

Credits

Directed byRocky Walls

Produced by Zach Downs Rocky Walls

Associate DirectorBraden Worrell

Associate Producer Grant Michael

Director of PhotographyJoseph Frank

Film Editor Zeph Vaughn

Music Composer Marc Stoeckle

Technical Info

Film TypeDocumentary

GenresInterview, Expository

Production Budget \$250,000

Shooting Format Digital – 1080p, 4K

Frame Rate 24fps

Aspect Ratio 2.39:1

Exhibition Format Vimeo or .mp4 file

Screener Format Vimeo or .mp4 file

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"Less is more. It's much, much more. So, you have to provoke yourself... to have it really, really primitive to get this feeling. It's hard work to have hygge.

You have to change things." – Kari Gram



Logline

A journey to discover the real meaning of hygge through a glimpse into the lives of the happiest people on the planet.

Synopsis

Standing accused, though perhaps not literally the worst year ever, 2016 sparked a search for something happier in the world, and the Danish concept of hygge (hoo-ga) found its way onto bookshelves, Pinterest boards, and the Oxford Dictionaries shortlist for "Word of the Year" alongside Brexiteer and Alt-right. Consistently ranked among the happiest people on earth, have the Danes possessed the key to happiness all along? And, can we find it for ourselves?

Finding Hygge begins with a look at the world's sudden interest in hygge and attempts to define it. Google searches for Hygge were up 163 percent in the last quarter of 2016, while the number of cozy, #hygge Instagram posts recently surpassed two million. At first glance, hygge seems as simple as enjoying friendly conversation over a cup of cocoa by candlelight, but this depiction pales in comparison to a glimpse at the real lives of people who truly know hygge.



Director Q&A

Why did you decide to take on production of this film?

In May of 2016, I visited Copenhagen for the first time and noticed something about the people that was captivating to me. As soon as I got home, I started to explore the Danish culture to find out what made the Danes different; it was a very subtle difference, nothing major. Through this, I learned about the concept of hygge. Hygge became an obsession to me. At first, it was all the cliche things (candles, blankets, books, etc.), but as I explored more, I found that it touches all areas of life. Hygge is something deeper within a person.

Who is Finding Hygge meant for and how do you expect it to impact them?

It's meant for people who want to improve their lives and the lives of others around them.

We all have stress, social media, pressure, and those things aren't all bad. But, we've got to find a way out of them, too. We need to turn stress off and appreciate life. I hope that the people who watch this film find hygge in their own way, that it makes their life better, and that they help others find and experience it, too.

What did we learn during production of this film?

One major challenge is that hygge is so hard to explain, and it means different things to different people. You can't buy or manufacture hygge. It's a mental shift, but it's also a paradox. While it takes effort to get into the right mindset, at the same time, it requires no effort at all. Most people have it. Once we know what to look for, we see it in our lives. The problem is that we cloud it with other things that don't matter and don't make us happy.

What is the message of Finding Hygge?

Finding Hygge is about learning how to find the truly good things in life that make you happy. It's about being inspired to rediscover the things you already know but have allowed clutter to cover up.



"I think what we've done is is given a language to people who are doing something they appreciate and helped them appreciate it in a new way." — Meik Wiking



Garrey Dawson

After losing his own father suddenly and becoming a new father himself, Garrey Dawson left his successful, but demanding, career in the U.K. to make a new life in Denmark. Now, he and his wife Helle, a Dane, have lived in Denmark with their two sons for almost a decade, but sometimes still feel like outsiders in their very tight-knit community.

Kari Gram

Kari believes that hard work and hygge go hand-in-hand. Not only does she work alongside her husband, Jesper, at their private practice, but she also manages 37 apartments and three farms. While her schedule seems busy, she gets joy from it. She doesn't call it work; she calls it life.





Frans van der Woude

Frans, a Dutchman who has lived in Denmark since the 80s, is a farmer, but he's also a painter and loves to shape and create things. He's not fighting against hygge, but does feel that it's closed to outsiders who long for togetherness. That's why he's so passionate about creating community and bringing people together for dinners in The Boundless Kitchen.

Dayna Robbie

The granddaughter of a Danish immigrant to Canada, Dayna Robbie (whose name literally means "from Denmark") yearns to preserve the heritage that has been passed from generation to generation. When she was a teenager, she would prefer to spend an afternoon on her grandparents' patio than with friends, and it's hygge that's helped keep her grandparents' memories alive.





Meik Wiking

CEO of The Happiness Research Institute and author of the international best-selling book, "The Little Book of Hygge," Meik writes in his book, "Hygge may help us to be grateful for the everyday because it is all about savoring simple pleasures. Hygge is making the most of the moment, but hygge is also a way of planning for and preserving happiness."

Signe Wenneberg

Signe is a journalist, lecturer, and blogger who specializes in sustainability, gardening, and food. You can't look at her Instagram account and without getting a deep sense of what hygge means to her. For Signe, hygge is even part of raising chickens. She explains that having chickens around shows children and anyone else who's interested that food doesn't just appear in supermarkets.





Nic Marks

Best known for his work on the Happy Planet Index as a fellow of the New Economics Foundation in London, Nic's TED talk on the Happy Planet Index has been viewed more than a million times and continues to inspire debate and commentary. He strongly believes that happiness should not cost the Earth and should be the pursuit of all nations.

Paul Cunningham

Chef Paul Cunningham trained in prestigious British restaurants and country house hotels. During his years working in England, he fell in love with a Danish girl and, ready for a simpler, healthier way of living he followed her home to Denmark. He now plays the role of head chef at Henne Kirkeby Kro.





Michael Dean

Originally from the U.K., Michael has worked for tech startups in Copenhagen for the better part of a decade. Hygge hasn't always been such a warm feeling for him. "Personally, I'm not always a fan of hygge," he explains. "To me, it can represent a slightly closed nature some Danes have, where they'd rather stick with their old friends instead of making new ones. There's an expression of 'out is good, but home is best,' which although can be pleasant and wholesome, is also a bit at odds with me."

Alexandra Gove & Koen van Renswoude

The owners of Hygge Life, an online store focused on selling Nordic home goods to create spaces that encourage a hyggelig atmosphere. The couple recently wed on a mountaintop in Colorado at a self-described hygge wedding with their family and closest friends. They strongly believe that everyone, especially Americans, could use more pursuance, recognition, and enjoyment of the little things in life.





"It'd be really nice if by sort of telling my story a little bit that you guys on the other side of the pond can sort of say, 'Okay, hang on, let's focus here on some important things - the good times - and make more of them'." — Garrey Dawson