Text 88 REAL MEN SHARE THE HOUSEWORK

And lo! As we all return to school it turns out that women in Britain are still doing more housework than men. The new British social attitudes survey has just been published, and it reveals that although a majority of Britons agree that adult couples sharing a home should do equal amounts of housework, two-thirds of them admitted that women ended up doing much more. Italian and Spanish women have it worse. But my adopted Nordic homeland is – apparently – winning, and there's much that Brits can learn from the way things are done here.

Since moving to Denmark in 2013, I've noticed a rhythm to Danish life that's more conducive to the equal division of labour. Both sexes work and get paid a decent wage. And from the age of 10 months, all children go to tax-subsidised, state-run daycare. Most daycare institutions and offices are open from 8am until 4pm, and this has defined the way Danes work. So even the CEO of a company is allowed to say in a meeting at 4pm, “I have to leave to pick up the kids and make dinner.” And they go home to eat as a family.

Meals are something you have together in Denmark, and we could never, ever eat in front of the TV. Finns, Icelanders, Norwegians and Swedes also prioritise family mealtimes. In my old life in London, my husband and I would regularly be shovelling a takeaway with one hand while clutching the remote or a phone with the other. Dinnertime conversations would run along the lines: “Want food?” “No thanks, I ate earlier. At the fridge...” But in Denmark, “life around the table” is prized.

Most Danish men have a signature bake up their sleeves and the Danish equivalent of Jamie Oliver is Timm Vladimir, a tattooed Viking in a leather apron. Inspired by the notion that “real men cook”, my husband now makes a mean cinnamon bun, and his apple-chip salmon was recently reviewed as “to die for”. Most Danes also take huge pride in their homes, so don’t mind doing a whiz around with a vacuum cleaner. The weekend living supplements have not been lying: Danes love a chic minimalist home, so no one puts up with clutter or cobwebs.

Researching Nordic childhoods for my new book, I've discovered that Vikings learn their way around a kitchen from an early age. My five-year-old twins learned to bake bread at kindergarten. Their big brother attends a weekly “food lab” at school where he has learned to rustle up messy yet edible scrambled eggs and porridge.

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