

My Netherlands Travels by Patrick Lyons

I originally wrote the first version of this travel guide in 2017 and decided to update it in 2026 after several more visits to Amsterdam and a deeper understanding of the surrounding areas. In May of 2026, I'll be making my **14th trip to the Netherland!** My friends joke that people might think I secretly have another family over there... I don't 😊. Hopefully, after your visit, you'll understand why I love it so much.

My adventures started in September of 2005 when my buddy JB was working in London for a week and another friend, EJ had just got divorced. We felt like it was a perfect time to get away, decompress, and celebrate. So, me, Doug, and EJ hopped on flights to meet JB in London, then EJ, Doug, and I flew to Amsterdam. I would have never thought that one single adventure would have evolved into my love for this amazing Country and culture. The beautiful thing about my trips is how many people I have been able to share these adventures with. The trips range from large groups of 12 to small groups of 2. Some on their 1st adventure and others, sharing the journey with me multiple times.

It was that 1st visit where we really had no idea what we were getting into. We had some internet information, a few guidebooks, some maps, and a love of exploring. We booked a cheap hotel that we could cram 3 of us into and threw ourselves into Amsterdam. We walked a million miles, dodged bikes, explored the difference between a koffiehuis vs a coffeeshop, did 1000 loops through the beauty of the red-light district (yes, it's beautiful), spent many hours in bars, and quickly got the lay of the land. Within a few hours, we knew this was not going to be our 1 and only trip and we started talking about the next adventure. We knew that next time it had to be on a houseboat though!

Most of my trips are in late May, just before the Memorial Day holiday. I've also visited in October with my family to run the Amsterdam marathon, I traveled in September for work and even planned a bachelor party there in March.

My buddy Doug and I really started to pave the way for the adventures and over the years we have done about 8-10 trips together. We started with getting a boat, renting bikes, and exploring beyond Amsterdam. On one of our adventures our buddy Kirk joined us and quickly fell in love with the adventures. Jim joined us a year later, and now it's evolved into a yearly trip for all of us. We are 4 like-minded guys with an absolute love for adventure. With the introduction of Jim and Kirk we started to see our exploration evolve much more beyond the Netherlands. In 2024, we cycled through Copenhagen and visited Sweden. In May of 2026, we are visiting Amsterdam, then headed to Belgium with Antwerp being our homebase and we will visit Bruges, Ghent and Brussels. We love calling Amsterdam homebase, but exploring beyond the city has been worth every minute!

I hope you find this information helpful and maybe even get a few laughs!

Currency:

The local currency is the euro, but the Netherlands is far more advanced than the U.S. when it comes to tap-to-pay—most people use cards for everything. That said, it's still a good idea to carry some cash for street markets or small vendors. Like most of Europe, ATMs use a **4-digit PIN**, so make sure your debit card is set up accordingly before you go. Also check your limits and consider increasing your daily withdrawal limit.

Grocery:

Bring a reusable shopping bag with you. Grocery stores like Albert Heijn do not readily provide bags, and even if you're staying in a hotel, you'll likely want one for snacks or charcuterie. Albert Heijn is everywhere and has amazing meat, cheese, and bakery items are fantastic. You'll also notice how cheap bottled water is over in the Netherlands, so grab some for your stay.

Airport to Central Station:

Amsterdam airport (**Schiphol**) is one of the easiest places to navigate. I usually hop on the train and head right to **Central Station**. It's about a 20-minute train ride (express) and only costs about 4 Euros. The train station is inside the airport and very well marked. They have a regional and an express, the express has only a few stops. You'll see signs just as you exit customs. They have blue and yellow kiosks where you can buy the tickets. Everyone knows English so if you run into a jam, just ask for help. Once at Central Station you exit with the river at your back. I always reference the city as a big U with Central Station being the opening of the U and the canal rings being the sides of the U.



One thing that is hard to avoid once getting out of the train station is the sheer number of bikes, they are EVERYWHERE!! A well often photo spot is the bike garage on your right when you exit Central Station.



Over the years the city has made some changes to the bike garage outside of the train station. It's moved underground and they are in the process of taking down the structure. It was a site to see, hopefully it's still intact when you visit!

I have taken an Uber from **Schiphol** and it was an absolute pain in the ass. Finding the Uber pickup outside was not simple and I think it took more time than just jumping on the train. There can be a fair amount of car traffic so take that into consideration if you are thinking about a car vs train.

If you do take the train, hang onto your ticket because you need to scan it to exit Central Station. I noticed that over the last few years the system has tightened down on "free riders."

Canals:

As you get to Amsterdam it's impossible not to notice the canals. Amsterdam is home to 165 canals, roughly 31 miles, more canals than Venice! There are 4 main canals that for the most part wrap around the city (U). The **Singel** in the inter canal closest to the center of Amsterdam. This one ends at the bottom of the U. After the **Singel** it goes the **Herengracht**, **Keizersgracht**, and **Prinsengracht**. All of them feed into the **Amstel**. If you see the word Gracht in an address then it's referencing a canal, if you see Straat then it's referring to a street. Numerous canals intersect within the ring of canals, creating particularly striking and visually appealing junctions.



One of my favorite spots is at the corner of **Brouwersgracht and Prinsengracht**. The boat activity at this intersection is absolutely insane. The beauty of it is watching the Dutch peacefully navigate the water and chaos without a single word to each other. In all of my years of going to Amsterdam, not once have I ever seen anyone yell, scream, or shout at another person despite the chaos. You will notice that the canal tour boats have priority over any other boat. You will be shocked watching these massive boats and their skilled drivers turn the boats on a dime.

If you happen to be on the corner in **Brouwersgracht & Prinsengracht** you might see a beautiful boat called the **Prins & Brouwer**, I stayed on this boat a in 2016 and had the best time ever just watching the world go by. This was the largest boat I have stayed on in Amsterdam, and we were told that it was owned by a Corporate America Executive (Nike or Reebok). A few years ago, we noticed a large group of people on the bow of it doing a photoshoot. The picture below on the right is from that day.



In 2024, Jim joined me on a work trip, and we stayed on a boat across from the **Prins & Brouwer** on the **Brouwersgracht**, adjacent to the Papiermolensluis Bridge (boat on the bottom left). It was fun to see the action from a different perspective. I love this area of town. It's a quick walk to Central Station.



Another famous canal is the **Amstel**. It is rather wide and long and separates North and South Holland. In 2013, 2015, and 2017 I stayed on the **Amstel**, renting 2 different boats directly in front of the Opera House. I have learned over the years that I prefer staying more in the center of the city vs being down near the Opera House.



In May of 2018, Doug and I stayed on the **Singel** directly at the Ronde Lutherse Kerk, a beautiful Lutheran Church with an amazing copper dome. This area of town is great; it's an easy walk into the heart of the Oude Kerk and Nieuwmarkt Square. The deck of this boat was great, and I have fond memories of having a cup of coffee in the morning and just enjoying the peace of the city. I could literally hear someone stirring their coffee with a spoon from a loft on the bank of the canal. For such a bustling city, it's extremely peaceful.



In 2019, Doug and I had an amazing houseboat on the **Prinsengracht**. This boat was just a few hundred yards from the Anne Frank House and in an amazing location!



Canal Tours:

A great way to navigate the city and see the canals is on one of the hop-on hop-off cruises. My advice is to take the **City Sightseeing Amsterdam** boats. They have 8 different loops you can take throughout the city. You can buy tickets in City Sightseeing Shops or online at www.citysightseeingamsterdam.nl. They are basically sleek water taxis that take you to some of the most common spots in the city or get you close enough for a short walk. A few years ago, we had a super rainy day, and I decided to hop on one and toured the entire city by water. It was a lot of fun, and I was able to jump off once it got nice, did some shopping and jumped back on again.

In 2017, we had a group of 9 that made the trip, so I rented a private charter for the group of us through **Rent A Boat Amsterdam**. It was a great way to see the city with a private captain. The private tours are nice as they get into some of the much smaller and quiet canals. You'll notice that the canal tours are abundant and they each offer something different (drinks, dinner, smoking, sunset, etc.). Don't miss getting on the water in Amsterdam!



In 2019, Doug and I decided that it was time to try our own rental as we wanted to experience navigating the canals in our own self-guided tour. We packed a cooler and rented a small electric boat from **Boats 4 Rent** in **Westerpark**. They gave us a map, and I also downloaded an app that made it so easy to navigate. We ventured out in our little electric metal boat and had no issues navigating the canals. You can get caught up in some wind, so my suggestion is to wait

to do this when you have a little more knowledge of the area and the canals. No boat license was needed.



Getting Around (try the bikes!):

Bikes, Bikes, Bikes... They are everywhere and an easy way to get around Amsterdam. The Dutch have figured it out and actually have bike lanes!! Whatever you do, just don't walk in the bike lane or you will get yelled at, someone will ring their bell at you, or you might even get run over. I often joke that Amsterdam is a silent city, the thing you will hear the most is the bells from the bikes. Our 1st year in Amsterdam we had no clue how easy it was to bike, so we just walked everywhere and logged mile after mile. Public transportation via trams also makes it easy to get around the city. Taxis can be very expensive and not really a great way to go in my opinion.

If you do want to rent a bike the 2 main places I have rented from are **MacBikes** or **Black Bikes**, both have locations all over the city, which is helpful for renting or if you run into an issue.

Over the years our trips have evolved so much with biking. We now rent peddle assist bikes, bring some handlebar mounts for our cell phones, and rent saddle bags/panniers for the bikes. We travel very long distances from Amsterdam and bring our chargers with us. Most places you visit have massive parking garages for your bike and you can plug them in while you're exploring another amazing city. Search "Fietsenstalling" (bicycle storage) on the map and you'll find all the bike parking garages. It's also free for tourists!

When using Google or Apple maps for directions and you select bike as the mode of transportation, it works perfectly. They really have the system down and I say that with logging hundreds of miles in the Netherlands.

As a side note, Doug now arranges City to City e-bike trips to the Netherlands. Let me know when you're ready and we can set you up for an amazing adventure!

It's easy to have Amsterdam as a home base and jump on the Train from Central Station and do some exploring if biking isn't your thing. The trains are cheap, fast, and the schedule has abundant options and very punctual. It's a very well-oiled machine.

In the city, you can also jump on the street trams. They have 15 tram lines that cover most of the city except the far north (Amsterdam-Noord). The tram operators do not tolerate any bad behavior so it's extremely safe to get around.

Places to visit outside of Amsterdam:

A few places we have biked to that I would suggest visiting – even via the train:

Zaanse Schans – Land of the windmills and cheese farms. If you can't bike here, take the train from Central Station. Get off at the Zaanse Schans stop. Notice the smell of chocolate in the air and walk towards the Zaan River. Cross the bridge to Zaanse Schans, you can't miss it. I have been a couple times, once on bike and once on the train. It's super easy and you get to go inside the windmills and learn about how they operate. The area is a giant walking museum and thankfully has been protected.



Utrecht – The 4th largest city in the Netherlands, as well as the capital and the most populous city of the province of Utrecht. In 2025, we stayed in a houseboat here and used it as a home base to travel to Amersfoort and Gouda. Before Amsterdam became a massive shipping port, Utrecht was the primary spot, the canals stroll right through the city and in some areas, you can see where a ship would bring in the supplies at the water level and deliver them under the street level business. Where I am standing in these pictures is below street level. The canal is

lined with bars and restaurants along the water and on the street above are shops and restaurants. If you're looking for a coffeeshop in Utrecht, there are only a few options so think about bringing something with you if you are coming from Amsterdam on the train.



Amersfoort – Has to be one of the coolest spots outside of Amsterdam and somewhere that I would love to stay for a couple days. We traveled on bikes, from Utrecht and made a pit stop in Zeist for some Dutch pancakes. You can get here very easily from Central Station in Amsterdam. It is worth the trip even just for a few hours. The train ride is an hour.



Gouda – Yup, it's the place where Gouda cheese is from. It's pronounced How-da, don't mess it up when you're in the Netherlands or you're really going to look like a tourist! We biked from Utrecht; it was a cool ride across the countryside with very nice bike lanes. You could really cover some ground as the roads were very flat. Along the way we saw some beautiful farms, windmills, little towns, bodies of water, and even a self-serve ice cream stand at a local farm.



Haarlem – An amazing city along the Spaarne River. A wonderful past time is to sit at one of the few restaurants surrounding Grote Kerk and enjoy the sunset. From Amsterdam Central Station, it’s about 30 minutes via the train. The ride on the bike was amazing. The bike lane traveled along the Haarlemervaart waterway almost the entire way and was a completely flat ride. It had a very medieval vibe to me and is often referenced as A Golden Age kind of town.



Muiden – Home to **Muiderslot Castle** and an absolutely adorable town that lays on the mouth of the Vecht river. If you get a chance to make it out to Muiden, visit Café’ Ome Ko for a pint. It sits alongside the Vecht directly next to the lock system on the river. If you do ride a bike out to Muiden, make a pit stop at the Browerij’t IJ brewery for several pints... maybe on the way back.



One of the best parts about traveling to these places is all the beauty between them. The bike lanes are so easy to navigate, the scenery is spectacular and varies from town to town with amazing farms, windmills, ices cream stands, bars, bodies of water, churches, and so much more. If you have the time, pick a spot and make it an adventure!

Amsterdam Parks:

I love the parks in Amsterdam; they are so beautiful and peaceful. I have yet to go to Amsterdam without visiting **Vondelpark**, it's on the Southwest corner of the U and is long and narrow. I would recommend having a bike in the park so that you can cover some ground. There are some great places to have some food and drinks, but I have to say my favorite spot is called **Groot Melkhuis**. It sits on a small pond and is a great spot for a cup of coffee or a beer. I stumbled upon this spot on my 1st visit and I make sure I add it to my list yearly. The park is situated very close to the **Rijksmuseum** as well as the **Van Gogh Museum** so, it's nice to knock those out on the same day. In 2023, we stumbled upon a secret bunker/speakeasy from the cold war that's under the road. It turns out that it's more of gritty music venue run by a set of volunteers. It's called Vondelbunker and you can check it out at www.vondelbunker.nl. It's donation only so bring some euros if you want a beer.



In 2018, we took the bike to **Amsterdamse Bos**, which is also known as "The Forest". The park is amazing as it's 3 times the size of Central Park in NYC. My suggestion would be to bring a bathing suit and a towel as there are some great swimming spots throughout the park. There is

also an outdoor music venue in the park called **Amsterdamse Bostheater**. I would look it up and see who is playing as it's a very cool outdoor venue.



A couple years ago I took the bike through **Beatrixpark**, it's known for its beautiful flowers, statues, and sculptures. It happens to be near the RAI Expo & Convention Centre so it's a bit of a hot spot for anyone visiting for a conference or even to check out the **Olympic Stadium**.

Oosterpark is located on East side of the U and a beautiful spot to visit with young kids as the wading pools are nice. My suggestion is that if you do visit **Oosterpark** wrap it around a trip to the **Brouwerij 't IJ (brewery)**, **Langendijk**, or the **Dorst Café**. All are near a beautiful windmill and just great pit stops on your adventures on the East side of Amsterdam.

Squares:

Dam Square is probably the most famous as it's in the center of Amsterdam. It's loaded with performers in the day and never without people. The architecture around Dam Square is just beautiful! There are plenty of places to eat and drink around Dam Square. It's a hot spot for some amazing hotels and high end shopping in De Bijenkorf (basically a massive mall).



Rembrandt Square is in a very cool part of town towards the bottom right of the U. The area around it has great nightlife with some really big night clubs, tons of bars, and a slew of coffeeshops (for smoking). It has some cool Rembrandt Statues in the Square and well worth checking out.

Nieuwmarkt Square is a public Plaza that includes the original building that was one of the gates to the city wall. It's a masterpiece of brick and spires built circa 1488; some believe 1425. The area is lively day or night due to its proximity to Oude Kerk and the red-light district, which is sandwiched between it. It's also a quick walk from Central Station. Most days Nieuwmarkt Square has some form of street market going on with fresh flowers, food, vegetables, and vendors selling their handmade items. Like most plazas in Europe, it's a bustling area with bars, café's, coffeeshops, and restaurants. The outdoor space to enjoy the scenery is abundant.



De Wallen - The Red-Light District (RLD):

This must be one of the most beautiful places in Amsterdam. No, I'm not high. It's also likely to be the most famous section of Amsterdam. The De Wallen area, otherwise known as the red-light district, is surrounded by Oude Kerk (old church) on the west, Nieuwmarkt Square on the east, and off in the distance to the north is St. Nicholas Basilica. Take a walk across the Ouderkerksburg bridge and you'll see a stunning view, especially at night. Oude Kerk was built circa 1213 and is the oldest building in Amsterdam. It's a stunning structure on the banks of the Oudezijds Achterburgwal canal. The area has a charm to it that you have to see while in Amsterdam.



Visit the area in the day if you can so that you can get a lay of the landscape, see less action with the sex workers. Then, come back at night. Depending on the day of the week, temperature, and time it can be absolutely packed with people.

At night, the canals throughout the Red-Light District are beaming with red lights under the bridge arches and the flow of people will shock you. The area is very busy at night with a lot of gawkers, Brits on bachelor party trips dressed up to be embarrassed by their friends, tourists, and locals. There are several areas that make up the RLD including the perimeter around Oude Kerk (the old church), and along Oudezijds Achterburgwal (both sides of the street). A good landmark for the area is the Old Sailor bar or Hotel Royal Taste. Hotel Royal Taste has a handful of chairs out front that have proven to be the best place to sit in the RLD to have a drink and watch the sights. There are plenty of bars to check out. It's a great meeting spot as the RLD is a bit hopping in that area with several side streets leading to some windows glowing in red. **Do not take pictures near any of the sex workers, they will open their doors and yell at you.**



In addition to the main Red-Light District, you might hear rumblings of another couple spots. There is a small RLD on the West side of town near the Singel canal. One of my old favorite places to grab a drink is called Tales & Spirits and it happens to be at the entrance of the RLD. Each section of the RLD has its own type of worker. As you work your way from the center of the RLD the quality of the worker is evident. I can't say enough great things about Tales & Spirits though so if you are in the area, you must put it on the list. In 2016, it was listed as one of the [top 50 bars in the world](#). In 2020, it was named the [best bar in Amsterdam](#).



When I first started coming to Amsterdam the red-light district was much bigger, it intertwined the streets and alleyways directly surrounding the old church in addition to what exists today. Take a walk through the Sint Annendwarsstraat area just outside the Old Church, behind The Old Church Bar. That entire area was all windows for sex workers. It's now cute boutique stores and various other shops. There is a big push from the Mayor of Amsterdam to move the sex workers from the area to a hotel style venue. There are lots of opinions on it and from 2005 – 2010 I noticed a big decrease in the number of windows. It's stayed consistent from 2010 to 2025.

Eating and Drinking:

Restaurants in Amsterdam come and go over the years, but some staples have stayed strong over the years. When I updated this information in 2026 a handful of great spots were gone. What you do have to be careful with about the restaurants is that they close at normal hours, but you get so much light in Amsterdam you feel like it's daytime at 9 PM and then you can't eat anywhere. When I go in May, the sun rises at 5 AM and sets at 10 PM. Even at 10 PM it's still pretty light out. Look at the times for the restaurants and plan accordingly. Here is a list of some solid ones that still exist.

When it comes to eating in Amsterdam my favorite thing is the pancakes. I could eat them all day long and you can make a pancake with any fixings your heart desires. I think I am a bit nostalgic for a place called **Bagel & Sandwich Village** (Singel 1). For years I would hop off the train after just arriving from an overnight flight and stop in for an 8 AM pancake, coffee, and beer... yes that is correct I would have a beer with my breakfast at this place. Not sure why, maybe because it's the start of my vacation, maybe it's the time zone adjustment. Nonetheless, this is my 1st stop on the party train.

Another spot that is top on my pancake list is the **Pancake Bakery** (Prinsengracht 191 – near the Anne Frank House). There can be a wait at the Pancake Bakery so just prepare.



If you're looking for a solid meal, head to a steak house called **Cannibal Royal** (Handboogstraat 17A). They do have several locations, and I have been to a few of them. I like the one on Handboogstraat. The vibe is fun, good music playing, and a bit eclectic. They do have a spotify channel so check it out.

If you want to try a traditional Dutch meal, head to **Moeders** (Rozengracht 251). It's a classic spot and the food is so good. It's old and has a great reputation so consider seeing if you can make a reservation. I think we went for a late lunch on my visit and had no problems.

For years while being on the canal boats I would pass a very cool looking spot called **Mexicaans Café-Restaurant La Margarita Amsterdam** (Langebrugsteeg 6). Try and go on a nice day and sit out back on the outdoor patio. The view is cool.



We have found two pizza places that are solid, **Eatmosfera Oost** (Sumatrstraat 47). It's pretty far west of the city in a completely residential section of the city. It's a great spot with solid pizza. If you're looking for something closer to the action, check out **De Pizzabakkers** (Leliegracht 34HS). It's more of a takeout spot, but they do have a small counter inside where you can eat.

When we have had large groups we took a trip over to **Sea Palace**, it's a giant Asian restaurant that looks to be floating on the water near central station. The food was great and the ambiance inside is what you would expect from seeing it on the outside, very elaborate and well done.

If you're looking for something a little on the nice side for a hot date, check out **Gio Cucina Italian** (Sint Jacobsstraat 8). It's not big, so consider a reservation.

If you're craving some apple pie, check out **Winkel 43** (Noordermarkt 43). Bill Clinton made a visit in 2014. I try and make a visit every year! Check out Noordermarkt while in the area. On Monday and Saturday they have open air markets at Noordermarkt.



It's almost a necessity to grab a stroopwafel from **Croissanterie Hans Egstorf** (Spuistraat 274). The stroopwafel is made right in front of you since 1898!!



If you are craving a croissant, make a stop at **Madame Croissant Amsterdam** (Hartenstraat 29H).

The bar scene in Amsterdam is fantastic. You can find so many amazing places to grab a drink. We generally are looking for spots that have outdoor options, which so many do. Anything around the squares or plazas are great spots to sit down and relax. Most of the parks have really cool spots to check out so grab check the map on your phone and really zoom into the map and find some. I made a few recommendations in the Vondelpark info.

Here is a list of some of my favorite drinking spots:

Tales & Spirits – Great cocktails – really small very friendly staff, some outdoor seating

Café' De Eland – awesome outdoor seating on the Prinsengracht

Louis – Very local at night, great outdoor seating area

Door 74 – Speakeasy, look it up online and make sure you are dressed properly

Brouwerij 't IJ – Awesome brewery – Craft beer!

Langendijk – Next door to Brouwerij 't IJ, awesome view of the windmill

Hannekes Boom – Great spot on the water if it's nice out

Wynand Fockink Proeflokall and Sprints – Liquor Tasting Room, very unique and local

Pllek – Take the free ferry over to NDSM and visit this bar if it's nice out!!!

Waterkant – Great spot on the water

The Waterhole – Bar with good music

ANY BAR ON THE WATER THAT YOU SEE ☺

Music Scene:

I have seen some great shows in Amsterdam. I highly suggest scouting out some music while in town. Here is a list of music venues to check out before you go:

Amsterdam Roest

Melkweg

Paradiso

Bitterzoet

Amsterdamse Bostheater

People's Place

Ziggo Bome

Opera House

Coffeeshops:

For those that want to visit a coffeshop and see what it's all about, I highly suggest it (ha-ha, get it). It's not like walking into a dispensary in the U.S. Each shop has its own vibe, so if you have the time, check out a few of them. I'll suggest some of my favorites, but just pop in and check them out. As you walk in most shops will have a menu with what they sell. The bud tender is the person behind the counter that you talk to about buying weed. Tell them it's your 1st visit and they will help you out. I used to buy a few grams of flower, borrow their grinder, buy some papers and roll my own. Now, I just ask for a pre-roll. All the work is done for me and it's rather simple. The one thing you should ask for though is a "pure" pre-roll. That is a joint that is all weed. The alternative is a joint that has a tobacco and weed mixture. I personally do not like tobacco so I stay away. I also always go with sativa vs indicia. Some say there isn't a difference and it's just the placebo effect. I disagree and sativa gives me a boost of energy vs indicia where I just want to go and take a nap.

Also, don't just buy weed. Post up, grab juice, water, or coffee and sit down and smoke and enjoy the space you are in. That is what we are missing with our dispensaries. As a non-drinker now, I like to be able to sit and relax like I am in a bar having a beer or a cocktail. If you have the desire, throw the bud tender a small 1- or 2-euro tip. They will appreciate it as that is not a general custom. Just like going to different bars, each coffeeshop will have their own pros/cons. What is extremely rare to find is a coffeeshop that also sells alcohol. It's really strictly forbidden, but what you might find is bar that is smoking tolerant. Some of those are in the red-light district and you see some of that going on late night. I also recommend not to just light up your joint on the street, that is really against their rules. I do suggest grabbing a joint, hitting a park with some snacks and smoking in a park.

They do not have edibles like we do in the United States, they have space cakes. Most are dry and not that good, occasionally you'll find something that catches your eye. I've had some amazing pastries that knocked me off my ass, so if you're new to this just take it easy. Also, don't feel like you need to smoke the entire joint. Smoke half of it, settle in and save it in the tube it came in or just toss it. It's not that much money to just buy another one at a different coffeeshop. Also, buy a lighter at the 1st shop you go to.

Pat's Favorite:

Coffeeshop Johnny (just off the Prins) – small but great people

Spirit – They have a bunch of pinball machines in the back

Greenhouse Effect

Grey Area

Dampkring

New Times (Great outdoor seating)

Amnesia

Barney's (uptown)

Siberie

Bulldog (Original in RLD)

Smart Shops:

I personally do not participate in psychedelics, but you can get them there. You would buy them from a smart shop. Similar to buying weed, they have employees that help you walk through the experience. **DO NOT BUY PSYCHEDELICS FROM ANY OTHER STORE!** They are sold in novelty stores, and you can't trust what you are getting, as it's illegal to actually sell them outside of Smart Shop. Magic truffles are popular as well as mushrooms. In my experience, have someone in the group who does not take them so you can help shepherd those that do. It's not a very long experience, maybe a couple hours of being really fucked up and happy. I have seen a number of people get sick after eating them.

Drug Tip:

When you are in the red-light district, and primarily only there, you'll have guys come up and try and sell you cocaine and extasy. Both are extremely illegal and you have absolutely no clue what you're buying. It's so surprising to me that those guys are still trying and sell it. I have never seen anyone buy from them. Just tell them no, you're all set and they leave you alone.

Museums:

The most famous are the **Rijk**, **Anne Frank House**, and the **Van Gogh**. Look at what's going on at each of them before traveling. I have seen it take 6-8 months to get tickets to the Anne Frank house. Also, if a big exhibit is going on at the Van Gogh or Rijk, it can be tough to get tickets. Just do some planning beforehand. I try and visit a museum on each visit and have found some really odd ones. For those that really know me, it won't be a surprise to hear that the **Torture Museum** and the **Sex Museum** were big hits for me. I came back from the Torture Museum with a million ideas for the Halloween party I throw and built at least 3 of the devices I saw.

The **Jewish Historical Museum** and the **Amsterdam Museum** over by the Opera House are also worth a visit.

A lot of people check out the **Heineken Experience**, I have once, it was fine. Not something you need to do until you have exhausted the really good stuff. You can pay to have your own bottle labeled to take home. It seemed like a waste to me because I could not fly with it so I tossed it.

In 2019, I took the kids to the **Nemo Science Museum** and that was a lot of fun! You almost can't miss it because it's a massive green structure with a slanted roof very close to the train station. They have a very cool area on the roof to relax and enjoy the sun with a beer. The bar at the top is pretty cool and the view is spectacular. On really nice days, it's packed with people soaking up the sun.

Sporting Events:

Consider taking a look what's going on at Johan Crujiff Arena, and the FC Amsterdam Soccer Field. A number of years ago I got the see the USA play Netherlands in an exhibition soccer match. The really nice thing about the soccer matches is how quick they are vs American football.

I am sure I am missing a million things, but I hope you find this helpful. Feel free to share it with others and send them my way.

--Pat

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