
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Overview

Introduction

Tell anyone you're going to Amsterdam and there's a fair chance they'll either sigh with envy or give you a sly nod. Amsterdam's reputation for tolerance laced with sin precedes it, but equally renowned are its scenic and cultural attractions.

Amsterdam hotels are known for their cleanliness and hospitality, its restaurants offer world cuisine, and along the city streets is a shopper's paradise. Most visitors fall in love with the city and return again and again.

Amsterdam is nourished by a wealth of museums, concert halls, and avant-garde theater and dance venues. Its relaxed and tolerant attitudes draw those looking for a creative, anything-goes atmosphere.

Large numbers of beautiful tree-lined canals are bordered by streets with rows of narrow, gabled houses and 17th-century warehouses, making Amsterdam an architectural treasure trove. Amsterdam is much smaller in population (but no less interesting) than many European capitals. As a result, much of the city center can be comfortably explored on foot—or, if you want to look like a true local, by bicycle.



Highlights

Sights—The Westerkerk (West Church) on the Prinsengracht and the spectacular view from its tower; gabled mansions on the 17th-century canal ring inside the Singelgracht; the Anne Frank Huis; the Red Light District; Amsterdam-Noord.

Museums—Rembrandts at the Rijksmuseum; the Van Gogh Museum; the Stedelijk Museum.

Memorable Meals—Smoked eel at Haesje Claes; french fries with mayonnaise or peanut-butter sauce from the rear end of the Albert Cuyper Markt; *rijsttafel* at Tempo Doeloe; salted or pickled herring from one of the fish stands along the canals; traditional Dutch fare at Moeders; international dishes from Food Hallen.

Late Night—Jazz at Bimhuis; drinks and dancing at club Panama in the Eastern Docklands; events at the Sugar Factory, ranging from poetry readings in English to DJ nights; concerts featuring international talent at Paradiso, a 19th century church turned rock music venue.

Walks—A stroll that takes in all the sights of Dam Square and the adjacent Red Light District; a walking tour of the old Jordaan section; a walk in Vondelpark; a guided walking tour from Gilde Amsterdam of the city's hidden courtyards, Jewish quarter or other specialized itineraries.

Especially for Kids—The aquarium, planetarium and petting zoo at the Artis Royal Zoo; the goat farm at the Amsterdamse Bos; hands-on exhibits at NEMO Science Center; the children's section (Kindermuseum TM Junior) of the KIT Tropenmuseum (tropical museum).

Potpourri

The Lloyd Hotel in the Eastern Docklands is a showcase for the best of Dutch design, from furniture by Marcel Wanders to breathtaking boiled-wool fabric by Claudy Jongstra.

At the Prostitute Information Center's minimuseum, run by ex-prostitute Mariska Majoor, visitors can see a mock-up of a historic brothel room.

There are 206 paintings by Van Gogh hanging on museum walls in the city compared with just 22 paintings by Rembrandt.

Amsterdam is also known as the Venice of the North, and it has more canals than the Italian city.

The movie *Ocean's Twelve* was shot in and around the Hotel Pulitzer, the Kloveniersburgwal and Heiligeweg. A key scene was filmed in De Dampkring coffeeshop on the Handboogstraat.

Rembrandt had to leave his home and declare bankruptcy because the company that commissioned his painting *The Night Watch* was dissatisfied with it. The painting is now hailed as one of Rembrandt's masterpieces and can be seen at the Rijksmuseum.

Central Station is supported by 8,687 wooden stakes, which were pounded into three artificial islands built to support it.

All public bars and restaurants in Amsterdam are smoke-free: Coffee shops aren't quite sure whether the ban includes them or not. Currently, you can still smoke your (legal) joint inside, but only if it's 100% marijuana and not laced with tobacco. If you want to smoke a plain cigarette, you must go outside.

New York's Bowery district is named after the Dutch word for a farm, *bouwerij*, and Stuyvesant Street after Peter Stuyvesant, whose statue stands outside Amsterdam's West Indisch Huis.

See & Do

Sightseeing

The broad plaza outside Central Station is a good place to begin a tour—you're likely to end up there anyway at some point during your stay. A walk down Damrak will take you to Dam Square, site of the Royal Palace and National Monument. If you turn toward the National Monument and continue walking, you'll end up in the colorful Red Light District. This is the oldest part of the city and a neighborhood where quaintness mingles with sex. From there, you can make your way north to the Oude Kerk, the city's oldest church, or continue walking to the southeast and see the Rembrandthuis, the Portuguese Israeli Synagogue and the Jewish Historical Museum.

If you turn toward the Royal Palace at Dam Square and keep walking, you'll be headed in the general direction of the Anne Frank House on Prinsengracht. Also nearby is the Westerkerk, where Rembrandt is buried. The Jordaan, one of Amsterdam's most picturesque districts, is just beyond Prinsengracht. Other areas worth exploring are around Leidseplein, Rembrandtplein and Muntplein, near the Flower Market.

Amsterdam offers a wide range of museums documenting everything from the city's highest cultural achievements to its seediest underpinnings. The must-see museum is the Rijksmuseum, which contains famous old-master paintings, including *The Night Watch* by Rembrandt. Nearby is the excellent Van Gogh Museum.

The Stedelijk Museum is a major modern-art venue that showcases contemporary art alongside works of impressionism, fauvism, cubism and expressionism. At the other end of the spectrum are small private museums dedicated to everything from sex and drugs to rock 'n' roll, tulips, cheese, houseboats, torture, small purses and even cats.

Those planning to take in many of the local attractions and institutions might consider purchasing a one-, two-, three- or four-day I amsterdam City Card, which entitles holders to free public transportation, discounts for restaurants and attractions, a free canal-boat trip and admission to many museums. A 24-hour pass is 59 euros, a 48-hour pass is 74 euros, a 72-hour pass is 85 euros and a 96-hour pass is 98 euros. The pass is available from any of the Amsterdam Tourist and Convention Board's VVV offices, or you can order it online. <https://www.iamsterdam.com/en/i-am/i-amsterdam-city-card/order-your-card>.

For those who love museums, the *museumjaarkaart* may also be worth purchasing. It grants free or reduced-fee admission to more than 400 museums (normally just the permanent collections) throughout the Netherlands (32 are in Amsterdam) and is available at participating museums at a cost of 64.50 euros. You can also order it online, but an administration and shipping fee of 4.95 euros is added to the price. A *museumjaarkaart* is valid for one year. <http://www.museumkaart.nl>.

Casinos

Photo identification is required for all casinos and gambling venues in the Netherlands. The minimum gambling age is 18. Dress code is smart casual.

Holland Casino

This is one of Europe's largest casino chains, and Amsterdam's stylish branch gets rather full at night. There is wheelchair access, and alcohol is served. If you have euros to burn before you leave the country, there's another branch at Schiphol Airport.

Daily noon-3 am. Dress is smart casual. 5 euros.

Max Euweplein 62 (on the water, across from Leidseplein)
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-521-1111

<http://www.hollandcasino.nl>

Historic Sites

Westerkerk

This church boasts the tallest and most beautiful tower in Amsterdam (with spectacular views of the city) and contains the largest nave of any Dutch Protestant church. Rembrandt is buried there.

Monday-Friday 10 am-3 pm. Admission to the church is free. Admission to the tower costs 7.50 euros.

Prinsengracht 281
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-624-7766

<http://www.westerkerk.nl>

The Begijnhof

This serene oasis in the heart of Amsterdam dates back to 1150, when a group of Catholic women banded together in a religious community that cared for the sick and educated the poor, using the Begijnhof as their sanctuary. More than nine centuries later, it retains its sanctified atmosphere and reputation as one of the city's most beautiful yet least known attractions, with a history that encompasses the Miracle of Amsterdam and a few other scientifically inexplicable events. Although it's private property still occupied by single women, visitors are welcome in the peaceful inner courtyard. Daily masses, weekend weddings and baptisms are held in the chapel. A shop accessed via the chapel sells postcards, candles and religious books.

Daily 9 am-5 pm. Free.

Begijnhof 30
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-622-1918

<http://www.nicolaas-parochie.nl/index.php?menu=3&page=94>

Portuguese Synagogue

Built by Jews fleeing the Spanish Inquisition in the 1600s and inspired by the architecture of the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, this synagogue is still in active use and is illuminated by more than 1,000 candles and 72 windows. Visitors are required to register with the synagogue in advance to attend religious services.

Sunday-Thursday 10 am-5 pm, Friday 10 am-4 pm. 17 euros adults.

Mr. Visserplein 3
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-531-0380

<https://jck.nl/nl/locatie/portugese-synagoge>

Oude Kerk

Dating back to the 14th century, this Gothic structure located in the heart of the Red Light District is Amsterdam's oldest church. The baroque, oak-encased Great Organ; dark wood, gilded ceiling; Renaissance stained-glass windows; and Lady Chapel have largely been preserved and are all worth a look. Rembrandt's first wife, Saskia, is buried there. The church houses exhibitions of modern art and photography.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday 1-5:30 pm. 12 euros.

Oudekerksplein 23
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-625-8284

<http://www.oudekerk.nl>

Koninklijk Paleis

The 17th-century Royal Palace was originally Amsterdam's city hall. It became a royal palace by order of Louis Napoleon in 1808. The many impressive rooms shelter Empire-style furniture and valuable paintings by some of Rembrandt's most illustrious contemporaries, such as Govert Flinck and Ferdinand Bol.

Daily 10 am-5 pm. 10 euros adults.

Dam Square
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-522-6161

<http://www.paleisamsterdam.nl>

Homomonument

This is the world's first memorial to persecuted lesbians and gays. It's constructed from three pink-granite triangles that are reminders of the triangles of pink fabric that homosexuals were forced to wear in concentration camps during World War II. Friends and families of AIDS victims often place flowers at the foot of the monument.

Westermarkt (beside the Westerkerk)
Amsterdam, Netherlands

<http://www.homomonument.nl>

Dam Square

This is the site of the National Monument (honoring the dead of World War II), the Royal Palace, Nieuwe Kerk (the New Church, where King Willem-Alexander was crowned in 2013 after his mother, Queen Beatrix abdicated after a 33-year reign), Madame Tussauds and the NH Grand Hotel Krasnapolsky. It's a lively meeting place for tourists, shoppers, businesspeople, street performers, artists and children feeding pigeons.

Damrak (at the south end, in the center
of the city)
Amsterdam, Netherlands

ARCAM

The ARCAM is the Centre for Architecture in Amsterdam. Anyone interested in architecture and urban planning can consult its collection of documents. It holds exhibitions and provides information on interesting buildings and sites in Amsterdam.

Tuesday-Sunday 1-5 pm. Admission is free.

Prins Hendrikkade 600 (by Central
Station)

Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-620-4878

<http://www.arcam.nl>

Museums

Zaanse Schans

For a taste of traditional Holland, visit this open-air museum 10 mi/16 km northwest of Amsterdam. The picturesque village features architecture, crafts and trades the way they were in the 17th and 18th centuries, and you'll want to photograph the beautiful working windmills.

Windmills open daily 9 am-5 pm, though November-February most of the windmills are only open on Saturday and Sunday (paint mill De Kat and oil mill De Zoeker are only open March-October). Free admission, but there are separate fees for parking as well as for admission to certain buildings.

Schansend 7
Zaandam, Netherlands

Phone: 75-681-0000

<https://www.dezaanseschans.nl>

Woonbootmuseum

The Houseboat Museum depicts life on the 2,000 boats lining the canals. The *Hendrika Maria* (1914) is typical of the industrial river barges that were rebuilt as furnished homes. There's a slide show and models of other boats.

Daily 11 am-5 pm. Closed most of January. 4.50 euros adults.

Prinsengracht 296 K
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-427-0750

<http://www.houseboatmuseum.nl>

Van Gogh Museum

Hundreds of the artist's paintings and drawings on permanent display, including some of his most famous works: *Sunflowers*, *Irises* and *The Bedroom*. There is also a collection of work by his contemporaries, such as Claude Monet, Henri Toulouse-Lautrec and Paul Gauguin. Also on display are the famed letters between Vincent Van Gogh and his younger brother Theo.

Daily 10 am-5 pm (until 10 pm on Friday). 17 euros adults.

Paulus Potterstraat 7
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-570-5200

<http://www.vangoghmuseum.nl>

Stedelijk Museum

You'll see a wide-ranging collection of modern Dutch paintings at the city's most important venue for contemporary art exhibitions. Post-World War II artists include De Kooning, Newman, Ryman, Judd, Stella, Lichtenstein, Warhol, Nauman, Middleton, Dibbets, Kiefer, Polke, Merz and Kounellis. The Stedelijk also has a fine collection of pre-World War II works from Cezanne, Picasso, Matisse and Chagall.

Saturday-Thursday 10 am-6 pm, Friday 10 am-10 pm. 18.50 euros adults.

Museumplein 10
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-573-2911

<http://www.stedelijk.nl>

Rijksmuseum Amsterdam Schiphol

This exhibition space is located inside Schiphol Airport, in a refurbished leisure zone between Lounge 2 and Lounge 3 (past security), and it displays 10 paintings from the Rijksmuseum collection. It is open 24 hours a day, free of charge.

Museumstraat 1
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-674-7000

<https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/schiphol>

Rijksmuseum

This vast complex houses many of the greatest Dutch masterpieces. The museum offers works from the Middle Ages to the present, with artworks, historical objects and other items displayed within the context of both art and culture. Rembrandt's *The Night Watch* is displayed with deserved reverence in its own specially designed gallery at the building's center.

Daily 9 am-5 pm. 20 euros adults.

Museumstraat 1
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-674-7000

<http://www.rijksmuseum.nl>

Rembrandthuis

This three-story house, where the artist lived 1639-58, is now a museum. It provides insight into Rembrandt's life and holds an important collection of his etchings and drawings, as well as a fascinating series of self-portraits.

Daily 10 am-6 pm. 14 euros adults.

Jodenbreestraat 4
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-520-0400

<http://www.rembrandthuis.nl>

NEMO Science Center

This futuristic, hands-on science center features interactive exhibits about technology, industry, energy and other subjects. A roof terrace is open until 7 pm in summer. The top-floor self-service restaurant can be reached from the street by a pedestrian ramp, and it affords one of the best views of the city.

Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-5:30 pm. 17.50 euros adults.

Oosterdok 2 (a short walk from Central Station)
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-531-3233

<https://www.nemosciencemuseum.nl>

Museum Our Lord in the Attic

Previously known as Museum Amstelkring, this may well be one of Amsterdam's best-kept secrets. It is located in a private home built in 1661-63. The lower floors have been wonderfully preserved, but it's the upstairs that harbors something truly unique: A hidden church named Ons' Lieve Heer op Solder (Our Sweet Lord in the Attic), which was used by Dutch Catholics during the 17th century, when Amsterdam Calvinists banned Lutherans and Catholics from public worshipping.

During those times, Amsterdam had a lot of hidden churches, though they were not exactly a secret from the Calvinist authorities, who tolerated them. Not until 1795 did French occupation restore religious freedom to the city. The church has been beautifully preserved. The altarpiece shows a painting by 18th-century artist Jacob de Wit.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday 1-6 pm. 12.50 euros adults.

Oudezijdsvoorburgwal 40
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-624-6604

<http://www.opsolder.nl>

Madame Tussauds

Go to the wax museum for face-to-face encounters with famous people from the present and past, including former U.S. President Barack Obama and Lady Gaga.

Daily 10 am-7 pm, with occasional late openings. 22.50 euros adults.

Dam 20
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-522-1010

<http://www.madametussauds.com>

KIT Tropenmuseum

This museum of the tropics is an ethnographic treasure-house, illuminating the daily lives of people in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America. There's also a special children's section called Tropenmuseum Junior.

Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-5 pm. 12.50 euros adults.

Linnaeusstraat 2
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-568-8200

<http://www.tropenmuseum.nl>

Katten Kabinet

This collection of paintings, sculpture and artifacts depicting cats is housed in a beautiful 17th-century canal house. There are pieces by Picasso and other famous artists as well as a gift shop. A fun stop for cat lovers, but anyone else may be bored.

Monday-Friday 10 am-5 pm, Saturday and Sunday noon-5 pm. 7 euros adults.

Herengracht 497
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-626-9040

<http://www.kattenkabinet.nl>

Joods Historisch Museum

The Jewish Historical Museum is located in the old Jewish Quarter in a complex of four restored synagogues from the 17th and 18th centuries and modern buildings. Inside are revered artifacts and chronicles of Jewish culture, religion and history in the Netherlands.

Daily 11 am-5 pm. 17 euros adults.

Nieuwe Amstelstraat 1
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-531-0310

<https://jck.nl/nl/locatie/joods-historisch-museum>

Het Scheepvaart Museum

This major maritime museum dates from 1656 and is housed in a former Dutch naval arsenal. It includes a full-scale replica of an 18th-century ship, with actors carrying out the crew's activities.

Daily 9 am-5 pm. 15 euros adults.

Kattenburgerplein 1
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-523-2222

<https://www.hetscheepvaartmuseum.com>

Hermitage Amsterdam

The Amsterdam branch of St. Petersburg's State Hermitage is located in the impressive and historic Amstelhof building near Waterlooplein. The Amstelhof was originally constructed in the late 17th century as a charitable nursing home for the elderly. Selections of Russian and European art are featured in the Hermitage. It stages two large-scale, temporary exhibitions each year.

Daily 10 am-5 pm. 25 euros adults.

Amstel 51
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-530-8755

<http://www.hermitage.nl>

Hash, Marihuana & Hemp Museum

The displays distinguish various types of these versatile plants and show how to cultivate them.

Daily 10 am-10 pm. 9 euros adults.

Oudezijdsachterburgwal 148 (Red Light District)
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-624-8926

<http://www.hashmuseum.com>

Foam Photography Museum

Both classic and innovative photography are on show at this museum, as you follow a maze leading through three beautiful canal houses. Foam strives to be a center for photographers and regularly organizes discussion evenings. There's also a bookshop and a cafe.

Saturday-Wednesday 10 am-6 pm, Thursday and Friday 10 am-9 pm. 12.50 euros adults.

Keizersgracht 609
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-551-6500

<https://www.foam.org>

Erotic Museum

This repository of all things sex-related is housed in a wonderful 18th-century building in the Red Light District. The saucy space exhibits erotic art and devices from different cultures and historical periods. Visitors younger than 18 must be accompanied by an adult guardian.

Sunday-Thursday 11 am-1 am, Friday and Saturday 11 am-2 am. 7 euros adults.

Oudezijds Achterburgwal 54 (Red Light District)
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-627-8954

<http://www.erotisch-museum.nl>

Cobra Museum voor Moderne Kunst

This building displays works by an international group of experimental artists who were part of the postwar revolutionary movement based in Copenhagen, Brussels and Amsterdam.

Tuesday-Sunday 11 am-5 pm. 12 euros adults.

Sandbergplein 1
Amstelveen, Netherlands

Phone: 00-547-5050

<http://www.cobra-museum.nl>

Anne Frank Huis

This house is a stirring memorial to the famed, doomed diarist who hid with her family from the Nazis in this tiny annex in 1942-44. The small house and the exhibition space next door display sections of Frank's diary along with historical photographs and exhibits about racism and anti-Semitism. There's also a bookstore and cafe. Avoid the summer crowds by visiting after 7 pm.

April-October daily 9 am-10 pm; November-March Sunday-Friday 9 am-7 pm, Saturday 9 am-10 pm. 10 euros adults.

Prinsengracht 263-267
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-556-7100

<http://www.annefrank.org>

Amsterdams Historisch Museum

Housed in a former orphanage, this museum painstakingly and artistically re-creates the life of the city from 1275 to World War II and beyond, with many special exhibits and movies linking the past and present.

Daily 10 am-5 pm. 15 euros adults.

Kalverstraat 92 (with a second entrance
at Sint Luciensteeg 27)
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 00-523-1822

<https://www.amsterdammuseum.nl>

Neighborhoods & Districts

The Jordaan

A onetime working-class and immigrant area, the Jordaan has been gradually gentrified into a trendy quarter of galleries, boutiques, cafes and antiques shops. Located northwest of Dam Square and 10 minutes from Leidseplein, the Jordaan is a labyrinth of twisting alleys and streets—confounding to mapmakers, but pleasing to bohemians and culture vultures. It's quieter than the city center and a nice place to stroll.

Some locals complain about the new sheen on the classic old buildings and the pricing-out of the original inhabitants. Nevertheless, the double-edged sword of urban revitalization has carved out a tourist-friendly neighborhood whose canals and narrow streets make it one of the most picturesque in Europe. Many of the houses are topped by gable stones, which (before the advent of numbered addresses) were carved or painted with pictures representing the occupations of their inhabitants.

Between a number of the buildings are *hofjes*, small private gardens that delight the eye and nose in the spring. Unfortunately, most of the gardens are hidden from the street and are accessible only by doors on the sidewalk. These are generally locked, but some residents keep theirs open as a consideration to visitors. A special Mee in Mokum walking tour of the Jordaan is available through Gilde Amsterdam (<http://www.gildeamsterdam.nl>). It is probably the best way to view these courtyards. Guides also explain many of the interesting gable stones. Many private canal gardens are open to the public the third weekend in June, during Open Garden Days.

Red Light District

For better or worse, this is the place that many outsiders associate with Amsterdam. It's also the oldest part of the city and is known as De Wallen because the old city walls were located there. This crowded, colorful neighborhood draws tourists by the thousands with its proliferation of sex shops and dens along narrow streets and canals. Prostitutes pose in illuminated windows, exhibiting their wares, as would-be customers, backpackers, strolling couples and travelers of all ages gape. (When the window shade is down, it means the woman of the house is engaged in business.) The experience is nothing short of surreal.

If you're visiting De Wallen out of simple curiosity, you might feel more comfortable going during the day, though the night is when the real crowds show up. Taking pictures is taboo and could prove dangerous—at the least you'll risk your camera being thrown into the murky canal, and if you are really unlucky you may still be attached to it. Ignore the street drug dealers. If you go in the evening, avoid deserted streets. There are also plenty of eateries and bars to nourish the tired spectator. Some of the best Chinese and Thai restaurants are located in Amsterdam's Chinatown, which occupies a small area of the Red Light District around the Zeedijk and Geldersekade.

A plan called Project 1012 (named after the local area code) was launched in 2007 to clean up the neighborhood. The city is buying up windows and plans to replace them with galleries, artists' workshops, restaurants and high-end bars. Some windows already display fashion, but the plan to turn the whole district into a shopping paradise has been met with major protests from locals and tourists alike.

To reach the Red Light District, head east from Dam Square.

Oud Zuid

The Old South district of Amsterdam is one of the cultural hubs of the city, mainly because it contains the wonderful Museumplein, an open grassy area with the Rijksmuseum, the Van Gogh Museum and the Concertgebouw on its edges. This neighborhood contains the city's most elegant residential area. Two of the most exclusive shopping streets, the P.C. Hooftstraat and Beethovenstraat, are located there, as well as many trendy brasseries and restaurants. In the more westerly part of the neighborhood is Vondelpark, the city's largest green area.

Oud-West

Bordered by the Singelgracht canal and Vondelpark, Amsterdam's Oud-West has shed its Wild West image for a new reputation as one of the city's most up-and-coming neighborhoods. After a decade of gentrification, the area is now a multicultural blend of residential neighborhoods, family-friendly businesses, busy shopping streets and such architectural gems as the 19th-century *Zenvenlandenhuizen* (Houses of Seven Countries, each representing a different architectural style) on Roemer Visscherstraat, and the neoclassical *Hollandsche Manege*, Holland's oldest equestrian center. De Hallen, a tram depot turned cultural hot spot, is now a big Oud-West draw with its indoor food court, movie theaters, cafes, library, four-star Hotel de Hallen, and a host of creative, media and fashion businesses.

Oostelijk Havengebied

The area known as Eastern Docklands (between Central Station and Zeeburg Island) is a hive of activity. It's an architectural showpiece that some say is destined to become the future city center. Spectacular modern buildings line the KNSM and Java islands and its south axis, along with accompanying trendy boutiques and restaurants.

Amsterdam, Netherlands

<http://www.amsterdamdocklands.com>

De Pijp

Sometimes called the *Quartier Latin* (Latin Quarter), De Pijp is best known for the Albert Cuypmarkt, Holland's largest street market, lined with some 260 stands selling fresh fruit and vegetables, fish, flowers, fabrics, clothing, accessories and trinkets. An Amsterdam institution since 1905, the market is the centerpiece of this former working-class neighborhood just outside the busy city center. Along Albert Cuypstraat and Ferdinand Bolstraat, De Pijp's main streets, Syrian, Moroccan and Surinamese restaurants coexist alongside typical Dutch pubs, Islamic butchers and Turkish delicatessens, reflecting the area's multicultural mix.

Centrum

This is the busy heart of the city, encompassing Leidseplein, Dam Square and Central Station. Many nice hotels line the main canals—Singel, Herengracht, Keizersgracht and Prinsengracht—that cut through the area. The popular Leidseplein is full of cafes, theaters, nightclubs, restaurants and bars. The flower market is located on the Singel, just off Leidsestraat. The Rembrandtplein area is where the city's main late-night spots and dance clubs are located. Dam Square and surrounding streets are a main shopping area. There is a large concentration of "coffee shops" around the Central Station area, where marijuana and hashish are sold and smoked. These smoking cafes also exist all over the city, with the possible exception of the Oud Zuid neighborhood.

Amsterdam North (Noord)

A free GVB ferry behind Central Station takes people and bicycles across the River IJ to NDSM Wharf and Amsterdam-Noord. What was a shipyard in the 1980s is now an artsy bohemian community where artist ateliers, creative initiatives and trendy businesses such as music channel MTV coexist alongside edgy nightclubs, waterfront cafes and historic villages with traditional Dutch farmhouses. The IJ-Hallen, Europe's largest flea market, is held monthly in Noord. Ferries run several times an hour, seven days a week.

Parks & Gardens

Westerpark

While it takes a back seat to Vondelpark, this expansive green space on the city's west side boasts acres/hectares of grassy fields, fountains, ponds, an art-house cinema (Het Ketelhuis) and an events stage. It was originally established in 1891 as a small neighborhood park that served residential Westerpark, a working-class area off the road to Haarlem, the Haarlammerweg. In 1989, the dilapidated red buildings of the city's municipal gas works were declared industrial monuments and remodeled into the Culture Park Western Gas Factory (Cultuurpark Westergasfabriek), now an avant-garde venue that bisects Westerpark, used for markets and special events throughout the year.

(Accessible via Haarlemplein or tram 10.) Phone 20-586-0710.

(Accessible via Haarlemplein or tram 10.)
Amsterdam, Netherlands

<http://www.westergasfabriek.nl>

Vondelpark

A few blocks west of the Rijksmuseum and south of Leidseplein, this bustling park has placid ponds and meandering paths that are popular with joggers. During the 1960s, this was a famous meeting place for hippies from all over the world, and there's still lots of free, youth-oriented entertainment on Saturday afternoons in summer. Just about any nice day brings out plenty of joggers, walkers, skaters, musicians, jugglers, Frisbee-throwers, dog-walkers, ice-cream vendors and all sorts of other sun-seeking citizens. The park also has a rose garden, a statue of Dutch poet Joost van den Vondel, a large outdoor sculpture by Picasso and a few cafes and refreshment stands. An open-air theater hosts free summer programs, while free concerts are held at the park's bandstand.

Vondelpark
Amsterdam, Netherlands

<http://www.hetvondelpark.net>

Hortus Botanicus

With more than 4,000 species of plants from different climates, the city's botanical garden is one of the world's oldest collections of shrubs, trees, perennials and flowering bulbs. Though it's rather small, it's conveniently located between the Joods Historisch Museum and Artis Zoo. Established in 1638, the Hortus offers regular art exhibitions, such as sculpture gardens and other plant-related art. Its butterfly house is nothing short of spectacular. The Orangerie, a historical monument, houses a cafe with one of the loveliest terrace views in Amsterdam.

Daily 10 am-5 pm. 9.75 euros adults.

Plantage Middenlaan 2a (Tram 9 or 14
from Central Station)
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-625-9021

<http://www.dehortus.nl>

Amsterdamse Bos (Amsterdam Forest)

Fitness fanatics and nature lovers have it all at the Amsterdamse Bos, 1,000 acres/405 hectares of jogging and walking routes, lakes, waterways, sport fields, scenic bridges and canopied paths. There's also a climbing park, organic goat farm, summer theater, horseback riding, camping, bike and canoe rentals, and several restaurants.

Bosbaanweg 5
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-545-6100

<http://www.amsterdamsebos.nl>

Wineries, Breweries & Distilleries

Heineken Experience

Though Heineken has stopped production at this former brewery, you can still take a tour of the old factory and learn how beer is made. The renovated brewery features a mini-brewery, the Brew U simulator, a tasting bar and the "Stable Walk," where visitors can see Heineken's iconic Shire horses. A visit takes approximately 90 minutes, and two drinks are included. Visitors younger than 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

Monday-Thursday 11 am-7:30 pm, Friday-Sunday 10:30 am-9 pm September-June; daily 10:30 am-9 pm July and August. 18 euros adults.

Stadhouderskade 78
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-523-9222

<https://www.heineken.com/in/heineken-experience>

Brouwerij 't IJ

Marked by a tall windmill rising from the skyline on Amsterdam's east side, this small brewery and pub offers a large selection of unfiltered, nonpasteurized beers and seasonal offerings, all certified organic and made on-site. Opened in 1985 by former musician Kaspar Peterson, it boasts a large outdoor terrace where you can enjoy your brew with peanuts, boiled eggs, local cheese, salami and *ossenvorst*. An adjacent pub serves more substantial meals, as well as drinks and snacks.

Daily 2-8 pm.

Funenkade 7
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-261-9801
<http://www.brouwerijhetij.nl>

Brouwerij de Prael

This working microbrewery in the heart of Amsterdam's Red Light District is set in a 17th-century canal house where Golden Age auctions were once held. Transformed in 2002 into a beer tasting room, shop and brewery, it now boasts a modern plant that keeps beer history alive using centuries-old brewing techniques that predate the Industrial Age. More than a half-dozen craft beers named after iconic Dutch singers are brewed on-site, in addition to seasonal and special-edition brews. A menu of beer-inspired selections includes Dutch specialties such as *bitterballen*, *croquettes*, and local cheese and sausages. Beer packages featuring craft brews as well as T-shirts, beer-based products and beer books are available in the shop, open daily noon-5 pm.

Tasting room open Tuesday and Wednesday noon-midnight, Thursday-Saturday noon-1 am, Sunday noon-11 pm; Brewery open Monday-Friday 9 am-5 pm.

Oudezijds Voorburgwal 30
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-408-4470
<http://www.deprael.nl>

Zoos & Wildlife

Artis Royal Zoo

One of the oldest zoos in Europe, Artis Royal Zoo contains more than 6,000 animals. It also has a geological museum, petting zoo, aquarium and planetarium.

Daily 9 am-5 pm (till 6 pm March-October). 24 euros adults.

Plantage Kerklaan 38-40
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 900-278-4796
<http://www.artis.nl>

Nightlife

Nightclubs, dance clubs, cafes and taverns offer plenty of after-dark options. In summer, the sidewalk bars are crowded until late, and street performers entertain in the public squares.

Jazz is popular on the live-music scene, and the city offers abundant opportunities to enjoy live acts. Nightclubs and late-night dance clubs are clustered around Leidseplein and Rembrandtplein. DJ bars line the Nieuwe Zijds Voorburgwal.

Amsterdam has a reputation for its thriving gay scene, and there are many bars and nightclubs catering to gay people in the Red Light District and along Amstel, Reguliersdwarsstraat, Warmoesstraat and Kerkstraat.

Most nightclubs are open until 4 or 5 am. Bars tend to close a few hours earlier.

Bars, Taverns & Pubs

Wijnand Fockink

Follow the little alleyway next to the massive NH Grand Hotel Krasnapolsky behind the Dam monument, and you'll reach this *jenever proeverij* (*jenever* being Dutch gin and *proeverij* being the place to taste it). It's been making its own *jenever*s since the 1600s, flavored with spices and fruits from the Dutch island of Texel. Some blends are known for their curative powers, though others, such as the lemon, are just plain delicious.

Daily 3-9 pm.

Pijlsteeg 31
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-639-2695
<http://www.wynand-fockink.nl>

Twenty Third

This bar on the 23rd floor of the luxurious Hotel Okura Amsterdam claims to have the best panorama of the city, and it's hard to prove otherwise. The hotel also offers fine-dining in the Yamazoto, Sazanka, Serre and Ciel Bleu restaurants. There's no better way to start an elegant night out than enjoying this view with a glass of wine or champagne.

Sunday-Thursday 6 pm-1 am, Friday and Saturday 6 pm-2 am.

Ferdinand Bolstraat 333
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-678-7111
<http://www.okura.nl>

Sky Lounge

This sky bar is located on the 11th floor of the DoubleTree Amsterdam Centraal Station. The panorama is spectacular, and the atmosphere is classy.

Monday-Thursday 11 am-1 am, Friday and Saturday 11 am-3 am.

Oosterdokstraat 4
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-530-0875
<http://www.skyloungeamsterdam.com>

Papeneiland

Since 1642, this bruin cafe (brown cafe, so called for its nicotine-stained walls) on Prinsengracht and Brouwersgracht, one of Amsterdam's prettiest corners, has been serving up draft ales and typical Dutch fare. Former U.S. President Bill Clinton famously washed down a hunk of apple pie there, then took a whole pie away with him. The place has been owned through the generations by the Netel family, in which all males are named Tiel, including current manager Tiel Netel, Sr. The famed apple pie is still made on the premises.

Daily 11 am-1 am (Friday and Saturday till 2 am).

Prinsengracht 2
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-624-1989
<http://www.papeneiland.nl>

Mulligans

Amsterdam is not that far from Dublin, so it's not surprising to find a good Irish pub where you can tap your feet to Irish folk music and down a few pints of Guinness.

Monday-Thursday 4 pm-1 am, Friday 4 pm-3 am, Saturday 2 pm-3 am, Sunday 2 pm-1 am.

Amstel 100
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-622-1330
<http://www.mulligans.nl>

Momo

The modern, stylish design of this restaurant, bar and lounge—and some of the best cocktails in town—attract Amsterdam's glitterati to this trendy spot within the Park Hotel near Museumskwarter. The restaurant's fusion cuisine is also recommended.

Sunday-Thursday 10 am-1 am, Friday and Saturday 10 am-2 am.

Hobbemastraat 1
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-671-7474
<http://www.momo-amsterdam.com>

Hanneke's Boom (Hanneke's Tree)

This uber-relaxed gastropub and dance venue on the IJ near Central Station has been around in some form since 1662. It now serves drinks, light fare and stunning views of Amsterdam's skyline and NEMO, the children's museum that resembles a green whale. A seasonal menu features organic ingredients in favorites such as nachos, sandwiches and burgers.

Sunday-Thursday 11 am-1 am, Friday and Saturday 11 am-3 am.

Dijksgracht 4
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-419-9820
<http://www.hannekesboom.nl>

De Twee Zwaantjes

The Two Little Swans is a great place to sample true Jordaan atmosphere, where locals grab the microphone to sing popular *smartlappen* (cheesy Dutch pop songs). Almost always filled to the max.

Thursday-Monday 3 pm-1 am.

Prinsengracht 114
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-625-2729
<http://www.cafedetweezwaantjes.nl>

De Drie Fleschjes

Once you enter this dark little tasting room in the vicinity of Nieuwe Kerk, you'll feel like you have stepped into a Frans Hals painting. Nothing has changed since 1650, and you'll find more than 50 taps and a battery of strange-looking, hand-painted bottles. The Dutch call these cafes *proeflokaalen* (tasting bars). Ask to taste the Korenwijn: It's one of the best Dutch *jenever*s around.

Monday-Saturday 2-8:30 pm, Sunday 3-7 pm.

Gravenstraat 18
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-624-8443
<http://dedriefleschjes.nl>

Cafe de Tuin

A traditional brown cafe in a now-gentrified working-class neighborhood, Cafe de Tuin is the place for a morning coffee, a lunchtime sandwich, or drinks and late-night conversation.

Monday-Thursday 10 am-1 am, Friday and Saturday 10 am-3 am, Sunday 11 am-1 am.

Tweede Tuindwarsstraat 13
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-624-4559
<http://www.cafedetuinnl>

Cafe de Prins

Just across the canal from the Anne Frank Huis, this traditional cafe with a young crowd is a good place to stop for a cozy coffee or a Belgian *witbier* with lemon on the sunny streetside terrace. The cafe also serves food 10 am-10 pm.

Sunday-Thursday 10 am-1 am, Friday and Saturday 10 am-2 am.

Prinsengracht 124
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-624-9382
<http://www.deprins.nl>

Dance & Nightclubs

Winston

This small, underground club has been open in the heart of the Red Light District since the mid-1980s, a long time in club terms. There's a range of live music, including indie-rock, hip-hop, reggae and pop, so check the website for what's on.

Sunday-Thursday 9 pm-4 am, Friday and Saturday 9 pm-5 am. Ticket prices vary depending on the event.

Warmoesstraat 129
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-623-1380
<http://www.winston.nl>

Studio 80

Electronic music, young crowds and some of Amsterdam's most popular parties make this place a must for hip and cool people. The club is actually a studio and radio station.

Rembrandtplein 17
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-521-8333

<http://www.studio-80.nl>

Panama

This giant, posh nightclub in the trendy Eastern Docklands is known for hosting big-name DJs spinning house music, as well as everything else from comedy to jazz singers.

See website for event schedule, opening times and ticket information.

Oostelijke Handelskade 4
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-311-8686

<http://www.panama.nl>

Nachttheater Sugar Factory

This small nightclub, a self-proclaimed "cutting edge, multidisciplinary night theater" just off the Leidseplein, is surprisingly cozy and unpretentious, especially during English-language poetry and theater events. It has regular dance nights too, with an emphasis on jazzy and funky sounds. Wednesday features rock and pop, Thursday is house and techno, and Sunday is jazz.

Opening times vary with events.

Lijnbaansgracht 238
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-627-0008

<http://www.sugarfactory.nl>

Lellebel

Amsterdam's most popular drag bar is located close to Rembrandtplein. On weekends, such local celebrities as Desiree Dello Stiletto and Babette Lafayette perform.

Monday-Thursday 9 pm-3 am, Friday and Saturday 8 pm-4 am, Sunday 3 pm-3 am.

Utrechtsestraat 4
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-233-6533

<http://www.lellebel.nl>

Jimmy Woo

East meets West in this stylish club near Leidseplein, and it sees its fair share of Dutch celebrities. Door policy is very selective, so make sure you're dressed to kill, or you could be left out in the cold. If you are with a party of six or more people, reserving a table might do the trick. Expect R&B, house, funk and soul music. The cocktails are excellent and served by an often stunningly beautiful staff. A glitzy dance floor is complemented by a discreet, exclusive upper lounge with comfy couches.

Thursday-Sunday 11 pm-4 am.

Korte Leidsedwarsstraat 18
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-626-3150

<http://www.jimmywoo.com>

Escape

Since 1986, Escape has been one of Amsterdam's largest and most popular dance clubs, known for dazzling light shows and cutting-edge sound and visuals. The multi-space venue encompasses Escape Club, a main hall, Escape deLux (an intimate club-within-a-club with its own lighting and sound system) and Escape Studio, with space for TV programs and smaller dance events. An on-site cafe that serves a three-course meal at 8:30 pm for 40 euros, which includes entry to the club.

Thursday-Sunday 11 pm-4 or 5 am. Minimum age for entry is 21.

Rembrandtplein 11
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-622-1111

<http://www.escape.nl>

Club Air

One of Amsterdam's most popular dance clubs presents an international array of electronic music artists in a large yet intimate space boasting cutting-edge technology. Come to see, be seen, and dance until dawn at this top Rembrandtplein nightclub.

Hours vary on regular club nights, Thursday-Sunday.

Amstelstraat 16 (club entrance at
Amstelstraat 24)
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-820-0670

<http://www.air.nl>

Live Music

Paradiso

Famous bands from all over the world play at this legendary club that was once a church. Strong on indie music, with lots of promising talents performing. DJs usually start around 11 pm.

Daily.

Weteringschans 6-8
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-626-4521

<http://www.paradiso.nl>

Bourbon Street

New Orleans meets Amsterdam in this small, moody jazz and blues club hidden between the tourist restaurants on Leidseplein. Live music nightly.

Monday-Friday 10 pm-4 am, Saturday and Sunday 10 pm-5 am.

Leidsekruisstraat 6-8
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-623-3440

<http://www.bourbonstreet.nl>

Bimhuis

This place regularly hosts visiting U.S. jazz musicians as well as those from other European cities, with events most nights of the week. Times vary.

Piet Heinkade 3
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-788-2188

<http://www.bimhuis.nl>

Other Options

De Melkweg

One of the most popular scenes in Amsterdam for clubbing and live music, the Milky Way is located on two floors of an old dairy factory. It's the city's biggest multifunctional entertainment venue, housing two stages with bars, a restaurant, theater and movie theater. The crowd is mixed and relatively young. Themed nights can be real fun: one stage may host Latin or hip-hop events, while the other plays techno, house or indie music, which makes for interesting queues at the entrance.

Hours vary.

Lijnbaansgracht 234a
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-531-8181

<http://www.melkweg.nl>

Casa Rosso

This self-proclaimed "five-star erotic theater" indeed has quite an impressive live erotic show. It's safe, clean, positively naughty, and extremely popular with stag and hen parties. Many visitors are couples, and women won't feel uncomfortable there. Those who didn't listen when their mothers told them not to play with food may wish to move on to nearby Bananenbar (under the same ownership), where lots of whipped cream and tropical fruit go to waste. Expect to pay 40 euros for basic entrance or 50 euros (3 euro online discount available) with two drinks included at Casa Rosso, and 60 euros for one hour entrance with unlimited drinks at the Bananenbar. Tips are extra, of course. Cameras are not allowed.

Daily 7 pm-2 am (Friday and Saturday until 3 am).

Oudezijds Achterburgwal 106-108
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-627-8954

<https://www.casarosso.nl>

Performing Arts

This is a city rich in music, dance and theater, from the traditional European arts of ballet and opera to some of the most modern and provocative performances. Amsterdam is well-served by venues to house this wide array of arts and styles, from grand and central to intimate and out-of-the-way.

Dance

National Ballet

The National Ballet presents its season at the Het Muziektheater.

Waterlooplein 22
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-551-8225

<https://www.operaballet.nl>

Music

Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra

The Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra is based in the Concertgebouw, known as one of the finest concert halls in the world, both acoustically and architecturally. The building was completed in 1888, and the orchestra first played there in November of that year. The orchestra was given the title "Royal" by Queen Beatrix upon its centenary in 1988.

Jacob Obrechtstraat 51
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-305-1010

<http://www.concertgebouworkest.nl>

Opera

Netherlands Opera

The Netherlands Opera performs its regular season at Het Muziektheater mid-September through mid-June.

Waterlooplein 22
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-625-5455

<https://www.operaballet.nl>

Ticket Brokers

Ticketshop

Tickets for same-day performances can be obtained online as well as in-person at three city locations: Visitor Information Centre across from Amsterdam Central Station (Stationsplein 10), Stadsschouwburg Amsterdam (Leidseplein 26) and the OBA Central Library (Oosterdoksade 143).

Offers announced daily at 10 am; tickets may be purchased from 10 am onward. Closing hours vary. Maximum two tickets per transaction.

Leidseplein 26 (terrace side)
Amsterdam, Netherlands

<http://www.lastminuteticketshop.nl>

Venues

The Concertgebouw

The city's premier concert hall opened in 1888 and today hosts performances by the world-renowned Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, as well as international ensembles and artists, who appreciate its wonderful acoustics, among the best in the world.

Monday-Friday 1-7 pm, Saturday and Sunday 10 am-7 pm.

Concertgebouwplein 10
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-573-0573 for information or
900-671-8345 (1 euro per call) for tickets

<https://www.concertgebouw.nl>

Pathe Tuschinski

This art-deco gem between the Munt Tower and Rembrandtplein was built by Polish immigrant Abraham Tuschinski, a Jewish tailor who capitalized on a new craze. Framed by ornate twin towers, it boasts a flamboyant foyer and main hall outfitted with love seats and private boxes. But for 4 million guilders, the 1,200-seat theater mixes art-deco elements with Amsterdam School, art nouveau and Tuschinski's own taste. It opened in 1921 with a 16-instrument orchestra backing up Maurice Chevalier, Judy Garland, Marlene Dietrich, Edith Piaf, Dizzy Gillespie, Fats Domino, Dionne Warwick and other talents. After the war, the theater returned to its former glory with a stage sporting a Wurlitzer-Strunk organ. Between 1998-2002, it was again restored. Today, Hollywood blockbusters are screened in the theater, now operated by Pathe. On premiere nights, celebs arrive in limos and preen for the paparazzi to the delight of the locals.

Open daily from 11:30 am.

Reguliersbreestraat 26-34
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 90-01458 (0.80 euro per minute)
for questions

<http://www.pathe.nl/bioscoop/tuschinski>

Muziektheater

Home to the Netherlands Opera, the Holland Symfonia and the Netherlands National Ballet, the Muziektheater was the subject of riotous campaigns to have its controversial construction halted in 1986. Housing in the city had to be torn down to make way for the building, which also incorporates the Stadhuis (Town Hall). Music, opera, ballet and modern dance are all performed there regularly.

Monday-Friday noon-6 pm, Saturday and Sunday noon-3 pm.

Waterlooplein 22
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-625-5455 (box office)

<https://www.operaballet.nl>

Muziekgebouw

The Muziekgebouw juts out over the water in the Eastern Docklands and features award-winning architecture designed to showcase the world-class opera and classical music performances that take place in its two concert halls. It is worth the visit just to see the building.

Box office open Monday-Wednesday noon-6 pm.

Piet Heinkade 1
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-788-2010

<http://www.muziekgebouw.nl>

Koninklijk Theater Carre

One of the city's finest theaters was once a circus, and after modernization has become one of the best performing spaces in Amsterdam. Productions include drama and musicals, comedy, cabaret, music concerts and opera.

Monday-Friday 9 am-9 pm, Saturday and Sunday 10 am-8 pm.

Amstel 115-125
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 900-252-5255 (calls cost 45 cents per minute)

<https://carre.nl>

Jeugdtheater (Youth Theater) De Krakeling

Founded in 1978, this is the only theater in the Netherlands that programs exclusively for children. A fine selection of Dutch and Flemish drama; music, circus and puppet theater; children's cabaret; and dance performances are designed for audiences age two and up.

Tuesday-Friday noon-5 pm (9 pm for night performances), Saturday and Sunday two hours before a scheduled performance or activity.

New Passeerdersstraat 1
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-625-3284

<http://www.krakeling.nl>

International Theater Amsterdam

Drama, dance and opera are all staged at the 1894 Municipal Theater, which was also home to the Netherlands National Ballet and Netherlands Opera until the Muziektheater was built.

Leidseplein 26
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-624-2311

<https://ita.nl>

DeLaMar Theater

This theater and event venue just west of Leidseplein hosts a wide variety of music, drama and dance performances starring international talents.

Box office open daily from 4 pm until the start of the performance. On evenings when no performance is scheduled, the box office is open until 6 pm. For matinee performances, the box office is open two hours before the performance. .

Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 90-0335-2627 (10 am-10 pm, 1 euro per call)

<http://www.delamar.nl>

Other Options

The John Adams Institute

Frequently hosts readings by popular American authors in venues throughout the city.

Herenmarkt 97 (West-Indisch Huis)
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-624-7280

<http://www.john-adams.nl>

Felix Meritis

This 17th-century canal house was the former home of the Felix Meritis Foundation, which was established in the late 1700s. The foundation makes the building available for political, literary, cultural and academic events, meetings, conferences, debates, TV recordings, photo and film shoots, dinners, receptions and weddings.

Keizersgracht 324
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-626-2321

<http://www.felixmeritis.nl>

Shopping

The Dutch have always been great traders, and in Amsterdam, shoppers are spoiled by the enormous diversity of shops. Leidsestraat, Kalverstraat, Nieuwendijk and Damrak are the classic shopping routes where the department stores, boutiques and souvenirs are concentrated. The more exclusive shops—international fashion houses, boutiques, jewelers and exclusive shoe shops—are mainly along Van Baerlestraat, P.C. Hooftstraat and Rokin.

Try exploring the narrow streets between the canals, which are crammed with unexpected little shops. The best area is the Negen Straatjes (Nine Streets), which forms a grid connecting the three main canals in the Western Canal Belt, south of Radhuisstraat. There you'll find hundreds of delightful places to shop and sip a beer or coffee.

The Jordaan district has an old-time atmosphere, with narrow streets and quaint shops. Haarlemmerstraat, near Central Station, has come into its own with fashionable boutiques, foodie shops and restaurants. For a shopping mall, head to Kalvertoren on Kalverstraat or Magna Plaza near Dam Square.

No trip to Amsterdam is complete without a visit to the Flower Market. The Albert Cuyp Markt, Waterlooplein flea market and Noordermarkt, where there's a farmers market every Saturday, offer old-world charm, and you can also find fun souvenirs and gifts to take home.

Amsterdam is also a center of the diamond trade, and not surprisingly, prices are often more reasonable there than elsewhere. Guided tours of diamond workshops let you see (usually fairly small) diamonds being cut and polished as they have been for centuries.

If shopping for cheeses or wines, keep in mind that some shops regularly set aside times for wine or cheese tastings.

Shopping Hours: Regular shopping hours are Monday 1-6 pm; Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 9 am-6 pm; Thursday 9 am-9 pm; Saturday 9 am-5 pm; Sunday noon-5 pm. Large supermarkets stay open till 8 pm daily.

Antique Stores

You may be able to pick up a bargain in one of more than 100 specialized antiques shops on and around the Spiegelgracht near the Rijksmuseum. The Jordaan is less chic but also touts many antiques. Don't be deterred by stated opening times; many dealers prefer to open by appointment. Most dealers will arrange to ship items, even large furniture, abroad. There are no export restrictions on antiques in the Netherlands.

Wildschut Antiquiteiten

Superbly crafted wooden chests, wardrobes and other large furniture can be restored and fitted to your wishes. Experienced with shipping abroad.

Daily (no set hours) and by appointment.

Eerste Looiersdwarsstraat 8-B
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 62-187-6724

<http://www.wildschut-antiek.nl>

Van Dreven

For 16 years, Fred van Dreven has been a fixture in the quarter with his wonderful collection of clocks, music boxes and barometers. The collection is constantly changing but always fascinating. Items have included an 1820 musical pocket watch for just less than 15,000 euros, a tiny Swiss silver-enameled travel clock for only 3,500 euros, and an elaborate 18th-century Dutch longcase clock with an automated painted scene of rocking boats (price on request). There are regular tours, demonstrations and workshops on clockmaking.

By appointment only.

Nieuwe Spiegelstraat 38
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-428-8442

<http://www.antique-horology.org/vandreven>

Kramer Kunst & Antiek

This antiques shop is crammed with Delft blue tiles (called *tege/s* in Dutch). The oldest tile in stock dates from 1540. The art-nouveau tiles are particularly interesting. You can also buy other Delft blue pottery, crystal, brass candlesticks, pewter plates, silverware, paintings, prints, jewelry and lamps there. It ships worldwide, so you don't have to carry your fragile purchases on your flight back home. There's another location at Prinsengracht 807, but this one has been selling tiles for more than 70 years.

Monday-Saturday 11 am-6 pm, Sunday 1-6 pm.

Prinsengracht 807
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-626-1116
<http://www.antique-tileshop.nl>

Jan Beekhuizen

You'll find antique furniture and tiles there, but the shop specializes in antique European pewter.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm.

Nieuwe Spiegelstraat 49
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-626-3912
<http://www.janbeekhuizen.nl>

Galerie Lieve Hemel

This airy former bank specializes in paintings by the contemporary Dutch trompe l'oeil school. The gallery's everyday items re-created in wood—such as a coat hanging on a door, a tablecloth on an occasional table and a bow tie—by Italian ornamental sculptor Livio De Marchi are guaranteed to elicit a giggle.

Tuesday-Saturday noon-6 pm and by appointment.

Nieuwe Spiegelstraat 3
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-623-0060
<http://www.lievehemel.nl>

Bebob Design Interior

This shop concentrates on retro and vintage design classics and lighting furniture from the 1930s to the 1970s.

Friday and Sunday 1-6 pm or by appointment.

Keizersgracht 467
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-624-5763
<http://www.bebob.eu/nl>

Antiekcentrum Amsterdam

This large indoor art and antiques market is located in the Jordaan. About 55 dealers with additional nonprofessional tables on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday.

Monday-Friday 11 am-6 pm, Saturday and Sunday 11 am-5 pm.

Elandsgracht 109
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-624-9038
<http://www.antiekcentrumamsterdam.nl>

Bookstores

Waterstone's

This British chain has a large stock of English-language books on its three floors.

Monday 10 am-6 pm, Tuesday and Wednesday 9:30 am-6:30 pm, Thursday 9:30 am-9 pm, Friday 9:30 am-7 pm, Saturday 10 am-7 pm, Sunday 11 am-6:30 pm.

Kalverstraat 152
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-638-3821
<http://www.waterstones.com>

The Book Exchange

You can exchange your English-language books there for money or for other interesting books.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday 11:30 am-4 pm.

Kloveniersburgwal 58
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-626-6266
<http://www.bookexchange.nl>

Lambiek

Founded in 1968 by Kees Kousemaker, this is Europe's oldest and probably best strip shop—comic strip, that is. Lambiek stocks the works of thousands of comic artists from all over the world.

Monday-Friday 11 am-6 pm, Saturday 11 am-5 pm, Sunday 1-5 pm.

Kerkstraat 132
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-626-7543
<http://www.lambiek.net>

Athenaeum Boekhandel

With its fetching art-nouveau hallmarks and red-and-white awning, this bookshop is the embodiment of old-school elan. It offers a selection of newspapers and magazines from around the world, as well as books.

Monday 11 am-6 pm; Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday 9:30 am-6 pm; Thursday 9:30 am-9 pm; Friday 9:30 am-6:30 pm; Sunday noon-5:30 pm.

Spui 14-16
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-514-1460
<http://www.athenaeum.nl>

American Book Center

This store carries plenty of hardbacks, paperbacks and magazines on every subject, in addition to a selection of calendars and a bargain-fiction section that competes with your favorite bookshop at home.

Monday noon-8 pm, Tuesday-Saturday 10 am-8 pm (Thursday until 9 pm), Sunday 11 am-6:30 pm.

Spui 12
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-625-5537
<http://www.abc.nl>

A la Carte

This shop sells a large selection of travel books and guides in many languages, as well as globes, maps and international postcards.

Monday 1-6 pm, Tuesday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday noon-5 pm.

Utrechtsestraat 110-112
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-625-0679
<http://boekholtalacarte.nl>

Department Stores

HEMA

This Dutch chain with 11 stores around Amsterdam is known for quality and cool design at low prices. Many locations have inexpensive cafeterias. HEMA sells clothing, toys, tools, cosmetics, paper goods and household wares. In the cheese section, you can buy pungent smoked sausage (*worst*), which is served hot from a large pot.

Monday-Saturday 9 am-7 pm (until 9 pm on Thursday), Sunday 11 am-6 pm.

Nieuwendijk 174-176
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-311-4800
<http://www.hema.nl>

De Bijenkorf

Amsterdam's best luxury department store overlooks the Dam and the Royal Palace. All the international cosmetic houses are represented in the center section of the ground floor. On the upper floors, you'll find everything from furniture to anoraks.

Sunday and Monday 11 am-9 pm, Tuesday-Saturday 10 am-9 pm.

Dam 1
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 800-0818
<https://www.debijenkorf.nl>

Galleries

Jaski Art Gallery

Specializing in Dutch contemporary art, Jaski has an emphasis on the CoBrA movement (Copenhagen, Brussels and Amsterdam).

Daily noon-6 pm.

Nieuwe Spiegelstraat 29
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-620-3939
<http://www.jaski.nl>

Glasgalerie Kuhler

This gallery specializes in studio-glass works, particularly by French and German artists.

Wednesday-Saturday noon-5 pm and by appointment.

Prinsengracht 134
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Markets

Waterlooplein

This well-known outdoor flea market is worth the time to browse through. You can find everything from cheap and cheerful clothes and leather goods to tourist-tacky, antiques and downright junk.

Monday-Saturday 9 am-6 pm.

Waterlooplein 2
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-552-4074
<http://www.waterloopleinmarkt.nl>

Ten Kate Markt

This neighborhood market in the Oud-West serves locals with flowers, cheese, wine, baby items, clothing, vegetables, fruit and knickknacks.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-5 pm.

Ten Katestraat 14
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Spui Market

This outdoor book market takes place on Spuiplein. Old posters, prints and maps are sold at the art market held in the same location.

Book market Friday 10 am-6 pm. Art market Sunday 10 am-6 pm March-December (depending on the weather).

Spuiplein
Amsterdam, Netherlands
<http://www.deboekenmarktophetspui.nl>

Postzegelmarkt

This outdoor stamp market is held along Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal behind the Amsterdam Historisch Museum.

Wednesday and Sunday 10 am-4 pm.

Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Noordermarkt

This general goods and food market takes place around the old wood-and-stone Noorderkerk (North Church).

Saturday 9 am-5 pm.

Noordermarkt
Amsterdam, Netherlands
<http://www.noordermarkt-amsterdam.nl>

Bloemenmarkt

This famous flower market is on a row of barges moored permanently on the Singel, between Muntplein and Koningsplein. When the tulips are not blooming, it sells tulip bulbs, as well as other bulbs, fresh flowers and plants, and souvenirs. Even if you don't intend to buy anything, go to enjoy the colors and fragrances.

Monday-Saturday 9:30 am-5:30 pm, Sunday 11 am-5:30 pm.

Singel
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Albert Cuyp Markt

This is the Netherlands' largest street market and a multicultural experience. All types of food, clothing, textiles, plants and flowers.

Monday-Saturday 9 am-5 pm.

Albert Cuypstraat (at Ferdinand
Bolstraat)
Amsterdam, Netherlands
<http://albertcuyp-markt.amsterdam>

Shopping Areas

The Jordaan

An atmosphere all its own, the Jordaan has narrow streets, picturesque canals and quaint little shops—some housed in 17th-century buildings. Second-hand shops and trendy boutiques make it a haven for students and artists. Many of the antiques dealers in the area specialize in art-nouveau and art-deco items and will arrange shipping abroad for antique furniture. Be sure to visit the antiques market Antiekcentrum Amsterdam on the Elandsgracht. The Jordaan is also a tempting route for a stroll.

Jordaan (just across the canal from the
Anne Frank Huis, a six-minute walk west
of Dam Square)
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Nieuwespiegelstraat

This street is the heart of Amsterdam's art and antiques trade, and there are many and varied galleries to browse. Some are long-established; others have changed hands frequently.

Amsterdam, Netherlands
<http://www.nieuwespiegelstraat.com>

Magna Plaza

Once the main post office, this building has been beautifully restored and converted into a striking indoor shopping complex with lots of specialty shops.

Monday 11 am-7 pm, Tuesday-Saturday 10 am-7 pm (Thursday till 9 pm), Sunday noon-7 pm.

Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal 182 (at Raadhuisstraat, just behind Dam Square)
Amsterdam, Netherlands
<http://www.magnaplaza.nl>

Kalvertoren

This shopping center has about 30 stores, specialty shops and restaurants. Its stairs, escalator and glass elevator take visitors to a cafe on the top floor for a good view of the entire city.

Shop hours are generally Monday 11 am-6:30 pm, Tuesday-Saturday 10 am-6:30 pm (Thursday till 9 pm), Sunday noon-6:30 pm.

Singel 457 (located next to the Munttoren and Bloemenmarkt)
Amsterdam, Netherlands
<http://www.kalverpassage.nl>

Haarlemmerstraat

This street offers many one-of-a-kind stores and trendy brasseries and restaurants.

Haarlemmerstraat (west from Central Station)
Amsterdam, Netherlands

De 9 Straatjes

This area called the "nine little streets" between Radhuisstraat and Leidenstraat is full of quirky shops, with narrow streets reminiscent of a bygone age. You'll find crafts, fashion, jewelry, food and much more, as well as plenty of enticing coffee shops, while enjoying the medieval architecture.

Amsterdam, Netherlands
<http://www.theninestreets.com>

Specialty Stores

Young Designers United

Excellent showcase for young Dutch fashion and accessories designers. A small collection that includes a great variety of styles you won't see elsewhere. Very wearable designer fashion at affordable prices.

Monday 1-6 pm, Tuesday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Thursday until 8 pm.

Keizersgracht 447
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-626-9191
<http://www.youngdesignersunited.com>

Wegewijs Kaas

Choose from hundreds of different cheeses, domestic and foreign, made from goat, sheep and cow milk.

Monday-Friday 8:30 am-6 pm, Saturday 9 am-5 pm.

Rozengracht 32 (trams 13, 14 and 17)
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-624-4093
<http://www.wegewijs.nl>

Thinking of Holland

Probably the country's best souvenir shop, located in the Passenger Terminal. The choice of contemporary Dutch design is mind-blowing.

Daily 10 am-7 pm.

Piet Heinkade 23
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-419-1229
<http://www.thinkingofholland.com>

Shoebaloo

Fancy shoes and bags sold in a shop with a spectacular, futuristic space-ship design and sophisticated ambient lighting. Barbarellas of the 21st century will feel right at home there, so take your camera. This shop is part of a chain of four stores in Amsterdam.

Monday and Sunday noon-6 pm, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Thursday 10 am-9 pm.

PC Hoofstraat 80
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-671-2210
<http://www.shoebaloo.nl>

Puccini Bomboni

This fine shop sells delicious handmade chocolates. There are two other locations, at Singel 184 and Oudekerksplein 17.

Monday noon-6 pm, Tuesday-Saturday 9 am-6 pm, Sunday noon-6 pm.

Staalstraat 17
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-626-5474
<http://www.puccinibomboni.com>

Nukuhiva

Dutch travel journalist and TV host Floortje Dessing believes that the future of fashion lies in a reconciliation between nature and industry. She indeed proves that sustainable fashion can look good and feel great. Floortje sells brands that support fair trade and produce environmentally friendly clothing, from elegant blouses to rugged jeans and biodegradable shoes. The beautiful belts, bags and wallets from Elvis & Kresse are made of old fire hoses, and the fashion label Boeji specializes in jackets, shoes and bags made from old ship sails.

Monday noon-7 pm, Tuesday-Friday 10:30 am-7 pm, Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday noon-6 pm.

Haarlemmerstraat 36
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-420-9483
<http://www.nukuhiva.nl>

Mechanisch Speelgoed

A paradise for kids, this tiny old-fashioned shop in the Jordaan is crammed with traditional toys, from tin drums to teddy bears to snow globes.

Monday-Friday 10 am-6 pm, Saturday 10 am-5 pm.

Westerstraat 67 HS
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Laura Dols

If you love to dress like a Hollywood star of the 1950s, this vintage store will fascinate you. Its dresses are glamorous, elegant and colorful, and many of them quite affordable. Great choice of bags and accessories, too.

Monday-Saturday 11 am-6 pm (until 7 pm on Thursday), Sunday noon-6 pm.

Wolvenstraat 7
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-624-9066
<http://www.lauradols.nl>

Jacob Hooy

Since 1743, this shop has been dealing in all sorts of fancy herbs, spices and teas. Worth visiting to see the old-time interior even if you're not going to buy anything, but ask beforehand if you want to take pictures.

Monday 1-6 pm, Tuesday-Friday 10 am-6 pm, Saturday 10 am-5 pm.

Kloveniersburgwal 12
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-624-3041

<http://www.jacob-hooy.nl>

Hogendoorn & Kaufman

This store offers the finest names in crystal and porcelain, with a wide selection of Royal Delft and Makkum. Unique limited editions are available.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday noon-6 pm.

Rokin 124
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-638-2736

<http://www.hogendoorn-kaufman.com>

H.J. Van de Kerkhof

A favorite shop of clothing designers, H.J. Van de Kerkhof stocks an extensive collection of trims, tassels, ribbons, laces and other accoutrements of fancy dress.

Tuesday-Friday 11 am-5 pm.

Elandsgracht 43-A
Amsterdam, Netherlands

De Kaaskamer van Amsterdam

Say cheese! This is one of Amsterdam's best places to buy cheese. It stocks about 400 varieties from all over Europe and you are invited to sample for free to your heart's content. Some products come in interesting colors. *Commissiekaas* is orange, *griene tsiis* is green.

Monday noon-6 pm, Tuesday-Friday 9 am-6 pm, Saturday 9 am-5 pm, Sunday noon-5:30 pm.

Runstraat 7
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-623-3483

<http://www.kaaskamer.nl>

Coster Diamonds

Diamonds, diamonds, diamonds. Walk in and join a free tour, but if you want to buy something custom-made, an appointment is needed.

Daily 9 am-5 pm.

Paulus Potterstraat 2-6 (near the
Rijksmuseum)
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 020-305-5555

<http://www.costerdiamonds.com>

Copenhagen Kralen

Beads of any size and made of any material you can imagine. The workshop offers beading classes in the evening for groups of six or more (15 euros per person).

Monday 1-6 pm, Tuesday-Friday 10 am-6 pm, Saturday 10 am-5 pm.

Rozengracht 54
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 20-624-3681

<http://www.copenhagenbeads.nl>

Condomerie

This shop located at the border of the Red Light District claims to be the oldest specialized condom shop in the world, and it does have interesting stories to tell about the condom trade in the 18th century, when less affluent clients needed to rely on washed second-hand condoms made of lambs' bladders and ribbons. Charles Goodyear ended that misery in 1839 with processed natural rubber. Progress never looked better than in this shop with its vast assortment from super-fine to super-funny to super-flashy. The philosophy there certainly is not "one size fits all."

Monday-Saturday 11 am-6 pm, Sunday 1-5 pm.

Warmoesstraat 141
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-627-4174
<http://www.condomerie.com>

Brilmuseum

This store sells eyeglass frames that range from the traditional to the truly bizarre. There's also a museumlike display devoted to the history of eyewear.

Wednesday-Friday 11:30 am-5:30 pm, Saturday 11:30 am-5 pm.

Gasthuismolensteeg 7
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-421-2414
<http://www.brilmuseumamsterdam.nl>

Amsterdam Watch Company

Fascinating collection of restored vintage watches. Some brands are hard to find anywhere else.

Tuesday-Friday 11 am-6 pm, Saturday 11-5 pm.

Reesstraat 3
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Phone: 20-389-2789
<https://awco.nl>

Dining

Dining Overview

Practically every cuisine in the world can be found in Amsterdam, from sophisticated French fare to the renowned Indonesian *rijsttafel*. Enjoy an Argentinean steak in a decor that evokes the vast pampas, dine on a pleasure boat cruising the canals, stop at any of the inexpensive Middle Eastern grills that seem to be on every other block, or try one of the small Chinese restaurants lining the Zeedijk and its many cross streets.

Smoking is banned in public places in Amsterdam, including restaurants. However, restaurants may designate an area, completely closed off from the rest of the premises, as a smoking area. Service is not provided in these areas, and you'll need to return to the bar to buy drinks.

At least once, you should try a paper cone of french fries served with mayonnaise, peanut-butter *satay* sauce or any of an ever-increasing number of exotic condiments. The best french fries are called *vlaamse frites* (Flemish fries). Other Dutch specialties reflect the locals' close relationship with the sea, such as smoked eel and raw or pickled herring (which is usually eaten whole with chopped onions and gherkins).

In winter, locals savor hearty meals of mashed potatoes combined with vegetables such as endive, cabbage, onions and carrots (*stamppot*) topped with delicious smoked sausage (*rookworst*). Another cold-weather favorite is *snert* (also called *erwtensoep*), a thick pea soup usually served with sausage.

Make a meal of the *pannenkoeken*, large Dutch pancakes with bacon, cheese, apples or other ingredients mixed into the batter; or *poffertjes*, tiny pancakes with powdered sugar. Cafes often serve a plate of three fried eggs with ham or cheese, known as an *uitsmijter*. The Dutch usually have it for lunch, although it also makes an excellent breakfast.

The hearty Dutch breakfast consists of a selection of breads, local cheeses, sliced meats, butter and chocolate sprinkles called *hage/slag* and jam. Lunch is generally a snack, with dinner being the main meal, eaten between 6 and 8 pm. Most restaurant kitchens close by 10 pm. Reservations are advisable because restaurants are often small and may be crowded during peak periods.

The Dutch are famous for their gin (*jenever*) and beer (*bier*). A popular winter drink is a rich herbal liqueur called Beerenburg. Bottled imported wines are expensive, but a carafe of house wine is of good quality for the most part. The Dutch drink their coffee strong, usually with cream and sugar, or opt for a *kofie verkeerd*, the Dutch version of a latte, that contains more milk than coffee. Tea is normally taken weak and without milk.

Expect to pay within these general guidelines, based on the cost of a dinner for one, not including drinks, tax, tip and service charge: \$ = less than 10 euros; \$\$ = 10 euros-25 euros; \$\$\$ = 26 euros-50 euros; and \$\$\$\$ = more than 50 euros.

Security

Personal Safety

Violence occurs less frequently in Amsterdam than in many other European cities, so simple precautions usually suffice. However, pickpockets do operate regularly. Watch your wallet or handbag, especially on public transportation and in department stores, and watch your bags when waiting for a train or bus. Be wary of strangers trying to distract you while you're using an ATM.

Be alert if you walk around the Red Light District, especially at night. The Red Light District is a major tourist attraction, and there are plenty of non-customers there just looking around. If you choose to walk around this area alone, stick to main, well-lit streets. Keep your camera well-stowed; taking pictures is not appreciated and will lead to immediate problems.

Trafficking in either hard or soft drugs is illegal. Consumption of hard drugs (cocaine, heroin, ecstasy, etc.) is illegal. However, soft drugs (marijuana and hashish) are sold in so-called coffee shops, which are easily identified by their window displays. (Confusion with regular coffee shops is highly unlikely.) The soft-drug coffee shops are allowed to sell small quantities only (no more than 5 grams per person), which can be smoked there or taken to go. The minimum age for this is 18. Police vigorously prosecute those who possess or sell hard drugs.

In any emergency, dial 112.

For more information, contact your country's travel-advisory agency.

Facts

Dos & Don'ts

Do take a boat trip: The city is at its loveliest from the water.

Don't bother trying to speak Dutch unless you know more than a couple of words. Most locals speak English well. Efforts to use the words *alstublieft* ("please," but also "you're welcome") and *dank u wel* ("thank you very much") will be appreciated, though.

Do leave the athletic shoes, shorts and baseball cap at home if you want to pass for a local.

Don't walk in the bicycle paths (narrow lanes sometimes marked with a white cycle symbol).

Do try raw herring with chopped onions and pickles (best in late spring) or, at the very least, the great *frites*.

Don't miss the appropriately situated 3-D bronze rendition of Rembrandt's *The Night Watch* in Rembrandtplein.

Do make an evening pit stop at the Magere Brug (Skinny Bridge). Of Amsterdam's 1,280 or so bridges, it's arguably the most beautiful, lit up as it is at night. Hardly surprising, then, that it's a popular smooching site.

Don't overlook the city's green lung, the Vondelpark. It's located in the south of Amsterdam, just a five-minute walk from the Leidseplein and within walking distance from the Museumplein. The Vondelpark is a perfect respite from the beaten tourist path.