

amsterdam marketing

PRESS FEATURE

Amsterdam: for free

Fun attractions that cost nothing

A day out in Amsterdam doesn't have to cost a fortune. There are enough free attractions to see in the city to last the whole week. In fact, some of Amsterdam's best hidden gems are gratis.

Free film in the basement of EYE Film Institute

The EYE Film Institute Netherlands is a spectacular building with four cinema screens, an exhibition area and a café-restaurant with large terrace on the north bank of the IJ. Another special feature is the Basement, which is free to visit and contains a permanent exhibition of iconic artefacts. You can also view clips or entire films from the collection in a Pod – a specially designed mini cinema with a comfy three-seater couch and cinemascope screen. In the 360° Panorama room you are surrounded by nearly 100 film images, 12 rows high. You can navigate through the EYE collection via seven keypads, for example through the slapstick of Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton. In the Playground are changing, interactive installations.

eyefilm.nl

The Schuttersgallerij (Civic Guards Gallery): paintings on the street

One of the many surprises in the Amsterdam Museum, the Schuttersgallerij is a passageway between the Kalverstraat and the Begijnhof where visitors can admire 15 enormous paintings for free. This is probably the only place in the world where such precious paintings are simply hanging on display in the street – although a glass roof protects them from the elements, of course. Portraits of Amsterdam's Golden Age Civic Guards, in the vein of Rembrandt's famous 'Night Watch', line the walls alongside works by contemporary Amsterdam graffiti artists and pictures of important Amsterdammers, such as former mayors, but also legendary footballer Johan Cruyff.

Kalverstraat 92

www.amsterdammuseum.nl

Begijnhof: peaceful medieval haven in the centre of a cosmopolitan city

Hidden behind the gables of the Spui lies the Begijnhof, like a peaceful village square in the heart of Amsterdam. The central tree-lined lawn is surrounded by almshouses, which are hundreds of years old, an

abundance of flowers and a small medieval church, situated right in the mid-dle. The Begijnhof was built in the 14th century as a residence for devout women. The oldest house in Amsterdam can also be found here – it has a wooden frontage dating from about 1475. The entrance is at the Gedempte Begijnensloot, a street between the Spui and Rozenboomsteeg. Visitors are welcome but asked to respect the residents' tranquillity. Consequently, guided tours are not permitted here. www.begijnhofamsterdam.nl

Under-18s free entrance to the Palace on the Dam

Wandering around a regal palace with great halls, marble floors and statues, decorated ceilings and imposing paintings: it's possible in Amsterdam's Royal Palace for free if you're under 18. In the Golden Age, the palace was built as the new town hall for Amsterdam, designed by Jacob van Campen. On the ground floor the Vierschaar (tribunal) can still be found, where until the 18th century death sentences were handed down.

www.paleisamsterdam.nl

Apple Store

The Apple Store opened in 2012 on Leidseplein in the Hirschgebouw, built in 1912 as a chic fashion house. Of course, the products here are not free – far from it. But you can try out the latest technology for yourself on multiple demonstration devices. But the real eye-catcher is the interior – especially the completely transparent staircase to the first floor. Leidseplein 25

Treasury from 1926

In the cellars of the Stadsarchief (City Archives), the Treasury of Amsterdam can be found. This spectacular space from 1926 has a beautifully restored tiled floor and a richly decorated ceiling. The design is a mix of art deco and Egyptian forms, executed in beautiful blue and yellow. Originally, this was the largest bank in the Netherlands, and the gold vault was located behind the Treasury's heavy doors. Today, it contains many special items. The oldest is the toll privilege from 1275, the first document in which a variation of the name Amsterdam occurs – the city was then called Amstelredamme. You'll also find a report of the theft of Anne Frank's bicycle from 1942. A unique document for classical music fans is a recording of Gustav Mahler's Fifth Symphony, performed by the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in 1906 under the direction of the composer himself.

Vijzelstraat 32

stadsarchief.amsterdam.nl

Bridge of 15 bridges

In Amsterdam's canal belt there is one bridge from which you can view no less than 15 bridges. This unusual spectacle can be seen from the bridge at the crossing of the Reguliersgracht with the Herengracht, on the odd-numbered side. If you stand on this bridge with your back to the Thorbeckeplein, you'll see six arched bridges in a row. On the left side you'll find six more over the Herengracht, one after another, and on the right you'll see the next two. If you're good at maths you'll arrive at the disappointing total of only 14 bridges. The 15th is the bridge you're standing on.

This is such an unusual sight, it's mentioned in most guidebooks to Amsterdam. In the evening, the display is even more festive because the bridge arches are lit with hundreds of lights. Standing on the bridge, you'll often hear a repeated chorus of "oohs" and "aahs", from the sightseeing cruise boats below you.
Reguliersgracht/corner of Herengracht.

Breath-taking view from a sinking ship

At the place where the IJ-tunnel begins and thousands of cars disappear every hour under the waters of the IJ, is the science museum NEMO. The structure, covered in green copper plates, looks like a sinking ship that has half disappeared into the water of the Oosterdok. It was designed in 1992 by the famous Italian architect Renzo Piano. The sloping roof terrace is free of charge from Tuesday to Sunday, 10:00 to 17:00. On the roof you stand 30 metres above the waters of the IJ and you can enjoy a breath-taking view of the city of Amsterdam, including the towers, the Maritime Museum with the 18th-century VOC ship Amsterdam and the Eastern Docklands.

Oosterdok 2

www.e-nemo.nl

Rijksmuseum free for under-18s

Amsterdam's stately Rijksmuseum reopened its doors in 2013, after an ambitious renovation designed by the famous Spanish architects Cruz y Ortiz. The Rijks, one of the most important museums in the world, now offers 80 rooms in which 8,000 objects tell the story of 800 years of Dutch art and history. Highlights include works by Rembrandt, Vermeer, Frans Hals, Albert Cuyp and Jan Steen. It's completely free of charge for under-18s.

Museumstraat 1

www.rijksmuseum.nl

Rijksmuseum garden

The Rijksmuseum is famous enough, but much less well known is the museum garden. In 2013, this was transformed into a world-class outdoor room, with a series of summer exhibitions, a children's play fountain and sun terrace. The 14,500m² garden is free to all. The "ruins" are especially worth a mention. Around 1890, a curious collection of building fragments were brought together here, originating from across the Netherlands. Thus a collection of five centuries of Dutch architecture was created, from Gothic pillars to 17th-century city gates.

www.rijksmuseum.nl

26-metre-high view from the OBA

With two million visitors per year, the Amsterdam Public Library (OBA) is one of the most popular attractions of Amsterdam. The OBA covers an area of 28,000m² and has 25 kilometres of bookshelves, the largest library of the Netherlands. The highlight is the seventh floor, with a terrace that offers spectacular views of the city from 26 metres in the air.

The "one and only" Normal Amsterdam Peil (NAP) in the Stadhuis (Town Hall)

In the passage between the Stadhuis and the Dutch National Opera & Ballet on the Water-looplein, you'll find the "one and only" Normal Amsterdam Peil (NAP): a bronze button indicating the exact NAP water level. This bronze button acts as the standard from which the levels above sea are measured in nearly all European countries. Next to this, three glass columns rise out of the floor. The water in two of these columns indicates the current water level of the sea at Vlissingen and IJmuiden. The water level in the third column bubbles terrifyingly high above your head, to a height of almost five metres. The seawater reached this level during the disastrous floods in Zeeland in 1953.

Amstel 1

Free Lunchtime concerts in the Dutch National Opera & Ballet and the Concertgebouw

Amsterdammers and visitors alike are treated to all kinds of free classical lunch concerts each week. On Tuesday in the foyer of the National Opera & Ballet there is a concert from 12:30 to 13:00, by musicians from the permanent ensembles of the National Opera & Ballet: the Dutch Philharmonic Orchestra, the Choir of the National Opera and the Dutch Ballet Orchestra.

The Concertgebouw offers a free lunchtime concert on Wednesdays, from 12:30 to 13:00. Often, these are public rehearsals of orchestras that

“officially” perform of an evening, like the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra.

Dutch National Opera & Ballet, Amstel 1
Concertgebouw, Concertgebouwplein 2-6

Free concerts in the Conservatorium

The Conservatorium of Amsterdam is housed in a spectacular building in Oosterdokseiland. There are free concerts here almost every day: every Monday at 20:00 there’s a concert in Amsterdam Blue Note; every Wednesday at 19:30 there’s an open stage in the Sweelinckzaal; every Thursday at 17.00 a jazz concert in Amsterdam Blue Note and every Friday at 12:30 a lunchtime concert by students of classical and jazz music.

Oosterdokskade 151

<http://www.ahk.nl/en/conservatorium/>

Floating flower market on the Singel

The flower market on the Singel between the Munt tower and the Koningsplein is one of the most colourful, sweet-smelling sightseeing attractions in Amsterdam at any time of the year. Of particular note is that the goods are set out on floating stalls, a tradition stemming from the time when all flowers and plants were transported daily by boat, fresh from the horticultural regions in Amsterdam’s hinterland.

Open Mon-Fri 09:00-18:00, Sat 09:00-17:00

Singel, between Koningsplein and Muntplein

United Europe on the Roemer Visscherstraat

On the Roemer Visscherstraat in Amsterdam it is possible to make a trip around seven European countries within a minute. Ever since 1894, a row of houses has stood here built in the style of seven countries: Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Russia, Holland and England. This “United Europe”, also known as the “Seven Countries Houses”, was built by the architect Tjeerd Kuipers (1858-1942) to celebrate the history of European architecture.

Roemer Visscherstraat 20-30A

The Magere Brug (Skinny Bridge)

This picturesque white-painted drawbridge has spanned the River Amstel since 1672.

According to some Amsterdammers, the bridge is named after two ladies called Mager: two wealthy sisters who lived on opposite sides of the Amstel. The real reason for the name, however, is much simpler: the

bridge used to be so narrow that two people could barely cross at the same time. As time passed the bridge was replaced by a wider example and the name "Skinny" was not quite so appropriate as it once was. The Magere Brug is still one of the most beautiful bridges in Amsterdam. It is illuminated every evening with thousands of lights and is a popular location for both lovers and photographers.
Amstel between Keizersgracht and Prinsengracht.

The narrowest house in the world

The narrowest house in the world can be found on the Singel. At just one metre wide, it's barely wider than the front door. Naturally, the people who live there have to be slim – although it's actually only the front of the house that's so narrow; the back is a little wider.
Singel 7

Buddhist temple in the heart of Amsterdam

On the Zeedijk, in the middle of Amsterdam's own Chinatown, is a Buddhist temple: the Fo Guang Shan He Hua Temple. It is the largest of its kind in Europe. For the construction of the temple special tiles were flown over from China, as well as many characteristic ornaments. The animals on the roof represent the Chinese Zodiac. To the left and right of the temple stand a building to accommodate the Buddhist nuns and a library.
Zeedijk 106-118

Amsterdam, January 2015

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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.