

A Judge's Guide to Amsterdam

Congratulations! If you are reading this guide, you are at least very interested in judging at Pro Tour Amsterdam. That is a very fine idea. Amsterdam, you see, has it all. We are very proud to be living in this city and we will enjoy welcoming you here. In this guide we will try and help you to get around in Amsterdam. In the coming months we will be glad to update this document with answers to special questions - if you have any questions you'd like us to ask, drop us a line at peter104@gmail.com and/or teunzjip@gmail.com. See you in September!

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Getting There

Central Station

Most international flights to the Netherlands will arrive at Amsterdam Airport Schiphol. From there, you have a few options to get into the city centre. The easiest and fastest way is by train. Schiphol Train Station is located directly beneath the central hall of the airport. Trains leave for the centre ('Amsterdam Centraal') approximately every 8 minutes, and a single trip costs €3,80. It's important to know that there is one hourly Hispeed train at three minutes to the hour that has an additional fee of €2,00 which you might want to avoid, given that it's only five minutes faster. Total travel time will be between 15 and 20 minutes. You can get a train ticket from the machine that is conveniently located in the baggage claim area; you will probably have to wait for ten minutes for your luggage to come anyway. Don't take the 'Comfort Class' ticket to Amsterdam since it's a fifteen minute trip and it's generally not worth it. If you like to throw money away, or there's six of you, you can get a € 40 cab ride to the city center.

The other, slower slower slower option is taking a bus. In order to get to Amsterdam Central Station, you will have to transfer to the metro. There are two lines going into the city. For line 197, go to Station Amstelveenseweg, transfer to metro line 50 (towards "Gein"), and again at the very next Station (Amsterdam Zuid/WTC) to line 51 (towards "Centraal Station"), which is at the other side of the platform. If you take line 310, go to Boelelaan/VU, then transfer to metro line 51 towards "Centraal Station". Both options will be about 45 minutes and cost about €3,00.

We recommend travelling into the city by train, as it is a lot faster and easier.

It is possible and often cheaper to arrive in another airport, like Rotterdam-The Hague or Eindhoven airports. From there, public transport will take you to Amsterdam. Add about two to three hours to your travel time.

If you arrive by car, you're going to have to find some place to park it. The street could cost you up to € 50 a day (we're not kidding) if you're in the city center. If you can reach the venue from your hotel by public transport, that's probably best - so dump your stuff at the hotel and then park your car at one of the larger 'P+R' parking lots, like the one in Zeeburg (Zuiderzeeweg 46a) which costs you € 13 a day.

Staff hotel

The staff hotel is located in the city centre, but fortunately it's easily reachable. Depending on where you're coming from (Schiphol Airport or Amsterdam Central Station) there are two easy options. If you're flying in, take a train to Amsterdam Zuid train station. There you'll have to take tram 5 towards Central Station and get off at Leidseplein. From there it's only a two minute walk. An important thing to notice is that the trams don't stop inside the station here, but a small distance away. There are two stops nearby. The easiest is just to walk off the platform in the direction the train came from. Walk down the stairs at the end and you'll see the stop. Take the tram going to the right (northern direction). The other option is to go inside the station, then take the

northern exit. Cross the square and take the stairs up. There you'll see the other stop. Tickets have to be bought inside the station first.

Should you for some reason arrive at Amsterdam Central Station, you'll also have to take a tram to Leidseplein, but you'll have many options. Take either line 1, 2 or 5 or even bus 142, 170 or 172. The tram is easiest. Make sure you've purchased your ticket inside the station first. From Leidseplein it's a two minute walk to the hotel.

Staff hotel to site

Getting from the hotel to the site is very simple. When you leave the hotel, you'll have to cross the canal and go to the Leidseplein, about 2 minutes walking. There you'll take the tram, line 10, towards Azartplein and get off 11 stops later, at the Eerste Leeghwaterstraat. From there it's another 2 minutes to walk to the site. In total this should take about 20-25 minutes, depending on how long you'll have to wait for the tram. The other way is exactly the same. Get on line 10 (this time towards Van Hallstraat) and get off at Leidseplein 15 minutes later.

Getting Around

Taxi and public transport

You can get a taxi to get around Amsterdam. Some people (mostly taxi drivers) would even recommend it. We would like to make a stand and say "Don't do it." Amsterdam taxi drivers are known for their general lack of customer service, rude behaviour, questionable knowledge of the Amsterdam street names and inventive shortest path algorithms. Public transport is usually faster, definitely cheaper and about as safe as a taxi. If you're going to be using public transport more than three times a day, get a 24- or 48- or 72-hour public transport card from the Tickets & Info stand at the Central Station. There's also the 'I Amsterdam card' which costs a lot of money, but certainly has value if you're planning to spend a day as a tourist. Prices for that one start at € 38 and you can find more information here: <http://www.iamsterdamcard.com/>

The Amsterdam Convention Factory is located in a newer business district called the 'Eastern Dock Islands'. Most hotels are in the old center so you will probably not be walking from your hotel to the tournament site. Tram lines 10 and 26 have a stop in front of the ACF. The stop is named 'Rietlandpark' ("reet-land-park"). Both lines will depart every 10 to 15 minutes from 6:30 to midnight, all days of the week. Again, public transport is pretty fast and reliable.

Bicycle

The main way to get around Amsterdam is, of course, by bicycle. You will find a lot of bicycle rentals in the city and they will cost you somewhere around € 10 per day. The most practical is probably MacBike, which has a location at Amsterdam Central Station. Be aware that riding a MacBike bicycle will definitely show everybody you are not from around. This will probably increase your safety, though, as locals will recognize the bikes and be more forgiving around you. From most hotels in the city, you can reach the tournament venue in less than 20 minutes.

Practical Information

Money

The Netherlands uses the euro (1 EUR ≈ US\$ 1,26). You may find your credit card to be less useful here. Convenience stores and supermarkets will probably not accept them. Restaurants and hotels will probably accept them if you have Mastercard or VISA. American Express will be frowned on and others don't stand a chance. You will see Dutch people swiping cards all the time, though; if you have a Maestro debit card, these will work. If you don't have one of those, you are best off having some bills and a couple of euro coins in your wallet at all times. ATMs are on most corners of most streets, contact

your bank to be sure you will be able to get money out of them. Again, your Maestro logo card should work.

Areas

Amsterdam doesn't really have any no-go areas. The red light district is under constant surveillance, and you will very likely not end up in one of the faraway suburbs featuring some crime. That being said, it is a major city so don't go stand somewhere with a map of Amsterdam in your hands and a wallet sticking out of your pocket, and such. Create the image that you know where you are and you know where you're going and the chances of being pocketed are slim.

The main entertainment centre is located around the Leidseplein. Students tend to gather in the Spui area. During normal weekdays, most bars and clubs are open until 2 or 3. In the weekend you will be judging so we won't say a thing about that.

Magic

If you arrive early and you want to play Magic, you can play drafts, EDH and whatever in Cafe Twee Klaveren (De Clercqstraat 136, Amsterdam). You can join us there for the famous Monday Night Draft that starts at 19:30. In the week leading up to the Pro Tour we will also have a draft on Tuesday night and Wednesday night, so you can play Magic all week long.

Touristy Activities

This is an overview of some things tourists do in Amsterdam. These are just some things we think you should do and/or see. Your travel guide will offer you a lot more.

Anne Frank House - (Prinsengracht 267)

Anne Frank wrote her world-famous diary while in hiding in occupied Holland. This museum shows the place where she was into hiding. The museum is open every day and located in the centre.

Rijksmuseum - (Stadhouderskade 42)

The Rijksmuseum is the Dutch national museum. It's dedicated to arts, crafts and history and has a large collection of painters from the Dutch Golden Age. The building itself is currently being renovated, but all masterpieces are still on display.

Van Gogh Museum - (Paulus Potterstraat 7)

Located close to the Rijksmuseum, the Van Gogh Museum is another place that should be visited by all those with an interest in art. The museum contains the largest collection of paintings by Vincent van Gogh in the world.

Canal Tour - (Multiple locations)

A tour through the canals by boat will show you the city from a different perspective. A guide will tell you all kind of interesting stories about the city and its architecture. A tour will take approximately an hour.

Food

We have personally eaten at each of these restaurants and will recommend them for their food and/or experience. Of course we have not eaten at every restaurant in Amsterdam and will probably have missed some. Do venture out and if you see something you like, let us know. :) Quoted prices are approximate and should cover an entire dinner without drinks.

FEBO - ~ € 4 (Lots of locations)

FEBO is a mediocre snack outlet you have to experience. You cannot walk a mile in the city center without seeing their yellow and red lighted signs. FEBO introduced the 'wall snack' into Dutch culture. You slip a euro into a vending machine and you get some form of fried, unhealthy snack, the most famous of which is the 'kroket', a deep-fried meat ragu puddle.

Rimini - ~ € 8 (Lange Leidsedwardsstraat 75, near Leidseplein)

Rimini is the archetypical cheap pizza eatery. Featuring a constant half price bargain, you can get a pizza for a couple of euros. The calzone is pretty good. Excellent quality for the price (note: this does not mean 'excellent quality'). Avoid the cheap headache wine. In the same street, you can find a lot of other budget options.

Twee Klaveren - ~ € 10 (De Clercqstraat 136, West)

It's our favourite place to spend the night drafting and it has surprisingly excellent food for a cafe. In fact, we'd like to recommend that if you are going to spend an evening with a booster draft here (see above), you eat here. Grab the chicken sateh or the daily special and a home made iced tea and you won't be disappointed.

Humphrey's - ~ € 22,50 (--- , near Central Station)

You will find a lot of locals in this relatively cheap restaurant near Central Station. There is one set menu that has six options for each of 3 courses, including at least one vegetarian choice for each course. This is a nice place to sit out an evening in a comfortable atmosphere with a group of people. Reservations might be necessary. Male meat lovers should not take the mixed grill as it's kinda small.

Fifteen - ~ € 35 (Jollemanhof 9, near the staff hotel)

This is one of few options near the Moevenpick hotel. This restaurant is listed here because some people love the experience of having eaten in 'Jamie Oliver's restaurant'. Like other Fifteens, this one employs young people that might have ended up in a life of crime and hopelessness, but now work in a restaurant instead. This is a very good cause of course, but the sad truth is that the quality of your food is very questionable and the prices are awfully high. Only for Jamie Oliver lovers and/or welfare workers, you're probably better off in the staff hotel restaurant.