

Hometown English: Amsterdam

In our second guest broadcast—but the first made just for Bite Sized English—we're going to hear about the city of Amsterdam. Many thanks to Hanne for making this recording for us.

Before You Listen to the Recording

Amsterdam is, I think, a city that most of us have heard quite a bit about. Before you listen to how Hanne describes her hometown, ask yourself what you already know about Amsterdam. What would you like to know about Amsterdam? If you were going to send in questions, what would you ask?

Now start the recording and listen to hear if Hanne tells you what you wanted to learn.

After You've Listened to the Recording

How much of what Hanne said was new to you? Was it difficult to listen to another person speaking? (It's easy to get used to how just one person—me, in this case—speaks.) Did Hanne miss any of the questions you would have asked?

If you want more information on Amsterdam, here are a few links you can read. After all, it's a good way to learn more, and it's good English practice!

- I always recommend starting with the [Wikipedia page on Amsterdam](#)
- [Lonely Planet](#) also includes [a lot of information](#), though they want you to buy their books.
- [World 66](#) also has a lot of information in their [Amsterdam guide](#).

The Text of the Recording

Hi everyone!

My name is Hannah. This is like a guest-broadcast from Amsterdam this time. As a matter of fact it was more or less a request by Toby, because I wrote him saying that I really liked his site 'Bite Sized English' and that my friends who are learning English found it very helpful. So he said: 'Well why don't you talk a little bit about Amsterdam?', as I am living in Amsterdam. So here I am talking about my city. I have been living in this city for almost 16 years now. I came here to study, I still live here and I still like it.

A lot of people know Amsterdam for the 'coffeeshops' and the 'Red Light District'. These of course

are very famous places in this city.

But it is kind of a shame that people don't know that there is a lot more to this city. So I would like to talk a bit about the other things that you could find if you would pay a visit to Amsterdam.

Of course Holland and Amsterdam are known for the many flowers and especially the tulips. There is even a song: 'Tulips from Amsterdam'. You can find these especially on the flower market, which is a place in the city center near a place called 'de Singel'.

This is a very popular destination for tourists to buy flowers, and in fact every time a friend of mine comes to visit, we always go there and they buy lots of bulbs (so-called flower 'bulbs') because you can put them in the ground and then of course in springtime you will have lovely beautiful flowers. So if you come here you can buy lots of bulbs and you can take them home with you, so you have just as beautiful flowers as we have here in the springtime.

Of course we are not only known for the tulips, we also are famous for the sunflowers, that is to say 'The Sunflowers' especially by Van Gogh. I say Van Gogh, because many of the English people say it's 'Van Gough'.. No in fact his name is pronounced 'Van Gogh'.

In Amsterdam we have many museums and art galleries because well, we love art, and also a Van Gogh museum which is on the 'museum square'. This is a very famous and popular destination for tourists, in the summertime you can find a long line of tourists who are eager, that is to say very enthusiastic to go into the museum and to see his famous works.

Van Gogh was a painter who lived in the 19th century. He was a painter of the so-called 'Impressionist movement' and he lived until 1890. One of the things that he is well known for is probably the fact that he had a temper. That is to say that he cut off his earlobe. A lot of people think that he did this on purpose but in fact it is because it was an accident.

He was attacking his fellow friend and painter Impressionist Gauguin after a fight. The Sunflowers is one of my favorite paintings by him, and another one that is very famous is 'Starry Night'.

Starry nights we have plenty here in Amsterdam especially on summer evenings, when there's a sweetness in the air and people are taking a stroll, so they are taking a little walk along the canals.

And one of the most popular things to do in the daytime or in the evening time is to take a canal tour.

This is on a boat, it takes you on for about an hour and it takes you to many different places in the city. So even to places you might not see otherwise and this is actually a very good way to see many of the famous sights from the water. So this is a very good idea if you come here, to take a canal tour.

In the evening time you can also take a canal tour, it is a 'Candlelight tour'. That's very romantic of course, if you want to take your girlfriend, or your wife, or your husband even if you are a romantic woman... You can take your spouse on a 'Candlelight tour' and that includes a dinner and seeing the city all with the romantic lights in the evening.

One of the places I think you should go to if you come here to Amsterdam is the Leidseplein, or Leidsesquare. There is always a lot of things to do and see in this place, it's very lively- like there are people performing and you can sit on one of the many terraces and enjoy a relaxing drink and sitting in the sun.

Or when you're getting hungry, take a bite in the nearby Leidsestraat, or 'Leidsestreet', where there are many café's , bistro's and restaurants. These can vary from Pizzeria's to Greek restaurants, Brazilian or Argentinian food or even Tibetan vegetarian food.

One thing you will notice when you are in Amsterdam is that there are many Indonesian restaurants. This is because Indonesia was a former colony of Holland. Many Indonesian people came to live in Holland then and when Indonesia became independent. So Indonesian food is very popular with the Dutch and with everyone here in Holland. You can go to one of the many Indonesian restaurants or in fact go to a so-called 'toko'. This is an Indonesian store. You can get food there but also lots of ingredients, so all the things that you need to be doing some Indonesian cooking of your own. In fact I am very lucky because I adore Indonesian food and there is a toko just around the corner..So guess what I will be doing tonight!

Anyway this is it for now, I hope you enjoyed this guest-broadcast, and I hope you will come see my lovely city sometime soon!

‘Tot ziens!’ everyone, take care!