



Summecosiness in the garden in Kallerup. Kim Jong Soo and Jong Huh explain about their experiences as guests with families in 26 different countries that they have visited through the Servas organization. When they return they have been through 30 countries in Europe.

Photo: Jens Fogh Andersen

Herrings and new Potatoes

By Jens Fogh Andersen
jens.fogh.andersen@nordjyske.dk

Fresh herrings and newly dug up potatoes, strawberries and other products from the garden washed down with beer from Thisted's brewery.

It may appear very exotic when the dinner guests are from Korea and never have been in Denmark; but when Bente Lauridsen and Mogens Kruse in Kallerup earlier this week were paid a visit by four Koreans, this was the menu for supper.

The four guests who all of them have passed 60 years have dedicated three months to experience Europe and the Europeans on their home field. Denmark was the 26th country on their journey. Wherever they have arrived they have met their hosts with the assumption that the primary is to have an insight as to how the hosts live their daily lives – and also tell the hosts about their own background.

The four travellers find their hosts through the organisation SERVAS which by the way saw the light of day at Askov Højskole back in 1949. The fundamental idea is simple. It is about creating understanding between people by letting them meet and communicate across ideology, background and nationality. And it is all based on voluntary work with no money from guest to host.

Mogens Kruse made acquaintance with Servas himself more than 30 years ago and has since then travelled many places in the world as a guest with families who also consider it positive to open their homes and give their guests an impression of their way of life as a means of international understanding. Today he is a local contact between Servas and new host families and travellers.

Since 1980 the home in Kallerup has had 78 visits by 142 inhabitants of 31 countries around the world – counting the Korean visit.

- During a typical summer we will have one or two visits for a couple of days, says Bente Lauridsen. The home in Kallerup is on the Servas list of homes with open doors to guests.



Kim Jong Soo, Jong Hu, Lee Sa Young and Lee Kunil are enjoying the July sun in the Kallerup Garden. It is part of seasonal life as it takes place in the country with the happy people.

We are travelling because we want to meet people.. The best way to do that is to be openminded and focused on watching and listening, but also to talk about yourself and your background.

Kim Jong Soo, Korean guest

An experience every time

It is an experience every time we have guests – exactly as it is an experience when we are received in a new home, says Bente Lauridsen and emphasizes that you come as a “guest” and not as a “tourist”.

The most important demands to Servas traveller will and ability to familiarize with other peoples every day life – and to accept things as they are.

The four Korean guests of Mogens Kruse and Bente Lauridsen go along with that. Therefore they took it easy when they arrived to a locked door as the hosts had not yet come home.

- But when they came, we were received as if we were a part of their family, says Kim Jong Soo, the informal leader of the Korean group.

Although two days are not a long time to experience Denmark, they feel that it is long enough to do a little more than just looking the Danes over their shoulders, which often is the situation of the tourist.

We travel because we want to meet people. You must come with an open mind and be prepared look and listen, but also tell about oneself and your background.

Kim Jong Soo tells about a Korean university professor, who after almost three decades as an active Servas host wanted to travel out in the world.

- He taught English literature and knew everything about the West – theoretically. He went to USA and had e really bad experience because he didn't have the ability to accept everyday life the way it was there.

The four Koreans in Kallerup don't have that sort of problems. They live, experience, listen and learn.

- And we have read a report saying that Denmark has the happiest population in the world. That is worth experiencing.

From **Thisted Dagblad** Saturday July 5th 2008
Translation Mogens Kruse