



Amsterdam

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HISTORY



Amsterdam, the greatest planned city of northern Europe, has always been a well-known name in world history and played a central role in the history of the Netherlands. In the 17th century Amsterdam was the centre of world economy, and nowadays the city is known for its tolerant character.

In the Beginning

Amsterdam was founded as a fishing village around the thirteenth century. Amsterdam developed around a dam in the Amstel river at the end of the 12th century. The name Amsterdam occurs for the first time in the toll concession of Floris V, Count of Holland, dated October 27, 1275.

During the 14th, but especially the 15th century, Amsterdam underwent a rapid development, which laid the foundation for the Golden Age. The city developed quite rapidly and around 1613 the digging of the three main canals started. After the conquest of Antwerp by the Spanish in 1685, Amsterdam became the biggest and one of the richest cities of the world. During that time, it also became the leading center for finance and diamonds. A position that would be held until around 1700.

Anne Frank

Although she was not born in Amsterdam, Anne Frank is still a very well known name associated with the city. Anne was born in Frankfurt but settled in Amsterdam with her family in 1933 to escape Nazi Germany. The Franks were a Jewish family and in July 1942 were forced into hiding in the back of an office building in Amsterdam to evade capture from the Gestapo. The Franks cleverly disguised areas in the office building and were able to remain undiscovered until August 1944. During her time in hiding, Anne kept a diary and wrote about her experiences. It is thought that Anne died in a Nazi concentration camp less than a year after her capture. Her diary was discovered in the hidden area of the office building in Amsterdam, it was later published and became one of the best selling books of all time. The hiding place that the Franks created is now a museum and is open to the public in the city of Amsterdam.

Recession to Recovery and Expansion

In 1795 the government of the patrician oligarchies was overthrown and the old Republic ceased to exist. Soon the French were to occupy the country. During the period 1795–1813 Amsterdam suffered badly from the economic recession, a state of affairs reflected by the stagnation of the demographic development. Many houses were vacant and some even collapsed for lack of maintenance. Fortunately some facades and interiors dating back to the Empire period survive today. The period 1813–1940 is marked by economic recovery and, from 1870 onwards, by expansion. The increasing wealth brought about a rapid population growth. This development was primarily the result of the Industrial Revolution which triggered off a New Golden Age. The city now ventured into the area beyond the Singelgracht. Large poorly built working-class neighbourhoods were built. The period 1920–1940 was a time of economic recession. Therefore it is all the more remarkable that the so-called Ring 20–40 compares favourably to the 19th century jerry-building. This was also the period of large-scale damage to the historical city centre; canals were filled in and new traffic breakthroughs were realised.



MONEY

MONEY



In Amsterdam, as well as in all the Netherlands and many other countries of European Community the accepted currency is Euro (EUR, €), no other currencies are commonly accepted, so you will have to change your dollars, sterling, yens, etc to Euros.

Credit Cards

Credit cards are widely accepted in Amsterdam, though in some small shops or hotels, there might an extra charge (2-6%) if you pay by a credit card, passport may be required.

Debit Cards

Major debit cards, such as Visa, MasterCard and American Express are widely accepted in the Netherlands at restaurants, hotels, and tourist destinations.



Visitors From The USA

If you have a five- or six-digit PIN, be sure to obtain a four-digit number from your bank to use in Amsterdam. Some cards with five- or six-digit PINs might work, but this depends on which bank you're with. The best advice is still to get a four-digit number from your bank. Tipping isn't quite the routine as it is in the USA or UK, but adding 5-10% to your bill in restaurants, cafes and taxis is appropriate in case of good service.

ATM

The Cirrus (tel. 800/424-7787; www.mastercard.com) and PLUS (tel. 800/843-7587; www.visa.com) networks span the globe; look at the back of your bank card to see which network you're on, then check online for ATM locations in Amsterdam. Be sure you know your personal identification number (PIN) and daily withdrawal limit before you depart.

HELPFUL INFO

Climate

In Amsterdam, the capital of the Netherlands, the climate is sub-oceanic, humid and rainy, influenced by the North Sea but also by the Atlantic Ocean, which is not far, so it has cold (but not freezing) winters, and quite cool summers. The average temperature in January and February is 3.5 °C (38.5 °F), while in July and August it's 17 °C (62.5 °F).

Electricity

The Netherlands use the 220-240 Volt (50 Mhz) system that's common everywhere in Europe, Australia, Asia and Africa. But since electricity plugs often still differ, visitors from some countries (e.g. the UK, Australia, Switzerland, Ireland) need to bring a plug adaptor.



Technology & Communication

The nation's telecommunications system is also highly developed. The government began privatizing the telecommunications industry in 1989. By 1997, service for all fixed line telephones was privatized. The country has 5 underwater cables for transatlantic communications and 3 earth stations which receive satellite transmissions. The nation maintains 2 communications satellites. There is a program underway to replace the existing communications cables with fiber-optic cable. Over 90-percent of homes in the Netherlands are serviced by cable television systems.

Concurrently, there have been dramatic increases in the use of mobile phones. By 2000, there were 6.8-million mobile phones in use. The Dutch are among the first people in Europe to begin using the third-generation mobile communications systems which allow mobile phone users access to high-speed data (such as e-mail and the Internet) and video communications via their phone. In 1999, there were 70 Internet service providers in the Netherlands.

Infrastructure & Transport

The nation has 125,757-kilometers (78,145-miles) of roads, 113,018-kilometers (70,229-miles) of which are paved. There are 2,235-kilometers (1,388-miles) of expressways that link the major cities and facilitate transportation from the coast across the country. All of the major Dutch cities have widespread and inexpensive public transportation systems. The high degree of urbanization has also led many Dutch cities to build comprehensive bicycle pathways that allow people to bike instead of using cars or other vehicles. Still, 79% of the Dutch use their personal cars for transportation.



In Case Of An Emergency

Depending on the emergency, options include calling the central emergency number 112, taking the victim to the A&E department or a nearby hospital, or going to a GP. Below you will find a summary of important Dutch telephone numbers in the case of an emergency or problem.

Police information (non-emergency): 0900 8844

Anonymous tip-line (to report a crime): 0800 7000

Emergency doctor (in your area): 088 003 0600

Central Information Hotline: 14 020 or +31 20 624 1111 if calling from outside the Netherlands

Language

The official language of the Netherlands is Dutch. The majority of Amsterdam's residents speak English well and are often fluent in one or two languages on top of that. You can usually get by effortlessly in Amsterdam without a knowing word of Dutch. For those keen to try, learning a few words or phrases will always go a long way with the locals.



LGBT Travel

For lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) visitors and residents, Amsterdam is one of the most attractive cities in Europe. Nowhere in the world will you find so many gay-friendly attractions per-square-meter as in the center of Amsterdam city. As such, it's no small wonder that Amsterdam became so popular with gay visitors. For centuries 'Amsterdammers' have had a relaxed and tolerant attitude towards different lifestyles. 'Live and let live' is one of the city's favorite sayings. Amsterdam Gay Pride is one of the most renowned Pride celebrations around the world. Still growing, encompassing the entire festivities and its infamous canal parade, it attracts almost 500,000 visitors each year, making it one of the biggest annual events to be hosted in the city.

Religion

The largest religion in Amsterdam is still Christianity 17%, (of which Roman Catholics form the majority, with 10%), though Islam (currently 14%) is rapidly growing in popularity and is predicted to be the largest religious group within a few years. Three ethnic groups—Moroccans, Turks and Surinamese—contain a much higher percentage of people who feel affiliated to a particular religion.



RESTAURANT D'VITTELIGHEN

Restaurant
Le Vif

WARM HATE
WARM HATE

pegasus

DAAC

Dante K



Getting There

Amsterdam is an international travel hub with an international airport and train and bus stations. Whether you plan to arrive by plane, train or automobile, you'll find that the city is well-equipped to receive visitors. It is served by Europe's fifth busiest airport, Amsterdam Airport Schiphol. It is well-connected to various cities across the world, There are ten railway stations in Amsterdam, out of which six are intercity stations: Amstel, Bijlmer ArenA, Sloterdijk, Zuid, Lelylaan and Amsterdam Centraal. There are regular train services from various countries in Europe, such as Belgium, the Czech Republic, Austria, Belarus, Denmark, France, Poland, Russia, Germany, Hungary and Switzerland. International trains serving these stations include the Nederlandse Spoorwegen from Berlin, the Thalys from Brussels and Paris/Lille, CityNightLine and InterCity Express from Cologne and Frankfurt. You can also reach Amsterdam via ferry services from various countries. Amsterdam can also be reached by bus, through various cities in Europe. Most of the buses are provided by Eurolines. Buses from UK are provided by Megabus and iDBus. However, Netherlands does not have many internal bus services within the country.

Driving

In general, Amsterdam is a charming, laid-back city. But driving a car through its beautiful city center can be stressful for even the most experienced driver due to the narrow streets, the volume of traffic and public transport, and the prevalence of cyclists. If you decide to drive in the city, take some time to learn the rules of the road and inform yourself about parking options before you get behind the wheel. The Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment publishes an excellent free guide explaining traffic signs and regulations in the Netherlands. In Amsterdam it's worth noting that trams have the right of way at most intersections. In the Netherlands (and Europe in general), traffic coming from the right at a junction has right of way by default unless otherwise indicated.

THE EXPERIENCE

Culture

Truly cosmopolitan, the culture of Amsterdam is rich and diverse. It oozes out a European feel with the diverse interests in art, music, dance, theatre, film, photography and architecture. Being an European capital, it is home to many world-famous museums and art galleries. The Van

Gogh Museum boasts beautiful collection of the famous Dutch painters. For classical and contemporary music lovers, Amsterdam hosts Grachten festival annually by and on the canals. The city of Amsterdam values its art and culture with an intention to hold its communities together and nurture cultural development.

Bucket List

Climb the Westertoren

Go bungee jumping over the IJ at the Faralda Crane Hotel

Attend a concert at the Concertgebouw

Go to Museum N8 ("Museum Night")

Go over the edge in "Europe's Highest Swing"

Find out what glows in the dark

Family Travel Highlights

Experience a bubble fountain on Frederiksplein

Canal Pizza Cruise

Harvest fruit, nuts, and other plants from around the city to eat at home

Do an apple pie taste-test: Villa Zeezicht vs. Winkel 43

Play giant chess

Anne Frank Story & Private 2-Hour Neighborhood Tour

Tourism Authority

Amsterdam has two official tourist offices: one in the Amsterdam Schiphol Airport Terminal and one in front of the Central Station in an old style wooden house called Noord-Zuid Hollandsch Koffiehuis – North-South Dutch Coffee House. These offices not only inform you about the city in a professional way but can also give you free small maps and folders with information about the city.



Foods To Try

Bitterballen

Stroopwafel

Thick Dutch fries

Raw herring

Kibbeling

Croquettes from a vending machine

Oliebollen

Dutch Cheese

Poffertjes

Ontbijtkoek

Stamppot

Drinks To Try

Koffie Verkeerd

Verse Munt Thee

Jenever

Likeur

Dutch Bier

Chocomel

Advocaat



Photography Hot Spots

Royal Palace

Magere Brug (Skinny Bridge)

Magna Plaza

Amsterdam Public Library

Reguliersgracht (Seven Bridges)

Science center NEMO

A'DAM LOOKOUT

Souvenirs To Buy

Custom Clogs

Dutch Licorice

Puccini Chocolate Bonbons

Nijntje Knuffel

Blond Amsterdam Breakfast Set

Pip Studio Bathrobe

Guillotine Cheese Slicer

Handmade Wallet

Cowboys Belt

G-Star Jeans

Custom Pendant Necklace

