VIKINGS
Warriors of the North.
Giants of the Sea.

Highlight:
Roskilde 6
The world’s longest warship

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# Table of Contents

Overview ........................................ 4  
Key Takeaways ................................ 6  
Exhibition Highlights ......................... 8  
Key Artifacts ..................................... 10 - 15  
Floor Plan ........................................ 16  
Exhibition Structure and Interactives .... 17  
Exhibition Details .............................. 18  
The Team ......................................... 20

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**Imprint**

**Photography**  
National Museum of Denmark  
Museumspartner

**Text**  
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National Museum of Denmark

**Graphic Design**  
Museumspartner
The National Museum of Denmark has opened up its most significant collection and brings together with Museumspartner more than 600 objects from the Viking Age on display. The exhibition’s diverse collection of Viking artefacts gives fascinating insight into the intriguing world of the seafaring Viking warriors, who set sail from 800 until 1050 AD to cross unknown borders, explore, trade, obtain revenues, plunder and conquer new land. Gruesome stories of Viking raids and sudden attacks from shores were already being told in the various contemporary written sources and the Viking warriors’ fierce reputation preceded them far beyond the borders of Scandinavia. However, contrary to popular conceptions of the Vikings as brutal warriors, most Vikings were skilled farmers, craftsmen and merchants who established towns and cities. Looking at the Vikings as traders and settlers, adventurers and explorers or highly qualified craftsmen and engineers, rather than focusing only on military matters and raids, this exhibition looks behind the general Viking stereotype.

Moreover, visitors will get a fresh and authentic view on Viking culture and religion as well as societal structure and state formation in Scandinavia during this exciting time of transition. Taking a multidisciplinary and interactive approach, this exhibition reexamines Viking history to give it a new turn and visitors, young and old, are given the chance to engage and intervene with Viking past with all their senses. In this unique exhibition the visitor will, for example, come to know that

Overview

Ribe in Denmark is one of the oldest commercial centers of the world and was founded even before the Viking age officially began (with the raid of Lindisfarne in 793 AD), how the first Viking kings emerged and how the Danish kingdom was unified with Norway to become dominant, why the Vikings really converted to Christianity under the Danish King Harald the Bluetooth, or what their everyday life actually looked like.

Goal

By offering a more nuanced picture of the Vikings, the exhibition wants to challenge the enduring image of the Vikings as brutal raiders and relive alternative surprising histories of the Norsemen’s culture instead. When visiting the exhibition, one should uncover the questions of what the Viking era really meant, how the Vikings changed the world and why they still influence us today.
The Vikings originated from Scandinavia, i.e. modern Sweden, Denmark, Norway and parts of Finland, but inhabited land throughout Northern and Eastern Europe, Iceland, the British Isles, Ireland, Faroe Islands, Greenland and even North America between 750-1100 AD. Vikings would not have necessarily called themselves that. Collectively, they would have been called ‘Norsemen.’ Individually, they would most likely have identified themselves by their farm or village. The term ‘Viking’ originally comes from ‘going on a viking,’ that is ‘going on a raid,’ and thus was popularly used by their enemies to brand them as bloodthirsty raiders and warriors. When Vikings conquered new land, they did not try to maintain or impose their cultural practices on the locals. Based on the important site L’Anse aux Meadows, the exhibition for example, presents the latest archeological evidence for cultural contact and exchange between the Vikings and the Canadian indigenous population.

Key Takeaways

1. Most Vikings were no warriors but self-sufficient farmers with domestic animals and crops in the fields; men would go hunting and fishing and the women made the clothes from usually self-grown wool and flax. They peacefully lived together in communities tied by traditions and honor.

2. There was not a single Viking ruler - free and unfree people were ruled by powerful magnates. Furthermore, in the Viking period, several kings could exist at the same time and a ‘king’ was just a leading magnate who the other magnates regarded as the ‘first among equals.’

3. The large Jelling Stone, erected in 965 by King Harald Bluetooth to announce his Christianization, symbolizes the transition of the Danes to Christianity. Nevertheless, archeology has revealed that both religions coexisted for some time and Vikings never completely abandoned their Nordic gods in favor of Christianity.

4. What about the helmets? There is no evidence that suggests Vikings ever wore horned helmets. Despite years of searching, archeologists have only found one fairly simple helmet and a few helmet fragments - the famous horns are yet to uncover. We associate the horned helmets with the Vikings because of 19th-century artists’ invented portrayals of the Vikings.
This is the largest touring Viking exhibition, showcasing an incredible collection of over 600 original artefacts and authentic replicas that tell the story of a people whose values, beliefs, skills, culture and language have continued to influence and captivate us today.

The artifacts include the almost 122-foot long ship Roskilde 6, the unique and fascinating Ulfberht Sword, a stunning replica of the beautiful but unfortunately lost Cammin Casket, Thor’s hammer, the spectacular Øster Halne necklace and more original artefacts that show the highly skilled Viking craftsmanship.

Visitors will be engulfed by Viking history with all their senses and get the chance to break down popular Viking stereotypes and replace them with a new image of the Vikings.

The exhibition includes the latest findings from the most renowned scientists, such as Anne-Christine Larsen and Peter Pentz. This exclusive and highly scientific content is presented in an interesting but entertaining and easy accessible way.
Key Artifacts

Roskilde 6
Roskilde 6 is the world’s longest warship ever found and is the attractive highlight of the exhibition. The unique ship-shaped steel reconstruction exhibits 25 percent of the original planks and inner timber found. A striking multi-media 4 projector sound and light show comes with the installation. The Roskilde 6 was a warship that could carry up to 100 armed warriors (including the 78 rowers) and was a powerful weapon. Despite its immense size of almost 122 ft., it was quick to carry and to land such a number of warriors unnoticed. The ship was originally built in 1025 in southern Norway using oak, the best and strongest wood available. Only kings and earls could afford building ships of this size and design. Given the era and region it was built, it probably belonged to Canute the Great, the ruler of Denmark, England, Norway and part of Sweden from 1018-1035.

Eik Sande (optional)
Eik Sande is a full-sized (32 ft. or 9.8 m) replica of a Viking ship originally found in Gokstad, an important find spot in Norway. The ship was built using the same techniques and materials as all other clinker-built ships from the Viking Age. For example, thick oak trees were radically cleaved into halves, quarters, eights and finally shaped into planks using replicas of Viking tools, instead of just using a modern saw. The replica-sail has been made from wool using a weaving technique common for the early Viking Age. As not a single sail has survived from the Viking Age, images on carved stones, original fragments of woolen fabric and numerous experiments helped reconstructing the sail of the ship.

Karl (optional)
Karl is a reproduction of one of the smaller (21 ft. or 6.4 m) boats found in Gokstad and was probably for costal and river sailing.
Set of Women’s Jewelry from Lerchenborg
This elaborate set of jewelry shows the belongings of a wealthy woman in the 10th century in Denmark. The two gilded, oval brooches were attached to the shoulder straps of the woman’s dress. Between them was a multi-coloured necklace of glass, quartz, silver coins and other pendants. A thick silver chain was attached to one of the brooches, and a key or similar personal item hung from the other. The set shows the extent of the Vikings’ overseas contacts. It includes a silver denarius from Western Europe, two dirhams from the Arab world, a carnelian bead, which had come all the way from India and the Mercury gilding from Spain. The jewelry is typical of the jewelry worn by wealthy Viking women.

Sigerslevøster
Several of this kind of burial hoards from the Viking Age have been found. The silver ingot and arm rings with smaller rings attached indicate that the owner was wealthy. Silver ingots were easy to cut into pieces and the small payment rings were a practical way to have small amounts of silver ready for making purchases. An Arabic coin has been folded around one of the arm rings. It either could have been attached for decoration or been added to increase weight to make a payment.

Urness Brooch (1000-1150)
The Urness has a three-dimensionality and lightness that distinguishes it from earlier animal ornamentation. The style is asymmetric and has a single main motif that fills the entire surface. The animal figure in the center is depicted using both thin and thick lines; its body twists in dynamic, swirling patterns.

Harness Bow
It was found with another harness bow in a richly furnished burial chamber in Søllested, Denmark, and is from the first half or middle of the 10th century. It is among the best examples of Viking Age ornamental work to be found. Possessions like this demonstrated the social standing of the family and maybe their heritage or religious responsibilities as well. The harness bow was worn on the back of a draught horse pulling a carriage.
Valkyrie
This figure (on the left) depicts an armed woman warrior. According to Viking mythology, the Valkyries selected the bravest warriors. They were also responsible for bringing those slain in the battle to Valhalla, the greatest hall of Odin in Asgard, the kingdom of the gods. The figure is unusual because it is three-dimensional. Details of the clothing and hair are clearly visible.

Cammin Casket (Replica)
The casket is beautifully decorated in the Mammen style and was probably made at a royal Danish workshop in the mid-10th century. The casket was found in Poland and probably had accompanied a Scandinavian princess as part of her dowry. However, the original Cammin Casket disappeared during WWII, when the Polish church where it had been on display was almost completely destroyed by fire.

Thor’s Hammer
Thor and Odin were among the main gods but the fertility god Freyr of the Vanir clan also played a major role. Thor was a powerful god and was very popular among the Vikings. His symbol the hammer Mjolner was worn as a protective pendant. The discovery of Thor’s hammer pendants shows that he was widely worshipped wherever the Vikings settled.

Åby Cruzifix (Replica)
The Åby crucifix is the oldest crucifix in Denmark and comes from the Åby church near Aarhus. The crucifix is from 1050-1100 and is made of gilded copper plates on a base of wood. Christ is, in the unique Scandinavian style, depicted as king on the cross.

Jelling Stone (Replica)
This full-scale replica of the large Jelling Stone erected in 965 by Harald Bluetooth has been reconstructed to show the details and patterns representing Christ and the beast in the possible colors, which have eroded on the original stone. The actual rune stone can be seen in Denmark at its find place in Jelling.
Additionally, self-activating elements, touch-screens and hands-on elements invite the visitors to fully experience the Viking Age. Visitors have, by way of example, the chance to feel the weight of a replica oar and try to get the ship moving, dress up either as a Viking housewife or put on a chain mail and pick up an accurate replica of a Viking Age sword to experience the weight and balance between sword handle and sword blade, become an archeologist by virtually excavating a Viking ship, play the original and fun Viking board game “Hnefatafl” on a touch screen or become a ‘true’ Viking also outside the exhibition by downloading the game Can You Go on a Raid available in all app-stores.

The exhibits and information are carefully grouped together in themes that can be read independently or as integral parts of the whole exhibition and adapted in accordance to the space and resources available:

1. Introduction
2. Viking Ships
3. Viking Warriors
4. The Vikings as Traders and Merchants
5. Viking Society
6. King and Power
7. Gods and Beliefs
8. Local Option (for example, Vikings in North America)
Exhibition Details

Rental period: 3 months minimum, 6 months maximum.

Size: 3,500 to 8,000 (or 1,066 to 2,438) sq. feet. The Roskilde 6 requires an additional 4,000 sq. ft. with a clear “runway” with no columns, 130 ft. long and 23 ft. wide and a gallery height of 18 ft. Depending on the final size of the installation up to over 600 objects. Venue to provide Facility Reports. Final loans depend on approved facility reports.

Up to 2 full-size replicas of Viking ships (two can also be displayed outdoors – security to be approved) and one reconstruction exhibiting original planks.

64 display cases come with the exhibition and have their own lightning and special climate control system.

Over 650 running feet of large image panels including texts, which can be adapted for two languages.

All audio/visual material available on request in two languages.

Custom-designed carpet with printed graphics especially made for each thematic area.

7 films: All projectors, speaker systems, media players and control systems are included.

12 Interactives with all furniture, displays and control systems included.

Lightning: Gallery lightning is to be supplied by the venue.

Publication: A catalogue is available on consignment. Venues can also produce their own with supplied content from the National Museum of Denmark.

Marketing Material: High resolution images of the key objects and the exhibition are available to the venue at no cost. All final graphic representations by venue are to be approved by National Museum of Denmark and Museumspartner to ensure adherence to proper citing of partners and lenders.

All the necessary insurances, shipping and transport, professional installation and dismantling crew from Museumspartner and specialists from the National Museum of Denmark (including their travel and accommodation) is also in-
In cooperation with international museums, Museumspartner has conceived a range of travelling exhibitions that are not only informative and engaging for a multitude of audiences but also easy to adapt to different spaces. We offer these exhibitions under a turnkey contract which ensures that our clients are guaranteed a secure investment customized for their own institution without any surprises. Drawing on our extensive experience in fine art transport, we provide full services to our partners and offer smart solutions to the challenges of project management, logistics and financial management – we stand for standards and services at the highest level possible.

Museumspartner

National Museum of Denmark

The National Museum is Denmark’s largest museum of cultural history with a collection of millions of artefacts from all historical periods. The museum’s main domicile as a classical 18th century Danish rococo palace with Parisian inspiration. It is just a stone’s throw from “Strøget,” in one of Europe’s longest pedestrian streets in the centre of Copenhagen. The National Museum runs over 20 exhibition sites throughout Denmark. It is the museum for all Denmark, and you can follow the history of the Danes right down to the present day, and get around the world from Greenland to South America.

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