

Amsterdam Recommendations

This document was originally created by Marshall Mawson. I have edited & added to this document.

★ = must do/highly recommend

What to bring 📦

- **Raincoat:** This is a must. It doesn't rain in the Netherlands as much as people say (in fact, it rains about the same in Boston). That said, it will almost certainly rain during your trip and having the proper gear will ensure a more pleasant experience.
- **Footwear:** Bring comfortable shoes. If you aren't walking, you're biking. It's vital to have comfortable shoes to get around Amsterdam. If you can, bring something waterproof. The Dutch have notoriously narrow staircases and it rains often.
- **Layers:** Bring lots of layers. Dutch weather is notoriously unpredictable even in the summer. Layers are key to making sure you're at a comfortable temperature while exploring the city.
- **Converters:** You'll need a standard EU converter that looks like the one below. You may need different types of converters if you are planning on traveling to other countries before/afterwards. For example, Italy, Ireland & the UK have different plugs.



- **Power bank:** This is one of the most beautiful places in the world! As such, you'll be taking lots of photos which drains your battery. There aren't many convenient places to charge in the city that I'm aware of. A power bank lets you keep exploring with the anxiety of being stranded in a foreign city.

- **Apps:** Uber, Bolt(rideshare), Google Maps, Google Translate, Uber Eats, + eSIM provider (see below)
- **SIM:** DO NOT buy an international plan with your US carrier. It's a complete waste of money. Your phone is likely compatible with eSIMs, which means you can data for [a whole lot cheaper](#). You can wait until you arrive to download and set up a plan if you'd like. If you have an older phone, we can get a prepaid SIM card shipped to the house for free, just let us know in advance as it takes about 1-2 business days to arrive.
- **Cash:** The Netherlands uses Euros. I don't recommend trying to find Euros before you fly here. In fact, you probably won't need them at all. Simply use your American credit card and decline the conversion when asked on the machine so your card is charged in Euros. Make sure your credit card has 0 foreign transaction fees! I can probably count on one hand the amount of times I have needed cash here since moving, but it doesn't hurt to have some pocket change (40 euros or so) in case you see something at a market and you want to avoid a card fee.
- **Overpacking:** Don't go overboard. You may want to take things back home with you. If you forget any essentials you can always pick them up at a local grocery store.

Getting around

- ★ **Bike rental:** the Amsterdam way! Amsterdam is best explored by bike (even in the rain as the locals do)! The bike infrastructure is amazing, but be careful to stay to the right, pay attention to the separate bike lane traffic lights, and yield if you have upside down triangles on your bike lane ("if the shark's teeth are biting you, you have to yield"). There are lots of bike stores to rent bikes from, and most hotels also rent bikes. Usually the daily rate is about €12-17. Make sure to ask for a bike with a hand brake. The default braking mechanism in the Netherlands is to pedal backwards. Bikes with hand brakes are more expensive but worth the cost. Gears are nice too, but not necessary. It's all flat (other than small bridges over the canals).
- **Trams/metro:** Clean, easy to navigate, and many come every 10 mins 24/7 (or replaced by a night bus from about 1-5am). You can use **apple/google pay** (only Visa and Mastercard, not AmEx) to **tap on and off** the trams, metro, and trains (make sure to tap off before you get off otherwise you'll get charged about 20 euros for the maximum pass). The 9292 app is the most accurate for timetables but Google Maps will suffice for the area. ETAs are listed at the tram stops. If you have an iAmsterdam card you can use that to pay for the metro (more details later).
- **Trains:** There's also a great train network in Europe & within the Netherlands. If you're taking a train, be mindful of the silent cars. They will have signs on the doors/glass that indicate that you shouldn't talk.
- **Airport:** You can use the trains to get to/from the airport. Our house is about a 15ish minute walk from the central station, and the train costs about 5 euros. Alternatively, you can take rideshare for about 30 euros. Download Bolt if you intend to do this option so you can compare prices with Uber.

- **Walking:** don't walk in / or even step in the bike lane, even though a lot of them look like sidewalks! ("red you're dead" is the phrase for the usually red color of the bike lanes) and you should just always assume bikes have the right of way, even if they don't. Don't expect them to stop for you (or wait for them) even if you have a crosswalk. You need to commit to walking, and then they'll stop or go around you. Bikes > pedestrians/cars. Also, be mindful of dogshit. The Dutch aren't great at picking it up 🙄.
- **Rideshare:** You probably won't need this at all unless you prefer to take it from the airport with your belongings. Rideshare can be unreliable within the city as it's more bike/pedestrian friendly than car friendly. Uber/Bolt do work if you need them in a pinch. It's important to note that even if it rains, the Dutch just power through it. You will see them biking/walking in the rain, often without any raincoat or umbrella at all.

Tours 🗺️

- ★ **Boat tour of the canals** - An excellent way to see the city! Choose one of the smaller boats rather than the big touristy ones. They tend to pick up very close to our house. There are lots of boat companies as well, like [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#). Just depends on what you're looking for. Renting your own is great (e.g. [Mokumboot](#) or [Eco Boats](#)), but only for the adventurous. They are fairly easy to drive and the max speed in the canals is very slow (around 6kph).
- **Bike tour** - There are 3 highly rated bike tour companies. Generally, these tours offer bike rentals for €10ish extra. Private tours are also available from all providers.
 - [We Bike Amsterdam](#)
 - City bike tour €35 (3 hours): Hidden gems & secret courtyards, canal district, Jordaan neighborhood, Vondelpark, National Museums, Anne Frank House, Inside stories and tips, and much more
 - Countryside tour €40 (4 hours): Scenic landscapes, dams & dikes, the villages Durgerdam and Ransdorp, a windmill, cows, sheep, birds and more Dutch wildlife.
 - [Bill's Bike Tours](#)
 - Bill offers several different types of tours that are more beginner friendly, including "safest bike tour in Amsterdam" at 2 hours, "Bill's expat bike tour", and "Bike with Bill and Puppy Herman."
 - [Mike's Bike Tours Amsterdam](#)
 - Mike's is the only e-bike tour on the list which is perfect if you want to enjoy the city on two wheels but don't feel like your legs are up to the task of 3+ hours of biking. They have plenty of other tours including City Highlights, Urban Adventures, and Countryside (long/regular).
- **Walking tour** - [free walking tours](#) are popular. They request tips as that's how they are able to offer them for "free." Pick up some Euros before embarking on one of these 😊 (though it might be modern enough where they accept venmo/cash app or some other type of digital payment).
 - [Hit the bricks](#) (from the same folks as Those Dam Boat Guys) is brand new and supposed to be a fantastic option for a walking tour.

- [Freedom Tours](#) is an alternative to the [free walking tours](#). It's basically identical but with a smaller booking fee.

Parks

If you have a bike, I'd recommend doing a little tour of the 3 parks below (Westerpark -> Rembrandtpark -> Vondelpark). If you just pick one, go to Vondelpark.

- ★ **Vondelpark** - a big, fun park. Busier, more of the party park. Can sit out with a blanket and drinks and picnic and people watch, or stop at one of the bars/food places in the park. [Proeflokaal 't Blauwe Theehuis](#) has a good selection of the Amsterdam craft beers from Brouwerij 't IJ plus food and other drinks. There are a few other good places to get food and drinks in the park (e.g. [De Vondeltuין](#) at the end of the park).
- **Westerpark** - Really big, lots of options for food and drinks concentrated in the middle. Also, the northwest corner of the park is all these really cool tiny homes with yards that people have as an escape from their apartment. You can walk through there and check them out; it's huge. For drinks/food: [Brouwerij Troost](#) or Pacific are nice, there's also an arcade bar (TonTon Club) and a chill seafood + gin restaurant (Mossel en Gin) among other stuff close by
- **Rembrandtpark** - big and woodsy, not crowded, nice to check out between Vondelpark and Westerpak.
- Feel free to bike out to any small park in Amsterdam! The crowded parks like Vondelpark are stunning and worth a visit, but locals flock to the smaller parks for peace and quiet.

Markets

- ★ [Noordermarkt](#) in Jordaan (**Saturdays/Mondays only**) - great cheese, bread/croissants, seafood, and also vintage stuff. Tons of clothing. If you visit on Monday, you should also stroll down the [Westerstraat market](#) which is right next door. You'll see lots of fabrics, small souvenirs, food items, and more.



- [Albert Cuyp Markt](#) - daily market in De Pijp. Big and busy (they have claimed to be the largest street market in Europe or something). Decent food options, especially if you want to try some classically Dutch food without a high sticker price (esp. [Stroopwafel](#)). Worth checking out



- **Bloemenmarkt:** I have to mention this as it's on every Amsterdam blog. It's the "world's only floating flower market." It's a bit of a gimmick but it's a pretty area if you're walking by.

Music 🎵

Amsterdam has a vibrant music scene! You should check the calendar for various music venues to see if there are any concerts you would like to see while you are in town. Here are a few nearby venues. In general, concerts here are *a lot* cheaper than in the US.

- [Waterhole](#) is a live music bar in the center with very late night music - open until 3AM/4AM every day.
- [Bourbon Street](#) is a late night live jazz/blues/soul bar open until 4am/5am every single day.
- [Melkweg](#) is a live music venue hosting more well known acts late into the night. Definitely worth checking out their calendar.
- [The Concertgebouw](#) is a famous concert hall (they even have a tram stop dedicated to them!). This concert hall has 9K+ reviews and 4.8 stars making it a "must visit" for those who love orchestral or chamber music. They also occasionally host more mainstream artists of other genres as well.
- [The Cave Rock Club](#) is an underground pub for heavy metal and rock music. Expect live music on Fridays and Saturdays late into the night
- [Paradiso](#) is a unique converted church turned theater/ concert hall playing all genres of music.
- [The Ziggo Dome](#) hosts big name artists like Taylor Swift and the like. Be sure to check their schedule before your visit. It's a lot cheaper than concerts in the US (a pint of beer is €7.50 instead of \$23.50)
- [Cafe Pianist](#) - located in Amsterdam West, a typical Dutch style bar with live music most days of the week!
- [Cafe Leentje](#) is a young person's party spot. They have gimmicks and games like rolling dice for free beer on Thursdays. You can expect classic cocktails, DJs, and late nights.
- [AFAS Live](#) is a large concert venue with recognizable names like Lizzy Mcalpine or Glass Animals.

- [Mulligans Irish Music Bar](#) is a fantastic Irish bar in the center with live music you'd expect to find in an Irish pub.
- [Muziekgebouw](#) is another large venue like Concertgebouw which is more of a theater. Superb for things like Opera/classical music

Comedy 🎭

- [Boom Chicago](#) is a fantastic improv comedy club just a few steps away (still in Jordaan). Their sets are in English so you can laugh along!
- [Comedy Cafe](#) is also just a 20 minute walk just north of Jordaan. They offer stand up, open mic, and other forms of comedy. They also have over 1k reviews, 4.6+ stars and plenty of acts in English

Sports ⚽

- The Dutch aren't that into sports, but people do watch soccer here (they call it football here, or voetbal in Dutch). [AJAX](#) is the team representing Amsterdam. Securing tickets can be a bit complicated without a Dutch bank account, so let me know if you want to go. The subreddit cautions against using Stubhub/Viagogo and other resellers since you can run into complications at the stadium. Tickets are *very* cheap compared to US sporting events, though sometimes it's hard to acquire tickets. The first game we went to was €50/ticket to sit 2 rows away from the field.
- If that's too expensive, check out a baseball/softball game for free! Not the most popular activity here but you can't beat free! Here are the [Amsterdam Pirates](#)

Museums 🏛️

Most of the famous museums are around the same area at [Museumplein](#). If you think you'll go to a lot of museums, you can order a Museumkaart for €75/year (€39 for children 0-18). (You do need to add a picture, pay with a Dutch bank, and get it sent to a Dutch address at least 5 days in advance, so I can do it for you if you want). Most museum entrance fees are ~€22-25. You can book [500 museums](#) for free with the Museumkaart. You'll also see advertisements for the [Amsterdam City Card](#) but it's a bit expensive for what you get.

- ★ **Rijksmuseum** - huge classical art museum, must book tickets ahead of time, but usually there's plenty of openings not too far in advance (although these days, looks like you need to book at least a few days in advance)
- ★ **Van Gogh museum** - It's a cool museum, but busy. Must book tickets ahead of time, and usually best to book a few weeks in advance. Fantastic audio tour that accompanies the museum.
- **Stedelijk museum** - modern art, pretty interesting. Don't need to book tickets in advance
- **Moco museum** - modern art with a banksy exhibit.
- ★ **Anne Frank house** (does not work with Museumkaart) - must book [tickets](#) ~4 weeks or further in advance (tickets are released on Tuesdays at 10am CET for up to 6 weeks

in advance. If you want a morning time, best to be on the site 6 weeks in advance at 10am). They also have evening times. It's crowded but well done. It only takes ~45 mins to 1 hour to go through

- **Amsterdam Cheese Museum:** Small museum in Jordaan along the Prinsengracht near the Anne Frank house. Features the history of cheese making, tastings, and the opportunity to buy some local cheese.
- **Museum of the Canals:** Nearby in the canal belt, you'll find a history of the canals in Amsterdam. There are films and interactive exhibits with audio.
- **Royal Palace Amsterdam:** Right in the center of Dam Square you'll spot the Royal Palace. It is open to visitors during the week, but double check to make sure there are no events going on before you plan your trip there. There is a museum inside which is supposed to be excellent.
- **Fabrique des Lumieres.** While this exhibit did not originate in Amsterdam, it's become very popular here, and gives you a good excuse to visit Westerpark. It's a digital art exhibit using projectors to make an immersive art experience, allowing you to "walk through" the art.
- **NEMO Science Museum:** Great for kids, lots of interactive exhibits. Giant boat-like building near Amsterdam Centraal.
- **Het Scheepvaartmuseum:** Large maritime museum, virtual voyages, replica of an 18th century merchant ship.
- **Micropia:** If you're into gross stuff, visit this contemporary museum with interactive exhibits on microorganisms.
- [House of Bols Genever Experience](#) - not exactly a museum, but it's in Museumplein. You get a little tour/background on jenever (Dutch precursor to gin) and a cocktail. It's not a bad deal.
- [Our lord in the attic museum](#) (near the red light district) - Catholicism was banned in the Netherlands in the 1500s, so people created churches in otherwise normal looking houses.
- **Do not go to Ripley's Believe it or Not, Body Worlds, or any other touristy garbage museum chain that you can find in any major city in the western world.**
Amsterdam has some of the best museums in the world, so just avoid the tourist traps if museums are your thing.

Coffee Shops ☞

In Amsterdam, coffee shops are not where you buy coffee. They are cannabis stores. If you are interested in purchasing coffee, search for "cafe." We do have a fancy coffee machine that produces tons of hot/cold beverages. Feel free to take some coffee and sit by the canal if you want to save a few euros! If you're interested in purchasing cannabis, you'll find some more information below.

Firstly, THC extract is banned in the Netherlands so there's no gummies, vape, etc. Only joints, loose weed, and edibles (like space cakes). Edibles are labeled differently than the US. They're often listed like "150MG" or "150MG THC" which looks absurd to a US viewer. Since they aren't

using extracts, 150MG just means they used 1.5G of flower for the edible, not actually 150MG of pure THC (which would be a ton).

Secondly, beware of Cali imports. A lot of it is just lemon cherry gelato/runtz repackaged for 2x the price. It's not a complete scam if you know what you're buying, but it's very expensive for what it is. If you want to know the menu before you go somewhere, look [here](#). Dutch law prevents the coffee shops from advertising their menus online, so you have to go there.

- **Paradox:** The neighborhood shop here in Jordaan. It's fairly inexpensive with a small menu. They have a space cake too.
- **Coffeeshop 137 (now 7th heaven):** Probably the highest quality shop nearby. Great menu Dutch/Cali, fair prices. Has everything you need.
- **Boerejongens:** Known for their space cakes. "Budtenders" serve you in suits. A lot of Dutch folks like this place even though it appears touristy.
- **Family First:** Best place for Cali imports. A little pricier for Dutch but you know you're getting high quality flower.
- **Terps army:** Probably the highest rated late night shop in the center. Large menu, a little sativa/import dominant but you can find something that'll suit your fancy.
- **Be cautious with coffee shops towards the center. There are a few tourist traps that draw large crowds, like The Otherside, Kadinsky, Bulldog, et al.**

Smart Shops 🍄

Shrooms have been banned since 2014, but you can still get psychedelic truffles at "smart shops." They have many different strains/strengths so be sure to discuss what you're looking for with the shop staff. They also typically offer packs for microdosing if you need a boost of energy/productivity. The best shops as far as I know are as follows: [Kokopelli](#), [When Nature Calls](#), and [Smartshop House of Smart Amsterdam](#) (formerly Azarius).

Dutch Food & Drink 🍟

The Dutch aren't exactly known for their food – however there are plenty of amazing food options in Amsterdam. Here are some things you should try during your visit.

- **Fries:** The Dutch love fries. Many Dutchies consider french fries to be a whole meal! The most popular fry spot (due to TikTok) is [Fabel Friet](#) in [De 9 Straatjes](#). It's a decent spot, but there are plenty just like it that don't have a massive line. Many Dutchies get their fries with Frietsaus (sorta like mayo) and onions. We recommend [Heertje friet](#) close by in the canal belt. Make sure to get a beer and enjoy your fries by the canal 😊



- **Herring:** (Broodje Haring in Dutch for the bread version) A dutch classic! You can try any version of this meal, but pickled herring is everywhere here. The street food version usually includes diced onions and pickles. You can find this in the Albert Cuyp market, or the markets near Foodhallen in Oud West.



- **Bitterballen:** A delicious little fried meat snack often served with a mustard based dip. You can find these at many of the brown bars in Jordaan, as well as other places like FEBO. There are lots of other croquettes that you will see that are very similar with different fillings that I assume are somewhat similar (haven't tried since I don't eat meat, but look for kroketten and frikandellen on the menus if you don't see bitterballen).



- ★ **Stroopwafel:** A Dutch classic! Head to Rudi's for this one to get the original style/flavor. Don't fall for any TikTok/tourist traps!



- **Gouda:** Try some of this classic Dutch cheese while you're here!

- **Poffertjes:** Fluffy Dutch pancakes served with powdered sugar. You can find these at most street markets around Amsterdam. There are also plenty of dedicated pancake restaurants that'll have these on the menu.



- **Drop:** This is the Dutch version of liquorice. There are tons of different versions of drop, but the Dutch love drop and you'll see it prominently displayed in many candy stores.
- **Kibbeling:** You'll find this street food at many markets (Dappermarkt, Ten Katemarkt, et al). It's essentially the Dutch take on Fish & Chips. Tiny pieces of fried cod served with something approximating a tartar sauce.
- **Jenever:** Jenever is the precursor to gin. It is spelled both jenever and genever (pronounced ye-NAY-vuh in Dutch). This spirit, distilled from juniper berries, has a malty flavor similar to whisky and was traditionally used for medicinal purposes before becoming one of the country's signature drinks. Served in a tulip-shaped glass, it's often served alongside a beer, a combination known as a *kopstootje*, meaning headbutt.



- **Beer:** Dutch beer mostly consists of pale lagers like most of Europe, the most famous of which is Heineken. The [Heineken Experience](#) is extremely touristy and you should probably avoid it. There are plenty of other great distilleries/breweries to visit as mentioned in this guide. The most popular mass-market beer around here is Amstel blond/pilsner. If you're into craft beer, check out [this guide](#).
- **Surinamese food:** The Dutch had many colonies back in the day, and Amsterdam is a very cosmopolitan city. You can find fantastic food from all over the world, and we *highly* recommend you explore options outside of traditionally Dutch food. While there are places you can go to get fantastic examples of Dutch food like [The Pantry](#) or [Moeders](#) (mothers in Dutch), these places are just for tourists/expats to try local cuisine and you won't find any Dutchies there. Dutchies love Surinamese food though! Check out [Simz Exotic Food Indian & Surinaams Specialiteit](#) for quick eats and [Warung Swietie Lelydorp](#) in De Pijp for a sit down place. [The Dutch have imported food from all over](#), so feel free to branch out past Suriname too. Indian/Thai/Indonesian food can also be found everywhere, and it's very high quality.



Neighborhoods + Bars/Restaurants/Things to do 🧑

- **Jordaan (our neck of the woods).** You can read about the Jordaan neighborhood [here](#) from the iAmsterdam website. They do a nice write-up.
 - ★ **Brown bar:** a classic dutch bar dating back to the 1600s. These are littered throughout Jordaan, as this area used to be the entertainment mecca for the working class. We recommend [Cafe Chris \(pictured below, interior\)](#), or [Cafe t'Smalle](#) (pictured below, water) when the weather's nice. Other great options are

[Cafe de Tuin](#) and [Café De Dokter](#) (a bit further away towards the center but worth the trip).



- [Waterkant](#) is a fun bar on the water that gets super busy when it's nice out
- [Café Restaurant De Reiger](#) - old school restaurant / bar, good ribs
- [Breadwinner](#) - Bagels - really good sourdough bagels (best in Amsterdam).
- [Kafenion](#) is great for coffee. 3k reviews and 4.9 stars speaks for itself. It's around the corner from our home. Ask Sarah to tell you about it 😊
- [Bar Pif](#) is a cocktail/wine bar serving up natural wines from [Rebel Wines](#). They also have nice snacks like oysters and satay.
- [Yan Yan Dumplings](#) are just fantastic. Great for lunch or dinner, quick and delicious!

- [Cafe Sonneveld](#): If you get one of those coveted outdoor seats overlooking the canal you have to camp out there the rest of the day. It's just gorgeous! Open 11-11 every day.
- [Nu Koffie](#) has amazing sandwiches and coffee, great for a quick bite before heading out.
- [Chok Dee](#) has fantastic Thai food and usually not too busy
- [Tanoshii Sushi](#) is delicious take-out sushi at an affordable price. It's usually not too busy so you can sometimes grab a seat and do some people-watching. Otherwise you can take it back to the house (about a 4 minute walk).
- [Monte Pelmo](#). If you like ice cream, you should probably go here. This place is always packed so it must be great (locals + tourists).
- [Madres](#) - Vegan Mexican food spot.
- [Moods Coffee Corner](#). A breakfast place that opens at 8am, and close to the house. Perfect if you're an early riser and want to get some food before you start the day.
- [Winkel 43](#): Ok this place has 12000 reviews for a reason. Get the apple pie. You won't regret it.
- [Cafe R. de Rosa](#) Cozy neighborhood bar to go for an affordable cocktail/glass of wine/beer. They serve brunch on Saturdays too. Could be a nice place to visit after a Noordermarkt trip.
- [Davie's Amsterdam](#): Nice place for a sandwich! It's a bit on the pricey side, but very generous portions. It's also about 20 steps from our house.
- [Pigniq](#) is a popular brunch spot in Jordaan. They source with local ingredients. Very cozy vibe with a cat you can pet inside 😊
- [Pie-Nong Thai](#) - this is a cute little shack with a couple that serve up some great authentic Thai food. They are very sweet. If the weather is nice they have a picnic table outside the shack with some board games that you can play while you wait for your food.
- [Pesca Vis Seafood Restaurant Amsterdam](#) Popular seafood restaurant near Boom Chicago. Fresh seafood that rotates daily. You order your fish from a "fish market" and drink from a wine market and then you sit down & they bring it to you. You can also try [The Good Companion](#) if you're looking for a similar spot without the fish theatre component 😊
- [Restaurant Semhar](#). If you're looking for something unique, try this Ethiopian spot. The food is served around several massive tortillas and it's meant to be shared.
- [Roode Remise](#) - Theatre cafe/bar that is definitely a local spot. Technically not in Jordaan, it's about 10 steps north in the Haarlemmerbuurt. Vegetarian eats! Expect to hear a lot of Dutch & enjoy some home cooked food.
- [Sint Andrireshofje](#). Hofjes are courtyards that were built by the wealthy in Amsterdam many hundreds of years ago, primarily for widows and poor women. It was a donation meant to provide a safe place for them to enjoy outdoor space. These complexes are still often only occupied by women. Some of the hofjes have been opened to the public. You may go to visit them when they are open

(usually around 10am-5pm during the weekdays) but be respectful as this is still someone's home. Given that there were many poor people in Jordaan a long time ago, there's a high concentration of hofjes in this neighborhood.

- **Avoid Cafe Nol:** "Dutch only" bar, they have a reputation of being dicks to tourists.
- **Grachtengordel:** ah the gorgeous [canal belt](#). This is right next to Jordaan. The canals here are in the UNESCO world heritage list. It's a really beautiful area. A bit busier than Jordaan, but plenty to see



- [Proeflokaal Arendsneest](#) - great beer bar in a classic dutch bar setting (over 50 beers on tap) and they have some tables outside on the canal too.
- [The Nine Streets](#) ("De 9 Straatjes") is a cute shopping district flooded with small boutiques and cafes. This place is iconic and will be busy with tourists.



- [Mikkeler at morebeer](#) (like the ones in Copenhagen, SD/SF, Helsinki, etc.) - huge selection of beer, also kitchen with plenty of veg/vegan eats.
- [Café De Klepel](#) - great restaurant, upscale, tough to get a reservation
- [De Pizzabakkers](#) - There are a few of these around Amsterdam but great for a little to-go pizza on your way home.

- [Oche](#) - if you're familiar with Flight Club in the US – this is very similar. Great place to play darts (of course), small plates/pizza, cocktails, etc
 - Vegan temple bar - great spot with vegan eats.
 - [Salsa Shop](#) - Craving a burrito? This place will hit the spot! They're all over town but we love the one in Haarlemmerstraat – about a 12 minute walk. You can find better Mexican food in the states but if you're based in Europe this is about as good as it gets for Mexican quick eats!
- **De Pijp** - (pronounced “de pipe”) hipstery neighborhood with lots of restaurants and bars. Busy and fun. Kind of like the Mission in SF. Less “classic Amsterdam”. Lots of expats live here.
 - [Glouglou](#) - cool natural wine bar with lots of little outdoor tables
 - [Café Gollem](#) - good beer bar
 - [SOJU Bar](#) - good korean fried chicken place, cool restaurant, usually quite busy
 - [Scandinavian Embassy](#) - good coffee
 - [Seafood bar](#) (there's also another location by Vondelpark) is a great seafood restaurant, reasonable prices
 - [Lion's Head](#) - South African bar where they brew their own beer. More of a sports bar. Decent food, decent drinks, usually pretty chill unless there's rugby or soccer on.
 - [Sjefiethé](#) - nice civiché / tapas type restaurant
 - [Restaurant Zaza's](#) - Seafood restaurant with lots of great reviews. Definitely “date night” type of vibe.
 - [Miri Mary Indian Restaurant](#) - As I mentioned before, Amsterdam hosts fantastic food from all over the world including India. The Dutch colonies in India may have ended 200 years ago but the food is still alive and well in Amsterdam, and this restaurant is a great example. Indian fusion restaurant with lots of complex flavors.
 - [Florentin Brunch](#) - There are a handful of brunch tourist traps in Amsterdam (I'm looking at you TEDS), but this is not one of them. Fantastic, cozy brunch spot in De Pijp, perfect if you're heading in that direction in the morning. There's outdoor seating on a warm day too!
- **Oud west**
 - [Foodhallen](#) - giant food hall with a variety of food stalls and a couple bars. Perfect for a quick stop for lunch.
 - [Hendrix](#) nice cocktail bar
 - [Nnea pizza](#) - recommended by Italians. It's good pizza (that you cut with scissors) but can be a long wait. Best to go early and put your name down and get a drink close by.
 - [Night Kitchen Amsterdam](#) - unique tailored tasting menu type place. They have one in Tel Aviv and Berlin too I believe.
 - [Rue d'Alger](#) - Casual Mediterranean spot with top quality food.

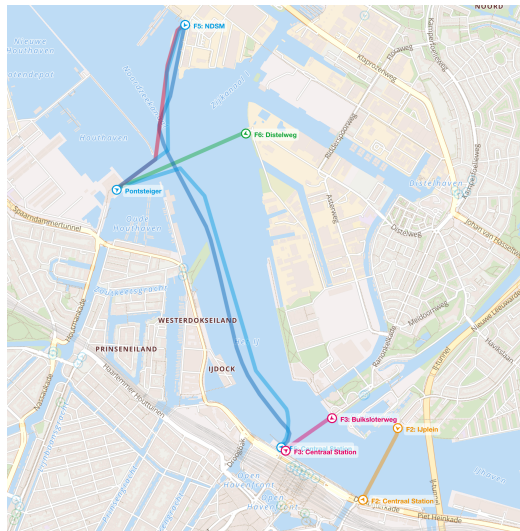
- [Truffle boutique](#) - Casual spot with outdoor seating. They use fresh truffles so don't expect an overpowering truffle flavor. It's subtle but delicious.
 - [Restaurant Zest - Craft Beer and Food](#). Fantastic craft beer/burger bar with pub fare and great beer (upscale brewery Asperius Brewing inside).
 - [Vicio Il Mastro Pastaio - Italian Restaurant in Amsterdam](#). Fancy Italian place. Very popular, reservation recommended.
 - [Kenneh](#) - Superb fine dining West African spot. Friendly chef explains the courses. Small restaurant.
- **Bos en Lommer/West/Westerpark area/Houthavens**
 - [Dandy Burger](#) - probably top 5 burgers I've ever had. It's a little pricey for a burger but it's SO much food and definitely worth a visit.
 - [Mamas and Tapas](#) - Bustling tapas restaurant with a huge variety of tapas for whatever mood you're in. Regular menu + seasonal rotating menu + cocktails too.
 - [De Parkwachter](#) - As the name suggests, great place to have a coffee and people/dog watch. Lots of activity in the westerpark on a sunny day!
 - [Mossel & Gin](#) - Great spot for a cocktail and some oysters on a patio outside. It doesn't get too busy even on a hot day.
 - [Ferry](#) - Where Sarah & I will be getting married! Fantastic restaurant for a drink and food. Say hi to Robbert for us 😊
 - [REM](#) - Big rooftop bar and restaurant with great views over the IJ and Amsterdam. Also mentioned below in the section about Noord with a photo if you're interested.
- **Centrum / Red Light district**
 - Careful of **tourist traps** here. This is where the highest density of tourists will be. The main reason to visit the center is to view the architecture and canals. Some of the oldest & most storied parts of Amsterdam are here. Many tourists will never leave this area, but you should plan to spend the least amount of time here. There's a high density of [tourist traps](#) and you absolutely need to Google the locations here before you step inside.
 - **Dam Square:** This is the "main square" of Amsterdam. It's quite crowded but includes the Royal Palace, some shopping places, fancy hotels, restaurants, etc. There's a WWII monument you'll see dedicated to Dutch resistance soldiers that died fighting. The square dates back to the 13th century.
 - [Oude Kerk Amsterdam](#): This church is magnificent and is also over 700 years old. The original wooden chapel dates back to 1213, but was replaced by the stone chapel you see today which opened in 1306.
 - [Beer Tasting Room in the Wilderman](#) is a pretty cool old school beer bar boasting over 250 varieties of beer throughout Europe.

- [The White Room](#): Amazing Michelin starred restaurant in the area. There's plenty of Michelin starred restaurants in Amsterdam. If you're interested, check out the [Amsterdam Michelin Guide](#).
 - [Flore](#) was probably our all-time favorite dining experience. Also in the Micheline Guide.
- **FEBO**: The best FEBO locations are in the center (as these ones are frequented the most and the food is the most fresh). FEBO is a hybrid between a vending machine and a fast food restaurant. Simply tap your card and select the item you would like and the door opens for you. Grab your snack and head out! Expect cheese souffles (Kaassoufflé), croquettes, burgers, and other fried snacks. Perfect for a late night if you don't feel like fries!



- **Red light district**. There's plenty to avoid in the red light district. If you don't believe me just take a gander at the Google reviews for staples like [Bananenbar](#). The whole area has a bizarre vibe to it but if you're visiting Amsterdam it's probably worth visiting once. The canals here are the oldest in Amsterdam. It has a lot of beauty and charm in the daytime.
- [Van Stapele Koekmakerij](#). Apparently this place is incredible for cookies, but be prepared to wait. It has a lot of social media clout.
- [Café Old Sailor](#) is a popular nautical themed bar in the heart of the red light district. Probably decent for people watching.
- [Dutch Courage](#) is a cool cocktail bar with mostly jenever drinks.
- [Rosalie's Managerie](#) is another cool cocktail bar around there. The areas around Oudezijds Achterburgwal street and Kloveniersburgwal are a little better / more chill.

- [Café de Sluyswacht](#) is a cool old leaning bar on the edge of a canal and a little bit removed from the madness. Dates back to the late 1600s when it was a house for a lock keeper.
- [Begijnhof](#) - famous hofje (courtyard – see Jordaan section) in the center. This one dates back to the 14th century.
- [Kim's So Korean Food](#). Authentic, casual Korean food in the center.
- [Backstage Bar](#) - Great dive/sports bar vibe. American friendly – great place to catch an NFL game in Amsterdam
- **Noord** - Noord (north) is the neighborhood across the IJ river (pronounced “eye”). You can easily take ferries there from behind Centraal station or other areas of the city. There are a few different ferry lines that go to different spots in Noord. They're free and you can just walk your bike right on (no ticket needed) and they run every 5 mins or so. Noord is big and open and spread out and has a lot of newer buildings and things in warehouses. It's kind of like the Brooklyn of Amsterdam. It's definitely less of a tourist scene over there. If you're opting to stay in a hotel, this area has a lot of affordable options.
 - [Ferries](#) - You can catch the ferry straight across from behind central station (“F3: Buiksloterweg” - this line runs all night) or the “F5: NDSM” from the same spot if you're going over to that side of Noord. The “F2: IJplien” will get you closest to the breweries and winery mentioned below, but it leaves from a different spot just east/right of central station. More ferry info [here](#). You can also take the **metro** but it goes further into Noord and stops running earlier.



- [NDSM wharf](#) - free, just walk around (and NDSM street art museum is really cool - paid). Lots of gigantic street art. This area is a bit over to the northwest in Noord. There's a ferry that goes right there, or you can bike around from the ferry that goes straight across from Centraal. [Pilek](#) is a cool bar with a man-made beach and serves snacks.
- Towards the east side of Noord is [Oedipus brewery](#) (bigger, fun brewery with outdoor seating), [Walhalla Brewery](#) (cool, smaller brewery) and [Lowlander brewery](#) restaurant (nice big casual restaurant/bar on the water, lots of plants) are

all super close to each other. [Bacalar](#) is really legit Mexican food - tough to get a reservation but usually easy enough for lunch.

- Before you head to Noord you can check out [REM](#), depending on which ferry you are taking. It's a nice small plates restaurant/rooftop bar with great views of Noord & parts of Amsterdam.



- Oost ("East")
 - (if you have a bike or are close enough) [Brouwerij 't IJ](#) - Amsterdam classic craft beer you see everywhere. The brewery is inside a really cool windmill. It's a bit out of the way on the east side, but not too far from Central station, and worth



it if you want a fun bike excursion.

- **Nieuwe Diep Distillery:** If you want a slightly less popular spot, check out this gorgeous distillery inside Flevopark with beer, wine, spirits and snacks.



Day Trips out of Amsterdam 🚆

- **Leiden** is a cool little Dutch college town that you can easily get to by train. It's where the pilgrims lived while hiding out from England
- **Delft** is similar to Leiden and is really nice. It's known for its distinctive blue pottery. Easy to check them both out.
- **Haarlem** is super close to Amsterdam west by train and where a lot of people move out of Amsterdam and live. Fun town to walk around, lots of restaurants and bars (and a brewery in a church - [Jopen](#)). Very quiet in the fall/winter.
- **Monnickendam/Volendam** - if you're looking for a fantastic bike trip, check out these little coastal villages. It's a stunning bike ride through the quiet countryside.
- **Utrecht** - kind of a mini-Amsterdam with canals. Nice town, easy train ride to get there.
- **Zaandam** - close to Amsterdam, has a traditional riverside windmill village ([De Zaanse Schans](#)) that's cool to check out, but touristy. Also this weird crazy-looking [hotel](#) by the train station.
- **Zandvoort** - beach town closest to Amsterdam, really popular on a nice day (30 min train from Centraal station). It's worth noting that beaches in Amsterdam are typically windy and not so pleasant, but it's there if you need it!

- **The Hague** (Den Haag) - nice town for exploring, also a surprisingly good beach with a lot of beach bars/restaurants (45 min train from Zuid station)
- **Rotterdam** - I wouldn't really recommend Rotterdam for visitors. It's all very modern because it was mostly destroyed in WWII. There's some cool stuff but not a must-go place.
- Cheese towns - **Gouda** or **Edam** (45 min-1 hour train rides). They have big wholesale cheese markets on different days - Gouda is Thursdays and Edam is Tuesdays. I think only in the summer. Otherwise, they're kind of boring. Gouda has a cheese museum, but more for kids.
- **Outside of Netherlands:** If you're bored of the Netherlands (impossible) there are a few options for trips outside the NL that are easily accessible.
 - **Paris:** 3.5 hr train
 - **Antwerp:** 1hr 20 minute train
 - **Brussels:** 2hr 10 minute train
 - **London:** 1hr 15 minute flight (direct train takes about 4 hours)

Words to the wise

- **Language** - Dutch is a Germanic language and is fairly readable even as a foreigner. However, you can always ask if you aren't sure about something. 90-93% of people in the Netherlands speak English. In Amsterdam, it's likely around 99%. If you are curious about pronunciation, there's a [short guide here](#). *Thank you* is *dank je wel* ("dank ya-vell"). Cheers is Proost! (pronounced "Prost", like German). Even Dutchies often default to English when interacting with strangers just to save the whole "is this person actually Dutch" song & dance. Keep in mind that this is still their second language, so it's always best to speak clearly and avoid American phrasing when possible (instead of saying "I'm all set", "I'm okay", "I'm good", etc. just say "no thank you" or "yes please."). If someone says something that sounds like "Yeah, whore" (Ja hoor) it just means yes, sure 😊. Also the fairly common Dutch words kunt (you can) and kijk (I look or imperative look like kijk uit = look out) are not offensive.
- **Restaurant reservations (and just reservations in general)** - the Dutch like to pre-plan so if you want to go to a good restaurant (or really even any normal restaurant/bar on a weekend/nice day), you usually need a reservation ahead of time and they're often booked up pretty far in advance for the weekends. You need a reservation for a lot of stuff in Amsterdam.
 - If you're going to a cafe or somewhere that doesn't take reservations, you should just sit down at a table. They may not acknowledge that you're there, so make sure you flag someone down to get some menus or place an order if it's been a while. Usually Dutch restaurants don't have a host unless it's a higher end place. Wait staff won't be very attentive.
 - You can also make reservations for a lot of places/restaurants day-of which isn't a thing in the US.

- **Tipping** - isn't required and a lot of Dutchies don't tip. However, tips are appreciated at restaurants (around 5-10%). You can't tip with your credit card after it's already been charged. Typically they will announce your bill, and then you tell them how much you want to be charged. For example, they'll say €46, you can say "can I do €50 please." Because there is less of a tipping culture, people tend to stay at the restaurant for as long as they want. The waiter/waitress often won't check in on you when you're done with your meal. In this case, just pay at the bar when you're ready to leave. It's not very common to tip at "fast service" places like bars, sporting/concert venues, etc.
- **Tap water:** the Dutch are known for their water quality and tap water is safe everywhere.
- **Clothing:** If you buy Dutch clothes here, I would strongly advise trying things on. People are *really* tall here. It's the tallest country in the world. I have had to size down on most tops because the sleeves/waist are all very long. Even the shoes I ordered in the correct "EU" size came about 2 sizes too big.
- **Early birds:** Just a warning to those early risers, everything in Amsterdam is basically closed until around 10-11AM. This is a blessing if you want to visit the center to enjoy some otherwise crowded places without the crowds. However, just be mindful when you leave the house that you may not be able to find that breakfast-on-the-go until later in the day.
- **Drinking/Smoking in public:** In Dam Square (the crowded main square), Red Light District, and Nieuwmarkt (right next to Red Light District), it is forbidden to drink/smoke in public. There will be signs posted in English that you can't miss. The fine is €100. Everywhere else it's totally fine. Obviously like most places in the world, you aren't supposed to be drunk in public anywhere, but this is rarely enforced unless you're truly disturbing the peace.
- **Culture:** The Dutch are known for being "direct", i.e. rude. I will say if you go to many of the places on this list, you'll meet some of the friendliest people in the world. However, there is a real deep hatred of tourists/expats/immigrants here (way more so than you might be used to in the US for example). These people exist throughout all of Europe, the difference is here, everyone can speak English and is not afraid of an altercation. It's quite likely someone will say/do something to try and upset you. Just try and brush it off. It's not emblematic of everyone here. Reacting to them just feeds the trolls.
 - The Netherlands is one of the most densely populated countries in Europe (the most if you exclude the tiny island of Malta), with roughly the same population density as India. North Holland has about 1100 residents/km². Amsterdam is one of the most visited cities in the world as a [proportion of residents](#). Basically, expect to see a lot of people!
- **Identification:** If you need to present identification (for renting a boat for example), try and use your passport or passport card. The dates on your driver's license will reliably confuse people outside of the US.
- **TikTok:** **DO NOT** use TikTok for travel advice in Amsterdam. Unfortunately, Amsterdam has a lot of tourist traps in the center. Visiting the flashy establishments you see on TikTok will likely leave you disappointed. When in doubt, check the Google reviews. If you want to hear from locals, try the [Amsterdam subreddit](#), [Netherlands subreddit](#), or watch [YouTube videos from locals](#).