

KRONBORG - THE MOST FAMOUS CASTLE OF DENMARK



The only thing Shakespeare had to do was to use them as a setting of his plays. And the effect? Immense popularity and appeal of all the castles, mansions or houses he put into his works. For many people these places became almost sacred. No wonder, that thousands of tourists travel each year to Denmark, to visit the infamous Kronborg Castle, the legendary home of Hamlet.

It doesn't matter that if there was a Hamlet, which the historical facts do not confirm, he would have lived much earlier than the castle was even built (1574 - 85). Kronborg Castle in Elsinore is considered one of the most important Renaissance castles in the Northern Europe. It was built during the reign of Frederik II. and presents not only a very impressive architectural treasure, but also a colossal military fortress. It is fully surrounded by a fortification walls with bastions and ravelins.

One of the most attractive elements of the interior of the castle is its Great Hall. Originally, there were forty tapestries hung on its walls, portraying 111 Danish kings. During the course of the centuries, several unfortunate incidents, including looting, bombardment, or Swedish occupation, affected the castle, resulting in the loss of most of its precious tapestries. Another seven are also displayed in the Danish National Museum in Copenhagen.

Well worth visiting is also the church with the original oak furnishings, as well as the royal chambers. To add to the overall appealing character of Kronborg, a mythological hero, Holger Danske, is deemed to dwell in the basement; should the country be in danger, Holger is believed to emerge to save it.

Visitors interested in maritime history, should visit the Danish Maritime Museum, located also on the premises of the castle. In a very interesting manner, the museum portrays the history of Danish shipping.

Even without entering the castle itself, the overall impression it leaves on the visitors is surprisingly great. The surrounding Oresund waters create a perfect setting for the Hamlet legend and one almost expects to meet the late king's ghost walking around the battlements or the spacious courtyards.

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