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## Relocation Guide to Amsterdam

[www.iorworld.com](http://www.iorworld.com)

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[Amsterdam](#)

Amsterdam is the capital and most populous municipality of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, although it is not the seat of the government, which is The Hague. The saying "Leef en laat leven" or "Live and let live" summarizes the Dutch and especially the Amsterdam open and tolerant society. With 180 different nationalities, Amsterdam is home to one of the widest varieties of nationalities of any city in the world.

One of Europe's most picturesque cities, Amsterdam is also one of the most bicycle-friendly large cities in the world and is a centre of bicycle culture. Amsterdam has more than 100 kilometres (60 miles) of canals, most of which are navigable by boat. The climate is an oceanic climate, strongly influenced by its proximity to the North Sea to the west, with prevailing westerly winds. Both winters and summers are considered mild, although occasionally quite cool.

Amsterdam has all the advantages of a big city: rich culture, lively Amsterdam nightlife, international restaurants, great transportation - but is quiet, and largely thanks to its extensive canals. The Netherlands' festivals celebrate everything from life to tulips to Dutch music festivals, with glorious Dutch celebrations to experience.

### City of Amsterdam Overview

- [Official Website of Amsterdam](#)
- [Tourism Website](#)
- [Relocation Information](#)
- Population: 847,176 within the city proper, 1,343,647 in the urban area, and 2,431,000 in the Amsterdam metropolitan area.
- Land Area: 165.76 km<sup>2</sup> (64.00 sq mi)
- Currency: Euro
- [Amsterdam's 7 city districts](#)

- [Weather Guide](#)
- [Museums in Amsterdam](#)
- Amsterdam (and in the rest of Netherlands) uses the Euro currency
- [Exchange Rates](#)
- [Information on the 30% tax ruling in Amsterdam](#)

#### **Suggested Travel Guides**

- [Travel Guides](#) (Lonely Planet)
- [Amsterdam Travel Information](#)
- [Tourism in Holland](#)

#### **Where to Find Arts & Entertainment**

- [Cinemas, and Open air theaters](#)
- [Theatre Locations](#)
- [Film Festivals](#)
- [Events in Amsterdam](#)
- [Trip Advisor Top Things to do](#)

#### **Restaurants and Food**

- [Dining out in Amsterdam](#)
- [Bars and cafes](#)
- [Trip Advisor Restaurant reviews](#)

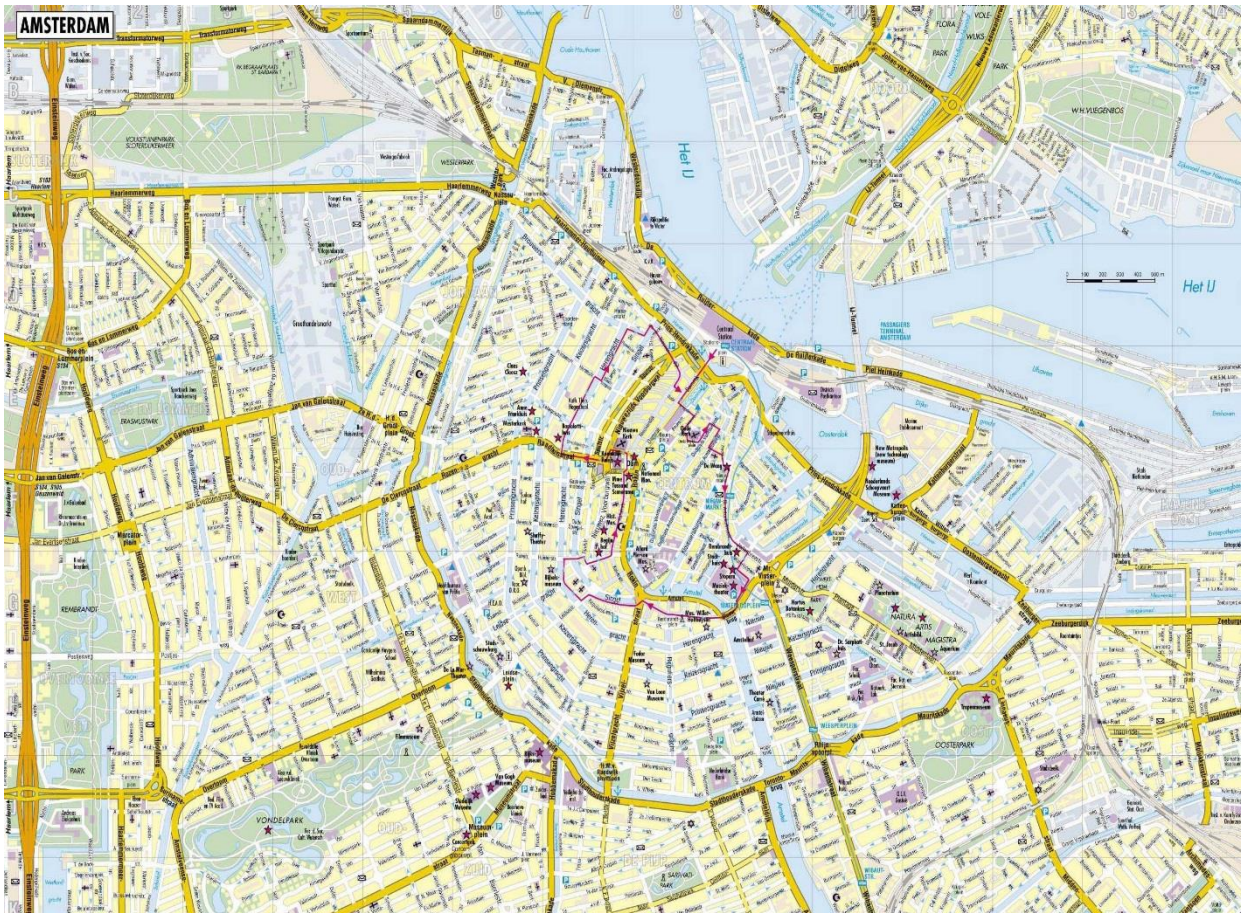




# Map of Amsterdam



[Area Map courtesy of Lonely Planet](#)



[Map of Amsterdam](#)

## GENERAL TIPS FOR LIVING IN AMSTERDAM

### Housing rights for renting

The supply of residential accommodation in Amsterdam fluctuates greatly. At times there is a housing shortage and unfortunately some landlords abuse this. It is therefore important to know your rights and read a tenancy agreement carefully before signing.

It's important for everyone who buys or rents a home in Amsterdam to know what their rights are. What do you do if there is a conflict with your landlord? What are your rights if the house you are buying has hidden defects? [Here](#) is a guide to protection for tenants and homeowners.

### Rental accommodation in Amsterdam

If you're planning a short-term stay in Amsterdam (under five years), renting is your best bet. After all, contracts can be easily changed and you're spared the effort of making major repairs or maintenance. Essentially, there are two rental markets in Amsterdam: public housing (sociale huurwoningen) and the private sector. Whichever you opt for, all rental dwellings are subject to the House Value Rating System (woningwaarderingstelsel) whereby the quality of a house is awarded points for criteria including standards, size, facilities and energy efficiency rating (up to 141 points). For more on the points system, see [www.huurcommissie.nl](http://www.huurcommissie.nl) (in Dutch).

### Language

Learning Dutch can be tricky for some internationals – and Amsterdammers are famously open to communicating in English – but those who make the effort definitely find that being able to speak and understand a little Dutch helps you to settle in quicker.

If you are looking for a surname that begins with a de, van, van der, etc. you must look under the name that follows. IJ is read as a 'y' and therefore is listed at the end of the alphabet.

**Access** is a volunteer organization to help coordinate and spread information and services dealing with the English speaking community. [Here](#) is more information.

*For additional cultural insights, go to [IOR Global Services Knowledge Center](#)*

**Your IOR DSC can assist with these items and any questions; please call for assistance.**

## EMERGENCY/IMPORTANT CONTACTS

**IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY  
DIAL 112  
FOR FIRE, AMBULANCE, POLICE**

### **Police, fire brigade or ambulance**

- Emergency police, fire brigade, ambulance: **112**
- Police information (non-emergency): **0900 8844**
- Anonymous tip-line (to report a crime): **0800 7000**

**They will ask for the following information so keep this page close to your phone:**

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE

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### **Embassies & Consulates in the Netherlands**

Just about every country in the world has a representative in the Netherlands. The majority of foreign [embassies and consulates](#) are located in The Hague and in Amsterdam.

[U.S. Consulate General in Amsterdam](#)

### **Emergency doctor's office**

An emergency doctor's office exists for problems outside of regular doctor's hours. The service operates around the clock (24-hour) and is available for nights, weekends and all public holidays.

The number in Amsterdam is **088 003 0600**. The operator will connect you with an emergency doctor in your area.

### Hospitals in Amsterdam

Hospitals in the Netherlands fall into one of three categories: university medical centres, teaching hospitals and general hospitals.

Amsterdam has two university medical centres: the [AMC](#) and [VU medisch centrum](#). It also has two teaching hospitals: [Onze Lieve Vrouwe Gasthuis](#) and [Sint Lucas Andreas Ziekenhuis](#).

### Expatcenter partners

For a full list of the Expatcenter's partners, including healthcare providers, or for more information on the Partnership Programme, please [click here](#).

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### Health Insurance

Everyone residing in the Netherlands is obliged to take out health insurance, even if you are only living and working in the country temporarily. Find out about Dutch health insurance providers, what you're covered for and how to apply, to make settling in to life in Amsterdam that much easier.

[See frequently asked questions about healthcare in the Netherlands](#)



### **Educational System**

The two types of international schools, independent international schools (private schools), and those partially funded by the government or municipality (public/private schools), place a lot of emphasis on connecting with Dutch society. This includes Dutch language lessons and activities to promote integration. Many international schools that focus on education in English follow the standardized International Baccalaureate (IB) programs, meaning students can receive an internationally recognized education and easily transfer to other international schools around the world. Tuition fees for independent schools are higher than the subsidized schools.

All schools listed below are happy to explain their education options in person, by phone or online – they recommend visiting where possible so that you can get a complete sense of their facilities and offerings. Also, be sure to read their entry requirements carefully. Entry to some schools requires that at least one parent holds a foreign passport. **With all schools it is important that you apply in a timely manner as they do tend to fill up very quickly.**

### **Schools Aiming particularly to American Families**

The American Schools of The Hague (ASH) and Rotterdam (AISR) offer the most American set up and curriculum. ASH is in a suburb of The Hague which is about 30 to 40 minute drive to Amsterdam. Many families choose this school if they want an American atmosphere/curriculum even though it means that for work there would be a commute to Amsterdam. AISA offers an American curriculum but is further away from Amsterdam. Details of these schools are given below.

Many Americans choose to put their children into the British Schools which are in Amsterdam and The Hague area. They are excellent but offer a British based education. Details below.

### **Private International Schools in Amsterdam, English language**

- **International School Amsterdam (ISA)**
  - Many Americans based in Amsterdam area choose this school. The International School of Amsterdam is an established leader in education for international understanding. Its program is designed for today's global student and is firmly grounded on the International Baccalaureate's three programs – the Primary Years, the Middle Years and the Diploma Years programs.
  - Languages: English, Dutch, French, German, Japanese & Spanish. ISA facilitates native and second language instruction on a private tuition basis in a variety of other languages
  - Address: Sportlaan 45, 1185 TB Amstelveen
  - Website: [www.isa.nl](http://www.isa.nl)

- **British School of Amsterdam**

- The British School of Amsterdam is an independent co-educational non-profit day school, providing world class learning for children from 3 to 18 years. There are opportunities for leadership, a varied sports program, a wide range of extracurricular clubs and European field trips are used as opportunities to enrich all the students' lives.
- Languages: English, Dutch, Spanish & German – Mandarin and Japanese as extracurricular activities.
- Address: Anthonie van Dijkstraat 1a, 1077 ME Amsterdam
- Website: [www.britams.nl](http://www.britams.nl)

### **International Schools in Amsterdam subsidized by Dutch Government**

- **Amsterdam International Community School**

- The Amsterdam International Community School (AICS) is a member of the group of Dutch International Primary and Secondary Schools. The AICS caters for students with foreign nationalities who will only be spending a few years in the Netherlands, as well as Dutch students who need to be educated in an international school to ensure continuity of education. The main language of instruction at AICS is English.
- Languages: English & Dutch (primary school); English, Dutch, Spanish & French (secondary school)
- Address: Prinses Irenestraat 59, 1077 WV Amsterdam
- Website: [www.aics.espritscholen.nl](http://www.aics.espritscholen.nl)

- **Berlage Lyceum**

- This school offers a bilingual education with a major focus on multicultural integration and international outlook. As such, half of the classes are taught in English, the other half in Dutch. Lessons are supplemented with international travel.
- Address: Pieter Lodewijk Takstraat 33-34, 1073 KJ Amsterdam
- Website: [www.berlage.espritscholen.nl](http://www.berlage.espritscholen.nl) (website only in Dutch)

### **International Schools subsidized by Dutch Government near Amsterdam**

- **European School Bergen**

- The European School Bergen seeks to promote high academic standards in an atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance, giving pupils confidence in their own cultural identity as a basis for their development as European citizens. With this in mind, the school offers multi-language education for nursery, primary and secondary school by native speakers in English, French and Dutch. Their EU curriculum equivalence makes it easy for students to transfer to national schools in other EU member states. Languages: Beyond the 3 base languages, children can typically be taught in their native language for many of the official languages of the European Union.
- Address: Molenweidjtje 5, 1862 BC Bergen
- Website: <http://esbergen.eu/>

- **International School Almere**
  - The International School Almere was founded on 10 July 2002. The school is an official IB World School with an authorized IB Middle Years and IB Diploma Program. It is a small school that attracts expats and internationally mobile students in the wider Almere region.
  - Languages: English, Spanish, Latin, French & Dutch (other languages may be possible)
  - Address: Heliumweg 61, 1362 JA Almere
  - Website: <http://www.hetbaken.nl/hetbaken/isa/>
  
- **International School Hilversum**
  - The International School Hilversum 'Alberdingk Thijm' is a long-standing, highly experienced IB World School. It offers three programs and caters for all ages from 4 to 19 years.
  - Address: Emmastraat 56, 1213 AL Hilversum
  - Website: [www.atscholen.nl/scholen/voortgezet\\_onderwijs/ish](http://www.atscholen.nl/scholen/voortgezet_onderwijs/ish)
  
- **International Primary School Letterland**
  - Letterland is an international (English-speaking) department within a Dutch Public School, creating a diverse international community of students, parents and educators. The school is fully committed to integration and celebrates diversity and different cultures.
  - Languages: English & Dutch (as a second language)
  - Address: A. Roland Holststraat 58, 1321 RX Almere
  - Website: [letterland.nl](http://letterland.nl)

#### Schools providing American Curriculum in the Netherlands

- **American School of The Hague**
  - The American School of The Hague nurtures and inspires character, commitment, creativity, and learning. The ASH is divided into three schools, Elementary School from Preschool to Grade 4, Middle School from Grade 5 to Grade 8, and High School from Grade 9 to Grade 12.
  - Website: <http://www.ash.nl/>
  
- **American International School of Rotterdam**
  - The American International School of Rotterdam (AISR) is a co-educational day school for internationally-minded expatriate and Dutch families residing in the greater Rotterdam area. Since 1959, the AISR has offered comprehensive education for students from Pre-Kindergarten through to Grade12
  - Website: <http://www.aisr.nl/>

- **The British School in The Netherlands**
  - As the center of a thriving and supportive international expatriate community, made up from over 80 different nationalities, the British School in the Netherlands (BSN) provides the opportunity to become part of a student community defined by an ethos of mutual understanding and cultural harmony. Children from 3 to 18.
  - Website: <http://britishschool.nl/>

### **Non-English language International Schools in or near Amsterdam**

- **iDealFuture Chinese International Community School**
  - This non-profit organization is dedicated to providing an inspiring learning environment for students in the local community to learn the Chinese language (and about Chinese culture). It caters for the needs of native Chinese speaking students who temporarily live in the Netherlands, ensuring the continuity of their Chinese education. Non-Chinese students can also attend their Chinese language courses.
  - Address: Prinses Irenestraat 21, 1077 WM Amsterdam
  - Website: [www.idealfuture.nl](http://www.idealfuture.nl)
  
- **The Japanese School of Amsterdam**
  - This Japanese school is supported by the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Japanese government. Its focus is on the elementary and junior high school levels, providing a comprehensive Japanese education that is supplemented by English and Dutch lessons. (private)
  - Languages: Japanese (English & Dutch lessons during primary school)
  - Address: Karel Klinkenbergstraat 137, 1061 AL Amsterdam
  - Website: [www.jsa.nl](http://www.jsa.nl)
  
- **Lycée Français Vincent van Gogh**
  - The Lycée Français Vincent van Gogh's curriculum is based on the official French program, as defined by the French Ministry of National Education. Pre-school begins at the age of 3, while children aged 6 to 11 years transition into five levels of elementary education.
  - Languages: French is the primary language in the school, with lessons in Dutch and English.
  - Address: Rustenburgerstraat 246, 1073 GK Amsterdam
  - Website: [www.lyceevangogh.nl](http://www.lyceevangogh.nl)



### Opening a Bank Account

To open a current account or a foreign currency account you need to provide identification. EU citizens require a valid passport or an ID card, proof of residency from the GBA (gemeentelijke basis administratie), a verification document such as a gas and electricity bill or a rental agreement with your address, proof of income and your Citizen Service Number (BSN, Burger Service Nummer, previously SOFI tax number).

For non-EU citizens, registration with the IND (immigratie- en naturalisatiedienst) and a work permit are also required. If you open a joint account you must present the documents described above for both holders.

You must go in person, taking your passport or other acceptable identification.

### International Banks

- [ABN AMRO](#)
- [ING](#)
- [Rabobank](#)
- [SNS-bank](#)
- [You can find a longer list of international banks here](#)

### Currency

Amsterdam (and in the rest of Netherlands) uses the Euro currency. There are 8 coins; 1, 2 and 5 cent, 10, 20 and 50 cent, 1 and 2 Euro coins. Then there are the bills of 5, 10, 20 and 50 Euro, 100, 200 and 500 Euro notes.

**Your IOR Destination Services Consultant will assist you in locating bank branches in your neighborhood.**

### Security

Amsterdam is generally a safe place. Follow basic safety rules and you should be fine. Be aware of who's around you at an ATM. Do not use the machine if you are suspicious of someone's behavior. It is safer to find another ATM or to come back later.

Credit card theft is another increasing problem. In order to protect your card from being abused, never give your credit card or credit card number to a service provider you have not called. Another precaution is to destroy or shred copies of receipts and bills. Criminals will not hesitate to dig through the trash to find a copy of your credit card number.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION/DRIVING

Whether you're commuting to work, home or heading out for a night on the town, traveling within Amsterdam is straightforward and convenient. The extensive public transport network connects the city's many districts by train, tram, metro, bus and ferry.

### Traveling by tram in Amsterdam

[Amsterdam's trams](#) are suitably distinctive, decked out in blue and white and armed with a famous bell that rings out to attract the attention of any pedestrians and cyclists in the vicinity. From Central Station to outlying neighborhoods, the tram is one of the quickest ways to get into and around the city centre.

### Traveling by metro in Amsterdam

[Amsterdam's metro system](#) radiates from Central Station to the city's outlying districts. Its four routes are often the fastest way to reach districts like Bijlmer, Amstelveen and Diemen.

### Traveling by bus

[Amsterdam's bus network](#) is extensive, connecting all neighborhoods with other city areas and extending outwards into the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area. For example, visitors heading to the flower strip in spring, towards the beaches of Zandvoort and Bloemendaal and to the main historic towns and villages north of Amsterdam can often get around easiest by bus.

### Traveling by ferry in Amsterdam

[Amsterdam's ferries](#) provide essential, free connections across the River IJ for pedestrians, cyclists and mopeds. Many of these blue-and-white ferries can be found directly behind Amsterdam Central Station, providing a frequent and free service across the water to and from Amsterdam Noord.

### Traveling by train in and around Amsterdam

Many people traveling to or from Amsterdam will often make use of the [train](#), which not only provides a superb connection with Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, but also different parts of the city, other Dutch towns and cities, plus direct connections with Belgium, France and Germany.

### Bike hire in Amsterdam

[Cycling](#) is a fun, efficient and easy way of getting around Amsterdam - just like the locals do! Even if you only pedal around for a few hours, riding a bike is an essential Amsterdam experience.

### Parking in Amsterdam

Amsterdam is easy to navigate by car, but to make the most of your trip, there are some factors to keep in mind – especially when it comes to parking. Because of the compact layout of the city and the limited number of (affordable) parking spaces, [Park+Ride locations](#) on the edge of the city are a great option.

### Taxis

[Taxis](#) are a popular form of transport in a city where many residents don't own a car. [Uber](#) is also available in Amsterdam

**Airports**

[Amsterdam Airport Schiphol](#), is of great importance in Europe. It is an international airport and is located twenty minutes from Amsterdam city and approximately nine miles south-west of the center of Amsterdam in Haarlemmermeer municipality. This is an international airport connecting to many notable European airports.

**GVB app**

The [official app from the GVB](#) – Amsterdam’s primary public transport operator – will help you make sense of the city’s tram bus, tram and metro lines ensure you always arrive at your destination!

**Citymapper app**

Real-time journey [planner](#) helping you to quickly get from A to B by public transport, bike, foot and every other transit mode imaginable.

## LOCAL REGISTRATIONS & DRIVER'S LICENSE

As a local in Amsterdam, there are several procedures that you will need to take care of. Some of these, such as registration and setting up health insurance, are required of everyone.

### **Registration in Amsterdam**

In the Netherlands, you will have to register with the municipality (gemeente). Non-EU citizens also need to take care of residence and work permits. More information [here](#).

### **Getting a Driver's License**

If you intend to drive a car in the Netherlands, you will need to pay close attention to the rules pertaining to driving licenses. If you plan to remain in the country for an extended period, you may need to exchange your current license for a Dutch one. Please note, this must be done before your current license expires. More details [here](#).

**Your IOR Destination Services Consultant will also assist you with the proper procedure.**



## LIVING AND SHOPPING

### Electronics

In the Netherlands (Holland) the power sockets are of type C and F. The standard voltage is 230 V and the standard frequency is 50 Hz. Many computers and other electronic devices will allow you to operate as long as the device is switched to the appropriate mode. In this case all that is required is an adaptor. If the standard voltage in your country is in the range of 100 V - 127 V (as is in the US, Canada and most South American countries), you need a voltage converter in the Netherlands (Holland).

### Setting up television, telephone or internet service

There are a large number of providers in the Netherlands for cable and landline connections. The best provider depends on your needs. It is important to bear in mind the length of stay.

Internet providers in the Netherlands are generally recognized as being of high quality, with many providers boasting access to some of the fastest and strongest connections in Europe. There are many companies which provide internet, therefore the market is quite competitive so it is usually possible to connect nationwide, while having plenty of choice over the provider. A number of websites exist, comparing prices and services. All are in Dutch. For television, landline connections and Internet: [www.consumentenbond.nl/internetproviders/internetproviders-vergelijken/](http://www.consumentenbond.nl/internetproviders/internetproviders-vergelijken/)

### Utilities: Gas and electricity

Gas and electricity are both supplied by the same provider. The Dutch energy market was privatized years ago, and there are now many providers. It is important to quickly arrange gas and electricity in a new home. When moving into a new home, note the meter reading and notify the energy supplier. Customers can choose their own supplier, but the choice may be limited by those operating in the community.

The major suppliers are:

- **Eneco energie**
- **Oxxio**
- **EnergieDirect**
- **Nuon**
- **Essent**
- **Eon**
- **Nederlandse Energie Maatschappij**

### Utilities: Water

There are two elements of water payments: a consumption charge based on actual water usage (which is estimated if you don't have a meter) and a municipal tax for services (sewage, maintenance, etc.).

Helpful Information about Utilities is [here](#)

Your IOR Destination Services Consultant will also assist you with the process.

## Post Office

Post offices are marked with an orange sign that says postkantoor or PostNL and generally located inside shops, newsagents or tobacconists. Stamps (postzegels) can be bought in all of the above places and in some of the larger supermarkets, or printed online at [www.postnl.nl](http://www.postnl.nl).



## Shopping

Amsterdam is a city of antiques, books, diamonds, and curiosities. In general, Amsterdam shopping opening hours are 1-6pm on Mondays and 9/10am-6pm Tuesday to Friday. Most have late night shopping on Thursday until 9pm, and close earlier on Saturdays, at 5pm. Some supermarkets, like [Albert Heijn](#) stay open until 8 or 10 pm. On Sundays, you can shop in the city center, [Kalverstraat](#), Damrak, Leidsestraat, and near the Noorderkerk.

Shops in Amsterdam range from large high end department stores such as [De Bijenkorf](#) founded in 1870 to small specialty shops. Amsterdam's high-end shops are found in the streets P.C. Hoofstraat and Cornelis Schuytstraat, which are located in the vicinity of the Vondelpark.

A few more options:

- [Albert Cuypmarkt](#) - Amsterdam's largest and busiest open air market. Everything from fruit, vegetables, cheese, fish and spices to clothes, cosmetics and bedding.
- [Haarlemmerstraat](#) - hip, quirky and a perfect spot for hours of relaxed browsing, dining and bar-hopping.
- [Haarlemmerdijk](#) - This busy, bustling street is ideal for strolling. There is a great diversity of stores, eateries, bars and other nightlife possibilities.
- [Amsterdam Flower Market](#) is the only floating flower market in the world, and one of the most fragrant places of interest of Amsterdam - in all seasons. This unique market has existed since 1862.
- [Ikea](#) has many branches across the country.
- [Furniture Shopping Reviews](#)



Amsterdam Flower Market

## ARTS AND RECREATION

### Top things to see and do in Amsterdam

#### Museums

There are seventy five Amsterdam [museums](#), here are a selected few:

- [Rijksmuseum](#) - Dutch art and history from the Middle Ages to the present day
- [Van Gogh Museum](#) - dedicated to the works of Vincent van Gogh and his contemporaries
- [Gassan Diamonds Amsterdam](#) - learn all about carats, colors, clarity and cuts of diamonds
- [Anne Frank House](#) - the house that was her hiding place during World War Two, and the famous diary she wrote
- [Hermitage Amsterdam](#) - branch museum of the Hermitage Museum of Saint Petersburg, Russia
- [Stedelijk Museum](#) - an international museum dedicated to modern and contemporary art and design
- [Amsterdam Museum](#) – The history of Amsterdam is presented at this museum



*Rijksmuseum*

#### Culture

- [Royal Palace](#) - one of Amsterdam's top attractions
- [Dutch National Opera and Ballet](#) - The leading Dutch organization for opera and ballet performances.
- [Stadsschouwburg Amsterdam](#) – The Municipal Theater is one of the most influential theater companies in the Netherlands.



*Stadsschouwburg Amsterdam*

#### Recreation

- [Biking in Amsterdam](#) - Cycling in Amsterdam is a way of life, made easier by the city's unbeatable network of bike paths, cycle routes and flat landscape.
- [Vondelpark](#) - With over 10 million visitors each year, the Vondelpark is the most famous park in the Netherlands.
- [Amsterdam Secrets](#) – best hidden places and little know stories of Amsterdam
- [Artis Royal Zoo](#) -one of the oldest zoos of mainland Europe.
- [Tour of Amsterdam's Canals](#)



## PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

The following is a list of public holidays in the Netherlands. On these days, shops, museums and attractions usually either close earlier or are closed the entire day – handy to know for Amsterdam newcomers!

### 2017

1 January	New Year's Day
14 April	Good Friday (not an official public holiday)
16 April	Easter Sunday
17 April	Easter Monday
27 April	King's Day
4 May	National Remembrance Day (not an official public holiday)
5 May	Liberation Day (official public holiday every 5 years, next in 2020)
25 May	Ascension Day
4 June	Pentecost Sunday (Whitsunday)
5 June	Pentecost Monday
5 December	Sinterklaas (not an official public holiday)
25 December	Christmas Day
26 December	Boxing Day
31 December	New Year's Eve (not an official public holiday)