INTRODUCTION

Whether it is about fashion, interior design or architecture, Dutch Architecture is striking at home and abroad. This was the case as early as the Golden Age, when the Dutch constructed the ring of canals bordered by enormous town houses. And Dutch buildings are still cited as examples at universities worldwide. How come? It’s all down to our Dutch inclination for experimentation and the trendsetting designs that stem from this, say some. Others point to our limited space and struggle against water as sources of inspiration for creative and practical designs. This cycle route contains a great mix of old and new architecture. From the most beautiful mediaeval castle in the Netherlands to the modern designs of well-known architects such as Rem Koolhaas and René van Zuuk. ‘Het nieuwe land’ (the new land), which contains cities less than 35 years old, will certainly appeal to fans of modern architecture. It is also called ‘the playground of Dutch architecture’, where designers sought the limits, then used new construction techniques and predominantly had a sizeable number of prominent designs implemented. In short, a varied route with plenty of opportunity for a coffee or lunch break, visit to a museum or shopping break. What’s more, cycling through this flat country abounding in water is a joy.

INSPIRING OLD AND NEW DUTCH ARCHITECTURE

BIKE RENTAL
VVV Almere
Stadhuispromenade 1, Almere
T +31 (0)36 548 50 41
www.vvvalmere.nl
(Open: Monday 13.00 -17.00; Tuesday - Saturday: 10.00-17.00)

TOURIST INFORMATION
VVV Almere
Stadhuispromenade 1, Almere
T +31 (0)36 548 50 41
www.vvvalmere.nl

VVV Weesp
Hoogstraat 10, Weesp
T +31 (0)294 41 54 27
www.gooivecht.nl

35 km
ca 4 hours

CYCLE JUNCTIONS:
FOLLOW THE NUMBERS...
The route description features several numbers in green circles. These are the so-called ‘cycle junctions’. Cycle from junction to junction following the numbered signs along the roadside in the direction of the arrow. At each junction you will find an information sign with a map.

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**Touristic routes Amsterdam Metropolitan Area**

**Architecture route**

**STARTING POINT OF THE ROUTE:**

1. **Railway station Almere Centrum**
   Walk from the railway station to Stadhuisplein (square) by means of Bankierbaan. This will bring you to route point 1. Hire a bicycle at the VVV (tourist information centre) at Stadhuispromenade.

2. **Almere city centre**
   Not your everyday city centre and a feast for anyone into modern architecture. Almere has only been around since 1976, when it was built on artificially elevated land. The renowned architect Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas prepared the master plan for the new city centre. Take (for example) the 1. **Openbare bibliotheek** (public library), which opened in 2010 and, due to its rising terrace floors, is actually a 400-metre-long walking route. On the inside it is just a department store, but one for books and reading.

3. **The Wave** is an apartment complex with an undulating, silver-coloured façade designed by René van Zuuk. An architect who is known for his quest for creating buildings that are as interesting as possible at costs that are as low as possible. In this regard, his inspiration for The Wave was drawn from the technique of tunnel formwork, i.e. pouring floor and walls at the same time.

4. **Muiden**
   The fortified town of Muiden is on the IJmeer (lake). It is neatly laid out, peaceful, green and has a picturesque port with convivial cafés and restaurants. The small city forms part of the world heritage site De Stelling van Amsterdam (Defence Line of Amsterdam), a 135-kilometre-long line of defensive works surrounding Amsterdam. Part of it is still from the early 15th century! Tip: Slink through the bunkers of the Muizenfort (‘mouse fort’) - a great place to start a historic sightseeing walk.

- Follow the cycle junction signs:
  75 77 78 33 31
  25 18 17 16

   You are now in Muiden.

- Cycle back a little to the Herengracht. On Herengracht, at the Haven (harbour), is Amsterdam Castle Muiderslot.

- From Stadhuisplein, enter ‘De Diagonaal’ (pedestrian zone) and follow this until you come out at the Citadel.

- **De Citadel** in the heart of the centre with shops and houses, is striking due to its curved layers of grass on the roofs, which vary in height. This forms a playful interruption to the drab oblong street plan.

- Follow the cycle junction signs in the direction of 75.
Amsterdam Castle Muiderslot
A square castle with a drawbridge, five towers, battlements and embrasures, the Muiderslot is the finest and best-preserved mediaeval castle in the Netherlands. The imposing Ridderzaal (Knights' Hall), gleaming suits of armour, and an interactive quest for children will take you 700 years back in time. Tip: At the Muiderslot, take the ferry to the fortified island Pampus (only possible between 1 April and 31 October).

Follow the cycle junction signs:
16 17 18 26 30, in the direction of 34.
At Almere Muziekwijk railway station, cycle on under the station and follow the cycle path 'Strawinskypad'. Cross the Louis Armstrongweg cycle path.
You are now in the Muzenpark (park).

Bouwexpo
Almere asked its most creative architects to experiment with consumer-oriented building, resulting in these designs:
De Muzen ('The Muses'), a red-orange apartment complex featuring a large glass atrium over the entire length of the building with hanging plants, vines, trees and ferns. The unpretentious social housing on Contrabasweg won Almere's first architectural prize in 1995. The Atelier houses are connected in groups of four in a striking way and the use of aluminium and steel lend the Meerfase houses an industrial character. The ample houses were built in such a way that they could be inhabited by old and young families simultaneously. No ordinary terraced houses then.

Go back under Almere Muziekwijk railway station. Go left and follow the cyclepath. Follow the cycle junction signs:
34 1 50.
You are now back at the station, the finishing point of this route.

1 BRASSERIJ DE BERGERRIE
Grote Markt 42-44
1315 JG Almere
T +31 (0)36 533 80 25
I www.de-bergerrie.nl

2 LIDO ALMERE
Bergsmapad 1
1324 ZK Almere
T +31 (0)36 530 46 66
I www.lido-almere.nl

3 EETGELEGENHEID DE ZEEMEEUW
STRANDPAVILJOEN
Zeeweg 1-A
1399 GP Muiden
T +31 (0)294 26 12 34
I www.zeemeeuw.net

4 GRAAF FLORIS V VAN MUYDEN
Herengracht 72
1398 AD Muiden
T +31 (0)294 26 12 96
I www.graaf-floris-v.nl

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