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An Insider's Guide to Where to Eat, Stay & Play in Amsterdam

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Travel Advisor

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Image courtesy of Pulitzer Amsterdam

One of the best parts of Amsterdam is its small size. You can cover a lot of ground, and really experience the city, in a short amount of time. Plus, you can basically walk everywhere. Amsterdam exudes a relaxed vibe. Spending the afternoon on a picnic blanket in Vondelpark is a brilliant use of one's time. This is not the city for planning every hour. Here, spontaneity reigns.

Marvel at the colorful canal houses, most of which are a bit crooked: the houses were built atop wooden beams plunged into mud. Over time, the wood eroded, and the houses tilted. Everyone rides bikes. Flowers and trees line the charming canals. There's a pervasive, pleasant coziness in the air.

Below is an overview of where to stay, what to do and where to eat in the Netherlands' capital city. The city is small and mighty, and this guide is just a starting point. When you connect with me, we'll work together to plan a trip according to your personal preferences. If a packed itinerary is what you're after, we can totally arrange that. And if you want a few planned activities or reservations here and there, interspersed among plenty of empty space, I'm here for you. Or, maybe you just want your hotel booked.

Need to know:

Currency: €, Euro (EUR)

Languages: Dutch

Airport: Amsterdam Airport Schiphol (AMS)

Transportation: The city's public transportation is excellent: there are trams, trains, a metro and more. Stick to that, rent a bike or walk. Avoid taking a car when you can.

Best time to visit: Spring and fall are the sweet spots. On April 27, the Netherlands celebrates Koningsdag, or King's Day, and Amsterdam becomes one big party. It can get quite hot in the summer, and AC is sometimes sparse. But the city really comes alive during Pride (the first weekend of August). And don't rule out winter: it's cozy, less expensive and less crowded. Plus, Amsterdam weather is fickle. One moment it's dreary, and then a few minutes later, the sun inevitably reappears.

Ideal length of stay: Four nights is the sweet spot. Extend your trip by a few days if you want to take a few day trips to the countryside or other Dutch towns. The Netherlands is small, so you can easily use Amsterdam as a homebase for exploring the rest of the country.

Signature dishes: bitterballen (deep-fried meatballs paired with mustard), pannenkoeken (thin pancakes), ontbijtkoek (ginger cake), stroopwafels (thin caramely waffles), broodje haring (herring sandwich)

Key phrases: hallo (hello), alstublieft (please, *als-too-bleeft*), dankjewel (thank you, *dank-yuh-vel*), how are you (hoe gaat het met u, *hoo khaht ut meht ew*), proost (cheers, *prohst*)

Dress code: colorful prints and patterns or a sleek monochromatic ensemble — keep it casual, but keep it chic

Special considerations: Amsterdam is an open city, and some of the rules and regulations may be more lax than what people are used to. Note that “coffee shops” are in fact cannabis shops, while “cafés” are where to go to get your morning cuppa.

Where to stay in Amsterdam



Images courtesy of De L'Europe Amsterdam

De L'Europe Amsterdam: Sophisticated and exceptionally tasteful, with a fine collection of Dutch artwork and the well-placed pop of color. Fora's VIP partner perks include \$100 food / beverage credit, breakfast daily, an upgrade and extended check-in/out.

Pulitzer Amsterdam: An elegant, five-star stay composed of 25 canal houses from the 17th- and 18th centuries. Fora's VIP partner perks include \$100 food / beverage credit, breakfast daily, an upgrade and extended check-in/out.

The Dylan Amsterdam: Discreet, tasteful luxury with excellent gastronomy and clean, stylish rooms. Connect with me to learn how I can level up your stay.

The Hoxton, Amsterdam & The Hoxton, Lloyd Amsterdam: Hip and cool, with a buzzy local vibe. Fora's partner perks include exclusive rates, a welcome amenity and an upgrade.

Kimpton de Witt Amsterdam: Playful and contemporary, with a boutique vibe and eclectic art. Fora's IHG Luxury & Lifestyle partner perks include \$100 hotel credit, welcome amenities, breakfast daily, an upgrade and late check-out.

Andaz Amsterdam Prinsengracht: Stay here for a playful Dutch aesthetic in a former public library. Book with me to unlock VIP Hyatt Privé partner perks, including \$100 hotel credit, a welcome amenity, breakfast daily, an upgrade and early check-in.

Sofitel Legend The Grand Amsterdam: An elegantly restored 15th-century convent with a French flair. Fora's VIP Accor STEP partner perks include hotel credit, a welcome amenity, breakfast daily, an upgrade and extended check-in/out.

Pillows Grand Boutique Hotel Maurits at the Park: A boutique newcomer with a tranquil aesthetic and five-star taste. Fora's SLH withIN partner perks include \$50 hotel credit, breakfast daily, an upgrade and extended check-in/out.

Conservatorium Hotel Amsterdam: A regal stay neighboring the city's best museums. Book with me to unlock \$100 hotel credit, breakfast daily, an upgrade and extended check-in/out.

What to do in Amsterdam



Image courtesy of Pulitzer Amsterdam

Much of Amsterdam's allure lies in its laid-back, relaxed vibe. You won't want a packed itinerary. Instead, allow plenty of time for wandering around the city's charming, colorful streets. De 9 Straatjes, or Nine Streets, is a lovely district brimming with local boutiques and cafés. The boho De Pijp neighborhood is youthful and hip. Explore its vibrant Albert Cuypmarkt, where local artisans sell produce, clothes, flowers, Dutch treats and more. (With over 250 stalls, the market is one of Europe's largest.)

Amsterdam has an excellent museum scene. Several of the cities are located in Museumplein, a cultural hub centered on a pleasant park where museumgoers can picnic in between visits. (The sprawling Vondelpark, a sprawling green oasis, is also nearby.) The Van Gogh Museum displays both famous and lesser-known works by the artist, all housed within a sleek, modern building. Head to the Rijksmuseum, the Netherlands' national museum, to see work created by Dutch artists from 1200 A.D. up to the present day. The museum is akin to a mini MET, and also shows pieces beyond paintings. Also in Museumplein are the Stedelijk Museum and the Moco Museum, both hubs for modern, contemporary art. (The latter has a uniquely great exhibition on NFTs.) If you're really into Van Gogh, consider an excursion to Otterlo, in the

Dutch countryside about 90 minutes outside of Amsterdam, where you'll find the intimate Kröller-Müller Museum. It boasts the world's second-largest Van Gogh art collection, complete with paintings and drawings, plus a delightful sculpture garden.

As mentioned, Amsterdam allows for spontaneity and relatively few plans. But you should plan ahead to visit the Anne Frank House. Tickets are available 30 days in advance — and sell out quickly. Try to go on a weekday and at non-peak times, when it will be less crowded.

See the city's beauty — the charmingly crooked, colorful townhomes; the houseboats bedecked with hanging pots of flowers — from its impressive network of canals. Those Dam Boat Guys is a fun and casual canal tour option, but there are numerous outlets to choose from (which I can help you with), whether you're looking for a swanky private dinner cruise or one more aimed at learning the city's history.

Where to eat in Amsterdam



Image courtesy of The Dylan Amsterdam

The Avocado Show has a couple locations in Amsterdam, and serves fun comfort dishes featuring its eponymous fruit: avo fries, bowls and burgers, avo ice cream. Delight in the elevated, garden-to-table prix-fixe menu at De Kas, a chic and airy space with onsite gardens and hydroponic greenhouses. Sister restaurants Collins (brunch and dinner) and Little Collins (just brunch) are hip local haunts with tight, curated menus. For a sweet, feminine all-day café moment, head to the brick-walled Ree 7, and for a cool, Nordic-chic coffee moment, Wandu Café is an excellent choice. Also a coffee must is Uncommon Café whose clean, soothing aesthetic and beautiful handcrafted ceramics are reason enough to visit.

Vuurtoreneiland, located on a tiny island just outside the city, is a glass-walled, sleek restaurant that offers a hyper-local tasting menu. In Amsterdam proper, hotel De L'Europe's two-Michelin-Starred Restaurant Flore excels at nourishing vegetable-forward cuisine composed of seasonal, local, sustainable and organic ingredients. The hotel's bar, Freddy's, is also not to be missed. It's a fun local hang-out named after Alfred "Freddy" Heineken. For additional farm-to-table, meticulously sourced cuisine, Kaagman & Kortekaas is a cool, casual option. Head to Oriole, a plant-filled bistro with a leafy garden courtyard, for Mediterranean-inspired fare. The swanky Nazka is great for modern Peruvian in a playful, cheery space, while SAAM Restaurant is a must for contemporary South African paired with a masterful wine list.

Enjoy artisanal, out-of-this-world cocktails at Bar Brasserie OCCO, located within The Dylan hotel. Another excellent spot for cocktails is Pulitzer Bar, found within the city's Pulitzer hotel.

This may be information overload, but that's where I come in. Above is just a taste of all that Amsterdam offers. Connect with me for a tailored trip. I'll work to understand your vibe and what you're after, and design your dream Amsterdam getaway, complete with VIP perks and priority status at the city's best hotels.

Get in touch with Gregory

Reach out for travel inspiration, hotel bookings or customized itineraries.

Please provide some details about your trip.

You can expect a response from Gregory within 1–2 business days. You'll also be subscribed to our traveler newsletter (you can unsubscribe at any time).

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by Fiona