



Day Trips from Amsterdam

Haarlem p209

Alleys wind among grand 17th-century buildings in this lively city, just a 15-minute hop from Amsterdam.

Leiden p212

Rembrandt's picturesque, canal-woven birthplace is home to the country's oldest and most prestigious university.

Keukenhof Gardens p213

See the world's largest, loveliest flower gardens in bloom during spring.

Delft p217

Delft's Gothic and Renaissance architecture rivals its beautiful Delft-ware pottery.

Alkmaar p220

Alkmaar's centuries-old cheese market is one of the traditional cheese guilds' last bastions.

Den Haag p221

Masterpieces abound in regal Den Haag's exceptional museums, including the sublime Mauritshuis.

Zaanse Schans p222

Watch windmills twirl and meet the millers at this delightful open-air museum.

Bloemenveiling Aalsmeer p223

Walk above vast, bustling, aromatic flower warehouses and catch the auction action.

Haarlem

Explore

As you stroll from glorious art-nouveau Haarlem Centraal train station (a national monument) to the old centre along Kruisweg and Kruisstraat, past exclusive boutiques, art galleries and antique shops, the city's wealth and elegance soon become apparent. Stop off at the Corrie Ten Boom House to pay homage to one of the Netherlands' most admired Resistance figures before heading to the lively Grote Markt. Just a few blocks south is the Frans Hals Museum. Haarlem was once more important in the art world than Amsterdam, and this incomparable museum possesses one of the country's finest assemblies of Dutch paintings.

Given Haarlem's quick and easy access to Amsterdam, you can easily stay on for sunset drinks, catch live music and enjoy the city's buzzing nightlife.

The Best...

- ➔ **Sight** Frans Hals Museum (p210)
- ➔ **Place to Eat** Brick (p212)
- ➔ **Place to Drink** Jopenkerk (p212)

Top Tip

Try to visit on a Saturday when Haarlem's lively market is in full swing. There's also a market on a Monday, but the Frans Hals Museum is closed.

Getting There & Away

➔ **Train** Services from Amsterdam's Centraal Station to Haarlem Centraal are frequent (€4.10, 15 minutes, up to eight per hour); the Grote Markt is a 850m walk

south of the station. When the trains stop running at night, the N30 night bus links Haarlem Centraal Station to Schiphol airport, Amsterdam.

➔ **Car** From the ring road west of the city, take the N200, which becomes the A200.

Need to Know

- ➔ **Area Code** 023
- ➔ **Location** 20km west of Amsterdam
- ➔ **Tourist Office** (VVV; ☎023-531 73 25; www.haarlemmarketing.nl; Grote Markt 2; ☎9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-5pm Sat, noon-4pm Sun Apr-Sep, 1-5.30pm Mon, 9.30am-5.30pm Tue-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat Oct-Mar)



SIGHTS

TOWN HALL

HISTORIC BUILDING

(Grote Markt 2) At the western end of the Grote Markt is the florid, 14th-century town hall, which sprouted many extensions including a balcony where judgements from the high court were pronounced. It only opens to the public on Open Monuments Days during the second weekend of September.

GROTE KERK VAN ST BAVO

CHURCH

(www.bavo.nl; Oude Groenmarkt 22; adult/child €2.50/free; ☎10am-5pm Mon-Sat) Topped by a 50m-high steeple, the Gothic Grote Kerk van St Bavo cathedral contains some fine Renaissance artworks, but the star attraction is its stunning Müller organ – one of the most magnificent in the world, standing 30m high with about 5000 pipes. It was played by Handel and a 10-year-old Mozart. Free hour-long **organ recitals** take place at 8.15pm Tuesday and 4pm Thursday in July and August, and



TRAVEL TIPS

All of these destinations lie within an hour's journey from Amsterdam by train (and, if need be, by connecting tram or bus). If you get an early start, it's possible to 'do' two locations in a day (Alkmaar and Zaanse Schans, for instance) without feeling rushed.

The fast, efficient Dutch railway network makes it a snap to get around. Rather than purchase a *dagkaart* (day pass; €51.40), buy a same-day return ticket from Amsterdam (around €8.20 to €22.40 for the towns in this chapter, depending on the distance), which allows you to hop on and off at multiple stops so long as you complete the journey in a single day.

Cycle paths are everywhere, but there's no need to bring a bike with you – rentals costing around €7.50 to €12 per day are widely available.