

Case Study

Vadehavscentret / The Wadden Sea Centre

Denmark

Module 6

<https://vadehavscentret.dk>

Vadehavscentret contributes significantly to sustainable coastal-forest tourism and wild-food education in Denmark, serving as the official UNESCO gateway to the Wadden Sea National Park. This award-winning visitor centre blends tidal flats with forest-edge ecosystems, attracting 4,000+ guests annually to its “Foraging & Fire” programs that combine sea herbs, forest mushrooms, and open-fire cooking.

Location

This vast UNESCO site is predominantly covered by coastal woodlands and forest-edge plantations with broadleaf trees including oak, beech, alder, and willow growing alongside salt marshes. The understory and tidal zones include sea plantain, glasswort, samphire, and forest mushrooms — all sustainably harvested in a 3-hour radius.





Linking conservation and culinary tourism for commercial partnership

Vadehavscentret believes that this UNESCO-integrated model provides a blueprint for coastal-forest visitor centres worldwide, marrying conservation objectives with tourism businesses, local chefs, and authorities who have goals including economic and social development of rural communities.

Activities & Commercial Model

Vadehavscentret Experiences include local tourism SMEs, e.g.,

- ◆ "Foraging & Fire" tours (3 hours, DKK 375 pp) collecting sea plantain, glasswort, and forest mushrooms → cooked over beach fires.
- ◆ Full-day corporate & school programs with team-building fire-cooking.
- ◆ The Wadden Kitchen Lab — preserved tidal-forest products sold in centre shop.
- ◆ A welcome centre with catering, retail, and rest facilities.
- ◆ Pay-to-participate public grants + ticket revenue (50/50 model).
- ◆ A range of forest-trail activities in Klosterhede plantations.
- ◆ Caravan and Camping Park and car parking for over 200 vehicles.



Sustainability and Trees

They began their sustainability programme through UNESCO and Danish Nature Agency, focused on reducing our carbon footprint as much as possible. For example, they identify trees as the 'lungs of the earth' on their website.

'Trees are often called the lungs of the earth. By managing the park sustainably, we're making sure our little forestry area is helping to keep our planet healthy'.



Trees and Plants



Reducing emissions



Wellbeing



Sustainability and Trees



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Trees and Plants

To allow the flora and fauna to live and breathe, they leave certain areas to grow naturally without being “manicured”. And to make sure trees continue to flourish for generations to come, they replant every one that falls or needs to be knocked. The fallen trees are put to good use; their bark is used for mulch to keep the cycle of life rotating.

Green Friendly Approaches

Energy They endeavour to be as energy-efficient as possible by using solar panels and rechargeable batteries where possible.

Waste They follow the mantra of “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle,” meaning very little gets thrown away. Recycling and compost bins are in place and all their takeaway packaging is eco-friendly.

Wellbeing

Promote Healthy and Enjoyable Activities

Their outdoor activities are designed to be a positive choice for both body and mind. Their park provides opportunities for both land and water-based activities, including Denmark’s only UNESCO-certified foraging-to-fire journey. Whether visitors come to the park for an exhilarating oyster safari or a thoughtful stroll, they are confident they will leave feeling all the better for it. They also make nature and wellbeing accessible to all so that everyone can enjoy the benefits of nature and natural landscapes.



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