

Amsterdam

Coordinates: 52°22′22″N 04°53′37″E﻿ / ﻿52.37278°N 4.89361°E﻿ / 52.37278; 4.89361

Amsterdam (/ˈæmstərdæm/ *AM-stər-dam*, UK also /ˌæmstərˈdæm/ *AM-stər-DAM*,^{[9][10]} Dutch: [ˌɑmstərˈdɑm] (listen (h·l)); lit. "The Dam on the River Amstel") is the **capital and most populous city** of the **Netherlands**, with **The Hague** being the seat of government. It has a population of 921,402^[11] within the city proper, 1,457,018 in the **urban area**^[6] and 2,480,394 in the **metropolitan area**.^[12] Located in the **Dutch province of North Holland**,^{[13][14]} Amsterdam is colloquially referred to as the "**Venice of the North**", for its large number of canals, now designated a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.^[15]

Amsterdam was founded at the mouth of the Amstel River that was dammed to control flooding; the city's name derives from the a local linguistic variation of the word dam.^[16] Originally a small fishing village in the late 12th century, Amsterdam became a major world port during the **Dutch Golden Age** of the 17th century, when the Netherlands was an economic powerhouse. Amsterdam was the leading centre for finance and trade, as well as a hub of production of secular art.^[17] In the 19th and 20th centuries, the city expanded and many new neighborhoods and suburbs were planned and built. The canals of Amsterdam and the 19-20th century **Defence Line of Amsterdam** are both on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Sloten, annexed in 1921 by the municipality of Amsterdam, is the oldest part of the city, dating to the 9th century. The city has a long tradition of openness, liberalism, and tolerance.^[18] **Cycling** is key to the city's modern character, and there are numerous **biking paths** and lanes spread throughout the entire city.^{[19][20]}

Amsterdam's main attractions include its historic canals; the **Rijksmuseum**, the state museum with a vast collection of Dutch Golden Age art; the **Van Gogh Museum**; the **Dam Square**, where the **Royal Palace of Amsterdam** and former city hall (*stadhuis*) are located; the **Amsterdam Museum**; **Stedelijk Museum**, with modern art; **Hermitage Amsterdam**, the **Concertgebouw** concert hall; the **Anne Frank House**; the **Het Scheepvaartmuseum**, the **Heineken Experience**, the **Natura Artis Magistra**; **Hortus Botanicus**, **NEMO**, the **red-light district** and many **cannabis coffee shops**. The city is also well known for its nightlife and festival activity; with several of its nightclubs (**Melkweg**, **Paradiso**) among the world's most famous. Primarily known for its artistic heritage, elaborate canal system and narrow canal houses with gabled **façades**; well-preserved legacies of the city's 17th-century Golden Age, and the establishment of the Van Gogh Museum, displaying the work of the famous Dutch modern artist, have attracted millions of visitors to Amsterdam annually.

The **Amsterdam Stock Exchange**, founded in 1602, is considered the oldest "modern" securities market **stock exchange** in the world. As the commercial capital of the Netherlands and one of the top **financial centres** in Europe, Amsterdam is considered an **alpha world city** by the **Globalization and World Cities Research Network**. The city is also the cultural capital of the Netherlands.^[21] Many large Dutch institutions have their headquarters in the city, including: the **Philips conglomerate**, **AkzoNobel**, **Booking.com**, **TomTom**, and **ING**.^[22] Many of the world's largest companies are based in Amsterdam or have established their European headquarters in the city, such as leading technology companies **Uber**, **Netflix** and **Tesla**.^[23] In 2022, Amsterdam was ranked the ninth-best city in the world to live in by the **Economist Intelligence Unit**^[24] and 12th globally on quality of living for environment and infrastructure by Mercer.^[25] The city was ranked 4th place globally as top tech hub in the **Savills Tech Cities 2019 report** (2nd in Europe),^[26] and 3rd in innovation by Australian innovation agency 2thinknow in their **Innovation Cities Index 2009**.^[27] The **Port of Amsterdam** is the fifth largest in Europe.^[28] The **KLM** hub and Amsterdam's main airport, **Schiphol**, is the **busiest airport in the Netherlands**, the **third busiest in Europe**, and the **11th busiest airport in the world**.^[29] The Dutch capital is considered one of the most multicultural cities in the world, with at least 177 nationalities represented.^[30] Immigration and ethnic segregation in Amsterdam is a current issue.^[31]

Amsterdam

Capital city and municipality



Aerial view of the **Canals of Amsterdam**



Keizersgracht



Reguliersgracht



Royal Concertgebouw



Rijksmuseum



Zuidas business district



Flag



Coat of arms

× **Gemeente**
× **Amsterdam**
×

Brandmark

Nicknames: Mokum, the Venice of the North

Motto(s): **Heldhaftig, Vastberaden, Barmhartig** (*Valiant, Steadfast, Compassionate*)