



ASSISTENS CEMETERY

Map inside



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Free guided tours of Assistens Cemetery
Every year from April to September, there are free public tours of Assistens Cemetery. Groups can book separate tours throughout the year. Scan the code at the bottom of the page, [QR code that goes to www.kk.dk/kirkegaardsvaending] and read more about terms, times and topics.

Download the app and get a digital tour
Take a tour whenever it suits you. Download the free app, read the fascinating stories and easily find your way around the gravestones on your own. You will find the ARTOUR app where you normally download your apps. Search for *assistens* once you have installed it. There is also an English-language guide.



H. C. Andersen's grave in Assistens Cemetery
H.C. Andersen was buried in Assistens Cemetery on August 11, 1875, in a grave belonging to his friends Edvard and Henriette Collin. The Collins were later buried there as well. Years afterwards, their grave-stone was moved by descendants to a Collin family grave in another cemetery—though their remains were left behind.

Unfortunately, H.C. Andersen's gravestone is a replica. The original stone accidentally fell and broke into two pieces in the 1980s, and a reproduction was promptly made. Today, the original gravestone is exhibited at H.C. Andersen's House in Odense.

Assistens Cemeter

For more than 250 years, Copenhageners have buried their dead in Assistens Cemetery. All that time, it has been a place full of life. Even 200 years ago, people would visit the cemetery on Sundays and picnic with lunch baskets and brandy. Today, coffee dominates, and an entire urban district now surrounds the cemetery. The number of visitors has grown to over 2 million annually, and there is a prevailing local love for the place. Nevertheless, the cemetery has stayed basically unchanged. It remains a deeply personal place of remembrance for the relatives of the deceased and a huge collective resource for everyone else.

Assistens Cemetery has many qualities: the relative silence in the middle of a bustling city, old trees and bushes, the history of old gravestones and the famous dead people. There is room for the reflection that the presence of the dead and the encounter with our own transience invite us to. It is the premise of the site that grief and mourning have a special place here - not in opposition to the life of the cemetery but defining it. A walk through Assistens Cemetery is not like a walk in the park; there is also an existential dimension. As poet Klaus Høeck puts it in one of the cemetery's artworks, *Megaron*:

what do you seek here / where life has turned into stone / do find your own death.



Assistens Cemetery from 1760 to present

- 1760** The cemetery is put into use in the area that is currently Section A. It is managed by five churches and two poor relief organisations, each of which receives a plot, and for the first several years it functions as a cemetery for the poor.
- 1785** The first wealthy person - Johan Samuel Augustin - is buried in the cemetery.
- 1802** The cemetery is expanded in 1802 - 1806 with an area corresponding to Sections B-G. Copenhagen's then longest wall is built towards Nørrebrogade. Catholics as well as French Reformed and German Reformed congregations get their own areas.
- 1805** Burials inside churches are banned, which results in a high demand for burial plots at Assistens Cemetery from wealthy people who can afford large gravestones.
- 1808** The grave digger's house at Nørrebros Runddel is built. Today, it is Nørrebro's oldest building.
- 1811** The cemetery's first and only mausoleum is built - von Scholten's in Section D.
- 1828** The cemetery is expanded again. The expansions, including the current Hans Tavsens Park, continues until 1864.
- 1851** Burials within the ramparts of Copenhagen are banned.
- 1853** Cholera epidemic kills around 5,000 Copenhageners. Many are buried in Assistens Cemetery.
- 1860** For long periods of the 19th century, Assistens Cemetery is in a chaotic condition. When the City of Copenhagen took over the administration of the cemetery in 1860, it is the first step towards dismantling the power of the gravediggers and creating more orderly conditions.
- 1867** The chapel is built according to a design by architects J.D. Herholdt and Valdemar Ingemann.
- 1880** The wall towards Jagtvej is built and the following year the missing wall towards Kapelvej.
- 1892** Cremation is legalised in Denmark. With this, the dead begin to arrive at the cemetery not only in coffins, but also in urns.
- 1907** The cemetery donates land for the construction of Hans Tavsens Park.

- 1938** The first section reserved for urns is built and it is possible to buy 1 m² urn graves instead of the larger and more expensive coffin graves.
- 1950** The cemetery's first mass ash grave - also known as the "grave of the unknown" - is built. In this type of plot, the urns are placed close together, currently at 9 urns per square metre, and there are no gravestones. Today, the mass ash grave is the preferred form of burial in Copenhagen.
- 1951** The city council reverses a decision from 1879 to convert Assistens Cemetery into a park in 1980. Now the cemetery is not to be closed until 2020. The decision is changed again in 1989.
- 1979** The chapel ceases to function as a setting for funerals. Today, the building is home to Turning Tables, an organisation that works to empower children and young people through music, film and photography.
- 1985** The cemetery's many old gravestones are examined by experts. Almost 1,900 are considered to be of such great cultural and historical value that they must be preserved. A restoration workshop is set up in the chapel.
- 1989** The city council adopts a plan that extends the life of the cemetery to 2150 and divides it into an active part and a more recreational and cultural-historical part.
- 1997** Cycling is now allowed in Poppelalléen. From 1999, cycling is also allowed along a route across the cemetery.
- 2008** In response to a growing and still significant nature romanticism movement, a new form of burial place is introduced with the Malus section, where urns are placed under apple trees.
- 2009** Construction of a metro station in the corner of Nørrebros Runddel is underway. Archaeologists are excavating more than 2,400 individuals. They are all reburied in Section E.
- 2013** A special section for "Street People" (the homeless) is established.
- 2015** Assistens Cemetery is listed in order to preserve the cemetery as a unified whole: historical and active burial ground and recreational area. It is the first time in Danish history that a cemetery in use has been listed. People can still be buried in the cemetery.



Burial plots of interest

Afdøde		Gravsted		Afdøde		Gravsted	
A1	Director and poet Peter Faber (1810-77)	A-58		K2	Sisters of St. Joseph (-1945)	K-5-2-51	
A3	Composer Friedrich Kuhlau (1786-1832)	A-97		K4	Architect Finn Juhl (1912-89)	K-300	
A9	Painter Christen Købke (1810-48)	A-315		M2	Burial site for People of the Street (Gadens Folk)	-	
A17	Philosopher Søren Aabye Kierkegaard (1813-55)	A-738		M3	Megaron	-	
A25	Widow Gertrud Birgitte Bodenhoff (1779-98)	A-1026		N1	Writer Jakob Ejersbo (1968-2008)	Iris-48	
B4	Painter and author Hans Scherfig (1905-79)	B-164		N2	Rainbow burial plot	N-625	
B13	Writer Dan Turéll (1946-93)	B-333b		N3	Entertainer Morten Lindberg (Master Fatman) (1965-2019)	N-180a	
B16	Pianist and composer Thomas Koppel (1944-2006)	B-1109		P1	Writer H.C. Andersen (1805-75)	P-513	
B21	Poet Benny Andersen (1929-2018)	B-917		P6	Sculptor Sonja Ferlov Mancoba (1911-84)	P-994	
B22	Writer Vita Andersen (1942-2021)	B-1074		Q2	Actor and artist Emilie Sannom (1886-1931)	Q-977	
E4	Politician Mathilde Hauschultz (1885-1929)	E-325		Q3	Historian Astrid Friis (1893-1966)	Q-1070	
E7	Writer Anne Marie "madam" Mangor (1781-1865)	E-554		Q6	Physicist Niels Bohr (1885-1962)	Q-1233	
E9	Physicist and chemist Hans Christian Ørsted (1777-1851)	E-1009		R1	Pianist, singer and composer Karen Jønsson (1909-42)	R-59	
H2	Writer Martin Andersen Nexø (1869-1954)	H-211		R5	Jazz tenor saxophonist Ben Webster (1909-73)	R-660	
J4	Rapper, singer and songwriter Natasja Saad (1974-2007)	J-21		V1	Poet Michael Strunge (1958-86)	uV-15	
J5	Artist Jørn Larsen (1926-2004)	J-220					