

amsterdam marketing

PRESS FEATURE

Japan in Amsterdam

Amsterdam and Japan have age-old ties. The first contacts between the Netherlands and Japan date from 1600. In 1598, five sailing ships were sent to Japan, of which only one survived the voyage and arrived after much hardship. That ship was De Liefde (Love) that anchored on the Japanese island of Usuki. In 1609 the Dutch East India Company was granted permission to establish a trading post on Hirado. Ever since that time, numerous ships of the Dutch East India Company have set sail for Japan. In 1641, the Netherlands were the first foreign nation to be granted permission to establish and maintain relationships with Japan from the Japanese island of Deshima.

Today, Amsterdam and neighbouring municipality Amstelveen are very popular among Japanese companies to establish their European headquarters in. There is a vibrant community of thousands of Japanese people living and working in Amsterdam and its surrounding area. Proof of the age-old ties between the Dutch capital and Japan is abundant.

Trade with Japan from the island Deshima

In 1602 the VOC (Dutch East India Company) was founded – the first multinational in the world. This trading company ensured fully equipped ships, merchandise and money were available for the lucrative trade with Asia. In 1641, the VOC was granted the right to establish a trading post on the small, artificially created island of Deshima.

Until 1859 this fan-shaped island in the harbour of Nagasaki was the only contact the Western world had with closed-off Japan and the Dutch, for that matter, also had strict limitations. From the mainland, the island could only be reached by one bridge. For the VOC, popular merchandise from Japan included porcelain, silver, gold, lead, tin, copper, sugar, tea and Chinese silk.

Deshima in the Scheepvaartmuseum: 'Red-haired barbarians'

The Scheepvaartmuseum (National Maritime Museum) displays a number of special objects from the time that the Dutch on Deshima were the only link between Japan and the rest of the world, such as Japanese porcelain from the 18th century. On the 18th century painting *Het leven in de factorij Deshima* (Life in the Deshima Trading Post) the Dutch working

there are depicted with red hair. Not surprising: the name the Japanese had for the Dutch roughly translates into 'red-haired barbarians'.

www.hetscheepvaartmuseum.nl

Oost-Indisch Huis, heart of the VOC

A nondescript gate at the Oude Hoogstraat 24 provides access to the courtyard of the Oost-Indisch Huis (East-Indies House) that was built here in 1606. At the time it was the nerve centre of the VOC. It is hard to imagine now, but in the 17th century this was a hive of activity when the VOC were about to set sail, for instance to Japan. Sailors were constantly recruited to sail with the ship 'to the East'. The valuable imported goods, such as spices, coffee, tea and tobacco could be smelt from afar.

Japanese art in the Rijksmuseum

The Rijksmuseum boasts a rich collection of internationally renowned Asian art. The collection includes lovely Japanese works of art such as Buddha statues and the Jizô Bosatsu, who transported children from the underworld. The two more than man-size Temple guards from the 14th century are impressive.

Worth seeing are also the Samurai swords and helmets and the folding screens with beautiful bamboo decorations. Rich families had the Japanese porcelain painted with their own coats of arms. It is interesting to see the mutual influence between Japanese and Chinese ceramic artists, and the influence they both had on their Dutch colleagues, particularly in Delft. The Rijksmuseum also owns various hand scrolls.

The rice paper the landscapes have been painted on is extremely fragile and that is why they are exhibited only a few weeks a year. Since 2013, the Asian Art has been housed in a separate pavilion, designed by the famous Spanish architecture firm Cruz y Ortiz.

The department Nederland Overzee (The Netherlands Overseas) has a 19th century model of the Deshima island on display.

www.rijksmuseum.nl

Japanse Kamer in Theater Tuschinski

Theater Tuschinski opened its doors in 1921. It is said to be among the most beautiful cinemas in the world. The building is an exotic mix of art deco and the Amsterdam School styles. In its time, the interior proved a sensation to the public. One of the exotic attractions is its Japanse Kamer (Japanese Room), on which the citizens of Amsterdam used to feast their

eyes. The room served as a cloakroom then. The Japanese lights add a beautiful blood red glow.

www.pathe.nl/bioscoop/tuschinski

Japanese pictures in the Van Gogh Museum

The collection of the Vincent Van Gogh Museum includes 400 Japanese pictures Vincent van Gogh predominantly collected when he stayed in Paris. Van Gogh was particularly fascinated by the works of artist Hokusai and was inspired by them. Due to the pictures' sensitivity to light, only selections can be viewed at a time. The love of Van Gogh for Japan is mutual; remarkably many Japanese visit the Van Gogh Museum during their stay in Amsterdam.

www.vangoghmuseum.nl

New wing of the Van Gogh Museum by Japanese architect

Since its opening in 1974, the Van Gogh Museum has had a substantial increase in visitor numbers and that is why it was decided to add a new wing dedicated to temporary exhibitions. Japanese insurance company Yasuda generously donated a large sum of money to realise the newly built wing.

The building was designed by the famous Japanese architect Kisho Kurokawa and was officially opened by Queen (now Princess) Beatrix in 1999. The architect used valuable materials, such as the titanium roof, the walls of flame-annealed natural stone and the sunken slate pond.

www.vangoghmuseum.nl

Lloyd Hotel: Japanese artisans & designers

The Lloyd Hotel & Cultural Embassy is dedicating 2016 to Japanese artisans and designers. Since the Lloyd opened in 2004 there has been a special relationship between the hotel and Japan, represented, for example, in Tokyo's temporary [Love Hotel](#) (2010) and various other design projects in Japan and the Netherlands.

This year, the Japanese architect Jo Nagasaka 'upcycles' the Lloyd Restaurant, reusing, recombining and transforming the existing furniture. Nagasaka's 'flat tables' are the eye-catching stars of the restaurant's new interior. The collaboration between the architect and the hotel then continues in Japan, where the Lloyd Hotel will contribute two room designs to the Nagasaka-designed Halema Hotel in Kanazawa.

Special attention is also being paid to the fourth centenary of the town Arita. Located in the Saga Prefecture in the south of Japan, Arita is where

porcelain was first introduced to Japan's population in 1616. Today the town's dedicated artisans still produce porcelain using special clay made from pulverised stone. In the Lloyd Hotel, designers Matthijs van Crujisen and Ina Meijer of INA-MATT have designed a 'Saga' room, opening in spring.

Japanese animals and stone Buddhas in Amsterdam's city centre

The famous Apenrots of Artis Royal Zoo also has a relation with Japan: the monkeys running around here are Japanese macaques. In the pheasantry we can see Japanese quails pater and Japanese koi carps are swimming around the 120-year-old aquarium. The magnificent ornamental fish, recognisable by the intricate patterns on their backs and sides, are also called the emperors among fish and are the result of a very laborious breeding method. In exceptional cases they can yield as much as 50,000 euros.

In 1875 former merchant shipping commander, Captain M.J.B. Noordhoek Hegt, who temporarily settled in Yokohama, donated two Japanese Buddha statues, a bronze water buffalo and several lotus vases to Artis. Buddha Dainichi Nyorai, from the beginning of the 18th century and approximately 1.75 tall, was put near the Japanese 'stone garden' planted with azaleas, magnolias and a Japanese Cherry. The other Buddha, Bodhisattva, from the first half of the 18th century, and the buffalo were put between two Japanese nut trees by a quiet pond with pink water lilies. That location is so serene that Buddhists sometimes recite their prayers there.

www.artis.nl

Japanese shopping in Amsterdam

't Japanese Winkeltje at the Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal sells kimonos, Japanese slippers, bowls and book on the Japanese art of cooking, tea ceremonies, origami and calligraphy. Its shop assistants speak English and Dutch and are knowledgeable about the Japanese community in Amsterdam. The bulletin board has information on courses and events. Next to 't Japanese Winkeltje, Tozai Travel is located, a travelling agency specialized in long-distance travel, to Japan and China in particular. At the Boerhaaveplein in the eastern part of Amsterdam, a Japanese couple produces organic tofu in an old butcher shop. This tofu can be bought (among other locations) at Meidi-Ya, the well-known Japanese delicatessen at the Beethovenstraat.

Van Hier tot Tokio is the name of a shop at the Prinsengracht where Japanese antiques and curiosities are sold. This shop also has its own

workshop for restorations. Japanese shop Roppongi is located at the Rozengracht.

- 't Japanse Winkeltje: Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal 177
- Tozai Travel, Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal 175
- Meidi-ya, Japanse delicatessen, Beethovenstraat 18
- Van Hier tot Tokio: Prinsengracht 262
- Roppongi, Rozengracht 15

Japanese 'fast food' is taking Amsterdam by storm

More and more sushi bars are springing up all around Amsterdam. It goes without saying that to the Dutch the phenomenon of eating 'raw fish' is not unusual – they have been eating raw herring for centuries. The interior of the restaurants is sometimes an attraction in itself, for instance at sushi bar Zushi on the Amstel river. Here, a 'conveyor belt' with coloured plates is used to show the food to the guests, in which each colour represents the price class of the dish.

- Zushi: Amstel 20
- Tomo Sushi: Reguliersdwarstraat 131
- Umi, Lange Leidsedwarstraat 71A
- Zen Japans Delicatessenhuis: Frans Halsstraat 38
- Kaiko: Jekerstraat 114

Japanese chrysanthemums at the Scheepvaarthuis

The Scheepvaarthuis (Shippinghouse) was built in 1912-16 as the office for six Amsterdam shipping companies and both the interior and exterior have been finished to a high standard. One of those shipping companies was the Stoomvaart Maatschappij Nederland (SMN), which put the Java-China-Japan-Line (JCJL) into operational service in 1902 with scheduled services to the Far East, including Japan. The emblem of the JCJL can still be seen on the façade of the Scheepvaarthuis: a combination of Buddha (Java), dragon (China) and chrysanthemum (Japan).

Today, the Scheepvaarthuis houses a five-star hotel: Grand Hotel Amrath. The interior has been beautifully restored and is well worth seeing.

www.amrathamsterdam.com

Okura Hotel: a Japan Walhalla

The Okura Hotel is a Japanese island in the south of Amsterdam; the Japanese lights, rice paper lanterns and other accessories provide a Japanese atmosphere. The hotel opened in 1971 and is part of a Japanese chain. The hotel boasts two top class restaurants: Teppanyaki Restaurant Sazanka and Yamazoto, boasting a Michelin star each.

The restaurants have been decorated by a Japanese designer with original Japanese furniture and accessories and the ingredients for the dishes are freshly imported from Japan. The menu changes ten times a year in keeping with the Japanese holidays. One of the restaurants looks out onto the Japanese stone garden with the pond of precious koi.

www.okura.nl

Japanese School

De Japanese school in Amsterdam, Olanda Nikonjun Gakko, was founded in 1979. Besides Japanese, the children are also taught English and Dutch. Although independent at first, the school has now been part of the primary school at the Karel Klinkenbergstraat 137 since 1986. The Japanese school year covers eight months: from April until July and from September until January. At the moment the school has almost 350 Japanese students for both primary and secondary education.

Visitors from Japan

On 25 June 1865 the first Japanese delegation visited Amsterdam. They were officially welcomed by the Amsterdam mayor and then toured the city in four open carriages, attracting half the population of Amsterdam. Today, visitors from Japan are a common sight in Amsterdam. Every year, Japanese visitors make great amounts of hotel bookings. Compared to other nationalities, Japanese visitors are especially interested in the Concertgebouw, the Van Gogh Museum, luxury shops and diamond cutters. They also enjoy strolls along the canals. It is remarkable that the Japanese, more so than other visitors, are interested in the daily life of the Dutch and find it interesting to visit a supermarket, a typical Amsterdam café, or the Woonbootmuseum (Houseboat Museum) to get an impression of Amsterdam life on a boat.

Japan in Amstelveen

Amstelveen, the municipality south of Amsterdam, is home of the largest Japanese community in the Netherlands. At the moment Amstelveen has over 1,500 Japanese residents. Due to a variety of amenities and the good relationship with the council, the Japanese enjoy settling here.

Japanese cherry trees in the Kersenbloesepark (Amsterdamse Bos)
The Kersenbloesepark (Cherry Blossom Park) in the Amsterdamse Bos (Amsterdam Forest) comprises four hundred Japanese cherry trees, donated by the Japan Women's Club (JWC) to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the ties between the Netherlands and Japan. Each year,

the trees bloom in the course of April. The annual Cherry Blossom Festival is organized in the same period.

Japanese shopping in Amstelveen

Amstelveen has various businesses focusing especially on the Japanese community. Kingsalmarkt Delicatessen sells a variety of Japanese delicatessen and articles, as does Take-Ya Japanese Food Specialiteiten. The latter also has a take-away and home-delivery service. Shopping centre Kostverlorenhof is a partly-covered shopping centre in the northern part of Amstelveen which caters for the needs and wishes of the employees of Japanese companies in the vicinity with a Japanese bookshop and a Japanese hairdresser.

The weekly Amstelveen goods market is also attuned to the Japanese community. The employees of the Waasdorp firm speak Japanese and this fishmonger's can supply all the species of fish the Japanese community requires.

- Kingsalmarkt Delicatessen, Rembrandtweg 621
- Take-Ya Japanese Food Specialiteiten, Rembrandtweg 340
- Wekelijkse Amstelveense warenmarkt, iedere vrijdag, Stadshart

Discover the Japanese kitchen in Amstelveen

Amstelveen has various places where Japanese food is served, varying from a simple pub to a luxury restaurant.

- Japans restaurant Cha Ya, Kostverlorenhof 58 (restaurant)
- Japans Eetcafé Tanuki, Pieter Lastmanweg 9 (pub)
- Sushi-Yaah, Nieuw Loopveld 4 (sushi bar)
- Kokusai, Stadstuinen 2 (all you can eat)

Japan Women's Club

Amstelveen has an active society of Japanese women: de Japan Women's Club (JWC). They engage in various activities such as organizing charity events, Japanese conversation classes, handicraft meetings, lectures and more.

www.jwc-holland.org

Japan Desk in the Amstelland Hospital

The Amstelland Hospital has a special Japan Desk at which employees inform Japanese people wanting to use the medical services in Japanese. Japan Desk Amstelland Ziekenhuis, Laan van de Helende Meesters 8

Japanese nursery school, Tulip Gakuen

In Amstelveen is a nursery school for Japanese children from 1 to 7 years old. Classes are taught in accordance with the Japanese schooling system.

Tulip Gakuen, Schweitzerlaan 2- 6

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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.