I’ve spent roughly five months in Aarhus, Denmark. This little summary is a guide for people who decide to visit Aarhus with ERASMUS for 1-2 semesters, focusing on the most important aspects of being an exchange student here, and maybe giving a little help for those who are still in doubt where to apply.

Administration and arriving

Be prepared for the extreme amount of administration, especially if you have to ask for modifications in your contract or in your learning agreement abroad. I had to do both of it, and in took roughly 1.5 months. Sometimes no one will know the exact answer for your question, you have to post home the signed, modified contract (not the learning agreement) in a hard copy, everything needs to be signed by 500 different institutions… All in all, quite exhausting. Though, in Aarhus the administrators/coordinators are really kind and reply usually within a business day, and they give you a lot of brochure to get all the information needed.

After arriving, you’ll have to register at the International Centre, it takes about 5 minutes and you’ll get a bunch of useful stuff, like even more brochures, Danish SIM-card, raincoat (see below...), etc.

Housing

It is very important to search for housing as early as possible. In Aarhus the housing, especially student housing (as roughly 15% of the population of the city is a university student)
is really bad, and the prices are going up as the beginning of the semester is approaching. There are multiple possibilities.

You can apply for dormitory housing when you fill in the university application form. I highly recommend it, as the Danish dormitories are in great condition. If (!) you receive an offer, most of the time you will have a single room with your own bathroom and a shared kitchen. I lived in Viby, a town in the agglomeration of Aarhus (30 mins into the centre by bus, door-to-door), and my dorm had music room, gym, bar, free sauna, etc. Also, it was quite cheap (app. 110,000 HUF/month). But it is never guaranteed to receive an offer, so you should look for other opportunities as well.

Another option is looking for private housing. Usually rooms are affordable, as a single room flat outside the downtown is around 340,000 HUF/month or above. Rooms are around 130-210k HUF/month, a bit cheaper in the suburban area, and can be more expensive in the popular areas. There are several sites for housing ads, such as boligportal, but there are Facebook groups as well, e.g. “Housing in Aarhus” or “Aarhus Student Accommodation Group”. Always double-check if they can provide address for CPR registration (see below). Some students are also subletting their dorm room for 1 or 2 semesters.

It is quite common to receive a housing option a few days/weeks later than your arrival. If you arrive in the autumn semester, you can try Start-up Housing. That is a trailer park for students for temporary accommodation. One trailer is for 4 people, but everyone has their own “cave” with a lock, and the trailers are small but are full comfort (bathroom with shower, heating, washing/drying machine, hot plate, coffee machine, etc.), and much cheaper than motels or Airbnbs (app. 21,000 HUF/week). Also, you can meet great people there.

Panoramic view of the peninsula where the trailer park is, with the city’s coast on both sides, Aarhus
Bureaucratic know-how

The most important document is the CPR-card (“Yellow-card”), but the University will help you to do the administration for it. It takes a while to receive it, but it is necessary for everything: visiting the doctor, opening a bank account, buying a “discount card” for the buses, etc. You can only get a CPR-card if you have a valid address. Only a given number of people can register into a flat with a given number of rooms, and they check it, so it is really important to get an accommodation with CPR registration available.

Otherwise, everyone speaks English and people are kind and helpful everywhere, so if you have a problem or you are in doubt about some rules, just ask the office in charge.

Shopping and prices

Compared to Hungary, food prices are 1.5-2 times higher. Bakery and eggs are especially expensive (100 HUF for a simple roll), but vegetables, fruits and sugar, rice, flour etc. are relatively cheap. It is totally okay to go to discount stores, as the products are perfectly fine there as well: no expired or inedible food, no schemes with sales. Street-food and fast-food is also affordable.

The prices can skyrocket when it comes to any type of service. Going to a pub is especially expensive (a standard 0.5 litre draft beer is app. 1700 HUF in an average bar but can go up to 2600 HUF easily and starts at 1300 HUF, except for special offers. However, in some University “Fridaybars” sometimes you can buy a 33cl beer for 210 HUF). A haircut is around 5-6.5k HUF, restaurants, cabs are expensive as well.

Weather and dressing

There is almost always a constant breeze, and the wind is pretty strong at least 3-4 days a week. Also, it rains a lot, so bring a pair of waterproof boots and a warm jacket.

The University

Teachers treat exchange and full-time students the same way. Exchange students do not get any advantage and must do the same (amount of) work. In exchange, you get the same access to the library, programs, help, etc., so all “advantages of not treating you differently”.
The general Danish kindness applies here as well: teachers are happy to help you, as well as the administration. They are flexible with your problems, but they are also strict with the requirements.

The amount of work to do really depends on the course you take, but in general they are a bit more tough than at Corvinus. The Uni only has 5 and 10 ECTS courses. Even though I have taken only 5 credit courses, everyone says that those need much more work than the half of the 10 ECTS courses do.

A huge negative aspect of the Aarhus Uni is the exam system / exam period. Every course has only one exam (plus a re-exam in February), and those cannot overlap each other, otherwise one course must be dropped. They disclose the exam schedule only at the beginning of the semester (that’s why I had to make changes in my learning agreement and contract...). Also, the exam dates can be considered fixed only one day before to the exam, so sometimes you need a massive amount of flexibility to survive the mishaps... And don’t book your retour flight before the official end of the exam period, as your exams can change.

Pond in the University Park, Aarhus

Miscellaneous (working, traveling, etc.)

Though you can earn a rather high salary in Denmark even for dishwashing or cleaning (around 4500 HUF before taxes / hour or more), it is very hard to find a job if you are an exchange student. Also, you have to have your CRP-card for work, which I have received only in early October. And don’t forget, you compete with a massive number of students, and most
of them speak Danish. So, if you are going for only one semester and don’t have a great luck, forget about pocket money.

If you are lucky enough to live in the downtown, most likely you will not use the bus, as most of the places are in (a long) walking distance. Otherwise the public transport is good; with only one change you can get to everywhere, wherever you are. Though, buses tend to be late as much as in Budapest... There is no discount for student for the buses, and the monthly pass is around 16000 HUF, but if you live in downtown, most likely you won’t need a monthly pass. You can also bike, which is a very common thing in Denmark, as the roads are very safe and there are bike lanes everywhere.

Egeskov Castle, Kværndrup

Life, hygge and overall experiences

All in all, I would highly recommend spending your Erasmus semester(s) in Aarhus. The city is very young and has a great student life, everyone is kind and speaks English. The Uni has a lot of international students, but you can make some Danish friends as well.

On Fridays and Saturdays pubs usually have some special offer. Every Friday “Fridaybars” open all around the campus and they are free to enter. Beer is the cheapest here (210-650 HUF / 33cl), the atmosphere is special for every bar and there are multiple types of them. Another opportunity is the International Night organised by the Student House every Tuesday, you can meet a bunch of people here as well. All in all, if you are into it, you have a lot of party potential during the week.
“Hygge” is the word how Danes like to describe their activities. There is no translation for it, but it basically means to spend some great time with others. They really pay attention to enjoy their time outside the office/school, maybe that’s why they have a special word for it. Also, they are quite famous for their leaned back lifestyle, and one can get used to it pretty quickly.