

On the Road





Amsterdam

📍 020 / POP 805,155

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Ron Gastrobar (p82)
- ➔ Dikke Graaf (p82)
- ➔ Foodhallen (p83)
- ➔ De Kas (p86)
- ➔ Ciel Bleu (p84)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Hoxton Amsterdam (p72)
- ➔ Hotel Not Hotel (p75)
- ➔ B&B Le Maroxidien (p76)
- ➔ Sir Albert Hotel (p75)
- ➔ Cocomama (p73)

Why Go?

Amsterdam works its fairy-tale magic in many ways: via the gabled Golden Age buildings, the glinting boat-filled canals, and especially the cosy, centuries-old brown *cafés*, where candles burn low and beers froth high. Art admirers will be hard-pressed to ogle a more masterpiece-packed city, thanks to rich collections at the Rijks, Van Gogh, Stedelijk and Hermitage museums. Music fans can tune into concert halls booked solid with entertainment from all over the globe. And hedonists? Amsterdam's risqué side beckons, from the women in the Red Light District windows to cannabis-selling *caffeshops*.

The city is remarkably intimate and accessible, its compact core ripe for rambling. You never know what you'll find among the atmospheric lanes: a hidden garden, an antique-book market, a 17th-century distillery – always worlds-within-worlds, where nothing ever seems the same twice.

When to Go

- ➔ Summer is the peak time, when *café* terraces boom and festivals rock almost every weekend. Locals go on holiday in late July and August, so you might find your favourite restaurant closed.
- ➔ Visitor numbers start to taper in October, and by November off-peak rates begin in earnest. Ice skating, fireplace-warmed *cafés* and queue-free museums ease the chilly days from December through February.
- ➔ Crowds start coming back around Easter, and amass in full force around King's Day (27 April), Remembrance Day (4 May) and Liberation Day (5 May).