Amsterdam Travel Guide

Discover Amsterdam: Venice of the North

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Things to do in Amsterdam

Landmarks & Monuments

Amsterdam's iconic landmarks tell the story of a city that has been a center of trade, culture, and innovation for centuries. From the **UNESCO World Heritage canal ring** to historic bridges and architectural marvels, these monuments define the city's unique character.



Must See

Amsterdam Canal Ring

2-4 hours walking No Booking Needed

Map

The **Canal Ring of Amsterdam** is a UNESCO World Heritage Site consisting of the Herengracht, Keizersgracht, and Prinsengracht canals. Built during the Dutch Golden Age in the 17th century, this engineering marvel showcases elegant merchant houses, picturesque bridges, and tree-lined waterways. Walking or boating through the canals offers an unparalleled glimpse into Amsterdam's historical prosperity and architectural beauty. The area spans *1,550 hectares* with over 90 islands connected by more than 1,500 bridges.



Top Pick Book Ahead

Royal Palace Amsterdam

1-1.5 hours Book Ahead

Map

The **Royal Palace** (Koninklijk Paleis) dominates Dam Square as one of Amsterdam's most magnificent buildings. Originally built as a city hall in 1655 during the Dutch Golden Age, it now serves as an official residence of the Dutch Royal Family for state functions. The palace features *opulent Empire-style interiors*, marble sculptures, and the famous Citizens' Hall with a floor map of the world. Visitors can explore the lavishly decorated rooms showcasing Dutch art and craftsmanship from the 17th century.



Notable

Westerkerk

45 minutes - 1 hour No Booking Needed

Map

Westerkerk is Amsterdam's largest Protestant church and one of its most recognizable landmarks with its 85-meter tower crowned by the imperial crown of Maximilian of Austria. Built between 1620-1631 in Dutch Renaissance style, the church is where Rembrandt was buried in 1669. Visitors can climb the *Westertoren* for panoramic city views. The carillon of 50 bells chimes every Tuesday between noon and 1 PM, creating a magical atmosphere in the Jordaan neighborhood.



Notable

Magere Brug (Skinny Bridge)

15-30 minutes No Booking Needed

Map

The **Magere Brug** is Amsterdam's most famous bridge, a beautiful white wooden drawbridge spanning the Amstel River. Dating from 1691 and rebuilt in 1934, this double-swinging bridge is illuminated by *1,200 light bulbs* at night, creating a romantic spectacle. The bridge opens several times daily to allow boats to pass. Legend says it was built for two wealthy sisters living on opposite sides of the river, though the name likely refers to its narrow (mager) width.

Tips for Landmarks & Monuments

- **Best photography:** Visit the canals during golden hour (sunrise/sunset) for stunning light
- **Canal tours:** Book evening boat tours to see bridges illuminated
- **Royal Palace:** Check opening times as the palace closes during royal events
- **Free walking:** The canal ring is best explored on foot - wear comfortable shoes

Museums & Galleries

Amsterdam boasts one of the world's finest museum collections, featuring **masterpieces from the Dutch Golden Age**, contemporary art, and unique specialized museums. The Museumplein district hosts the city's most prestigious cultural institutions, attracting millions of art lovers annually.



Must See Book Ahead

Rijksmuseum

3-4 hours Book Ahead

Map

The **Rijksmuseum** is the Netherlands' national museum, housing an unparalleled collection of Dutch art and history from the Middle Ages onwards. The museum's highlight is *Rembrandt's Night Watch*, displayed in its own gallery. With over 8,000 objects on display including works by Vermeer, Frans Hals, and Jan Steen, the museum chronicles 800 years of Dutch culture. The building itself is an architectural masterpiece combining Gothic and Renaissance elements, reopened in 2013 after a decade-long renovation. Don't miss the stunning library and the beautiful gardens.



Must See Book Ahead

Van Gogh Museum

2-3 hours Book Ahead

Map

The **Van Gogh Museum** contains the world's largest collection of works by Vincent van Gogh, with over *200 paintings, 500 drawings, and 750 letters*. The chronological exhibition traces Van Gogh's artistic development and troubled life, featuring iconic works like *Sunflowers*, *The Bedroom*, and *Almond Blossoms*. The museum also displays works by Van Gogh's contemporaries including Gauguin, Monet, and Toulouse-Lautrec, providing context for his revolutionary style. The modern building and thoughtful curation make this an essential Amsterdam experience.



Must See Book Ahead

Anne Frank House

1.5-2 hours Book Ahead

Map

The **Anne Frank House** is where Jewish teenager Anne Frank hid with her family during WWII and wrote her famous diary. This deeply moving museum preserves the *Secret Annex* where the Frank family lived in hiding for over two years before their betrayal and deportation. Visitors walk through the actual rooms, see Anne's original diary, and learn about the Holocaust through multimedia exhibits. The museum serves as a powerful reminder of the horrors of war and the importance of tolerance. Advance booking is essential and often sells out weeks ahead.



Top Pick Book Ahead

Stedelijk Museum

2-3 hours Book Ahead

Map

The **Stedelijk Museum** is Amsterdam's premier museum of modern and contemporary art and design. The collection spans from 1870 to the present, featuring works by *Kandinsky, Mondrian, Malevich, Warhol, and De Kooning*. The distinctive white 'bathtub' extension contrasts beautifully with the original 1895 building. Rotating exhibitions showcase cutting-edge contemporary artists alongside design classics. The museum houses over 90,000 objects including paintings, sculptures, photography, video, and industrial design pieces, making it one of Europe's most important contemporary art institutions.



Notable

NEMO Science Museum

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

NEMO Science Museum is housed in a striking green copper ship-shaped building designed by Renzo Piano. This hands-on science center features *interactive exhibits* covering physics, chemistry, biology, and technology. Visitors can conduct experiments, explore phenomena from lightning to DNA, and enjoy spectacular views from the rooftop terrace. Perfect for families and curious minds, NEMO makes science accessible and fun through five floors of engaging displays. The building itself is an architectural landmark rising from the IJ harbor waterfront.



Notable

Rembrandt House Museum

1-1.5 hours No Booking Needed

Map

The **Rembrandt House Museum** is the actual home where Rembrandt van Rijn lived and worked from 1639 to 1658. The house has been meticulously restored to its 17th-century appearance, complete with period furniture, art objects, and Rembrandt's studio. Visitors can see where masterpieces like *The Night Watch* were created and explore his collection of curiosities. The museum includes nearly all of Rembrandt's *etchings* and offers demonstrations of traditional printmaking techniques. It provides intimate insight into the artist's life during both his successful and financially troubled periods.

Tips for Museums & Galleries

- **Book online:** Major museums require advance tickets - book weeks ahead for Anne Frank House
- **Museumkaart:** Consider the Museum Card if visiting multiple museums (pays for itself after 3-4 visits)
- **Timing:** Visit Rijksmuseum early morning or late afternoon to avoid crowds
- **Free entry:** Many museums offer free entry to visitors under 18
- **Combined tickets:** Some museums offer discounted combo tickets

Religious Sites

Amsterdam's religious architecture reflects its diverse spiritual heritage, from **grand Protestant churches** to hidden Catholic chapels from the Reformation era. These sacred spaces showcase remarkable art, history, and provide peaceful sanctuaries in the bustling city.



Top Pick

Ons' Lieve Heer op Solder (Our Lord in the Attic)

1-1.5 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Ons' Lieve Heer op Solder is a remarkable hidden Catholic church built into the attics of three canal houses in 1663. During the Protestant Reformation, Catholics were forbidden from worshipping publicly, so this secret *schuilkerk* (clandestine church) was created. The beautifully preserved baroque church features original galleries, altars, and religious art. The museum showcases 17th-century canal house interiors complete with period furniture, kitchens, and living quarters, offering a unique glimpse into Amsterdam's religious tolerance and Golden Age domestic life.



Notable

Oude Kerk (Old Church)

45 minutes - 1 hour No Booking Needed

Map

The **Oude Kerk** is Amsterdam's oldest building, consecrated in 1306, located in the heart of the De Wallen red-light district. This striking Gothic church features a magnificent wooden ceiling, beautiful stained-glass windows, and the largest medieval wooden vault in Europe. The church contains the tomb of *Rembrandt's wife Saskia van Uylenburgh* and hosts contemporary art exhibitions that create fascinating dialogues between sacred and modern spaces. Its tower offers panoramic views, and the church regularly hosts classical concerts taking advantage of its exceptional acoustics.



Notable

Portuguese Synagogue

1-1.5 hours No Booking Needed

Map

The **Portuguese Synagogue**, built in 1675, is one of the largest and most beautiful synagogues in the world. This massive brick structure was designed for the Sephardic Jewish community who fled persecution in Portugal and Spain. The interior remains virtually unchanged, featuring *enormous brass chandeliers* lit by candles, sand-covered floors, and carved wood furnishings. The complex includes a magnificent library with rare books and manuscripts. Adjacent to the synagogue is the Jewish Historical Museum, together telling the rich story of Jewish life in Amsterdam.



Optional

Zuiderkerk

30-45 minutes No Booking Needed

Map

The **Zuiderkerk** was the first Protestant church built in Amsterdam after the Reformation, designed by Hendrick de Keyser and completed in 1614. Its distinctive Renaissance tower with baroque spire has become an iconic part of Amsterdam's skyline. Though no longer used for worship, the church now serves as an *information center for urban planning* with exhibits about Amsterdam's development. Visitors can climb the tower for spectacular views. Rembrandt's children were baptized here, and the church appears in several of Monet's paintings.

Tips for Religious Sites

- **Respectful dress:** Wear modest clothing when visiting active religious sites
- **Services:** Check times if you wish to attend a service - most welcome visitors
- **Tower climbs:** Book in advance for tower climbs at Westerkerk and Zuiderkerk
- **Photography:** Ask permission before photographing inside religious buildings

Squares & Streets

Amsterdam's squares and streets are the beating heart of the city, where locals and visitors mingle in vibrant public spaces. From the historic **Dam Square** to bustling shopping streets and charming market squares, these areas showcase daily Amsterdam life.



Top Pick

Dam Square

30 minutes - 1 hour No Booking Needed

Map

Dam Square is Amsterdam's main town square and the historical heart of the city, built on the original dam across the Amstel River in the 13th century. The square is surrounded by notable buildings including the *Royal Palace, Nieuwe Kerk, and the National Monument* commemorating WWII victims. This bustling public space hosts events, markets, street performers, and demonstrations. It's a natural meeting point where locals and tourists gather, surrounded by cafes, shops, and the iconic Madame Tussauds. The square's energy captures Amsterdam's vibrant urban culture.



Notable

Leidseplein

1-2 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Leidseplein is Amsterdam's entertainment hub, a lively square buzzing with activity day and night. Surrounded by theaters, clubs, restaurants, and cafes with outdoor terraces, it's the city's premier nightlife destination. Street performers and musicians entertain crowds, while the nearby *Stadsschouwburg theater* and *Melkweg* and *Paradiso* music venues attract culture seekers. The square transforms after dark into a vibrant party scene. The American Hotel's Art Deco café overlooking the square is an Amsterdam institution perfect for people-watching.



Notable

Nine Streets (De Negen Straatjes)

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

The Nine Streets is a charming shopping district consisting of nine picturesque streets connecting the main canals in the Grachtengordel. This area features *vintage boutiques, specialty stores, cafes, and galleries* housed in 17th-century buildings. It's the perfect place to find unique Dutch design, antiques, artisanal goods, and fashion from independent designers. The streets - Reestraat, Hartenstraat, Gasthuismolensteeg, Berenstraat, Wolvenstraat, Oude Spiegelstraat, Runstraat, Huidenstraat, and Wijde Heisteeg - maintain their historic character while offering contemporary shopping experiences.



Optional

Rembrandtplein

30 minutes - 1 hour No Booking Needed

Map

Rembrandtplein is a vibrant square named after the famous Dutch painter, featuring a statue of Rembrandt surrounded by *life-size bronze sculptures* recreating his painting 'The Night Watch'. The square is lined with cafes, bars, and restaurants, making it a popular gathering spot especially in summer when outdoor terraces fill with people. By night, it transforms into a nightlife hotspot with numerous clubs and bars. The square hosts events throughout the year and serves as a connection point between the canal ring and the entertainment district.



Optional

Kalverstraat

1-2 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Kalverstraat is Amsterdam's main shopping street, a bustling pedestrianized avenue running from Dam Square to Muntplein. This commercial thoroughfare features *international chain stores, department stores, and high-street fashion brands*. While heavily tourist-oriented, it's also where locals shop for mainstream fashion and goods. The street dates back to medieval times and contains historic buildings among modern storefronts. Connected to smaller shopping streets like Nieuwendijk and Leidsestraat, it forms the backbone of Amsterdam's retail district.

Tips for Squares & Streets

- **Peak times:** Visit Dam Square early morning to avoid crowds
- **Evening atmosphere:** Leidseplein and Rembrandtplein are best experienced after 8 PM
- **Nine Streets:** Best explored on weekdays when it's less crowded
- **Pickpockets:** Stay vigilant in busy squares, especially Dam Square and markets

Neighborhoods & Districts

Each Amsterdam neighborhood has its own distinct character and charm. From the bohemian **Jordaan** to the trendy **De Pijp**, exploring these districts reveals the authentic soul of the city beyond the tourist center.



Must See

Jordaan

2-4 hours No Booking Needed

Map

The **Jordaan** is Amsterdam's most charming neighborhood, a former working-class area transformed into one of the city's most desirable districts. Its narrow streets and canals are lined with *independent art galleries, antique shops, courtyard gardens, and cozy cafes*. Monday's Noordermarkt flea market and Saturday's organic farmers market draw crowds. The area is perfect for wandering, discovering hidden hofjes (almshouse courtyards), and experiencing authentic Amsterdam life. Famous for its brown cafes and local character, Jordaan epitomizes Amsterdam's gezelligheid (coziness).



Top Pick

De Pijp

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

De Pijp is Amsterdam's Latin Quarter, a vibrant multicultural neighborhood known for its diversity, creativity, and the famous *Albert Cuyp Market* - the largest daily market in Europe. The area features an eclectic mix of boutiques, vintage shops, ethnic restaurants, and trendy bars. Sarphatipark provides green space for relaxation. Once a working-class area, De Pijp has become one of Amsterdam's hippest neighborhoods while maintaining its authentic, unpretentious character. The Heineken Experience brewery tour is located here.



Notable

De Wallen (Red Light District)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed

Map

De Wallen is Amsterdam's oldest and most famous neighborhood, known worldwide as the Red Light District. Beyond its notorious red-lit windows, the area is part of the medieval city center with *historic buildings, canals, and the Oude Kerk*. The district combines Amsterdam's liberal approach to vice with significant cultural heritage. Narrow alleys contain sex shops, cannabis cafes, museums, restaurants, and bars. While it attracts curious tourists, it's also a working neighborhood with residents, businesses, and beautiful architecture deserving respect.



Notable

Amsterdam Noord

2-4 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Amsterdam Noord is the city's creative frontier, accessible by free ferry from Central Station. Once industrial, this area has transformed into a hub for *artists, designers, and innovative cultural spaces*. The former NDSM shipyard now hosts studios, galleries, festivals, and street art. The EYE Film Museum's futuristic architecture dominates the waterfront. Noord offers a grittier, more experimental Amsterdam with beach clubs, food markets, and urban farms. A'DAM Lookout tower provides panoramic views and Europe's highest swing over the city.



Optional

Oud-West

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Oud-West is a trendy neighborhood west of the Jordaan, known for its multicultural atmosphere and foodie scene. The area centers around *Kinkerstraat market, Ten Katemarkt, and the Foodhallen* - a hip indoor food market in a former tram depot. Oud-West features diverse restaurants, craft beer bars, and the beautiful Westerpark. It's more residential and less touristy than central districts, offering authentic local life. The neighborhood attracts young professionals and creatives, maintaining a village feel despite being close to the center.

Tips for Neighborhoods & Districts

- **Jordaan walking:** Get lost in the side streets - that's where you'll find the best hofjes and cafes
- **De Pijp market:** Visit Albert Cuyp Market Monday-Saturday for local food and goods
- **Red Light District:** Be respectful - no photos of workers, and visit with an open mind
- **Noord ferry:** Free ferries run 24/7 from behind Central Station
- **Local experience:** Spend time in residential areas for authentic Amsterdam culture

Parks & Gardens

Amsterdam's green spaces offer peaceful retreats from urban energy. The city's parks range from the expansive **Vondelpark** to intimate gardens, providing spaces for relaxation, recreation, and connecting with nature in the heart of the city.



Must See Book Ahead

Keukenhof Gardens

2-4 hours (plus travel) Book Ahead

Map

Keukenhof, located in Lisse near Amsterdam, is the world's largest flower garden, open only from *mid-March to mid-May*. The 79-acre park showcases over 7 million tulips, daffodils, and hyacinths in spectacular displays. Pavilions feature flower shows and exhibitions. The garden's design changes annually with new themes and arrangements. Visiting during peak bloom in mid-April offers an unforgettable explosion of color. Though touristy, Keukenhof represents Dutch flower-growing heritage at its finest. Book tickets online and arrive early to avoid crowds.



Top Pick

Vondelpark

1-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Vondelpark is Amsterdam's most famous park, a 47-hectare English landscape garden opened in 1865. Named after poet Joost van den Vondel, it's the green heart of the city where locals and tourists gather for *picnics, jogging, cycling, and open-air concerts*. The park features ponds, playgrounds, rose gardens, and winding paths lined with trees. Free concerts and theater performances occur at the open-air theater in summer. Cafes like Blauwe Theehuis offer refreshments. With over 10 million visitors annually, it's one of Europe's most visited parks.



Notable

Hortus Botanicus

1-2 hours No Booking Needed

Map

The **Hortus Botanicus** is one of the world's oldest botanical gardens, founded in 1638 as a medicinal herb garden. This oasis contains over *6,000 plant species* from around the world in themed greenhouses and outdoor gardens. Highlights include the three-climate greenhouse with tropical, subtropical, and desert environments, the butterfly house, and historic palm trees from the 19th century. The garden played a crucial role in spreading coffee and cinnamon cultivation globally. Its cafe overlooks the palm house, creating a tranquil spot in the city center.



Notable

Westerpark

1-2 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Westerpark combines natural beauty with cultural venues in the former Westergasfabriek industrial complex. The 14-hectare park features *meadows, ponds, and wooded areas* perfect for relaxation. The renovated gasworks buildings now house restaurants, cafes, galleries, and event spaces hosting markets, festivals, and concerts. Sunday Market offers vintage goods and food stalls. The park attracts a younger, creative crowd and feels more local than Vondelpark. It's ideal for combining nature with cultural experiences in a laid-back atmosphere.



Optional

Amstelpark

1-2 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Amstelpark is a beautiful landscaped park in Amsterdam-Zuid featuring *rose gardens, a petting zoo, mini-golf, and a historic windmill* . Created for the 1972 Floriade flower exhibition, it showcases excellent horticultural design. The Riekermolen windmill (1636) offers a picturesque setting. Children enjoy the playground and miniature train that circles the park. The Glazen Huis (Glass House) art gallery and restaurant provides cultural programming. Less crowded than Vondelpark, Amstelpark offers a peaceful escape with diverse recreational activities for all ages.

Tips for Parks & Gardens

- **Vondelpark:** Visit on sunny weekends for the best people-watching and free concerts
- **Biking:** Rent a bike to explore larger parks - most have dedicated cycling paths
- **Keukenhof:** Only open 8 weeks in spring - book accommodation and tickets early
- **Picnics:** Pick up supplies at Albert Heijn supermarket before heading to parks
- **Weather:** Parks are best in spring and summer; bring layers as weather changes quickly

Tours & Activities

Experience Amsterdam from different perspectives through **canal cruises, bike tours, and unique experiences**. These activities offer both entertainment and insights into Dutch culture, from traditional to contemporary attractions.



Must See Book Ahead

Canal Cruise

1-2 hours Book Ahead

Canal cruises are quintessential Amsterdam experiences, offering unique perspectives on the city's *UNESCO World Heritage canal ring*. Options range from one-hour sightseeing tours with audio guides to dinner cruises, cocktail boats, and private rentals. Glass-topped boats provide excellent photo opportunities of bridges, canal houses, and landmarks. Evening cruises showcase illuminated bridges. Companies like Blue Boat Company, Stromma, and Lovers offer various options. For something different, try a small electric boat rental or historic wooden boats for intimate experiences navigating Amsterdam's waterways yourself.



Top Pick Book Ahead

Bike Tour

2-6 hours Book Ahead

Bike tours let you experience Amsterdam like a local in the world's most bike-friendly city. Guided tours cover *major attractions, hidden neighborhoods, countryside windmills, and tulip fields*. Options include city highlights tours (3 hours), countryside tours (6 hours), evening tours, and food tours. Companies like Mike's Bike Tours, Yellow Bike, and We Bike Amsterdam offer various routes. Alternatively, rent a bike independently and explore at your own pace. Cycling reveals Amsterdam's character - just follow the rules and watch for trams!



Notable

Heineken Experience

1.5-2 hours Book Ahead

The **Heineken Experience** is an interactive journey through the history of this iconic Dutch beer brand, housed in the original 1867 brewery. The self-guided tour includes *brewing process exhibits, vintage advertisements, and tasting sessions*. Highlights include the stable with original Heineken horses, karaoke booth, and learning to pour the perfect beer. The experience combines corporate museum with entertainment, appealing to beer enthusiasts and casual visitors alike. It concludes with tastings in the rooftop bar overlooking the city. Book online to skip queues.



Notable

A'DAM Lookout & Swing

1-1.5 hours Book Ahead

A'DAM Lookout offers 360-degree panoramic views from the 22nd floor of the A'DAM Tower in Amsterdam Noord. The observation deck features *Europe's highest swing* - 'Over The Edge' - suspended 100 meters above the ground, swinging over the city edge for adrenaline seekers. The tower includes an interactive exhibition about Amsterdam's history, a sky bar, and a revolving restaurant. Reach it via free ferry from Central Station. The contrast between historic city center views and Noord's modern architecture creates spectacular photo opportunities day or night.



Optional

Cheese & Wine Tasting

1-1.5 hours Book Ahead

Cheese and wine tasting experiences showcase Dutch culinary traditions. The Netherlands produces famous cheeses like *Gouda, Edam, and Leyden*. Specialized cheese shops like Reypenaer and Amsterdam Cheese Museum offer guided tastings explaining production methods, aging processes, and flavor profiles. Tours often combine cheese with Dutch wine or jenever (gin). Some include visits to traditional cheese markets in nearby towns like Alkmaar. These experiences provide insights into Dutch dairy culture and make delicious introductions to Netherlands gastronomy beyond typical tourist fare.



Optional

This is Holland

45 minutes - 1 hour Book Ahead

This is Holland is a 5D flight experience that takes visitors on a virtual journey across the Netherlands. The attraction combines *motion seats, wind, mist, and scents* with spectacular aerial footage showcasing Dutch landscapes, from tulip fields to modern architecture. The 9-minute flight flies over windmills, polders, cities, and coastlines, providing an overview of Dutch geography and culture. It's an entertaining, family-friendly introduction to the country, particularly good for short visits or bad weather days. Located near Central Station with other interactive exhibits about Dutch culture.

Tips for Tours & Activities

- **Canal cruises:** Avoid the big tourist boats - smaller companies offer better experiences
- **Book ahead:** Popular tours sell out, especially in high season (April-September)
- **Combo tickets:** Look for combination tickets covering multiple attractions
- **Weather:** Canal cruises are mostly covered but bring layers; bike tours require rain gear
- **Times:** Sunset canal cruises and night bike tours offer magical atmosphere

Day Trips & Excursions

Amsterdam's excellent train connections make numerous Dutch destinations perfect for day trips. Explore **windmills, traditional villages, historic cities, and coastal towns** that showcase Netherlands' diversity beyond the capital.



Top Pick

Zaanse Schans

Half day (3-4 hours) No Booking Needed

Map

Zaanse Schans is an open-air museum preserving traditional Dutch life with *historic windmills, wooden houses, and craft workshops*. Located 15km north of Amsterdam, visitors can tour working windmills producing paint, oil, and mustard, watch clog-making demonstrations, visit a cheese farm, and explore a pewter factory. While touristy, it authentically represents 18th-19th century Zaan region architecture and industry. The scenic village along the Zaan River offers picturesque photo opportunities. Easily reached by train or organized tours, it's perfect for understanding Dutch windmill heritage.



Top Pick

Haarlem

Half to full day No Booking Needed

Map

Haarlem is a charming historic city just 15 minutes from Amsterdam by train. This smaller, more relaxed alternative features a *medieval center, the magnificent Grote Kerk cathedral, and the Frans Hals Museum*. The Grote Markt square is lined with cafes and restaurants. Haarlem offers authentic Dutch city atmosphere without Amsterdam's crowds, with excellent shopping on boutique-filled streets. The Teylers Museum is the Netherlands' oldest museum. Haarlem was home to Frans Hals and influenced Dutch Golden Age painting. It's perfect for those wanting a quieter city experience.



Top Pick

The Hague & Delft

Full day No Booking Needed

Map

The Hague (Den Haag) is the Netherlands' political capital, home to government, royal palaces, and international courts. One hour from Amsterdam, highlights include the *Mauritshuis museum (Vermeer's Girl with a Pearl Earring), Peace Palace, and nearby Scheveningen beach*. Combine with nearby Delft, famous for blue-and-white Delftware pottery. Delft's charming medieval center features canals, the Oude Kerk, Nieuwe Kerk, and Royal Delft pottery factory. Both cities offer distinct character from Amsterdam, showcasing Dutch political heritage and craftsmanship.



Notable

Giethoorn

Full day No Booking Needed

Map

Giethoorn, known as the 'Venice of the North,' is a fairytale village with *no roads - only canals, wooden bridges, and thatched-roof farmhouses*. Located 120km from Amsterdam, transportation is by boat or foot along walking paths. Visitors rent whisper boats to navigate the canals independently or take guided tours. The village's peaceful, timeless atmosphere contrasts sharply with urban Amsterdam. While remote and requiring more travel time, Giethoorn offers unique Dutch countryside beauty. Spring and summer provide the best weather; avoid peak summer weekends when it's crowded.



Notable

Utrecht

Half to full day No Booking Needed

Map

Utrecht is the Netherlands' fourth-largest city, combining medieval history with vibrant university energy. Just 30 minutes from Amsterdam, it features *unique wharf cellars along canals, the Dom Tower, and charming streets*. The Dom Tower offers spectacular views after climbing 465 steps. Utrecht's canals have two levels - street level and lower wharves converted to cafes and restaurants. The city has excellent shopping, museums including the Centraal Museum and Railway Museum, and a compact, walkable center. Less touristy than Amsterdam, Utrecht showcases authentic Dutch city life.



Optional

Volendam & Marken

Half day No Booking Needed

Map

Volendam and **Marken** are traditional fishing villages north of Amsterdam showcasing Dutch heritage. Volendam's harbor is lined with seafood restaurants and shops selling traditional costumes. Marken, a former island, features *green wooden houses and a museum about fishing culture*. While touristy, both villages preserve authentic architecture and traditions. Visitors can try traditional dress for photos, taste smoked eel, and explore the IJsselmeer waterfront. Combined visits take advantage of the ferry connection between villages. Spring and summer offer the best weather for this scenic countryside excursion.

Tips for Day Trips & Excursions

- **Train travel:** Buy NS train tickets online or at stations - most destinations under 1 hour
- **Early start:** Leave early to maximize day trip time and beat crowds
- **Combine destinations:** Hague/Delft or Volendam/Marken work well together
- **OV-chipkaart:** Consider a tourist day pass for unlimited travel
- **Advance planning:** Check train schedules and attraction opening times beforehand

Food & Dining

Real, highly-rated Restaurants in Amsterdam, sourced from Google Places (rating above 4★).



Restaurant Showw★★★★★ 4.9 (202)

1-2 hours

Map

Restaurant Showw is a highly-rated restaurant in Amsterdam, rated 4.9★ from 202 reviews. Located at Gelrestraat 28, 1079 MZ Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 – 1:30 PM, 6:30 – 8:30 PM
- Tuesday: Closed
- Wednesday: Closed
- Thursday: 6:30 – 8:30 PM
- Friday: 6:30 – 8:30 PM
- Saturday: 6:30 – 8:30 PM
- Sunday: 12:00 – 1:30 PM, 6:30 – 8:30 PM



Renvy★★★★★ 4.9 (124)

1-2 hours

Map

Renvy is a highly-rated restaurant in Amsterdam, rated 4.9★ from 124 reviews. Located at Prinsengracht 587, 1016 HT Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Opening Hours

- Monday: Closed
- Tuesday: Closed
- Wednesday: 6:00 – 10:30 PM
- Thursday: 6:00 – 10:30 PM
- Friday: 6:00 – 10:30 PM
- Saturday: 6:00 – 10:30 PM
- Sunday: Closed



Little Buddha Asian restaurent★★★★★ 4.9 (5,156)

1-2 hours

Map

Little Buddha Asian restaurent is a highly-rated restaurant in Amsterdam, rated 4.9★ from 5156 reviews. Located at Halvemaansteeg 18, 1017 CR Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:15 PM – 3:00 AM
- Tuesday: 12:15 PM – 3:00 AM
- Wednesday: 12:15 PM – 3:00 AM
- Thursday: 12:15 PM – 3:00 AM
- Friday: 12:15 PM – 4:00 AM
- Saturday: 12:15 PM – 4:00 AM
- Sunday: 12:15 PM – 3:00 AM



Il Vicolo★★★★★ 4.8 (3,348)

1-2 hours

Map

Il Vicolo is a highly-rated restaurant in Amsterdam, rated 4.8★ from 3348 reviews. Located at Taksteeg 3, 1012 PB Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 5:00 – 9:15 PM
- Tuesday: Closed
- Wednesday: 5:00 – 9:15 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 9:15 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 9:15 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 9:15 PM
- Sunday: 12:00 – 9:15 PM



Florentin brunch★★★★★ 4.8 (7,835)

1-2 hours

Map

Florentin brunch is a highly-rated restaurant in Amsterdam, rated 4.8★ from 7835 reviews. Located at Eerste Sweelinckstraat 20, 1073 CM Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Tuesday: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Wednesday: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Thursday: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Friday: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Saturday: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Sunday: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM



Restaurant 21 (R21)★★★★★ 4.8 (320)

1-2 hours

Map

Restaurant 21 (R21) is a highly-rated restaurant in Amsterdam, rated 4.8★ from 320 reviews. Located at Peperstraat 23, 1011 TZ Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Opening Hours

- Monday: Closed
- Tuesday: 6:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Wednesday: 6:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Thursday: 6:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Friday: 6:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Saturday: 6:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Sunday: Closed



de Silveren Spiegel★★★★★ 4.8 (830)

1-2 hours

Map

de Silveren Spiegel is a highly-rated restaurant in Amsterdam, rated 4.8★ from 830 reviews. Located at Kattengat 4, 1012 SZ Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Opening Hours

- Monday: Closed
- Tuesday: 6:30 – 11:00 PM
- Wednesday: 6:30 – 11:00 PM
- Thursday: 6:30 – 11:00 PM
- Friday: 12:30 – 11:00 PM
- Saturday: 12:30 – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: Closed



De Kas★★★★★ 4.7 (3,651)

1-2 hours

Map

De Kas is a highly-rated restaurant in Amsterdam, rated 4.7★ from 3651 reviews. Located at Kamerlingh Onneslaan 3, 1097 DE Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 – 4:00 PM, 6:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Tuesday: 12:00 – 4:00 PM, 6:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 4:00 PM, 6:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 4:00 PM, 6:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Friday: 12:00 – 4:00 PM, 6:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 4:00 PM, 6:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Sunday: Closed



Restaurant Flore★★★★★ 4.7 (251)

1-2 hours

Map

Restaurant Flore is a highly-rated restaurant in Amsterdam, rated 4.7★ from 251 reviews. Located at Nieuwe Doelenstraat 2-14, 1012 CP Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Opening Hours

- Monday: Closed
- Tuesday: Closed
- Wednesday: 6:30 – 10:00 PM
- Thursday: 6:30 – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 4:00 PM, 6:30 – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 4:00 PM, 6:30 – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: Closed



The Seafood Bar★★★★★ 4.7 (17,840)

1-2 hours

Map

The Seafood Bar is a highly-rated restaurant in Amsterdam, rated 4.7★ from 17840 reviews. Located at Spui 15, 1012 WX Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Tuesday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Sunday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM



Belly Pepper★★★★★ 4.7 (440)

1-2 hours

Map

Belly Pepper is a highly-rated restaurant in Amsterdam, rated 4.7★ from 440 reviews. Located at De Clercqstraat 128, 1052 NP Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Opening Hours

- Monday: Closed
- Tuesday: Closed
- Wednesday: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Thursday: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Friday: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Saturday: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Sunday: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM



MOS★★★★★ 4.7 (905)

1-2 hours

Map

MOS is a highly-rated restaurant in Amsterdam, rated 4.7★ from 905 reviews. Located at IJdok 185, 1013 MM Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Opening Hours

- Monday: Closed
- Tuesday: 6:00 – 10:00 PM
- Wednesday: 6:00 – 10:00 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 2:00 PM, 6:00 – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 2:00 PM, 6:00 – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 2:00 PM, 6:00 – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: Closed



Restaurant Bellezza★★★★★ 4.7 (489)

1-2 hours

Map

Restaurant Bellezza is a highly-rated restaurant in Amsterdam, rated 4.7★ from 489 reviews. Located at Oudezijds Achterburgwal 99, 1012 DD Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 5:45 PM – 1:00 AM
- Tuesday: 5:45 PM – 1:00 AM
- Wednesday: 5:45 PM – 1:00 AM
- Thursday: 5:45 PM – 1:00 AM
- Friday: 5:45 PM – 1:00 AM
- Saturday: 5:45 PM – 1:00 AM
- Sunday: 5:45 PM – 1:00 AM



Brasserie Ambassade★★★★★ 4.7 (1,119)

1-2 hours

Map

Brasserie Ambassade is a highly-rated restaurant in Amsterdam, rated 4.7★ from 1119 reviews. Located at Herengracht 339, 1016 AJ Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 7:00 – 11:00 AM, 12:00 – 3:30 PM, 5:30 – 10:00 PM
- Tuesday: 7:00 – 11:00 AM, 12:00 – 3:30 PM, 5:30 – 10:00 PM
- Wednesday: 7:00 – 11:00 AM, 12:00 – 3:30 PM, 5:30 – 10:00 PM
- Thursday: 7:00 – 11:00 AM, 12:00 – 3:30 PM, 5:30 – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 7:00 – 11:00 AM, 12:00 – 3:30 PM, 5:30 – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 7:00 – 11:00 AM, 12:00 – 3:30 PM, 5:30 – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: 7:00 – 11:00 AM, 12:00 – 3:30 PM, 5:30 – 10:00 PM



Omelegg City Centre★★★★★ 4.6 (6,351)

1-2 hours

Map

Omelegg City Centre is a highly-rated restaurant in Amsterdam, rated 4.6★ from 6351 reviews. Located at Nieuwebrugsteeg 24, 1012 AH Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 7:00 AM – 3:30 PM
- Tuesday: 7:00 AM – 3:30 PM
- Wednesday: 7:00 AM – 3:30 PM
- Thursday: 7:00 AM – 3:30 PM
- Friday: 7:00 AM – 3:30 PM
- Saturday: 8:00 AM – 3:30 PM
- Sunday: 8:00 AM – 3:30 PM

Practical Information

Best Time to Visit Amsterdam

Spring (April-May): Peak season with *tulips in bloom, especially at Keukenhof Gardens*. King's Day (April 27) transforms the city into an orange celebration. Weather is mild but unpredictable. Book accommodations months ahead.

Summer (June-August): Warmest weather with long daylight hours, perfect for *canal cruises and outdoor dining*. Peak tourist season means crowds and higher prices. Festivals include Grachtenfestival (classical music) and Amsterdam Dance Event.

Fall (September-October): Shoulder season with fewer crowds, pleasant weather, and beautiful autumn colors in parks. Amsterdam Dance Event (October) attracts electronic music fans. Good value for accommodations.

Winter (November-March): Cold and often rainy but fewer tourists, lower prices, and cozy atmosphere in brown cafes. Museums are less crowded. Amsterdam Light Festival (December-January) illuminates canals. Some attractions have reduced hours.

Tip: Avoid major holidays and weekends for better prices and smaller crowds. Weather is unpredictable year-round - always bring layers and rain gear.

Getting Around Amsterdam

Walking: Amsterdam's compact center is easily walkable. Most major attractions are within *20-30 minutes walking distance*. Watch for bikes and trams!

Cycling: The most authentic way to explore. Rent bikes from numerous shops (€10-15/day). Follow cycling rules, use bike lanes, and lock bikes securely. Watch for tram tracks.

Public Transport: Extensive tram, bus, and metro network operated by GVB. Use an *OV-chipkaart* (rechargeable card) or purchase day passes (€8.50-€39 for 1-7 days). Trams cover most tourist areas. Download the GVB app for route planning.

From Schiphol Airport: Trains to Amsterdam Centraal (15-20 minutes, €5-6), buses, and taxis available. Airport Express Bus 397 connects to major hotels.

Canal Transport: Free ferries from Central Station to Noord. Water taxis and rental boats available but expensive for transport.

Taxis & Ride-sharing: Expensive compared to public transport. Uber operates in Amsterdam. Official taxis have blue license plates.

Important: Don't walk in bike lanes (red pavement) - cyclists have priority and won't slow down!

✈ Airport Transfer

Amsterdam Airport Schiphol (AMS) to city center:

- **Train (NS Intercity):** Direct trains to Amsterdam Centraal in 15-20 minutes, running every few minutes, The NS 2026 fare table lists a standard one-way fare of about €5.40 for short journeys; check the journey planner for the exact fare.
- **Metro/Bus (Amsterdam Airport Express 397):** Bus to Museum Quarter and city center in 30-40 minutes, about €6.50 one-way
- **Taxi:** Around 20-30 minutes to city center depending on traffic, typically €45-55
- **Private Transfer:** Pre-booked door-to-door service in 25-30 minutes, roughly €70-90 for up to 4 passengers

Tourist Passes

I amsterdam City Card

The **I amsterdam City Card** offers *The Rijksmuseum is included, but the Van Gogh Museum and Anne Frank House are not.*, unlimited public transport, free canal cruise, and discounts at attractions, restaurants, and shops. Available for 24, 48, 72, 96, or 120 hours Current listed prices are €67–€140 for 24–120 hours. Best value if visiting multiple museums and using public transport extensively. Book online for instant digital delivery.

www.iamsterdam.com

Museumkaart (Museum Card)

The **Museumkaart** provides *free or discounted entry to over 400 museums nationwide* for one year (€70 adults, €35.50 youth). Pays for itself after 3-4 museum visits. Ideal for culture enthusiasts planning extended Netherlands travel. Note: Some museums require online reservations even with the card. First-time buyers pay €5 temporary card fee, receiving permanent card by mail.

www.museumkaart.nl

GVB Day Passes

GVB Day Passes offer *unlimited tram, bus, and metro travel* within Amsterdam for 1-7 days In 2026, GVB day and multi-day tickets cost €10 for 1 day and €16–€43 for 2–7 days. More economical than individual tickets if making 3+ journeys daily. Available at GVB ticket offices, machines, and online. Perfect for exploring beyond walking distance. Night buses require no additional fee with valid day pass.

reisproducten.gvb.nl

Holland Pass

Choose from small, medium, or large passes with 'tickets' redeemable at 100+ attractions. Includes canal cruises and Keukenhof entry. Best for first-time visitors wanting flexibility across multiple cities. More economical than individual tickets if used strategically.

hollandpass.com