



Haarlem & North Holland

Includes ➔

Haarlem.....	102
Waterland Region....	108
Alkmaar	112
Hoorn	116
Enkhuizen	118
Texel	121
Muiden.....	129
Flevoland	132
Lelystad	132

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Brick (p105)
- ➔ Marque (p117)
- ➔ Restaurant Mr & Mrs (p105)
- ➔ De Hoofdtoren (p117)
- ➔ Texel's island producers (p128)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Camp Silver Island Hideaway (p127)
- ➔ Gevangenij Hotel Hoorn (p117)
- ➔ Boutique Hotel Texel (p126)
- ➔ De Koepoort (p119)
- ➔ Hello I'm Local Boutique Hostel (p103)

Why Go?

The quintessentially Dutch province of Noord-Holland (North Holland) wraps around Amsterdam like a crown. Less than 20km west of Amsterdam, but entirely its own city, elegant Haarlem is the region's capital and a charming example of 17th-century grandeur. Canals wind through its centre, while wide, sandy beaches fringe its western edge.

Further afield, smaller centres range from mast-filled Golden Age ports such as Hoorn and Enkhuizen with architecturally resplendent historic centres to canal-laced towns and villages like Alkmaar and Edam, famed for their cheese and centuries-old cheese markets. Across the region, bucolic expanses of windswept countryside span extensive *polders* (areas surrounded by dykes where the water can be artificially controlled) to windmill-dotted farmland grazed by cows and sheep, fields of flowers and magnificent dunescapes, especially on the idyllic, ends-of-the-earth island of Texel.

When to Go

- ➔ Easily accessible from Amsterdam whatever the weather, Haarlem's outstanding museums, fabulous bars, *cafés*, restaurants and great shopping make it a year-round destination.
- ➔ Springtime lambing in March and April, around Easter, is an especially delightful time to island hop over to Texel, even though it's still too cold for swimming.
- ➔ The warmer months of May to September are the prime time to visit smaller towns and villages, which all but hibernate during winter, particularly from November to March, when many sights, activities and attractions close.



Haarlem & North Holland Highlights

- 1 Viewing priceless works of Dutch Masters at the **Frans Hals Museum** (p103) in Golden Age Haarlem.
- 2 Taking in the centuries-old spectacle of the **Kaasmarkt** (cheese market; p110) in the quaint town of Edam.
- 3 Experiencing hardy seafaring life in the days

before the Afsluitdijk (Barrier Dyke) at Enkhuizen's **Zuiderzeemuseum** (p118).

- 4 Cycling past high sand dunes, deserted beaches, lush forests and green pastures on the island of **Texel** (p121).

- 5 Exploring the mighty medieval fortress of

Muiderslot (p129) in the lively harbour town of Muiden.

- 6 Experiencing a 'floating auction' at Broek op Langedijk's fascinating **Museum Broeker Veiling** (p115).

- 7 Strolling the elegant streets inside the vast star-shaped fortress at **Naarden** (p130).