

Holland Herald

YOUR COPY TO KEEP

OCTOBER 2017

Take A Stroll

5 Reasons To Visit Amsterdam Right Now

Check Out The World's Most Spectacular Lakes



2. Multiple art gems

The Rijksmuseum, Van Gogh Museum and Stedelijk Museum are all conveniently located around the aptly-named Museumplein (Museum Square). These three art Meccas have been tourist favourites since, well, forever. And rightfully so. "If you look at the visitor experience, the Rijksmuseum is truly top-notch," says Bertan Selim, a Macedonian-Dutch art expert and programme coordinator at the Prince Claus Fund, which provides grants for art projects in the Netherlands and abroad. "But the real contemporary art gems can be found outside the city centre, like at P////AKT in the east or Frammer Framed in the north, or in an innovative concept like Sexyland at the NDSM docks, which hosts a new artist every day, 365 days a year."

When Selim moved to Amsterdam six years ago, he was blown away by the "magic" local art scene. "It's not just conceptual work that's only understood by experts within the context of a museum. Artists in Amsterdam are known to experiment, to challenge our ideas. That's what struck me when I first came here. I saw art that made me fall in love, art that made me reflect on my own life."

Selim is impressed by how tiny Amsterdam manages to have such an international art presence. "Toneelgroep Amsterdam is now a world-renowned theatre group, performing in New York, London and Moscow. Modern dance company NDT draws diverse audiences with personal themes like migration," says Selim. "And we also excel in photography. Few people know that World Press Photo is a Dutch organisation. Unseen Photo Fair is becoming more influential every year. And Foam photography museum is doing great work in documenting how we live and who we are becoming, for future generations to look back on, and not just showcasing big names." In addition to showing off their own genius

abroad, Amsterdammers are also bringing in the best minds from other countries. "Quite a few directors of major arts centres are not Dutch. Thinking outside the box like that takes guts," concludes Selim.

3. Confidence in the kitchen

Confession from the author: I love Dutch food. A *stampot* (mashed potatoes with carrots, kale or endive, served with a meatball or sausage and lots of gravy) warms my soul. I also love the feeling of raw herring sliding down my throat. And when I've had a few too many drinks, I'll run to FEBO, which sells Dutch snacks, like *kroketten*, *bamischijven* and *frikandellen*, from a wall-sized vending machine. So, we have our local dishes, and plenty of sweets, but I wouldn't really call it a cuisine.

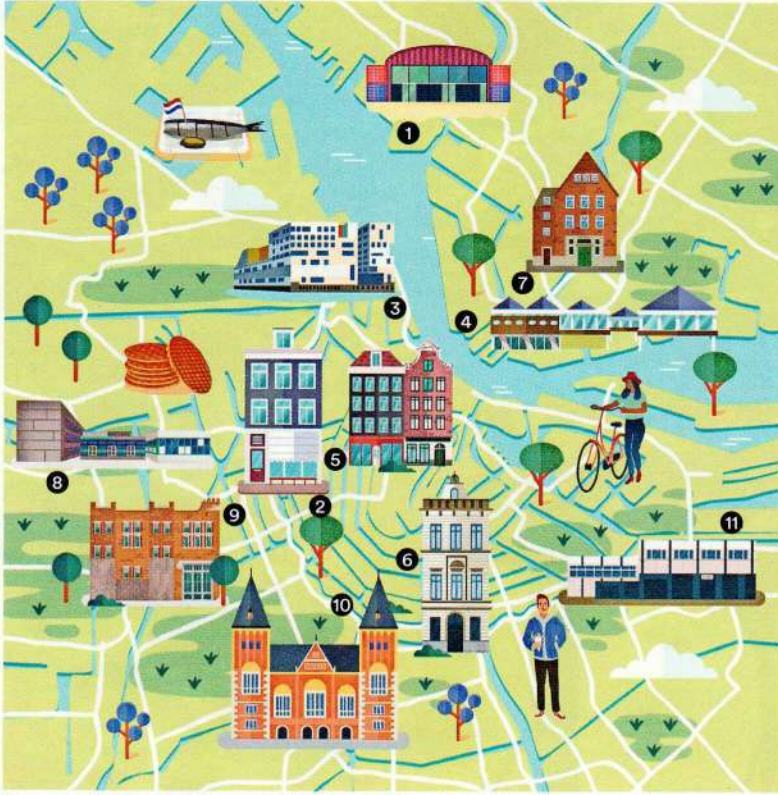
"People say the Dutch have no culinary tradition, but that is no longer the case," says food critic Joël Broekaert. "France and Belgium are known for their classics, but what's happening here is way more interesting. Look at what chef Joris Bijdendijk is doing at Rijks, the Rijksmuseum restaurant that has received its first Michelin star. He'll make a dish using 30 types of Dutch beans, or an extra small *krentenbolletje* (traditional Dutch raisin bun) as an amuse-bouche." There is a new confidence in the kitchen, because young chefs care more about reinvention than getting a Michelin star, even though twenty Dutch restaurants have two or three stars.

Broekaert says that fine dining in Amsterdam doesn't have to cost a fortune. "Restaurants like Café Modern, Kaagman & Kortekaas and Breda all serve great value for money." The service has also improved tremendously over the past few years. "Waiting tables used to be a job for grumpy college students, but hospitality is finally being taken seriously again. In Amsterdam's upscale restaurants, it's not about expensive bottles >

Previous pages
from left to right:
Vondelpark (left);
EYE Filmmuseum.

Left (clockwise
from top left):
Plek restaurant
in Amsterdam
Noord; view of Prins
Hendrikkade; the
Rijksmuseum.

Amsterdam



- 1 Pilek
- 2 Festina Lente
- 3 IJdok
- 4 Framer Framed
- 5 Prinsengracht
- 6 Foam
- 7 Café Modern
- 8 De School
- 9 Hotel De Hallen
- 10 Rijksmuseum
- 11 P/////AKT

5. Green with envy

So, you've walked along the canals, been to a few museums, had a lovely dinner and danced into the wee hours. All you want to do now is to relax outside, because the sun finally came out. What I really adore about Amsterdam is that there are parks everywhere, more than in any city I've ever been to. You're never far from a canal or pond to calm your mind. Most visitors go to the romantic Vondelpark, which I consider my backyard, or the modern Westerpark, created next to a former power plant.

But you could also hop on your bike and explore the quaint towns up north. If you thought the canals were pretty, wait till you see the dikes and tiny bridges in Broek in Waterland, Durgerdam and Monnickendam. You might run into art editor Gwen Parry, who moved to Monnickendam with her partner and their baby boy. "I've always lived in the city centre, but it was overwhelming to be surrounded by parties and craziness 24/7. So, we decided to move back to the north, where I grew up. It was considered to be out in the sticks, but now everybody is buying up houses here," she says.

Monnickendam is further north than the edge of NDSM docklands. It's one hour from

Things to do

Amsterdam Dance Event
Biggest club festival in the world, attracting over 375,000 party freaks. This year's edition will be held 18-22 October; five days and five long nights. amsterdam-dance-event.nl

Bike north, way north
Rent a bike and pedal north, past the industrial docklands, towards quaint towns like Broek in Waterland and Monnickendam. You'll see the Netherlands at its prettiest. iamsterdam.com

“Hop on your bike and explore the quaint towns up north”

Central Station by bike, or twenty minutes by bus – but worth the trip. “On my way to the bus stop, I stroll past open fields and streams, I hear the birds in the trees – it's surreal.” She also likes the sense of community in Monnickendam. “When my cat went missing, the whole town went looking for him. And when my neighbour died, the villagers brought groceries for his widow. I've never seen the level of commitment to other people that I have seen here.” ■