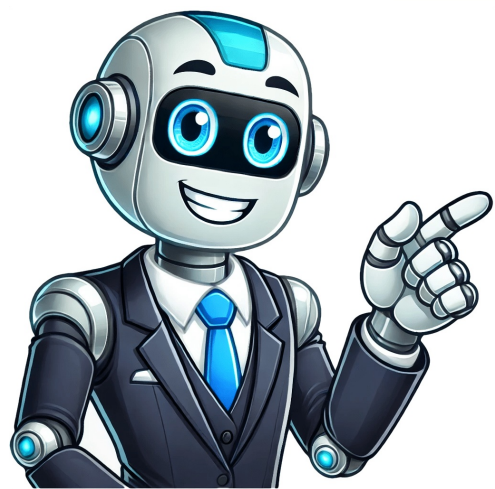


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Updated on October 7, 2024 There are so many reasons why Amsterdam, the capital the Netherlands, should be on your must-visit travel list. The city perfectly blends historic elegance and a modern attitude. The four major components the city is famous for are the picturesque canals, historic architecture, world-famous museums, and a vibrant culture. The city has so much to offer, that regardless of whether you are a history nerd, an art enthusiast, a food lover, or simply someone who appreciates visiting a big city, Amsterdam will meet your needs and go beyond. What to do in Amsterdam There are many activities happening around the city all year around, but on top of this, the city will find of sights worth checking out when going to Amsterdam. Visit the Anne Frank House A powerful and emotional experience in Amsterdam is visiting the Anne Frank House. The museum is located on Prinsengracht, in the building where Anne Frank and her family hid from the Nazis during World War II. As you walk from room to room, you will find the diary on display. You also get to walk through the secret annex, all colliding in a very moving experience. Getting tickets to Anne Frank House is simple, but ticket can sell out during the popular seasons. So, make sure to book in advance, to experience this sight which is a reminder of the horrors of war and the resilience of the human spirit.

The city's canals are a beautiful sight. The Canal Ring is a UNESCO World Heritage site and was constructed in the 17th century. Immersive yourself in art at the Rijksmuseum and Van Gogh Museum If you are a lover of art, Amsterdam is the perfect place for you. The Rijksmuseum is one of the world's most famous art institutions with over 8,000 works of art. Some of the most famous artists in display includes Rembrandt, Vermeer, and Frans Hals. Close to the Rijksmuseum you will find the Van Gogh Museum, which has been dedicated to the life and works of Vincent van Gogh. The museum has the world's largest collection of Van Gogh paintings. Walking through the museum gives an insight into his troubled life and the emotional intensity of his work. Bike around the city At the heart of the city of Amsterdam you will find bikes. The city is built for cyclists, with over 40 kilometers of bike paths. You can rent a bike and get around the city faster, or ride through Vondelpark, the largest green space in the city. Experience nightlife in Leidseplein and Rembrandtplein If you are looking for vibrant nightlife, you can head to the squares of Leidseplein and Rembrandtplein. Both areas are packed with bars, clubs, and restaurants, where you can find anything from live music to cocktail lounges. The nightlife in Amsterdam is diverse, with a large music selection of electronic music or jazz clubs, or cozy pubs for a chill hang. Book-to-know before heading to Amsterdam The most important thing before heading to Amsterdam is to be aware that the weather can be unpredictable. The city in general has mild temperatures and frequent rain throughout the year. Between April and October is the best time to visit. The weather is warmer, and more activities are happening in the city. Expectancy spring as the best time to visit. The city is generally warm, but it can be rainy. It is always good to have a backup plan. The city is generally warm, but it can be rainy. It is always good to have a backup plan. The city is generally warm, but it can be rainy. It is always good to have a backup plan.

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One is called 'Clara', about an eighteenth-century rhinoceros who grew to be the most famous in history. The other is 'Crawly Creatures', an exhibition which explores the appreciation of little creatures such as toads, lizards and spiders in art and science, featuring work by artists such as Albrecht Dürer, Peter Paul Rubens, and Maria Sibylla Merian. 'ADE - Amsterdam Dance Event' - is one of the biggest EDM festivals in the world, with many artists playing all over the city. In August, we celebrate love with hundreds of thousands of people during Pride - we are incredibly proud as Amsterdammers to celebrate Pride together as one. And November brings Museumnacht - museum night - when almost every museum in Amsterdam opens long into the night. Imagine seeing a Frans Hals painting while dancing!' Interview by Derek Robertson. Discover our full ranking of the 53 best cities in the world for 2022. We just named Amsterdam the fifth best city in the world, based on the results of our annual Time Out Index survey. And so who better to tell us why 'Dam is so hot right now than Taco Dibbits, director of the world-famous Rijksmuseum? From its progressive politics to its dazzling art scene, he tells us why he loves his home city. Amsterdam's a tolerant, progressive city 'Since the sixteenth century Amsterdam has welcomed immigrants and, along with them, their many cultures and beliefs. Nowadays, Amsterdammers work hard on upholding and redefining tolerance as one of the city's essential values. 'You can walk or get around by bike 'It's beautiful, vibrant and bustling, but it's also very approachable and relaxed. Because it's small, you can visit everything on foot and by bike, and there's always something going on somewhere to explore. 'It comes into its own in summer 'With summer getting into full swing, there are so many great exhibitions, concerts and special events lined up. Think cinema under the stars, nights in the Botanical Gardens and concerts at Artis Zoo and on the canals during Grachtenfestival.' Noordmarkt. Photograph: Picture Partners / Shutterstock.com The food scene is popping off 'On Saturday mornings I get fresh organic products from Noordmarkt. And while one never previously thought of Amsterdam as a city of restaurants and great food, this has changed radically - there are now so many great places worth trying. Dine at RIJKS, our Michelin-starred restaurant (Amsterdam now has 19 Michelin-starred restaurants!) or Café Caron in De Pijp. The food scene really highlights Amsterdam's cultural diversity too, with great places such as Bacalar (Mexican), the classic Sama Sebo (Indonesian), Shah Jahan (Indian), Lalla Rookh (Surinamese) and De Hajeshoek (Surinamese). 'If I'm with friends or family, I often visit Café de Ceuvél in Noord. On a warm summer day, we bring our swimsuits and take a dive. One thing the Dutch are famous for is apple pie, and you'll find the best at a café called Waagenaogen in Noord's Neef Louis vintage design store. ... and there's always loads of art to see 'An important part of Dutch history is to be found in the Jewish Cultural Quarter. Next year the National Holocaust Museum will open in the area, while the Portuguese synagogue and the Jewish Museum are worth visiting to learn about Amsterdam's Jewish heritage. 'Bijlmer's OSCAM is an interesting new contemporary art space that specialises in youth subcultures. And always plan day trips to experience the Netherlands fully! I'm really fond of the beautiful Kröller-Müller Museum in the Veluwe National Park - they have an incredible sculpture garden and van Gogh collection. Also, Museum de Pont in Tilburg has an amazing international collection of art from the likes of Anish Kapoor, Marlene Dumas, Rineke Djikstra and Sophie Calle.' Amsterdam Pride. 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Interview by Derek Robertson. Discover our full ranking of the 53 best cities in the world for 2022. Within one minute of stepping out of our taxi upon arriving at our flat in Amsterdam Zuid, we decided we wanted to move here. Amsterdam is a wonderfully dynamic and diverse city that doesn't experience blistering heat waves like most of the South of Europe does during the summer. In fact, we experienced nearly all four seasons in one day most of the days we were there (pro tip - do not rely on the weather app in Amsterdam - it will prove you wrong!). We experienced nights in the low 60's and highs in the mid-70's F. The humidity was perfect. My husband, Sasha and I have spent quite a bit of time traveling and living in Europe, so we have visited a decent amount of European cities. So for us to say that Amsterdam is our FAVORITE European city, it's a big statement! Below I will list 15 reasons we (and so many others) think that Amsterdam is one of the best cities in Europe! If you'll be visiting Europe, have a look through my European archives for helpful blog posts all around the continent!' In this blog post I will cover the following: Great things to do in Amsterdam and fun facts about the city Delicious places to eat in Amsterdam Recommendations for traveling in Amsterdam with kids This is one of the aspects that makes this canal city so charming. The biking and pedestrian infrastructure is truly remarkable with bike lanes clearly painted in a rusted red color. There are three different light sections when you cross a pedestrian crosswalk here - one for bicycles, one for the city tram, and one for cars. Locals have little patience for tourists who are not paying attention, so be aware of your surroundings and watch your small children, as bicyclists stop very fast. Not only is the city accessible by bike, it's very pedestrian friendly and well thought out. Whether you're on a boat cruising through the canal, on a bike whizzing by, or taking a casual walking stroll, getting around Amsterdam is easy and stress-free. In early July, children are still in school (their summer holiday begins later in other parts of Europe), so we got to see how parents commute their children to school every day - in the front of a bike, of course! This type of bicycle was the most commonly seen method of transportation for families in Amsterdam, and I wish cities in the U.S. would catch on to this, as it's a brilliant and environmentally friendly way to bring young kids to school rather than driving. We even saw a few bicyclists carrying a grown adult in the front carriage! The tram runs through the city and costs just a few euros each direction. You can simply scan your phone payment or credit card, but be aware that if you don't pay for the trip, you won't be able to board the train. Amsterdam is a wonderful city to visit with kids. We had a fantastic time here, and we highly recommend it. Amsterdam is a wonderful city to visit with kids. We had a fantastic time here, and we highly recommend it. Amsterdam is a wonderful city to visit with kids. We had a fantastic time here, and we highly recommend it.

enter Zaanse Schans, you will suddenly smell the incredible aroma of chocolate. Why? There is a cacao processing plant along the river, which makes the entire town smell of chocolate. It felt very odd as Willy Wonka and I half expected giant blueberries to suddenly appear and start dancing before our eyes. Here you can walk through the fields and even get to see an iconic the leopards live, serene and lovely experience. Be sure to try a smoked salmon or smoked herring sandwich from the nice married couple with a stand along the pedestrian path! Entry into Zaanse Schans is free, though you can purchase tickets to its various museums on site. Entry into the clog museum and cheese shop (where you can do all the sampling your heart desires!) is free. What we loved about Zaanse Schans was how non-tacky it felt. Even though this is a very popular tourist attraction, it just didn't feel tacky, and I think it's because nearly everything they sell is 100% local and from this region, from the cheese to the clogs to the mug and keychain souvenirs in the gift shops. I didn't see anything made in China, which was a nice surprise. Zaanse Schans is a great day trip and you should allow enough time to explore the area. Our bike ride took a little over an hour each way (there are also a few restaurants along the way you can stop to get food), plus around 2 - 3 hours to explore the village. Did you know that clogs were invented to be a working shoe? Farmers wear them in the fields so as not to injure their feet from the cow's heavy hooves and heavy farming equipment. You can roll a car over a clog and your foot will be none the wiser, nice and snug with all toes still intact as if it were merely struck by a feather (though we did not test this theory ourselves). There are different types of clogs for different regions, and Sundays are meant for decorative clogs rather than functional clogs. Essentially when out and about mingling with folks from other towns, people could take one look at the other person's clog and know from which region that person is from. Cool, right? Quiet? A capital European city? Sure, Amsterdam has its share of party nightlife, but during the daytime, the city feels very quaint and quiet, and locals tend not to yell or speak loudly. We've spent quite a bit of time in Mexico, so we're quite used to constant noisy music with a heavy bass, and a lively Latino culture who laugh openly, speak loudly, and generally take pride in being jolly and boisterous. Amsterdam often felt like a peaceful lullaby as we walked through its quaint streets with not a soul in sight. We've never visited a city where all the museums were concentrated in one walkable area rather than being spread out - this makes it easy to plan your day around which museum(s) you'd like to visit! *Tip*: If you plan to visit many museums, it may be worth your while to purchase the IAmsterdam card, which gets you into select sites for free. If you only have time for one museum in Amsterdam, let the Rijksmuseum be it! You could easily spend all day here if you're an art lover. Head directly to the second floor to the Hall of Honor for the special collection (this is where you can see many of the Dutch Masters works such as Rembrandt and Vermeer.) One of the first things you'll notice when walking around Amsterdam, is the lovely tall, skinny shoebox houses - but if you look a bit closer, you'll notice that many of them are not straight. They are tilting, and most of the front facades lean forward. Why is this? Well, houses are built on 12 meters (36 feet) of mud, and because of their location directly on the canal, the infrastructure is not stable and the homes are literally sinking. This is starting to become a big problem for homeowners because there is no insurance to protect against mitigating this, so homeowners are having to foot the bill to fix it, and it's not a cheap procedure! Now look even closer and you'll notice that each home and building has a large hook on the very top. The reason for the front facade tilting, is because the hooks are how furniture is hoisted up inside the building via a pulley system (the lifts are too small and the staircases too narrow, and most of the homes don't even have lifts). Think about the physics of this situation - if you hoist a heavy couch up a straight wall and a big gust of wind comes (not uncommon in Amsterdam), it may swing and smash straight into a window. But if it tilts forward, there is less potential for it to swing back into the building. Fascinating stuff! 80% of the population lives below sea level! Bike theft is a huge issue - around 80,000 bikes are stolen each year! Over 50 cars are pulled out of the canals each year, so they introduced a low railing about half a foot above the ground to help keep cars out of the canal. Whenever a car falls into a canal, a special diving team is called into action. Amsterdam is the only city in the Netherlands that has four professional divers on call 24 hours per day - what a job! Can you imagine that small talk at a dinner party? "So what do you do for a living?" "Oh, I rescue cars from the canals of Amsterdam...oh, in fact, I'm getting a call right now, gotta go!" Prior to the 18th century, there were no home addresses, so instead a stone was placed above the door with an icon depicting whatever that business was (for example, a ship for ship builders, a ballet shoe for a dance studio, or a tooth for a dentist.) To this day you'll still see several stores above businesses with the original pictorial. Story has it that the reason behind the flowers that you'll see decorated on bicycles around the city is that a man had a wife with Alzheimer's, and he decorated her bike with brightly colored flowers so that she could find her bike in a sea of other bikes and know how to get home. How romantic is that! I'm from Hawaii, so I love seeing water - any body of water, as long as it's not a dirty swamp, lol. See the city from a different perspective from a canal cruise. There are all kinds of cruises from a 75-minute leisurely cruise, a hop-on-hop-off cruise, or a romantic dinner cruise in the evening. The two photos above were taken just a few hours apart, so you can see how wildly the weather can change within one day! Which means that while you'll still see large retail chains such as Zara and H&M, you can also head to De Negen Straatjes or 'The Nine Streets' - quaint cobblestone streets that connect the main canals between Leidsegracht and Raadhuisstraat. Here you can find over 200 independent shops, including cafes, cookie shops, and retail clothing stores selling locally made products and beautiful Dutch design. Amsterdam has been welcoming immigrants since the 16th century, so the diversity and crossroads of cultures has been ingrained in the social thread of their culture for a long time. I found it interesting that everybody spoke English, and it almost felt like an insult if I asked politely, "sorry, do you speak English?" (I never like to assume when traveling abroad.) The answer was always, "yes, of course." From the few locals we spoke with, many tend to think that the level of progression and tolerance in the city can be both a blessing and a curse. Overall we felt incredibly welcomed in Amsterdam, both when we traveled as a couple and when we had our toddler with us. People were genuinely interested in where we were coming from and if we were enjoying ourselves so far. The vibe is friendly, engaging and communal rather than transactional like we experienced in parts of the Balkans, like Montenegro. Within the span of ten minutes, you'll easily hear over 10 different languages from around the globe. People from all over the world come to Amsterdam to work or to study. The city has a young and energetic feel to it and pulsates with life. The food is incredible with a diverse array of various ethnic cuisines, and is usually run by the owner who is from that particular country. We did it when the owner of an establishment is actually the person working there - it feels more authentic, genuine and welcoming, and we always love to hear their story! My husband is an entrepreneur and business owner, so we value these connections when we travel. We tried Indonesian, Dutch, Algerian and Portuguese food just to name a few! Also, at the time of writing this blog post, Amsterdam has 23 Michelin star restaurants. (Read on for our foodie recommendations below!) Here you can find everything from stylish leather coats to locally made Dutch products, to gyros, bagels, and pickled herring. (Open all year, rain or shine, but closed on Sundays.) We walked through Vondelpark every day to get from our flat to the city center, and each time it felt so serene. Amsterdam has done a great job of integrating nature and large park spaces into the city for people to enjoy and slow down. *Tip for parents with children*: there is a playground in the back of a restaurant called Melkweg (located inside Vondelpark) with a play structure and giant buses and trucks. I recommend taking half a day to explore Amsterdam Noord, which includes taking the free ferry (you can either walk on or come on with your bike - if you're coming from Centraal Station, you'll take the #4 ferry). When you exit the ferry, grab some coffee and baked goods from Brood, a delicious bakery and cafe with a lovely seating area to rest and relax. On this side of the city, you'll also find the A'dam Lookout, which is atop the Amsterdam tower and has a giant swing overlooking the city. Be sure to head upstairs to the museum's cafe - it's a great space to get off your feet, relax, and people watch as they're art-watching. (I may have fallen asleep in one of the comfy chairs - we walked 30 months every day!) The Netherlands is well renowned for their cheese production, particularly Gouda and goat cheese. We sampled our hearts out during our visit to the countryside of Zaanse Schans, with unique flavors like lavender, red pepper, pesto, and even beer! You can purchase cheese to take home with you, as it lasts for about one month unrefrigerated, and the best place to buy it from is Henri Willig. This family has been making delicious cheese since 1974 and they sell it all over the city, including at the airport, so if you forget to purchase it in the city, not to worry, you'll have one more chance before your flight home! I would be remiss not to include the red light district in a post about Amsterdam, but I mention it with care. People come to Amsterdam for all sorts of reasons, and the opportunity to see a city where prostitution is legal (and highly regulated), is one of them. Now with our toddler back at our flat with the local nanny, Sasha and I were not exactly looking for a crazy party evening. We simply wanted to walk through the district to see what it was all about. We went around 9PM, which is the time I recommend going if you're just curious but don't want to be caught up in a rowdy evening with drunk tourists vomiting into the canal. The great thing about visiting during July, is that it doesn't get dark until 11:30 PM, so at 9PM it was still completely light outside. *Please note that it is strictly forbidden to take photos of the working ladies. There is a hefty fine, and our guide told us that they've been known to come running out in their high heels to make people delete the photo from their phone if they see someone snapping a sly photo. Please be respectful.* Now that I've covered 15 reasons why we think Amsterdam is such a cool city, let's dive into the amazing food! Below I'll list our top favorite places to eat and cafes! 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