



## **10 Minutes For The Planet**

### **The Greenest City On Earth** ©

by *Pierre Vercueil*

Hi there and welcome back to our weekly environmental series here on EnglishWaves, Ten Minutes for the Planet. Today we take a look at the greenest city on the planet. It's easy to say we'd like our cities to be cleaner and greener. But what does green even mean? If anything, 'greenness' is a concept that's difficult to pin-point since there's no universally agreed-upon set of criteria for working out how green a city is. To date analysts have relied on measures such as the percentage of renewable energy purchased by a city (not including nuclear – sorry France!) or the share of all 'trips' made by public transport.

Since 2009 the *Economist* Intelligence Unit, and cosponsored by German engineering giant Siemens, has published the Green City Index, an internationally respected ranking of the world's greenest cities on all five continents. In total, 120 cities have been assessed and ranked according to the following criteria: energy & CO2, transport, water, air quality, land use & buildings, waste, sanitation and environmental governance. Which city took the top spot? Copenhagen.

Danes have often been said to be the happiest people on the planet, and their capital one of the most livable cities. Some of the reasons are the large number of green oases and open spaces with fresh air, some of the cleanest water in the world – for drinking and swimming - as well as a city overflowing with bicycles, and a high availability and consumption of organic produce. Accordingly, Copenhagen has consecutively been ranked the greenest city on Earth, was the European Green Capital in 2014, and boasts a perfect score of 100 in the Green City Index in terms of perception and performance.

The metropolis of nearly two million people (which makes it rather small for a European capital – compare it to greater Paris' whopping 12 million!) is known for advanced environmental policies and planning, with its goal of being completely carbon-neutral by 2025. The city is truly green as it is surrounded by water and parks, with climate-friendly citizens to match. One can even swim in the clean waters of the city's famed harbour baths.

When you are in Copenhagen, there are plenty of ways to be an eco-tourist. Finding a sustainable place to stay in Copenhagen is actually easier than finding a non-sustainable one, as 71% of all the city's hotel rooms hold an official eco-certification. More than half

of the hotels in Copenhagen have an environmental plan regarding water, laundry, house cleaning, waste, energy consumption, food, smoking, indoor climate, and administration. The flagship of climate-friendly hotels in Copenhagen is considered to be the Crowne Plaza Copenhagen Towers, Denmark's greenest hotel, where a luxury visit comes guilt-free thanks to its 25 floors of suites designed with one thing in mind: environmental sustainability.

Whether it is new bike routes, urban parks or new residential areas, Copenhagen is constantly moving towards a more sustainable future. Water, light, open spaces, sustainability and quality of life seem to be the key elements in the capital's architectural development. With the title of the world's greenest, this city will continue to inspire its peers as the global trend towards green continues to develop.