

# amsterdam marketing

## PRESS FEATURE: AMSTERDAM CULTURE

### Amsterdam, a cultural Valhalla

**For centuries, Amsterdam has been one of the leading cultural centres of Europe. You don't have to enter a museum or theatre to see that: the culture here is on the streets. A stroll along the canals is an excellent cultural experience, but it would be a shame to leave it at that. One of the most important attractions of Amsterdam is, after all, the surprising offerings of the 60 theatres and concert halls, 40 museums and more than 140 galleries found here – and all that in the relaxed atmosphere for which Amsterdam is known. Culture in Amsterdam is not only of high quality; it is also accessible. The mentality of the locals is that you can enjoy Beethoven as much in jeans as a tuxedo. Music and theatre fans can enjoy more than 16,000 concerts and theatre performances throughout the year: more than 40 per day, on average.**

### **Music: both high quality and unconventional**

Amsterdam is a distinctly musical city. You will find all types of music, from high-level classical and modern jazz to the newest pop and dance trends – and sometimes surprising combinations of all these. The music scene in the city is just like Amsterdam itself: unconventional, lively and authentic.

### **Classical**

Amsterdam boasts two large symphony orchestras. The Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra (KCO) has been repeatedly voted the best in the world by leading magazine Gramophone. The orchestra has been under the leadership of head conductor Mariss Jansons since 2004. A new era for the orchestra begins soon: Italian Daniele Gatti takes over the conductor's baton from 2016-2017.

### **Inspiring locations**

Amsterdam has historically played a leading role as a centre for traditional and chamber music. Various ensembles of international renown have their base in Amsterdam, such as the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra and the Orkest van de Achttiende Eeuw (Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century). They play not only in the Concertgebouw, but also in inspiring medieval locations such as the English Church in the Begijnhof. Since 2006, Amsterdam also has the Orgelpark, a unique venue with three organs in the 19th-century Parkkerk next to

Vondelpark. Here organ music is combined with, for example, film and literature.

### **Contemporary music and jazz**

The Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ, built on the waterfront in 2005, is a spectacular music stage. Here the emphasis is on 20th-century and contemporary music. The sleek concrete, maple and glass building is also worth a visit for its cutting-edge architecture. Housed in a "black box" that protrudes from the Muziekgebouw, the Bimhuis is known by jazz fans around the whole world for its impeccable jazz and improvised music programming. Another lively new jazz place is the North Sea Jazz Club in the Westergasfabriek area, where you can also find soul and R&B.

Atmospheric music venues

The famous pop temples Paradiso and Melkweg are housed in a church and an old dairy respectively.

These venues host both renowned artists and present the latest trends in Amsterdam. In October, the annual four-day Amsterdam Dance Event (ADE) takes place, spread over 40 locations in Amsterdam. The ADE is the most important conference for electronic music and also the greatest clubbing festival in the world.

### **Ballet and dance: classic and contemporary**

Amsterdam occupies a special place in the arena of dance, through the combination of classic and experimental companies. The National Ballet shares a distinctive, permanent venue with the Dutch national opera, the Dutch National Opera & Ballet on the Amstel. Another Dutch world-class dance company – the Nederlands Dans Theater – also performs regularly in the city. Dutch choreographers are renowned for the personal tone of their performances, often on the cutting edge of theatre and dance. The theatres on the Nes, a small street just behind Dam square, serve as an ideal breeding ground for talent. Amsterdam is the base for contemporary dance groups such as ICKamsterdam and anoukvandijk dc. Each year in July, the Julidans festival of modern dance takes place at venues including the Stadsschouwburg, Paradiso and Melkweg.

### **Distinctive opera**

The Dutch National Opera (DNO) shares its home base, the 1,600-seat National Opera & Ballet, with the Dutch National Ballet. Under artistic director Pierre Audi, the DNO has developed into one of Europe's leading opera houses. In often-sensational productions and performances, the technical possibilities of the theatre on the Amstel – one of the best

equipped in Europe – are fully exploited. The National Opera & Ballet has an enormous glass-fronted foyer with a charming view over the Amstel.

### **Innovative theatre**

The theatre scene in Amsterdam is in a constant state of renewal, and can be found in diverse venues, from atmospheric listed buildings such as the Stadsschouwburg (City Theatre) to restored tobacco exchanges, port warehouses and a state-of-the-art black box. This last is the Rabozaal, opened in 2009, which connects the Stadsschouwburg with nearby pop venue Melkweg.

### **Renewal drive**

Amsterdam's lively theatrical climate can be traced back to the uprising in 1969 of young artists against the established order, the so-called Actie Tomaat (Tomato Action). The new generation wanted to make the state-sanctioned theatre more accessible and less predictable, and that innovative drive characterises Amsterdam theatre to this day.

### **Increasing international productions**

One of the theatre companies regularly performing at the Stadsschouwburg is Toneelgroep Amsterdam, which tours internationally under the artistic direction of Ivo van Hove. Toneelgroep Amsterdam performances are regularly subtitled. An increasingly number of international theatre companies can be seen in Amsterdam, both in the Stadsschouwburg and in intimate theatres such as Frascati and the Flemish cultural centre De Brakke Grond, both in the Nes.

### **English-language comedy**

The Boom Chicago troupe performs improvised comedy in English in the stunning Rozentheater on the Rozengracht. The cosy Comedy Theater in the Nes and Toomler, in the basement of the Hilton Hotel in Amsterdam-Zuid, also regularly host English comedy during the summer months. Musicals and large-scale variety shows, meanwhile, have long been a speciality of the impressive Royal Theater Carré on the Amstel.

English speaking cultural offerings at a glance? Check [What's on!](#)

### **New hotspot: Amsterdam-Noord**

Amsterdam North is the new cultural hotspot in the city. Take the ferry across the IJ and discover the theatre and concert venues of the Tolhuistuin or M-Lab, the laboratory for music theatre where musical producers can test out their new compositions. During the lively Over het IJ Festival in the summer, harbour warehouses and containers on the

NDSM grounds are used as performance locations for site-specific theatre.

### **Reservations**

Tickets for most theatre, music and ballet performances can be reserved in advance. This can be done via the I amsterdam Visitor Centre located across from Amsterdam Central Station and at the Last Minute Ticket Shop in the Stadsschouwburg and Amsterdam Public Library (OBA), where tickets with a 50% reduction can be also be bought on the day of a performance or concert from 12:00.

### **Films in the original language**

Amsterdam has more than 60 cinemas, where all films are shown in the original language, with Dutch subtitles. The Pathé Tuschinski deserves special mention. Built in 1921 in art deco style, it is considered to be one of the most beautiful cinemas in the world. A recent attraction is the EYE Film Institute on the northern IJ embankment opposite Central Station. In addition to exhibition space and a charming terrace with a restaurant on the waterside, EYE offers four comfortable cinemas, where both new films and classics are shown.

### **More than 40 museums**

You will find more than 40 museums in Amsterdam. The largest and most famous are without exception world-renowned: the Van Gogh Museum, Rijksmuseum, Stedelijk Museum and Hermitage Amsterdam. Other large museums include the Anne Frank House, the Rembrandt House, the Tropenmuseum (Museum of the Tropics), the Amsterdam Museum and the Jewish Historical Museum. In addition, there are all sorts of smaller museums and galleries, often with surprising collections. Typical of Amsterdam and well worth a visit are various museums located in historical houses along the canals, such as Museum Ons' Lieve Heer op Solder (Our Lord in the Attic), a 17th-century hidden church dating from the Reformation.

### **Architecture: new heyday**

A stroll through Amsterdam's city centre offers "greatest hits" highlights of Dutch architecture from the 16th to the 20th centuries. The emphasis is on the 17th and 18th centuries, with important buildings such as the Westerkerk and the richly decorated canal-house gables dating from this time. The economic revival of Amsterdam around 1870 led to a boom in new buildings, with the most important architects being PJH Cuypers (Rijksmuseum, Central Station) and Dolf van Gendt (Concertgebouw, Stadsschouwburg). In the 20th century, Amsterdam architecture gained

an international reputation with architects such as HP Berlage (Koopmansbeurs, Plan Zuid) and, in the period after 1960, Aldo van Eyck (Burgerweeshuis, "Moederhuis") and Herman Hertzberger. Since 1990, architecture has experienced a new heyday in Amsterdam. The Eastern Docklands, within walking distance of Central Station, has become a major attraction for architecture enthusiasts. A new architectural hotspot is the embankments of the IJ, including the Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ, EYE Film Institute and IJdock.

### **Combining culture**

Culture in Amsterdam needn't be separated from other pleasures that the city has to offer. Near each museum are lovely cafés and restaurants, and in each neighbourhood a park in which to relax.

It is also interesting to explore Amsterdam by district. Combine a concert in the Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ with an architecture walking tour and a visit to the Science Centre NEMO or the Scheepvaartmuseum (National Maritime Museum). Or after a visit to the Old Masters in the Rijksmuseum, go to the nearby Spiegelstraat with its many antique shops or sample local herring at the typically Amsterdam Albert Cuyp Market. City zoo Artis is located in a neighbourhood of beautifully restored warehouses, where the grandeur of Holland as a seafaring nation is still palpable. Get to know Amsterdam culture in all its richness.

**Note to the editor:** The information may be freely referenced or copied if the source is credited: [www.iamsterdam.com](http://www.iamsterdam.com). The above information is subject to change and Amsterdam Marketing accepts no responsibility for inaccuracies in published information.

**Public information:**

[www.iamsterdam.com](http://www.iamsterdam.com)

**Amsterdam Marketing Press Office**

Email: [pressoffice@iamsterdam.com](mailto:pressoffice@iamsterdam.com)  
Images: <http://mediabank.iamsterdam.com/>  
Telephone: +31 (0)20 702 6265

**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 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.