# What Is 'Hygge'? We Asked An Expert In Danish Design To Find Out

*ESTATENVY spoke with Global Visual Merchandising Manager of BoConcept on the origins of this trend centered around comfort and coziness.*

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It's 2019—at this point, you've probably heard the word "hygge" tossed around, desperately trying not to mispronounce it (for the record, it's 'hoo-gah').

Kalina Todorova has been with contemporary Danish retail brand BoConcept since 2003. As a master of Danish interior design, Todorova knows a thing or two about hygge, a distinctly Scandanavian quality of coziness that has no direct English translation. Comfort is important in many aspects of design, but hygge in particular can be somewhat baffling for those who have never heard of it.

Danes are notoriously cool, frequently landing the top spots of the World Happiness Report, an annual publication of the United Nations Development Solutions Network. The report

analyzes GDP Per Capita, life-expectancy, social support and self-reported happiness. That is to say, when it comes to living well, the Danish know what they're doing.

So, ESTATENVY asks, how does this feel-good philosophy translate into design.

"Hygge describes a mood or feeling that is associated with happy moments—anything from spending time with friends and enjoying a meal to lighting candles and cozying up in a comfy chair to read a book," said Todorova. "It is a state of mind that centers on creating a warm atmosphere within the home."

"In interior design, hygge can be associated with warm, inviting settings," Todorova continued. "Hygge design incorporates natural materials like wool, linen or felt. It's all about creating an inviting space using warm blankets, tactile textiles, light wood, comfortable seating and other elements."

According to Todorova, Hygge can be as simple as a dining table set up for entertainment with tealights and candleholders.

When asked why she thinks hygge has seen so much popularity in recent years, Todorova cited the need for a relaxation space in our increasingly fast-paced world. "Our homes become more and more our sanctuaries," said Todorova. "Home is a place where we relax, recharge and disconnect. In the search of ways to release stress and bring harmony into our lives, the concept of hygge brings us back to the simple things in life that make us happy—appreciating small moments and joy and enjoying time with friends and family."

"Denmark is one of the happiest countries in the world," Todorova continued. "There is a Happiness Research Institute in Copenhagen. Education and welfare is free. Denmark has one of the best and safest cycling infrastructures and it functions as a primary mode of transportation for many."

Todorova went on to illustrate that, overall, Danes are very trusting. Danish people often leave their homes and bicycles unlocked. Danish people even happily pay some of the highest taxes in the world, which accommodate the multitude of social services they receive.

On the other hand, the weather in Denmark is not ideal—winters in particular are very dark and cold. "The concept of Hygge plays an important role in the Danish culture for this reason," said Todorova, "It's about bringing warmth into everyday life."

In general, Todorova feels that Danish design is so universally trendy because it focuses on great craftsmanship, simplicity and functionality. Innovation and sustainable technology are other pillars of Danish design, and you can bet those are never going out of style. All of that in combination with hygge? Well, it just feels like home!