

ANTEA 3rd SPRING EMEA MEETING

Amsterdam, Netherlands – 6th May 2011



Introducing Amsterdam

Amsterdam is situated in the province of North Holland in the west of the country. It comprises the northern part of the Randstad.

Its name is derived from Amstelledam, indicative of the city's origin: a dam in the river Amstel. Settled as a small fishing village in the late 12th century, Amsterdam became one of the most important ports in the world during the Dutch Golden Age, a result of its innovative developments in trade. During that time, the city was the leading centre for finance and diamonds. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the city expanded, and many new neighbourhoods and suburbs were formed. The 17th-century canals of Amsterdam (in Dutch: 'Grachtengordel'), located in the heart of Amsterdam, were added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in July 2010. Its characteristics canals do that Amsterdam be known as “the Venice of the North” colloquially.

In 2010, Amsterdam was ranked 13th globally on quality of living by Mercer, and previously ranked 3rd in innovation by 2thinknow in the Innovation Cities Index 2009.

Amsterdam's main attractions, including its historic canals, the Rijksmuseum, the Van Gogh Museum, Stedelijk Museum, Hermitage Amsterdam, Anne Frank House, its red-light district, receiving more than 3.66 million international visitors annually.

More than 16 million people call the Netherlands home. It is the most densely populated country in Europe and one of the most densely populated countries in the world. More than forty percent of the total population lives in the urban agglomeration area called the Randstad.

“Down-to-earth and tolerant”

The Dutch are known for being level-headed and down-to-earth. They frown upon boasting and bragging. "Act normally and you will be conspicuous enough" is an often-heard expression. The Dutch are also very direct. Some people find this tactless, but the Dutch consider it a sign of honesty and openness. The Dutch are also known as a tolerant people, particularly to those of different opinions and persuasions. They are used to discussing differences of opinion and admire those who stand up for themselves, their ideas and ideals. Freedom is a cherished virtue in the Netherlands.

“Multicultural”

The Netherlands is a multicultural society. This is primarily evident in the larger cities. You will find more than two hundred different nationalities in the city of Amsterdam alone. The largest minority groups in the Netherlands are Turkish, Surinamese, Moroccans and Antilleans from the Dutch Caribbean.



Culture

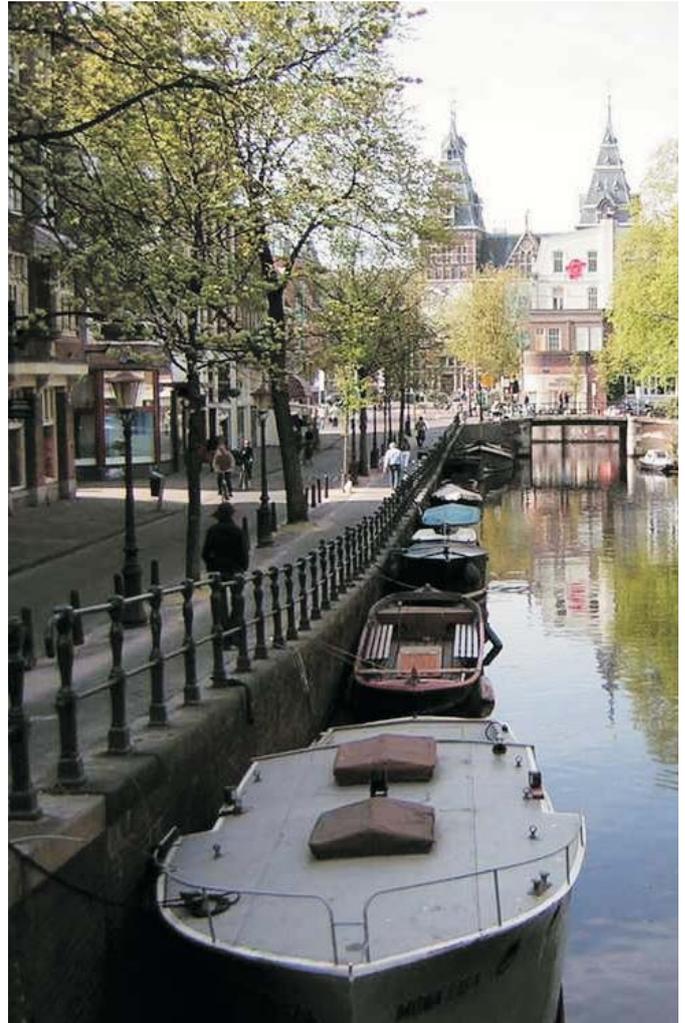
The best classical and experimental art, theatre, music, dance, architecture, design, film and photography can be found throughout the country. Holland might be small, but when it comes down to art and culture we are an absolute world leader.

In 1638, Amsterdam opened its first theatre. Ballet performances were given in this theatre as early as 1642. In the 18th century, French theatre became popular. While Amsterdam was under the influence of German music in the 19th century there were few national opera productions; the Hollandse Opera of Amsterdam was built in 1888 for the specific purpose of promoting Dutch opera. In the 19th century, popular culture was centred around the Nes area in Amsterdam (mainly vaudeville and music-hall).

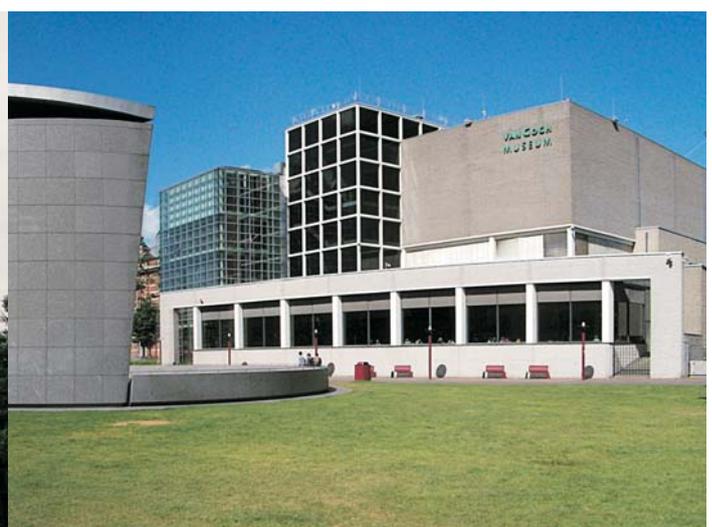
For those who only visit Amsterdam, these are the cultural highlights you must visit:

The National Museum of Holland, the **Rijksmuseum**. Situated in the city centre, this museum is home to a wonderful collection of Dutch art and history. Don't forget to take a picture of the amazing Nightwatch by Rembrandt.

Vincent van Gogh was a 19th century Dutch post-impressionist painter. His works were of great influence on 20th century art. During his life he was little appreciated. He only sold one work of art. Today the **Van Gogh Museum** attracts around 1,5 million visitors a year.



The National Museum of Holland, the **Rijksmuseum**.



Van Gogh Museum

The Anne Frank House is a museum with a story. It's situated in the center of Amsterdam and holds the hiding place where Anne Frank wrote her famous diary during World War II. Anne Frank was a normal girl in exceptional circumstances. For more than two years she described the events of her daily life in hiding in her diary.

The Rembrandt House Museum (Dutch: Museum het Rembrandthuis) is a house in Jodenbreestraat in Amsterdam, Netherlands, where Rembrandt lived and painted for a number of years. It is now a museum. Rembrandt purchased the house in 1639 and lived there until he went bankrupt in 1656, when all his belongings went on auction.



The Anne Frank House



Hortus Botanicus is a botanical garden in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. One of the oldest in the world, is one of Amsterdam tourists attractions as well.

Furthermore the Hermitage Amsterdam, a canal boat tour, a concert at the Concertgebouw and a walk through the Red Light District should be on your list. The best way to discover and experience the great architecture and many cafes, terraces, parks, squares and shopping areas of Amsterdam is by bike.



Hortus Botanicus

Sights

Amsterdam, capital of the Netherlands, has been called the "Venice of the North" for its more than one hundred kilometres of canals, about 90 islands and 1,500 bridges. The three main canals, Herengracht, Prinsengracht, and Keizersgracht, dug in the 17th century during the Dutch Golden Age, form concentric belts around the city, known as the grachtengordel. Alongside the main canals are 1,550 monumental buildings. The 17th-century canal ring area, including the Prinsengracht, Keizersgracht, Herengracht and Jordaan, are put on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

“Architecture”

Amsterdam has a rich architectural history. The oldest building in Amsterdam is the Oude Kerk (Old Church), at the heart of the Wallen, consecrated in 1306. The oldest wooden building is het Houten Huys at the Begijnhof. It was constructed around 1425 and is one of only two existing wooden buildings. It is also one of the few examples of Gothic architecture. In the 16th century, wooden buildings were razed and replaced with brick ones. During this period, many buildings were constructed in the architectural style of the Renaissance. Buildings of this period are very recognizable, since they have a

façade which ends at the top in the shape of a stairway. This is, however, the common Dutch Renaissance style. Throughout the 18th century, Amsterdam was heavily influenced by French culture. This is reflected in the architecture of that period. Around 1815, architects broke with the baroque style and started building in different neo-styles.

At the end of the 19th century, the Jugendstil or Art Nouveau style became popular and many new buildings were constructed in this architectural style.

The last style that was popular in Amsterdam before the modern era was Art Deco. Amsterdam had its own version of the style, which was called the Amsterdamse School.

The old city centre is the focal point of all the architectural styles before the end of the 19th century. Jugendstil and Art Deco are mostly found outside the city's centre in the neighbourhoods built in the early 20th century, although there are also some striking examples of these styles in the city centre. Most historic buildings in the city centre and nearby are houses, such as the famous merchants' houses lining the canals.

“The Bicycle”

Amsterdam is famous for the enormous quantity of bicycles and is the world center of bicycle culture. Almost all the principal streets have routes for cyclists, and it is possible to leave the bicycle in any site.

In Amsterdam there are approximately 700.000 cyclists, more than 7 millions of bicycles and 750.000 inhabitants. Every year, about 80.000 are stolen and 25.000 finish in the channels of the city.

In the center, to drive in car is complicated, the rates of parking are very high, and many streets are pedestrian or for cyclists.

“More Sights”

Another interesting sight in the city, is the Heineken's brewery. This is a museum at the same time.

De Wallen, also known as Walletjes or Rosse Buurt, is a designated area for legalized prostitution and is Amsterdam's largest and most well known red-light district. This neighborhood has become a famous tourist attraction. It consists of a network of roads and alleys containing several hundred small, one-room apartments rented by sex workers who offer their services from behind a window or glass door, typically illuminated with red lights.



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