

# AMSTERDAM

## ENCOUNTER

ZORA O'NEILL

Amsterdam Encounter

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### Colour-Coding & Maps

Colour-coding is used for symbols on maps and in the text that they relate to (eg all eating venues on the maps and in the text are given a green knife and fork symbol). Each neighbourhood also gets its own colour, and this is used down the edge of the page and throughout that neighbourhood section.

Shaded yellow areas on the maps denote 'areas of interest' – for their historical significance, their attractive architecture or their great bars and restaurants. We encourage you to head to these areas and just start exploring!

### Prices

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## ZORAO'N EILL

Fresh out of college, Zora O'Neill arrived in Amsterdam to work at a cafe adjoining a scrappy improv theatre (now the comedy juggernaut Boom Chicago; p93). Her job description called for dispensing tourist advice along with grilled sandwiches – a bit flawed, considering she'd just arrived herself. If you got lost looking for that 'super easy-to-find' bike route to Marken in 1994, Zora's very sorry. Fortunately, she's much more qualified now; with in-laws, friends and her own bike in Amsterdam, she visits every year. The first thing she does when she arrives is eat a *broodje haring* (p89), and the second thing she does is get on a boat. The rest of the year, she lives in Astoria, Queens, where she writes about food and travel. Zora has been a guidebook author since 2003; this is her fourth book for Lonely Planet.



## ZORA'ST HANKS

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**Cover photograph** Bicycles parked by Singel canal. Amsterdam, North Holland, Netherlands, Europe; Frans Lemmens/LPI

**Internal photographs** p21 Dennis Cox/Alamy; p131 Arco Images GmbH/Alamy; p15 (Rag chair for Droog by Tejo Remy) Robaard/Theuwkens; p24 Netherlands Board of Tourism & Conventions; p156 Eduard Bergman (NBTC); p49, p71, p87, p107 by Zora O'Neill. All other photographs by Lonely Planet Images, and by Will Salter except p8 Christian Aslund; p4 Paul Beinssen; p28 Simon Foale; p159 Amerens Hedwich; p22, p40, p52, p64, p76, p94, p98, p116, p118, p141, p142 Martin Moos; p11, p165 Richard Nebesky; p36 Zaw Min Yu.

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# THIS IS AMSTERDAM

You're sitting on a small boat, sliding along the curve of the Prinsengracht. It's twilight, and the sky is painted the richest indigo. The white lights edging the canal bridges reflect on the black water, and the windows in the gabled houses glow gold.

It's just another gorgeous evening in Amsterdam, a magical city where 17th-century buildings lean against each other like fond old friends, and the mindset of residents is one of the most progressive in the world.

Amsterdam may be famous for its pragmatic approach to sex and drugs, but once you're here for more than an afternoon, you'll see how this policy fits right into a city that values its inhabitants' rights to pursue their interests – whether that means opening a shop specialising in toothbrushes or skating around town in nothing but a rhinestone-studded jockstrap.

It is true that Amsterdammers will take any excuse to party till dawn, and concert halls and clubs are booked solid with entertainment from all over the globe. Combine this with a flourishing design scene and catwalk style during the biannual fashion week, and it's hard to believe that Amsterdam is a city of only 750,000 people.

It is growing though, as you'll see from the construction scaffolding visible all over town. With a new metro line being laid and a harbour that seems to sprout a fresh architectural marvel every month, this metropolis is in fast-forward motion. In recent years, debates over immigration, right-leaning national politics and a global economic meltdown have caused citywide anxiety. But Amsterdammers are too relaxed to live in crisis mode. They've gotten back to business, settled into their beloved candlelit bars, flocked to the clubs – or donned their wigs and platform boots and hopped back on their bicycles. In short, they're still doing their own thing. Care to join in? Just pack a few days' attitude, and climb aboard.

**Top left** Getting into the swing of things at the Dampkring coffeeshop (p53) **Top right** The sun sets on Groenburgwal canal in the heart of the Southern Canal Belt **Bottom** A motorcyclist pauses outside Koninklijk Paleis (p42)