

amsterdam marketing

PRESS FEATURE

Amsterdam and bikes

Real Amsterdammers (citizens of Amsterdam) cycle. They even turn cycling into an art form, traversing the city with fully loaded bike crates and multiple child seats, their bikes bedecked with flower garlands. More and more visitors to Amsterdam also want to feel like an Amsterdammer and travel by bike – and for good reason: cycling is also the easiest way to see the city. Amsterdam is home to approximately 880,000 bicycles, which is more than the population of the city itself.

Most visitors are still shocked, however, by the vast numbers of bicycles, and the wide variety of cyclists: from students to police officers and from bank staff to couriers, cycling is the most egalitarian mode of transport. The Mayor of Amsterdam and City alderpersons also cycle. Even King Willem-Alexander cycles regularly with his family.

Cycling: second nature to Amsterdammers

Travelling by bike is the logical choice for Amsterdammers, whose city is less geared towards cars than many. This is because the 17th-century city centre was built with pedestrians and horses and carts in mind. In comparison with other means of transport, the bike is cheap, fast, healthy and environmentally friendly. Moreover, Amsterdam is flat and compact: the maximum radius of the city centre is around five kilometres, an ideal distance to cover by bike.

Bicycle facts and figures

Number of bikes	881,000
Number of kilometres cycled by Amsterdammers each day	2 million km
Percentage of Amsterdammers that cycle daily	63% older than 12
Number of pedal boats/canal bikes	120
Total length of cycle paths and bike lanes (Amsterdam Bicycle Network)	767km

Dedicated cycle paths	513km
Two-way cycle paths	275km
One-way cycle paths	236km
Bicycle shops	140
Bicycle parking spots around Amsterdam Central Station	10,000
Secured bicycle parking garages	25 (including 8 free bicycle garages)
Number of bicycle racks	200,000–225,000
Number of bicycle hire businesses	29

Cycling through the ages

The modern chain-driven bicycle was actually only invented in 1885. Following the invention of the pneumatic tyre, the bicycle gradually became the means of transport for the masses. The bicycle caught on immediately in the flat terrain of the Netherlands. The egalitarian nature of Dutch society also contributed greatly to the bicycle's popularity: the "humble" image of the bicycle has never been an obstacle here. Just as the wealthy Amsterdammers moved into terraced (canal-side) houses during the Golden Age, they now travel effortlessly via the same means of transport as "the common people".

All shapes and sizes

Bicycles in Amsterdam come in all shapes and sizes. There are models for children, adults and professionals. Not interested in cycling yourself? Take a ride in a bike taxi or discover Amsterdam from the canals by renting a pedal boat/canal bike.

The bakfiets (cargo bike), which comes in many forms, is especially popular in Amsterdam. This carrier bicycle was originally designed to transport goods, but now appears to be the ideal – and often the only – means of transport for whole families.

Nescio Bridge: the longest bicycle bridge in the world

In 2006, the longest bicycle bridge in the world, totalling 780 metres, was built across the Amsterdam-Rhine Canal. It is only accessible to pedestrians and cyclists, and connects "mainland" Amsterdam with the manmade archipelago of IJburg.

Like a local

The bicycle is an attractive and adventurous way for foreign visitors to explore the city from a local's perspective. There are plenty of special tourist routes, guided bike tours and, of course, bike rental companies throughout the city. And the best part is: every visitor suddenly feels like an Amsterdammer when on a bike.

The new way of cycling

Hip new iterations – like the e-bike, the bamboo bike and the “fixie” (fixed-gear bike) – are becoming increasingly popular. There is a lot of innovation within this field in Amsterdam. Take Basten Leijh's wooden “Sandwichbike”, for example, which can be sent flat-pack and assembled in half an hour, or the bamboo-framed cycles of BlackStarBikes, which sources raw materials from Ghana and distributes profits along the supply chain. And the electric bike is no longer just for the elderly, as can be seen, for example, with the models by cool Amsterdam-based companies VANMOOF and QWIC. Amsterdam now also has an actual “bicycle motorway”, between Amsterdam and Zaandam.

Practical information

Bicycles on the train, ferry or metro

Bicycles can be transported at no cost on the free public ferries across the River IJ. You need a special ticket to take bicycles on the train or metro. Bicycles are not allowed on trams.

Bicycle parking spaces

With so many bicycles in the city, it is a real art to create sufficient parking spaces. One way that the City of Amsterdam has achieved this is with the bicycle-parking tower on the west side of Amsterdam Central Station. With three floors that can accommodate 2,500 bikes, this has become something of a visitor attraction in its own right.

Bicycle hire

Bikes can be rented across the city, generally for a minimum period of three hours with the average daily rental rate €8. In addition to city bikes, there many other types for hire: racing bikes, tandems, children's bikes, cargo bikes and scooters.

Amsterdam is home to many rental companies – such as YellowBike, Rent-A-Bike and MacBike – each with its own distinctive livery. MacBike

recently celebrated its 25th anniversary and is the largest bike rental company in the city, with 2,000 bikes and a number of locations in the centre of Amsterdam.

A video guide to cycling in Amsterdam

Get on your bike and take a cycling lesson unlike any you've seen before with Dutch funnyman Maxim Hartman.

Cycling in Amsterdam can sometimes feel like a bit of a minefield to the uninitiated. Thankfully, The Bike Instructor is on hand to guide you through the potential pitfalls and dangers of navigating the city on two wheels. Watch his handy video guide below, and soon you'll be cycling just like a local.

www.youtube.com/TheBikeInstructor

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About Amsterdam Marketing

Amsterdam Marketing is the city marketing organisation of the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area, active in the fields of promotion, information, research and services. Our ambition is to put this region on the map as one of the five most attractive metropolitan areas in Europe for its residents, visitors, businesses and influential groups. Under the motto "I amsterdam", we present the region as a dynamic place to live and work, an attractive travel destination and a test market for innovation.