



A Piece of Danish Happiness

Sharmi Albrechtsen

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An amusing witty memoir packed with happiness research (deciphered), quirky facts and amusing personal vignettes about American Sharmi Albrechtsen's life in the happiest country in the world: Denmark. Despite having the highest personal tax burden anywhere, a newcomer unfriendly community and grey, gloomy weather nearly all year round, the Danes lead the world in the happiness rankings and she was determined to find out why. The book reveals that the unspoken Laws of Jante are why the Danes have a unique mechanism for 'keeping it real' with lowered expectations. While it seems quite straightforward, unlearning American values like materialism and ambition to reach a higher goal of everlasting happiness was a rocky transition. With the help of her Danish friends, thousands of blog fans and Oprah's Lifeclass, Albrechtsen found the true meaning of happiness and shed her destructive materialistic ways.

A Piece of Danish Happiness Details

Date : Published August 19th 2013 by Create Space (first published August 1st 2013)

ISBN : 9781489565

Author : Sharmi Albrechtsen

Format : Paperback 213 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Biography

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Haven Gordon says

I won this book off of a goodreads firstreads giveaways, and I am so happy that I did because this book was exactly what I needed. I've struggled with anxiety, depression, low self esteem, and the elusiveness of happiness that felt like it was just out of my reach. By reading this book, I learned a very valuable lesson. I learned to not look for immediate gratification from material objects, but to search inwardly for the things that make me content. This book has helped change my perspective about the way I view life. It's all the little moments of happiness in life that help create the longer moments of contentment.

Peter Stephensen says

Sharmi may as well be on the payroll of the Danish Government Propaganda reach out team. Most foreigners who have lived in Denmark for a significant amount of time laugh at the notion of Denmark being the happiest place on earth. What this book fails to mention is how cold and inconsiderate everyday Danes are to one another, and how xenophobic and generally racist they are towards "invandrer", or foreign immigrants. Poorly written and clearly leaving out the truth of how cold, dark and gray day in and day out life in Denmark can be. Not mentioned in the book, Denmark is a country that works relentlessly at keeping people out who won't contribute to their bottom line, and almost as tirelessly at attracting highly skilled foreigners to come, work, pay ridiculous tax to help support their aging citizenry and un-productive youth. The book leaves out how the immigrant population within DK is reproducing at a MUCH higher rate than the native Danes, and as a result, the cultural demographic within the tiny country, is quickly shifting away from traditional Danish, and it drives the locals nuts. Avoid this nonsense at all costs. Waste of time and money.

Ann says

Top 5 Pop Culture - PLA

Venohe says

First of all, I didn't read the whole book.
The reason: I just couldn't find a connection to the author and her materialistic life.
When I read the description of the book I expected some kind of humorous stories about the Danes and their happiness but at times it turned out to be an essay about research...

Samantha Bustos-Hubeny says

I got this free through a Goodreads Giveaway.

It starts out as an interesting insight into consumer addiction: the must have attitude. The most horrifying part to me wasn't how much she spent constantly, but that she really did represent what America wants its consumers to be. She used to be a perfect shopper, always having to have the newest thing. Tons of people are just like how she was and just as miserable.

While this was fascinating, I am not a materialistic person myself, so I couldn't relate to how she used to be. Much of what she was saying I already believe, so while it's an interesting book, it's not one that was of much interest to me.

Donna says

I loved the author's inviting humor and knowledge about a country I would never had considered reading about. The Dane's happiness is almost an oxymoron in that are they really happy or just accepting of their lot in life? It's debatable since they are rather closed minded and not inviting of other people and cultures! I'm wondering why Ms. Albrechtsen stayed in that crazy country? Her story made me laugh and I actually want to hear more of her stories! The nonacceptance of other people is familiar and the Danes aren't the only rude people in this world. I traveled to France whereby I felt invisible the whole week, maybe I was!

All in all I LOVED this book and it is a great read although I do not see Denmark in my future. Thanks to you Sharmi Albrechtsen for a delicious Piece of Danish! I received a free copy of this book from Goodreads Giveaway!

Sam Thomas says

If you want to get to know about Danes people and their culture this book is for you. The major beneficial side-effects of happiness is the following: happy people live longer, are more productive, earn more, and are also better citizens. Well-being should be developed both for its own sake and for its side-effects. It is well written and it is worth the read.

Laurel says

A funny and endearing memoir of one woman's journey to adapt from "Hindu American Princess" consumerism to Danish minimalism... Unfortunately, I found the constant abysmal spelling and grammatical errors too distracting to truly enjoy this.

Carol says

The subtitle of this book, "one woman finds the secrets of the happiest people in the world," describes the author Albrechtsen's quest well. Born a 'Hindu American Princess' to an immigrant family in the Washington, DC area, she ends up an immigrant herself when she marries a Dane. Although her first Danish marriage doesn't last, she finds herself having to stay in Denmark for her daughter's sake. The adjustment doesn't go smoothly at first because of her extremely self-centered, materialistic attitude (by her own

admission). It was interesting to see her begrudgingly come to appreciate Danish culture, and how it changed her. I found her comments on what it's like to be a foreigner in Denmark particularly insightful, and they will be helpful to those trying to integrate into Danish society. Her research into the happiness issue is well done and presented in a very readable manner.

Please note that I do not use the star rating system, so this review should not be viewed as a zero.

Shana James says

Sharmi Albrechtsen's A Piece of Danish Happiness was an interesting look inside the habits and customs of the people of Denmark and her own journey as an American living in that country and trying to find her own path. I enjoyed the anecdotal stories Sharmi shares about her initial experiences as an American living in Denmark and those she shares about her daughter who is being raised enjoying many Danish customs.

Sharmi's discussion about her struggles with consumerism can serve as cautionary tale for all readers. There's nothing wrong with wanting to experience the finer things in life, I certainly do, but you have to maintain balance and spend responsibly. Great job, Sharmi!

Beth says

Poorly written -- she really needs an editor to go through this -- but she got her point across. Albrechtsen reveals her study of why Danes are "the happiest people on Earth." The answer lies in Danish culture and society, which in my opinion probably cannot be duplicated in this country.

Shana says

Mixed feelings on this book. I am fascinated with Danish culture and the author has done her research and laid out some really interesting facts and anecdotes along the way. On the other hand, this book was in desperate need of an editor--spelling and grammar errors and repetitions thought the book. I also truly cringed at the way she spoke about Americans (as an American herself). We're not all like that!
