

Amsterdam

At first glance, horseshoe-shaped Amsterdam is a breeze to navigate and its offerings seemingly obvious. But look closely and you'll find hidden pockets in the maze of canals and burgeoning neighbourhoods that are a quick pedal from the city centre. This archetype of liberalism is forever reinventing itself and won't fail to surprise first-time travellers and longtime visitors alike. Amsterdam is about more than cheese and windmills.

Need to know

Get to grips with the basics

- 01 **Meet and greet:** When meeting someone for the first time, a warm handshake will suffice. If you're meeting a friend, a trio of kisses is the go-to greeting.
- 02 **Building a case:** Visit the Eye Filmmuseum in Noord, the Westergasfabriek in Westerpark and Bimhuis in the Eastern Docklands to see attractive contemporary public buildings.
- 03 **Pedal to the metal:** Cycling is the best way to get around. Indicate your direction by sticking out a hand and bear in mind that traffic from the right has right of way. Helmets aren't compulsory but lights at night are.
- 04 **Cash in hand:** Maestro is king in the city and the card machines used by retailers and smaller cafés don't always accept Visa or Amex. Be sure to carry a little extra cash.
- 05 **Learn the lingo:** An important nuance to note is the use of "IJ" as a single letter. It's pronounced along the lines of "aey" and is derived from a Germanic word that means water. It's also the official name given to the harbour and river.

Hotels

Where to stay

- 1 **Hotel V Fizeastraat, Watergraafsmeer**
The 1970s with a twist

In-house designer Mirjam Espinosa has blended a modish 1970s aesthetic into the boxy Piet Zanstra building. All 91 rooms are finished with hexagonal solid-oak parquet floors, pebble-grey linens and woollen tapestries.

2 **Fizeastraat, 1097 SC**
+31 (0)20 662 3233
hotelfizeastraat.nl

- 2 **Conservatorium Hotel, Oud-Zuid**
Light touch

Italian designer and architect Piero Lissoni has reinvented this historic building, with natural light playing a key part. Many rooms benefit from heritage-listed windows.

27 **Van Baerlestraat, 1071 AN**
+31 (0)20 570 0000
conservatoriumhotel.com

- 3 **Maison Rika, Centrum**
Boutique hideaway

In the heart of the De 9 Straatjes neighbourhood, one of the 200-year-old corner houses has been converted into a pocket-sized guesthouse. It only has two rooms but both occupy an entire floor.

12 **Oude Spiegelstraat, 1016 BM**
+31 (0)20 330 1112
rikastudios.com

Food and drink

Going Dutch

- 1 **Little Collins, De Pijp**
Best of the brunch

The restaurant takes the now ubiquitous avocado on toast to new levels with fennel, goat's cheese and dukkah; it also serves delicious waffles with English bacon or kimchi pancakes.

19F **Eerste Sweelinckstraat, 1073 CL**
+31 (0)20 753 9636
littlecollins.nl

- 2 **Worst Wijncafé, Westelijke Eilanden**
Nice sausage

Starter-sized servings are ideal for sharing during a *borrel* (evening drink) with friends. The pigs' trotters – one of the few imported ingredients – are highly recommended.

171 **Barentszstraat, 1013 NM**
+31 (0)20 625 6167
deworst.nl

- 3 **Choux, Centrum**
Conversation starter

Owners Figo van Onna and Merijn van Berlo experiment with umami-loaded sustainable ingredients such as seaweed to get people thinking about meat-free cooking. The results are particularly impressive.

128 **De Ruijterkade, 1011 AC**
+31 (0)61 651 2364
choux.nl

- 4 **Toki, Jordaan**
Easy does it

This light-filled hangout offers a superb range of coffee from Berlin roastery Bonanza, with an ever-changing selection of beans. Order a flat white and a slice of fresh lemon-drizzle cake and sink into the large sofa along with the rest of the neighbourhood.

15 **Binnen Dommersstraat, 1013 HK**
+31 (0)20 363 6009
tokiho.amsterdam

- 5 **Kanarie Club, Oud-West**
Chirpy vibe

By day this is a relaxed café but at night the space comes into its own. Join the trendy Oud-West crowd with an expertly mixed cocktail.

51 **Bellamyplein, 1053 AT**
+31 (0)20 218 1775
kanarieclub.nl

Retail

Fill your tote

- 1 **X Bank, Centrum**
Going Dutch

Inside the design-savvy heritage Kas Bank building in Amsterdam's centre, X Bank provides an engulging space for those who appreciate great products and thoughtful design. Its abiding mission is to highlight design and fashion brands with distinctly Dutch roots.

172 **Spuistraat, 1012 VT**
+31 (0)20 811 3320
xbank.amsterdam

- 2 **No Label, Oud-Zuid**
Tailor-made

No Label aims to take the fuss out of the men's clothes-shopping experience, leaving just well-made, good-fitting fashion. The formula is showcased at the brand's flagship store in the retail district in Amsterdam's south.

66 **Willemsparkweg, 1071 HK**
+31 (0)20 846 5591
nolabel.nl

- 3 **Shop/Shop, Oud-Zuid**
Splash of colour

Shop/Shop is where Amsterdammers head when looking for good design with an international air. The neutral walls make for a perfect canvas for Dutch product designers Carole Baijings and Stefan Scholten's colourful tableware.

2-4 **Ruysdaelkade, 1072 AG**
+31 (0)20 420 8940
scholtenbaijings.com

- 4 **Marie-Stella-Maris, Centrum**
Thirsty work

Marie-Stella-Maris opened in 2014, inspired by a social incentive to support water projects around the world. The two-storey flagship immaculately displays a selection of room sprays, perfumes and natural skincare products.

357 **HS Keizersgracht, 1016 EJ**
+31 (0)85 273 2845
marie-stella-maris.com

Vocabulary

Local lingo

- 01 **Hallo/hoi:** Hello/hi
- 02 **Dank je wel:** Thank you
- 03 **Dag/doi:** Bye
- 04 **Proost:** Cheers
- 05 **Jammer:** Too bad
- 06 **Potverdorie:** Damn
- 07 **Nog een biertje/wijn:** One more beer/wine
- 08 **Mijn fiets is kapot:** My bike is broken



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