

le boat

HOLLAND

Region Guide





The Netherlands has a complex network of waterways which are not all shown here. We have only shown principle waterways which allow you to visit the cities, towns and villages that feature within this guide.



Utrecht, North & South Holland		Approx time		No. of locks		No. of lifting bridges	
Spakenburg	1 hr 30 min	4 hr	0	2	0	2	
Huizen	2 hr 30 min		2		2		
Muiden	45 min	7 hr	0	1	2	16	
Weesp	1 hr 15 min		1		1		
Nigtevecht (via the Vecht)	1 hr 30 min		0		2		
Loenen	2 hr		0		6		
Maarssen	1 hr 30 min		0		5		
Utrecht	5 hr 30 min	7 hr 45 min	3	5	14	18	
Oudewater	2 hr 15 min		2		4		
Gouda	3 hr	5 hr 15 min	1	1	10	13	
Alphen a/d Rijn	2 hr 15 min		0		3		
Leiden	2 hr	9 hr	0	2	4	24	
Lisse	45 min		0		2		
Hillegom	1 hr		0		3		
Cruquius	5 hr 15 min		2		15		
Amsterdam	2 hr 30 min	4 hr 30 min	2	3	8	15	
Ouderkerk	2 hr		1		7		
Vinkeveen							

		Approx time		No. of locks		No. of lifting bridges	
Nigtevecht	2 hr 30 min	5 hr	2	4	1	1	
Vinkeveen	2 hr 30 min		2		0		
Maarssen							

		Approx time		No. of locks		No. of lifting bridges	
Vinkeveen (via the Rijnkanaal)		4 hr	7 hr 30 min	0	2	0	7
Amsterdam	3 hr 30 min	2	7				
Edam	3 hr 15 min	8 hr 30 min	0	2	6	17	
West-Grafdijk	4 hr 15 min		2		10		
Haarlem	1 hr		0		1		
Cruquius							

		Approx time		No. of locks		No. of lifting bridges	
Muiden							
Amsterdam	2 hr 15 min	2 hr 15 min	0	0	1	1	

		Approx time		No. of locks		No. of lifting bridges	
Alphen a/d Rinj	4 hr 45 min	4 hr 45 min	1	1	10	10	
Ouderkerk							

Times and the number of locks and bridges shown here are based on the most direct route between stops, using principle waterways.

Other routes may be possible - please consult your onboard waterways map. Times are an approximation only and are calculated on the basis of an average speed of 7.5km/h and an average time of 12 minutes to pass through a lock and 4 minutes to pass a lifting bridge. Your speed, the flow of the water and the time it takes to go through locks and bridges will all affect your progress.

VINKEVEENSE PLASSEN

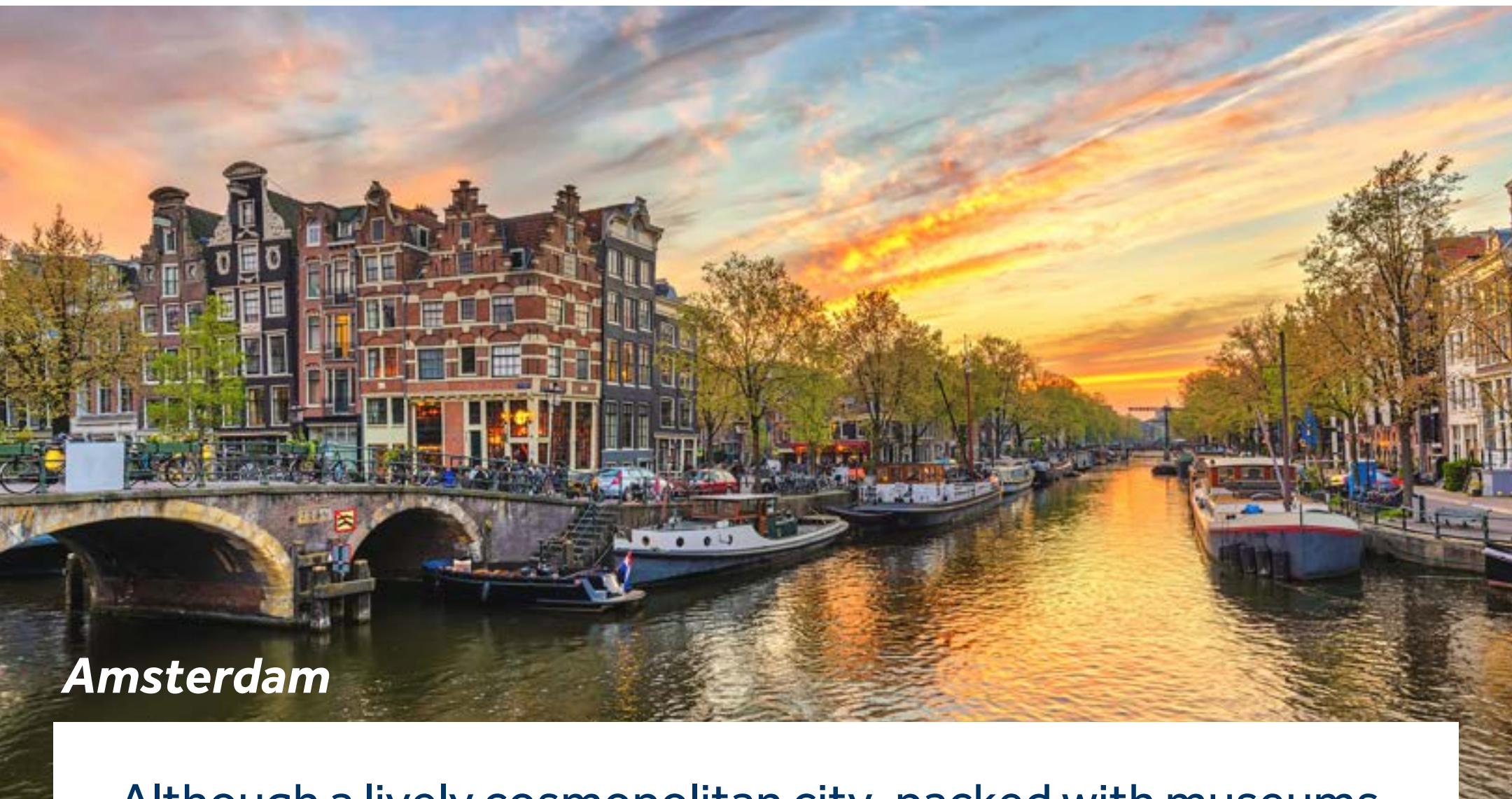


Le Boat's Vinkeveen base is located on the shores of this vast lake that is alive with visitors and watersports lovers in the summer. Take a refreshing swim, cruise among the many islands and eat in one of the excellent lake-side restaurants.

EXITING VINKEVEEN PLASSEN

You can exit the lake to the south, through Demmerikse Lock (see back cover for times and charges) and then along the Angstel River. From here you can head along the wide and busy Amsterdam-Rijnkanaal. You'll make quick progress, but you'll share it with large, commercial barges and many find it quite daunting. For a more pleasant boating experience, we suggest turning off onto the adjacent and prettier River Vecht that wends its way at a more leisurely and scenic pace.

AMSTERDAM



Amsterdam

Although a lively cosmopolitan city, packed with museums, markets and entertainment for all, Amsterdam has managed to retain much of its traditional character. If markets are your thing, the Albert Cuyp Market in De Pijp is the largest and most popular, open Monday to Saturday with 260 stalls offering everything from street food to fresh stroopwafels. For vintage finds, head to Waterlooplein - the city's oldest flea market, with around 300 unique stalls open Monday to Saturday. Grachtengordel is arguably the most charming part of the city with its lattice of waterways and sweet bridges overlooked by canal houses, while the Herengracht canal is the most prestigious canal in the city, and a great place to stroll at night when the grand facades are illuminated. Bike is the best way to get around or hop on a glass-roofed canal boat for a different perspective (and to get a view the slanted houses).

MUSEUMS

The Anne Frank Museum, the Van Gogh Museum and the Rijksmuseum, with its wonderful collection of Rembrandt paintings are three sights not to be missed. The Nemo Science Museum is another must.

Amsterdam is famed for its vibrant nightlife, and the two key areas of Leidseplein and Rembrandtplein are the place to be, whether it's to party or just sit and soak up the atmosphere. And if you're simply planning to eat your way through Amsterdam, Pickled Herring, Stroopwafels and Bitterballen are a great start! Amsterdam is also full of great spots to try local Dutch brews. Brouwerij 't IJ, located next to a windmill and easily reached from Sixhaven marina, is a top pick for craft beer in a unique setting. They offer English tours on weekends at 3:30pm - but get there early, as spots fill up fast. If you're after something more mainstream, the Heineken Experience is another fun stop for beer fans. For luxury shopping, stroll down P.C. Hooftstraat - one of the world's top-rated shopping streets. It's perfect for some window-shopping and designer daydreams. For more everyday finds, head to Kalverstraat.

Amsterdam's central Red Light District is the most famous of the city's three and draws visitors with its unique blend of history and nightlife. Along its scenic canals, you'll find a mix of bars, adult shops, museums, and historic landmarks, all offering a unique window into Amsterdam's open-minded spirit.



Red-Light District, Amsterdam



Recommended restaurant: Café Bern's delicious fondue is not to be missed, but make sure you reserve a table in advance. Situated just off Nieuwmarkt.



Amenities: There's a vast range of shops and restaurants here.

Flower market: Every day – Singel

Farmers' market: Sat (am) - Noordermarkt

Flea market: Mon to Sat - Waterlooplein.

To visit Amsterdam, moor at Weesp and take a train (approx. 20 min) to the city centre. If you would like to travel to Amsterdam by boat, you can moor at Amsterdam Marina or the Six Haven Marina (directly opposite the Central Station), and take the free ferry to the city centre.

VOLENDAM

Explore the charming town of Volendam, where you can try on traditional costumes, visit a cheese-making factory, or enjoy some fresh fish. Afterward, wander through "Doolhof," the oldest part of Volendam, where the buildings form a true maze, built without any street structure. From here, hop on the ferry to Marken, an idyllic Dutch village that feels like stepping back in time with its wooden houses, narrow alleys, and picturesque drawbridges. The ferry departs every 45 minutes and takes just 30 minutes to reach Marken. Don't miss Volendam's museums, including the Volendam Museum, Palingsound Museum, and the Cheese Factory, where you can learn about the local culture, cheese-making traditions, and wooden shoe craftsmanship. It's the perfect mix of history, culture, and charm!

EDAM



Cheese Market, Edam

Famed worldwide for its delicious cheese, the charming town of Edam celebrates its heritage loud and proud. At the heart of Edam is the Damplein, a small town square where you'll find the Edam Museum, renowned for its floating cellar. From here it's just a short walk to the Grote Kerk, the largest three-ridged church in Europe, where you can enjoy impressive views over the surrounding area. If you're visiting in summer, make sure to visit the Edam Cheese Market, which takes place every Wednesday in July and August. To round out your visit, explore The Story of Edam Cheese, the cheese museum in Edam, where you can learn about the town's cheese-making history and enjoy a guided tour and tasting. Make a booking on tickets.thestoryofedamcheese.com.



Recommended restaurants: Het Geheim van Edam, Spui 5, or De Beurs Eten en Drinken.



Amenities: There's a vast range of shops and restaurants here.

Cheese market: Weds (10.30 am-12.30 pm) July & Aug – Nieuwenhuizenplein.

ALKMAAR



Alkmaar

Alkmaar is a delightful slice of Dutch heritage and charm, famous for having the largest and oldest Cheese Market in the Netherlands. Cheese enthusiasts can immerse themselves in the Dutch Cheese Museum, while beer drinkers will appreciate the guided tours and tastings at the Nationaal Biermuseum De Boom. If you're feeling up for adventure, Racesquare Alkmaar offers state-of-the-art Formula 1 racing simulators, bringing the excitement of the track to life. For a bit of culture, pay a visit to the Beatles Museum, the largest of its kind and a must-visit for fans of the Fab Four (plus, there's an Elvis Presley exhibit to explore).

Alkmaar also offers breathtaking views and fresh coastal air which can be enjoyed on foot or by bike.



Cheese Market, Alkmaar



Recommended Restuarant: Abby's, located under the sails of the famous Piet Mill – offers delicious meals with a historic view. Reservations recommended.



Amenities: There's plenty of shops and restaurants here.

Cheese Market: From the last Friday of March until the last Friday in September – every Fri (10am-1pm) | During July and August, the market is also open on Tuesday evenings from 7pm -9 pm – Waagplein.

Moor your boat in Alkmaar for easy access to the town, or grab a bike to explore the area's highlights. It's a fun and eco-friendly way to soak up all the Dutch charm Alkmaar has to offer.

ZAANSE SCHANS



Take a step into a storybook when you stop at Zaanse Schans, a charming Dutch village famed for its 13 iconic windmills. Along the scenic Kalverringdijk, visitors can explore historic mills like De Huisman, De Kat, and De Zoeker – each showcasing traditional Dutch craftsmanship. Nearby, the Zaans Museum adds to the experience with its fascinating Verkade Experience, where century-old chocolate and biscuit machines come to life. Cheese lovers will adore the Catharina Hoeve Cheese Farm, where you can watch a traditional cheese-making demonstration and learn about Dutch cheese culture.



Recommended restaurant: Kalverringdijk – enjoy local flavours on the water.



Amenities: You'll find shops, supermarkets, a pharmacy, bakery, cafés and restaurants.



HAARLEM

Haarlem is a town steeped in history and rich in culture.

Start with the Koepelgevangenis (Dome Prison), an architectural marvel completed in 1901. Once a prison, it has since been transformed into a vibrant hub for art, education, and start-ups, complete with a cinema in the basement. Don't miss a glimpse inside the old prison cells for a taste of its past. Beer enthusiasts will love Jopenkerk, a former church turned craft brewery. The brewery is the city's first craft beer bar, offering a rotating selection of 30 draught beers and over 120 bottled varieties. Brederode Castle is just a short drive from downtown Haarlem, where you can explore its medieval roots. For a glimpse of Haarlem's industrial past, visit Windmill De Adriaan, located on the banks of the River Spaarne. Finally, treat yourself to a sweet local delicacy at Michel Patisserie – Chocolaterie, where you can try the famous 'Haarlemmer Halletjes,' a crispy Dutch cookie dating back to the 17th century.

WALKING OR BIKING TOUR

Plan your personalized walking or biking route through Haarlem on [Visithaarlem.com/en/wandel-en-fietsroutes/](https://visithaarlem.com/en/wandel-en-fietsroutes/).



Windmill De Adriaan, Haarlem



Recommended restaurants: deDAKKAS has breathtaking views of the city (located on the rooftop of a parking garage), or if you're looking for Michelin-starred excellence, Café Samabe offers an exceptional dining experience.



Amenities: You'll find shops, supermarkets, a pharmacy, bakery, cafés and restaurants.

Market: Grote Markt, Mon & Sat (9am-4pm) – Haarlem Town Square

LISSE



Home of the spectacular Keukenhof Gardens. Lisse is at the heart of the Dutch bulb-growing region. Open in mid-March until late-May (check website for exact dates - [keukenhof.nl](https://www.keukenhof.nl)) the gardens are home to a dazzling collection of more than 7 million flowers which are planted every year. Nearby, the 17th century Keukenhof Castle is open year-round and tours can be arranged by appointment (info@kasteelkeukenhof.nl +31 252 75 06 90).

MUSEUMS The Museum De Zwarte Tulp offers a fascinating look at the region's tulip history, while the LAM Museum showcases contemporary art with a focus on food. For history enthusiasts, Castle Keukenhof blends art exhibitions with beautiful gardens, and Huys Dever provides insights into medieval life. T. Huy's Dever offers a deeper dive into the local culture and heritage, making these museums a perfect mix of art, history, and nature.



Recommended restaurant: Vier Seizoenen on Heereweg - two minutes from the Flower Museum.



Amenities: There's a vast range of shops and restaurants here.

LEIDEN



Leiden

Renowned as Rembrandt's birthplace and the home of the Netherlands' oldest and most prestigious university, Leiden is a beautiful city. Less crowded than Amsterdam, it has some of the most beautiful sights in Holland, and a stroll around its waterways and churches is the best way to see them all. The Leiden Loop is a self-guided walk around the historic centre, with key points indicated by signposts. You can also purchase a guidebook at the tourist office. Its 13 museums, including the Natural History Museum and Ethnology Museum, are all within walking distance of each other and great for the whole family. The bi-weekly street markets are a great place to pick up fish, flowers or cheese, and they provide the perfect place to people-watch.



Recommended restaurant: Oudt Leyden, Steenstrat – for sweet and savoury pancakes! Head for the Beestenmarkt.



Amenities: There's a vast range of shops and restaurants here.

Market: Wed & Sat (8am-5pm) – all over the city, lining the canals.

GOUDA



The city is famed worldwide for its famous cheese, and a weekly market is held in The Markt where you can take part in the centuries-old tradition of handjeklap (clapping hands), a game of bidding and haggling for the best deal. Stop by De Waag afterwards to enjoy a cheese-making demonstration.

A visit to St Janskerk is well worthwhile to see the Goudse Glazen, an impressive collection of 70 stained glass windows dating back to the 16th century, and which are explained on an audio tour. If you're feeling active, the Reeuwijkse Plassen north of Gouda is the perfect place to explore on two wheels with miles of car-free cycle tracks. You can even explore Edam from the water by renting a SUP to paddle through the beautiful canals of the historic city center.



Visiting the Kamphuisen Siroopwafel Factory is a must for anyone with a sweet tooth, offering a chance to experience two centuries of tradition while enjoying freshly made siroopwafels.



Recommended restaurant: Kamphuisen, Hoge Gouwe.

Amenities: You'll find shops, supermarkets, bakeries, cafés and restaurants.



Cheese Market: Thurs (10am-1pm)
– The Markt

Goudse Glazen, St Janskerk, Gouda



OUDEWATER



***The Heksenwaag,
Oudewater***

Oudewater is one of the oldest towns of the Netherlands with around 250 protected buildings in the town. While there are a few small boutiques and restaurants, the main attraction here is The Heksenwaag, where witches were tried in the 16th century.

They were weighed on the scales and if above a certain weight; they were deemed too heavy to ride a broomstick and therefore must not be a witch. If they passed the weighing they would receive an official certificate. There is now a small museum in the Heksenwaag in honour of this colourful past.

UTRECHT



Utrecht is a beautiful old city and well worth a daytrip. Top of your list to see should be the Dom Tower. There are regular tours and after climbing the 465 steps to the top, you'll have a beautiful aerial view of the city. The city is home to countless museums, such as the excellent University Science Museum, while the Miffy Museum, dedicated to the cute cartoon rabbit, is perfect for young children. St Martin's Cathedral and the botanic gardens are also worth a visit. After dark – follow the Trajectum Lumen, a self-guided trail that leads you around artistically lit locations throughout the historical city centre. Pick up a guide from the tourist information centre.

We recommend you use the moorings alongside Nieuwekade – look for 'Monicabrug' on your onboard waterways map.

De Haar Castle, Utrecht



Just 13 kilometers west of Utrecht lies Kasteel de Haar - the Netherlands' largest and most lavish castle, and an absolute must-visit for history lovers and fairy-tale seekers alike. Originally built in 1391 and reimagined in the late 19th century by famed architect Pierre Cuypers (of Rijksmuseum fame), this grand neo-Gothic estate stuns with its dramatic towers, whimsical turrets, and a moat that looks straight out of a storybook. A stroll through its opulent halls and lush gardens feels like stepping into a different century



Recommended restaurant: Dapp Frietwinkel, 10 minutes walk from the moorings at Nieuwekade.



Amenities: You'll find shops (head to Hoog Catharijne), supermarkets and plenty of cafés and restaurants in Utrecht.

Market: Wed, Fri & Sat – Vredenburg Square.

MAARSSSEN



Goudestein, Maarssen

On the outskirts of Utrecht, Maarssen was a key place for the peat-bog in the Middle Ages. Later, affluent families of Amsterdam built country houses in the town, many of which have since been restored to their former glory. One such example is the 18th century Goudestein, now used as the town hall and a wedding venue. Visit the romantic old town with its quaint little church.

SOMETHING FOR THE KIDS

Kinderboerderij Otterspoor is a fun and free-to-visit spot where kids can get up close with animals. Open 362 days a year, the farm is supported by donations and proceeds from selling fresh eggs, honey, snacks, and drinks. It's a perfect place for a family outing.

BREUKELLEN



Kasteel Nijenrode, Breukelen

Breukelen is a charming town right in the heart of the Netherlands, offering a perfect blend of history, art, and relaxation. Start your day with a stroll around the beautiful Castle Gunterstein and its serene park, the castle's historic grounds are the perfect place to unwind. Don't miss a visit to Kasteel Nijenrode, a stunning castle with rich history, now home to a business university, where you can explore its grounds and learn about its past. For some culture, head to Galerie Peter Leen XL, where contemporary works showcase local talent. Finish your day with a relaxing evening at Wine Bar 't Stichtse Pakhuis, a cozy spot offering an excellent selection of wines in a charming, intimate setting.



Recommended restaurant: Enjoy classic Dutch cuisine at Loetje Breukelen, located at Stationsweg 1.



Amenities: There's a vast range of shops and restaurants here.

Breukelse Weekmarkt: Fri (9.00 am-17.00 pm) – on the Kerkbrink.

WEESP

Weesp has a wealth of historic streets and attractions (stop by the tourist office for a walking map) and is famous for the having the first Dutch porcelain produced in the town, back in 1759. Nowadays, the town is renowned for Van Houten chocolate, whose factory was based in the town until 1970. The Town Hall museum “Stadhuis” now houses exhibits



about both exports. Accessible from the river, Molen De Vriendschap is a fully functional corn mill dating from 1900 which still produces wheat flour. Just a short bike ride away is the nature reserve, The Naardermeer Area, a marshland covering 1080 hectares and home to various rare bird.



Recommended restaurant: De Schalkse, Ossenmarkt. 5 minutes walk from the town moorings. Followed by Nelis' Ice Saloon for award winning ice-cream!



Amenities: There's a vast range of shops and restaurants here.

Farmers market: Tue (am) – Grote Plein/Nieuwstraat.

MUIDEN

Muiderslot Castle, Muiden



Take a break in Muiden, where you can relax at bustling lock-side cafes or enjoy a scenic walk to the IJmeer beaches, just a 10-minute stroll away. The town, surrounded by greenery and located on the IJmeer and the river Vecht, offers picturesque waterfront views and charming streets to explore. For a deeper dive into history, visit the UNESCO-listed Muiderslot Castle, one of the Netherlands' oldest and best-preserved castles. Dating back to 1285, the castle has served both as a fortress and a prison, with a fascinating museum showcasing its medieval past. Muiden is also known for beautiful cycling routes through meadows and along the winding Vecht River, making it the perfect spot for a relaxing day out.



Recommended restaurant: Restaurant Fort H - housed in a historic military fort with a cozy bar and an atmospheric conservatory.



Amenities: You'll find shops, supermarkets, a pharmacy, bakery, cafés and restaurants.

HUIZEN

Huizen's indoor karting and laser quest are sure to entertain kids of all ages for a few hours or, for a more cultural activity, the Huizermuseum houses a collection of the town's traditional costume, and the interior of a fisherman's cottage.



Recommended restaurant: Le Beau Geste, Middenweg - open for dinner only.



Amenities: You'll find shops, supermarkets, a pharmacy, bakery, butchers, cafés and restaurants.

Market: Sat - Oude Raadhuisplein

LOCKS AND LIFTING BRIDGES

There are four ways to pass a lock or a lifting bridge in the Netherlands. The required method will be clearly displayed on site as you approach. There are four different ways to pass a bridge/lock:

1. Lock or bridge will operate automatically using sensors.
2. Operation will commence by pressing a button.
3. Call the lock/bridge keeper (numbers are indicated on the bridge/lock).

There is a fee of €1 – €3 to pay at a small number of locks/bridges, so keep some change handy for you to throw into the basket as you pass. The fee for Demmerikse Sluis, to exit and enter Vinkeveen to the south, is €7 in each direction.

OPENING TIMES

TIME OF YEAR	DEMMERIKSE LOCK* (The main lock to enter and exit Vinkeveen to the South)	MOST OTHER LOCKS AND BRIDGES
16 th Apr – 16 th Oct	Every day: 9am – 7pm (Closed for lunch: 12:30 - 1:30pm, and afternoon break: 4:30 - 5:30)	Every day: 9am – 7pm (Closed for lunch and dinner – exact times vary)
1 st – 15 th Apr & 17 th – 31 st Oct	Mon - Fri 10am - 4pm Sat 10am - 12pm (By appointment only)	Mon - Sat 9am-6pm

**Our base team will make a reservation for you (before the 16th of April and after the 16th of October) and will advise at what time you should be at Demmerikse Lock. If you plan to return to Vinkeveen earlier or later, please let the base team know at least 24hr in advance, so they can change your appointment. Most locks and bridges are closed on Good Friday and Easter Monday, but most are open on other public holidays. Opening hours can vary on some waterways.*

MOORING

Moorings are plentiful in the Netherlands, although you must moor in dedicated moorings which have bollards or rings to tie your lines to. Public moorings along the banks are usually free, although these will have no facilities. Most towns and facilities have public moorings with water, and sometimes electricity, for approximately €10 – €15 a night. The fee at private marinas is between €20 – €30.



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Disclaimer: We have endeavoured to ensure that all the information in this Guide is correct at time of printing. However, opening times and prices are subject to change. Attractions, restaurants, locks and even stretches of the rivers and canals can close without notice. Le Boat is happy to recommend all of the attractions and eating establishments featured within this Guide. However, they are not owned or managed by Le Boat and, as such, we cannot guarantee the quality of your experience at any particular time. If anything in this guide is not correct, we'd love to hear from you at guides@leboat.com so that we can revise future editions.

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