



Amsterdam: Getting Around

Abstract

This information should help you get into and out of Amsterdam during the 12th EUGRIDPMA meeting, January 14-16, 2008.

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1 Places and Dates

For the **HOTEL**, head for

Ibis Stopera
Address: Valkenburgerstraat 68, 1011 LZ, Amsterdam
Tel.: +31.20.5319135
Fax: +31.20.5319145
Web: <http://www.ibishotel.com/ibis/fichehotel/gb/ibi/3044/>

To get to the hotel from Schiphol Airport, use the trains to Amsterdam Central station, followed by either tram #9 or the metro to "Waterlooplein". The hotel is 200m from the Stopera ("City Hall And Opera")

For **Nikhef**, head for

Nikhef (Science Park Amsterdam)
Address: Kruislaan 409/413, 1098 SJ Amsterdam Watergraafsmeer
E-mail: travel@nikhef.nl
Tel.: +31 20 592 2000
Fax: +31 20 592 5155
Web: <http://www.nikhef.nl/>

The **meetings** start each day at 09.30 local time. The trip from the Ibis Stopera takes a little over 30 minutes, with trams leaving every 10 minutes during rush hour.

If you are at the science park, but you're lost, ask anybody for rooms Z0.09 or Z0.10. These rooms are on the ground floor, right below the restaurant. The Nikhef reception (internal phone number: 2000 from any wall-mounted phone) can also help you.

The one crime that is prevalent in Amsterdam, though, is pick pocketing. Never, ever, leave your baggage, cameras, or wallets unattended. Just don't. Watch your laptop bags, keep your camera in front of you, and watch all baggage, especially on the trains between Schiphol and Central Station, and at the station itself. Do not leave your bags, not even to answer a question or to hand someone stuff he or she 'forgot' on the train. In many cases that is just a trick...

2 Getting Around in Amsterdam

Getting to Amsterdam is easy via *Schiphol Amsterdam Airport* (IATA code: **AMS**), or by train via Amsterdam's *Central Station* using express trains from Germany (ICE), Brussels and Paris (Thalys) or London (using EuroStar and Thalys). Where ever you arrive, public transport in most cases will be the best option to get from where you are to where you want to be.

2.1 Getting to Amsterdam: by train

If you are living in Brussels, Antwerp, Paris, Berlin, or close along the Rhine in Germany, getting to Amsterdam by train is certainly an option. Amsterdam is linked by Thalys to Belgium and France, and by ICE to Germany. All these trains terminate or commence at Amsterdam Central Station, which is the most convenient spot to get on or off.

Although international trains do get priority on the Dutch rail network, delays are common, and arriving an hour late is not unusual. But there is one big plus of train travel that makes it attractive despite of the delays: the opportunity to stretch your legs and walk about any time you like is a luxury no airline ticket can buy you.

2.2 Train travel

Trains are a convenient and fast way to travel, although punctuality is not a forte of the Dutch Railways (*Nederlandse Spoorwegen* or *NS* for short). To travel by train, you must purchase a train ticket **before you board** a train or go to a platform. Failure to do so will typically result in an on-the-spot fine of €60 plus the ticket price. Ticket inspectors are by policy left with virtually no alternative but to impose a fine, even if they would personally like to do otherwise, so leniency is rare.

You can buy train tickets from the ticket windows at Schiphol, Amsterdam Central Station, and Amsterdam Amstel, but using the ticket **vending machines** is a good alternative. Most modern machines (those with a touch screen) will take Visa and Eurocard/Mastercard, as well as a couple of Maestro/Cirrus enabled debit cards. Another range of machines (slightly more rare) will take cash in Euro's.

If, by chance, you encounter a vending machine with a 10-digit push-button system: the entry codes Amsterdam Centraal is "1000", for Schiphol it's "1117". These older machines do NOT take credit cards, but they will take cash.

Useful terms:

Enkele Reis	Single, one-way trip
Retour	Return ticket
1e klas, 2e klas	first or second class (second class is OK)
Korting	Reduced fare (sorry, you won't qualify)
Chip, PIN	payment options for Dutch bank account holders only
Annuleren	Stop and restart the process

Reserved seating is not available on domestic trains (but reservations and supplements are required for Thalys and ICE trains).

2.3 Rail system

Amsterdam is inside a rail loop, and has stations all around the loop. As a result, not all trains call at Amsterdam Centraal Station! Similarly, there are both trains from Amsterdam to Den Haag (The Hague) that call at Schiphol, and some that do not, as there is a choice between a route via Schiphol/Hoofddorp and one via Haarlem. The map below shows an overview, with the direct link between Schiphol and Amsterdam Centraal Station marked in red.



2.4 Bus, tram and metro: local area transport

At the time of writing, all busses, trams, and metros around Amsterdam used the “Strippenkaart”. They are available in 2, 3, 10, 15, and 45 “strips”, with the first three available from most bus and tram drivers, and the latter two (15 and 45) from the red machines, tobacconists, news stands, and supermarkets. At Amsterdam Central station look for the “AKO” news stands, as these are the least crowded.

The system appears complicated at first:

- The whole of the Netherlands is divided into “zones”
- The number of strips required for any trip is one higher than the total number of zones through which you will be traveling: if you will be traveling through one (1) zone, stamp two (2) strips.
- You can stamp your strippenkaart in the yellow stamping machines.
- The strippenkaart is an ordered list, starting at strip “1”. You need to stamp it in numeric order as well, or you will invalidate the entire strippenkaart ☺
- You only need to stamp once, on the last strip of a block. On the example shown below, two trips have been used, each trip traversing one zone, and thus needing two strips.
- If you by chance manage to fill the entire strippenkaart: you can “concatenate” them together, by stamping on the *last strip of the old one* and then continue counting on the new one. In this case, you will have to stamp twice. Then: keep both till the end of your journey.

Only at Amstel Station you need to take care: it is on a zone boundary, and therefore has stamping machines for all three zones it borders. Since, depending on the direction you take, you will only be traveling in one zone, you must make sure you stamp your strippenkaart in the proper machine, i.e. the machine at the entrance to the platform from which you will depart. For busses, there is no such problem as the driver will always stamp with the appropriate zone as the starting point.

If you are in doubt:

- Nikhef is in zone 5715 (“Oost”)
- All the rest is in zone 5700 (“Centrum”)

So only if you would, for some strange reason, travel from Amstel to the Ibis Stopera via Nikhef and the Middenweg (taking bus #40 and then changing for tram #9), need you stamp 3 strips (as you will then be traversing two zones).



The “strippenkaart”, in this case a 15-strip variant, costing around €7,-.

Two trips have been made using this strippenkaart, in both cases traversing one zone only (and thus needing two strips). Note that you need to stamp only on the last strip for each journey.

You can buy there from supermarkets (“Albert Heijn”), or get them from dedicated (fully red) machines (at Amsterdam Centraal and Amstel), ticket windows in train stations, news stands, or from tobacconists. On the busses and trams, one-journey strippenkaarten (with 2 or 3 strips) are sold, at a considerably higher price per ‘strip’!

Please note that tickets for bus, tram and metro are not available from the *train ticket* vending machines. If you want to use a machine, look for the big red “GVB” vending machines in the Amsterdam Centraal and Amstel stations.

2.5 Getting to Nikhef by taxi

Brief driving directions for taxis from Schiphol Airport to Nikhef¹:

Ring A10 Zuid/Oost, use exit S113 (“Watergraafsmeer, Science Park”) and follow the Middenweg till the Kruislaan.

Keep following the sign “Science Park”, turning RIGHT at traffic lights on the middenweg/kruislaan intersection.

Continue straight ahead, crossing under the railway shunting yard. Continue to go straight ahead (do not enter the MacGillavrylaan) and enter through the first main gate at your left just after the bus stop. If the gate is closed, use the intercom button to call the guards.

Follow small signs for “WCW Colloquiumzalen”, turning right after approx. 50 metres.

Otherwise, the use of taxis is not recommended. All of Amsterdam is well connected by public transport, and the city centre can easily be covered on foot.

¹ Try to avoid city taxis in Amsterdam itself if you can: they are horrendously expensive, usually rude, and spend most of the time fighting with each other instead of caring about their customers. Any you don't need taxis in Amsterdam anyway, as everything is well connected by public transport. For inbound transport directly to Nikhef, the official Schiphol Taxis can be considered, but these are also very expensive. For taxis outbound from Nikhef, see the section on airport transport.

3 Finding your way

3.1 From Schiphol Airport to your hotel or to Nikhef

If you need to get from Schiphol to Nikhef fast, taking a taxi from the taxi stand in front of Schiphol Plaza is an expensive (over €50) but usable option. For driving directions see section 2. For getting to your hotel, the train is probably just as fast as the taxi, and a lot cheaper!

When you arrive at Schiphol (IATA: **AMS**) from outside the Schengen area, you first pass through immigration, then pickup your baggage and process through Customs (use a green lane). You are then spit out on the ground floor, and immediately hit the shopping area of Schiphol Plaza. Make your way through the shops towards the centre of the Plaza where trains (and even busses and taxis) are waiting for you. Trains are absolutely the best choice.

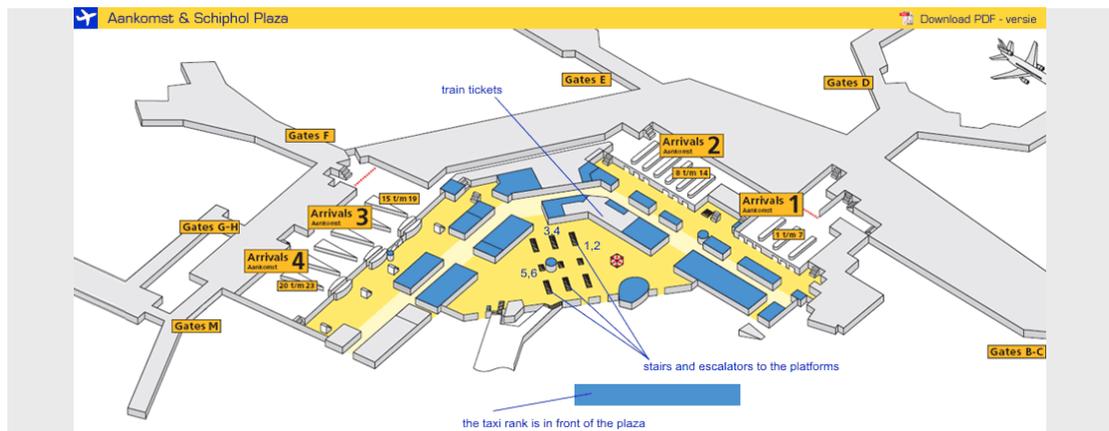


Schiphol Plaza: ticket windows for buying your train tickets



Schiphol Plaza: find the platform for the train going to *Amsterdam Centraal Station*. Electronic vending machines are located just behind the blue platform information screens.

The map of Schiphol Plaza below shows the location of the shops and the main plaza. First get a train ticket, and then go one level down towards platforms 2 or 3 (see the signs above the escalators).



Schiphol Plaza and the arrivals area. At the entrance to the plaza, just above the ticket machines, are signs showing the next train for all major destinations, including the platform from which the train will leave.

To get to the **Ibis Stopera hotel**, take a train to Amsterdam *Centraal Station*. These usually leave from platforms 2 or 3, but check the blue information screens to make sure (and buy a ticket before going to the platforms, which will be a little over €5,-).

At the central station, get tram #9 in the direction “*Diemen Sniep*” right in front of the station. The map of the station area below indicates the #9 stop. Get off after about 10 min in front of the city hall and opera house, the “*Stopera*”. Looking at the photo of the building you may start to understand why some locals see some connection between the buildings architecture and a set of artificial teeth.



Stopera: combination of city hall and opera house.

From the *Stopera* (“*Waterlooplein*”) tram stop, walk for 200m along the *Valkenburgerstraat* to the *Ibis Stopera* hotel.



To **get to Nikhef** by public transport you have your choice between two alternative routes:

- Easy route: North, via Amsterdam Centraal Station**
 Take a train to Amsterdam Centraal Station from platform 2 or 3. The train departure signs in Schiphol Plaza will tell you when, and from which platform, the next train for Amsterdam Centraal will leave. Also, get your train tickets from the ticket windows or machines at the Plaza.
 At Amsterdam Central Station, get out through the east (“oost”) tunnel on the front side, following the signs for trams and busses. If you got out and see ferries and lots of water, go right back into the station and exit on the opposite side ...



Public Transport at Amsterdam Centraal Station. The #9 tram left from the platform with the red circle. Tickets can be bought in the train station (red machines) or from the Tickets and Info shop in opposite. If you exit the station and see ferries and really lots of water, get back in and exit on the opposite side.

Get a ticket and invalidate three (3) strips, or ask the tram ticket's inspector to do that for you. Ride on the #9 tram for approximately 25 minutes, getting off at the "Kruislaan" stop. From there, either walk or take bus #40 (for precise directions, see section "Towards the Science Park" in the commute chapter)

- South, via Amsterdam Zuid WTC
Travelling to Nikhef via the southern route requires you to change twice: at Duivendrecht and at Amstel Station. We recommend you buy a train ticket from Schiphol to Amstel, and use (NS) trains exclusively for that trip, even though you have the option to use metros between Duivendrecht and Amstel.

At Schiphol airport, trains to Hilversum will usually stop at Duivendrecht, but check the overhead signs and the overview board at Schiphol Plaza to make sure you board the proper train (usually from platform 1). At Duivendrecht, change trains for Amsterdam Centraal (platform 5, upper level) and get off at the next stop "Amstel".

Here, buy a strippenkaart for tram and bus travel in the main hall, and then, still in the main hall, go down the stairs, past the bicycle shop, across the tram tracks and board bus #40 bound for "Muiderpoort Station". Get off at the Kruislaan 409/413 stop, after a 10 minute ride (or ask the driver to warn you). The main entrance to Nikhef and the WCW is right opposite you (see photo).



Overview of the Duivendrecht train station. You will be arriving from Schiphol on the mezzanine level ('1'), and need to go up one level to the platforms for Amstel and Centraal on the upper-most level, from platform 5. These platforms are those on the east-side of the station.
Trans for Schiphol airport (on your way back) leave from platform 4.

3.2 Finding your way at Nikhef and the Science Park

You enter the WCW (Amsterdam Science Park) via the main gate off the Kruislaan to your left.



Main gate to the WCW Amsterdam Science Park, Kruislaan 403 – 415. The main gate is open between 7 AM and 7 PM.

Go straight ahead through the gate, and after 50 metres you should see a small sign “WCW Colloquiumzalen” pointing you to the right. The sliding doors are the entrance to the waiting area, where also coffee and biscuits are served during the breaks.

If you are lost and want to get to the Nikhef reception: it's a bit further ahead, through the underpass of the building and then immediately to your left ("Kruislaan 409"). A photo of the Nikhef entrance is shown below. The reception desk is just through the double sliding doors on your right, and is open between 8 AM and 5 PM.



Map of the Science Park Amsterdam and Nikhef area. The colloquium rooms are at CWI on the ground floor (Z0.09 and Z0.10). Bus stops are marked with the GVB logo, and are all along the Kruislaan. The rail shunting yard is on the lower left hand corner. Only the entrances on the Kruislaan can be used. (note that the green buildings on the right are from the UvA and are on the wrong side of the road)

This detailed map can also be found on-line.



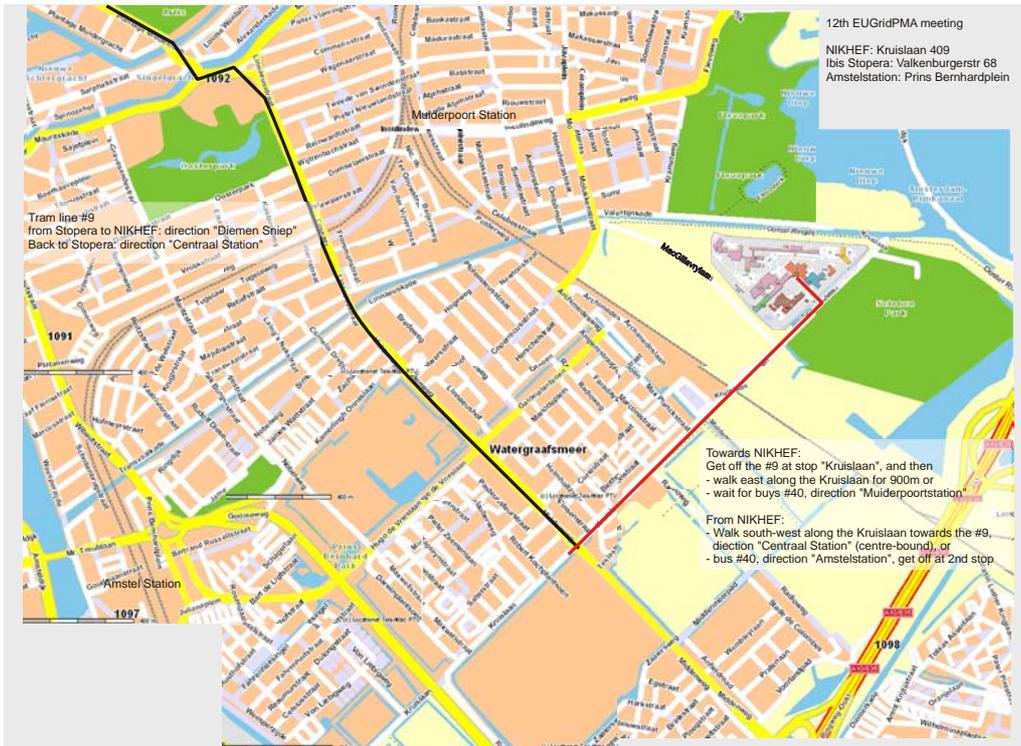
Entrance to the WCW Colloquium zalen, where the meetings will be held.



Entrance to Nikhef, Kruislaan 409, just left of the grey metallic building (which contains the bike shed)

3.3 The Commute from your Hotel to Nikhef and the Science Park

The Amsterdam Science Park and WCW (*Wetenschappelijk Centrum Watergraafsmeer*) are located off the Kruislaan on the eastern side of Amsterdam, but within the outer city ring road (A10).



Street plan of the east of Amsterdam. On the web site also a one-page detailed image with in-line instructions is posted for printing. The line colour changes at the intersection of the Kruislaan and the Middenweg.

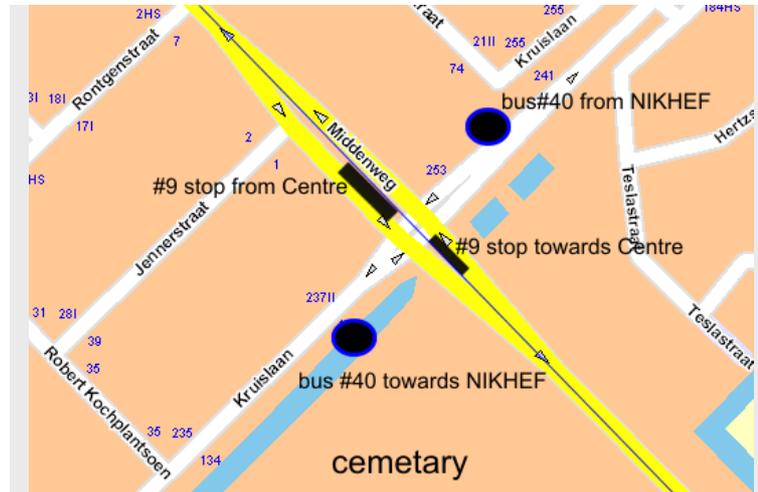
The best way to commute between the Ibis Stoperia hotel and Nikhef is using the street cars (trams) and then either take a walk or wait for a bus. The overview plan above shows the directions to follow:

From the Ibis Stoperia to Nikhef:

- Get on the #9 tram either on the Muiderstaat or in front of the City Hall. Use the tram stop on the 'far' side of the road, and board a tram out-bound towards "Diemen Sniep".



- It takes a few stops to get to the Kruislaan-Middenweg intersection, where you will have to get off. In the mean time, you will pass under a train overpass, cross a small canal, and pass by a small park landscape on your right. Just in front of a large cemetery, get off the tram, stop “Kruislaan”.



Where to get on and of the trams and bus at the Kruislaan-Middenweg intersection. Nikhef is along the Kruislaan towards to top-right, after approximately 900m.

- At the Kruislaan, you have two options:
 - In decent weather, you can walk to Nikhef. It's about 900 metres in all. To do that, cross the Middenweg and walk up on the Kruislaan in an easterly direction (that's to your left in the direction of travel of the #9 tram you just left). The Kruislaan is a broad lane (30-50 metres wide). You will pass by a (roofed) skating stadium and some soccer fields on your right, whilst on your left are low-rise (3-stories) apartment buildings. Cross under the train overpass (it's quite long, approximately 150 metres, and takes you under the rail shunting yard). A photo of the overpass is shown below.
Continue along the Kruislaan till you get to the main gate on your left. The Institutes at the WCW and Amsterdam Science park are signposted to your left (Nikhef, CWI, SARA, UvA, TeleCityRedBus, and AquaSense/GrontMij).
 - If case of foul weather, or if you just dislike walking:
Go to the bus stop of the #40 bus service on the Kruislaan-Middenweg intersection. The bus stop is on the Kruislaan, right 30 metres into the Kruislaan on the west side (your right, in the direction of travel of the #9), next to the water separating the Kruislaan from the cemetery, but on the cemetery-side of the road (i.e., not the side of the police station). Wait for a #40 bus in the direction “Muiderpoort Station”. The bus will take you along the Kruislaan along the same route you would have walked, crossing under the railway and stopping (3rd stop) just opposite the main gate. If you forget to get off in time, all of the 3rd till 6th stops are within 100m from the gate ...
Look for the main gate (picture is shown below) to enter the WCW Science Park.



View on the Kruislaan, on your way to the Science Park from the Middenweg. The tunnel (about 150 metres long) crosses under the railway shunting yard. Nikhef and the Science Park are beyond.

Note: even though there is a taxi stand at the Stopera, it's not the recommended way to get to Nikhef. Using taxis is not only expensive, but some drivers may consider the trip "too short" and just refuse to drive you there.

4 Going Back Home

4.1 Leaving Nikhef for Schiphol Airport

If you are in a hurry: call a taxi from “Taxi Centrale Diemen”, phone number 020 6905858 (from within Nikhef, dial a “0” first for an outside line) and ask for transport from Nikhef (Kruislaan 409) to Schiphol. Allow 10-15 minutes for the taxi to appear. The drive takes anywhere between 20 and 40 minutes, depending on the time of day. Rush hour is between 7-10 AM and 3-7 PM. Costs vary according to both distance and time, but plan for at least €50 per trip.

By public transport (see section on public transport and the strippenkaart):

- Go to the main gate, and wait for bus #40 bound for “Amstel Station” (and **do not board** one for “Muiderpoort Station”!). The frequency is about every 10-15 minutes. The drive to Amstel Station takes about 10 minutes.
- At Amstel station, buy a train ticket to “Schiphol” (approx. €3,30 for a single trip). The trip takes about 30 minutes, but, there are two possible routes: one via “Centraal Station” and one via “Duivendrecht”. Along each route there is a train every 30 minutes, teaming up to provide an effective service once every 15 minutes:
**.03 and *.33 via Duivendrecht, leaving from platform 4 (at Duivendrecht: platform 4)*
**.15 and *.45 via Amsterdam Centraal, leaving from platform 1 (at Centraal: platform 13a)*

At Schiphol Airport, go up from the platform to Schiphol Plaza, and follow the yellow signs for “departures”.

The trip from Nikhef to the airport takes in total anywhere between 60 and 100 minutes.

4.2 Leaving Ibis Stopera for Schiphol Airport

The easiest way is to go back to Amsterdam Centraal Station (with the #9 tram or with the metro from Waterlooplein), and get a train to Schiphol Airport from there. The tram costs 2 strips, the train ticket is around €3,80.

Trams will leave from near the Ibis Stopera hotel every 15 minutes during daytime, and the trip takes about 15 minutes. From Amsterdam Central Station to Schiphol is about 20 minutes by train, with trains every 15 minutes. Expect an overall travel time between 45 and 80 minutes.

But if you are really in a hurry you can consider a taxi from the taxi rank at the Stopera or ask the hotel to call a taxi for you. For well over €50, they will take you to Schiphol in about 30-60 minutes.

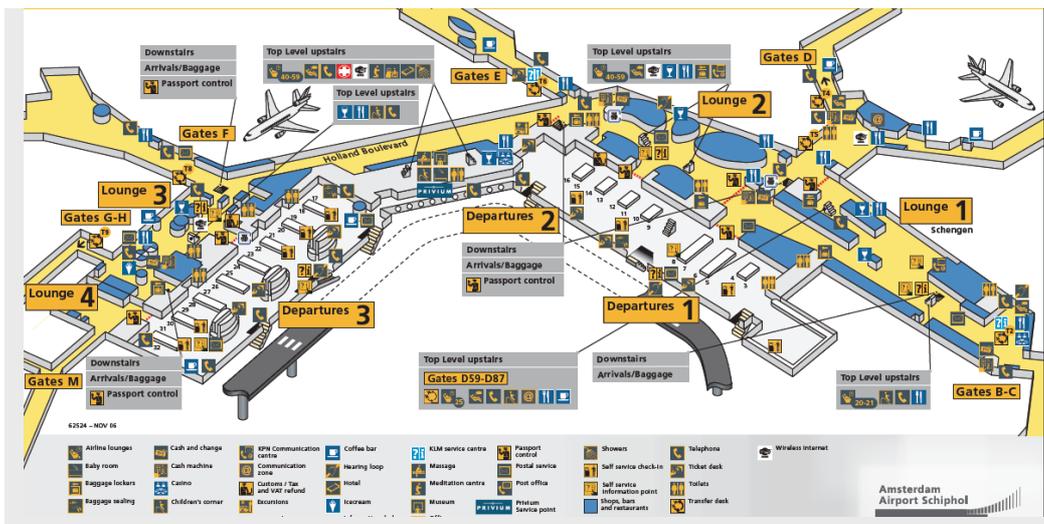
4.3 Checking in at Schiphol

Most major airlines now support self-service check-in at Schiphol, and a majority allows for internet check-in as well. If you have only carry-on baggage and have checked-in on-line, you can go immediately to your gate. Otherwise, go to a check-in machine and, if needed, drop your bags at a baggage drop-off point in the departure area. Just note that EasyJet does not offer self-service check-in at the airport, but does have internet check-in.

Usually, queues are short at Schiphol airport, and passing immigration and customs takes less than 10 minutes. The idea behind it is that people standing in a queue cannot spend money shopping, and shopping is the main source of income for Schiphol☺. So, the airport tries for short queues. Only during top holidays in the morning does it get crowded (my worst time ever having been 25 minutes). Do not go to a line or join a queue marked “Privium”: it’s just not for you, unless you come to Schiphol on a weekly basis and pay €145 per year for it.

In you are travelling to the Schengen area (gates A, B, C, D59-87 and M), there is of course no immigration check, but a baggage security check is done immediately, as you enter the passenger-only area. If you are travelling outside the Schengen area (gates D1-58, E, F, G and H), you pass through immigration only and are dumped into the shopping area. Security checks are done at each gate individually (so as long as there are other people queuing for your plane, you don't need to ...☺)

The entry to the Schengen area is at "Departures 1", most major airlines from Europe leave from "Departures 2", whereas most budget carriers and many US carriers (but not NWA), use "Departures 3". See the map below to find out where to go².



Schiphol departure area and gates. Departures 1 and Lounge 1 are for Schengen.

Airline lounges are all on the upper level ('Level 2'), with KLM and SkyTeam having one lounge in the Schengen area and two lounges in the non-EU area (one near the E gates, one nearer to the F gates). Level 2 between the E and F gates is also the place to go to if you want a relaxing chair in a quiet spot. Just opposite the airline lounges are some very nice publicly-accessible chairs ...

If you are culture-starved, you can explore paintings in an annex of the Rijksmuseum for free, on Holland Boulevard between gates E and F, after carefully negotiating your path through the inevitable shopping circus that surrounds it.

² See also http://content.schiphol.nl/info/plattegronden/pdf/plattegrond_lounge_uk.pdf

5 Troubleshooting

5.1 Routing trouble

First of all, make sure you have a valid train ticket or a strippenkaart for trams, busses, and metros, for all legs of your journey. All of the train stations below will have a ticket window where you can buy these.

I find myself at	What to do?
Train station “Amsterdam Sloterdijk” or “Amsterdam Lelylaan”	If you want to get to Ibis Stopera or Nikhef: get a train to Amsterdam Central Station. At Lelylaan, trains to If you want to get to Schiphol: all trains from platform 1 at Lelylaan, or platform 11 (Sloterdijk) will call at Schiphol Airport. (and don't forget to buy a ticket if you don't have one!)
Train station “Amsterdam Zuid/WTC”, or “Amsterdam RAI”	If you want to get to Ibis Stopera: take metro-line 51 (needs a “strippenkaart”, not a train ticket, and invalidate 3 strips) in the direction “Centraal Station” to the stop “Waterlooplein”. From here, walk the 200m to the hotel. If you want to get to Nikhef: take metro-line 51 (needs a strippenkaart, not a train ticket, invalidate 3 strips) in the direction “Centraal Station” to the stop “Amstel Station” ³ . Get out at that station, cross the main hall ⁴ and go down the stairs at the end. Cross 4 tram tracks (take care!) and board bus #40. Ride in it for 10 minutes and get off at the Kruislaan 409/413. You can ask the driver to warn you when to get out. You are now in front of the meeting place. If you want to get to Schiphol: board any west-bound train (destinations “Hoofddorp”, “Leiden”, “Den Haag”) on platform 4 (at Zuid/WTC) or platform 2 (at RAI). In all cases, the information signs on the platform will clearly state “Schiphol” as an (intermediary) destination.
Train Station “Amsterdam Muiderpoort”	If you want to get to Ibis Stopera: walk west along the “Wijtenbachstraat” (600m), and at the first major intersection with traffic lights, and board tram #9. Get out at the Waterlooplein (the first major square, in front of the city hall, and walk 200m to the hotel. If you want to get to Nikhef: go to the bus stop area and board bus #40 (2 strips). Ride in it for 5 minutes and get off at the Kruislaan 409/413
Train stations “Hoofddorp”, “Leiden”, “Den Haag” or “Rotterdam”	You left Schiphol station in the wrong direction, or did not get off in time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you want to get back to Schiphol, look for trains in the direction “Amsterdam Centraal” <i>that do not also say Haarlem</i>, or trains to Amsterdam Zuid, Hilversum, Almere, or Lelystad. • If you want to get to Nikhef or the Ibis Stopera: take a train back to Schiphol Airport and start from there again.
Train stations “Weesp”, “Hilversum”	You did not get off in time, or boarded an Intercity service from Schiphol which was routed via the southern part of the Amsterdam ring. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To get to Ibis Stopera: board a train to Amsterdam Central

³ No NOT leave at “Overamstel”, that's an entirely different place in the middle of a light-industrial zone. If you are at Overamstel, get the #51 in the direction “Centraal Station”.

⁴ If you got out of Amstel Station and find yourself surrounded by students of the UvA or HvA, enter the station again and leave on the other side ☺

I find myself at	What to do?
	Station. Take tram #9 from there <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To get to Nikhef: take a train to Amsterdam Duivendrecht (towards destinations “Hoofddorp”, or “Leiden”), get off there, buy a tram/bus metro ticket, invalidate three (3) strips, go to the upper platforms on level 2, board a #52 or #53 metro bound for “Centraal Station”, get off at Amstel station (3rd stop), and take the #40 bus to “Muiderpoort Station” (see above). • To get to Schiphol: all trains in the direction Hoofddorp and Leiden will call at Schiphol.
Train station “Utrecht”	For Schiphol: there are a few direct trains, otherwise change at Duivendrecht. For Ibis Stopera: take any train to Amsterdam Centraal Station For Nikhef: take any train that stops at Amsterdam Amstel, and take bus #40 there.
Train station “Amstel”	If you want to get to Ibis Stopera: take any metro-line (needs a “strippenkaart”, not a train ticket, 2 strips) in the direction “Centraal Station” to the stop “Waterlooplein”, get out to street level and walk the 200m to the hotel (see earlier map). If you want to get to Nikhef: You’re almost there. Get out of station via the main hall ⁵ and go down the stairs at the end. Cross 4 tram tracks (take care!) and board bus #40 (2 strips). Ride in it for 10 minutes and get off at the Kruislaan 409/413. You can ask the driver to warn you when to get out. You are now in front of the meeting place. If you want to get to Schiphol by train: from platform 4, take a train that calls at Duivendrecht (it’s the next stop), change trains there to a train in the direction Hoofddorp or Leiden (it will also say Schiphol on the overhead signs).

5.2 Site security and other emergency information

The emergency number in the Netherlands is **1-1-2**:

Nikhef is located at: Kruislaan 409, 1098 SJ Amsterdam

Ibis Stopera is located at: Valkenburgerstraat 68, 1011 LZ Amsterdam

You can dial 112 from any fixed line or mobile telephone, and you will be connected to the emergency switch board. You will be asked whether you need the police, ambulance or fire brigade. The police usually is the quickest on the scene (5-10 minutes), and an ambulance should always be there within 15 minutes. If in doubt, take time to explain the situation to the switchboard operators (they do understand English), and they will connect you to the proper people.

5.3 Inside the Nikhef and Science Park buildings

Nikhef has its own emergency response teams during office hours. In case of fire, or if you need first aid, call **5008**. But you can always call 112 if you forget this number.

A slow-whoop siren signals that you have to leave the building and go to an assembly area. Follow the green emergency-exit signs towards the nearest usable exit, and go to the assembly points in front of the Nikhef or SARA entrance. Follow the directions of the emergency response teams.

⁵ If you got out of Amstel Station and find yourself surrounded by students of the UvA or HvA, enter the station again and leave on the other side ☺

5.4 Non-urgent emergencies

If you are lost, need other kinds of assistance, or need anything else, contact the Nikhef reception at (020) 592 2000 or phone me at my desk (020) 592 2179 or mobile (for number, please see my email to the list)⁶.

The nearest public police station to the hotel is almost opposite the Ibis Stopera ("bureau IJtunnel", IJtunnel 2), within 100m. You can phone the police for non-urgent matters on number (0900) 8844 (local rates apply).



⁶ The Netherlands international dialling code is "31", so +31 20 592 2000 gets you to Nikhef.

6 Eating and Drinking

There is no shortage of neither food nor drink in Amsterdam. The city is filled with restaurants bringing you tastes from all around the world. Typical “Dutch” food is hard to find, though, probably because the most of the old-style native Dutch cuisine is scorned by the locals nowadays, and locals still make the largest market share.

There are two typical Dutch elements that you really should not miss while you’re here: *rijsttafel*, a assortment of dishes from all over the Indonesian archipelago served almost tapas-style, and *pancakes*, available in over 20-odd varieties, ranging from plain to a rasin-enhanced-embedded-bacon-with-apples pancake with sugar, syrup and butter, served on a 12-inch plate. The best restaurants are given below.

Lastly, the Dutch have a quite unique concept of a “snack bar”: a small shop where you can buy chips (French fries), “kroketten” – fried meat ragout in bread crumbs, “frikadel” (processed meat, shaped in a straight-sausage form and fried), and other fried snacks. In quite a few places you can get these from a “snack wall”, with the chain “Febo” being the most well-known. Have enough Euro coins ready ...

And if you come past a “HEMA” department store, look for “rookworst”. This piece of warm, smoked and rather thick sausage, lightly salted, makes for a heartwarming experience on a cold winter day. It costs about 1 Euro for a half sausage of about 150 grammes.



6.1 Where to go

We have already pre-booked restaurants for the Monday and Tuesday trust building events – these suggestions are there in case you arrive really early or stay on after the meeting for some sight-seeing.

If you just want to get to a restaurant and don’t care about the sort of food you get, head for the Reguliersdwarsstraat, the link narrow road that runs between the Koningsplein and the Rembrandtplein. Here you’ll find Indonesian, Argentinean steak, Mexican, Indian, and garlic-inspired food in plenty. Also, most of the restaurants here are actually quite reasonable, as most of the tourists tend to get trapped elsewhere.

Many pubs can also be found through the rest of the city. Try a few in the Jordaan, just west of the city centre around the Westermarkt and beyond. And in “de Pijp”, around the Ferdinand Bol straat and the Heinekenplein.

There are just a few places to avoid:

- On and around the Leidseplein (Lijnbaansgracht, Lange Leidsedwarsstraat, Korte Leidseswarsstraat): all restaurants here are tourist traps in all their horrendous glory. Avoid them if you can: there are scores of better restaurants to be found closeby
- Rembrandtplein: don’t eat on the square itself. Take one of the side streets (Utrechtse straat, Reguliersdwarsstraat) and you’re OK again.
- Rokin (the street between Central Station and Dam Square): a chain of tourist traps interspersed with fast-food chains. Amazingly, a shop is household appliances sticks it our inbetween all of them. The “Febo” at the end close to Central Station is worth having a look at for anthropological purposes, i.e., just to be able to see a snack wall...

6.2 Eating On-the-go

There are plenty of sandwich shops (“broodjes zaak”) in Amsterdam, but supermarkets nowadays also have a good selection of sandwiches and meals “to-go”. Albert Heijn is the largest of them,

with a big supermarket just behind the Palace on Dam Square. There are “AH-to-go” shops in many of the larger train stations, such as Centraal Station and Amstel.

Near the Spui in the city centre, “Broodje van Kootje” has a large selection of fresh sandwiches, laden with old Dutch cheese (the real stuff, not the plastic-tasting fake-Gouda you see in the rest of the world), cured ham and fish. Eat your sandwich on a bench in the Begijnhof (see below) if the weather allows it.

Another option is one of the all-day markets in Amsterdam. There are two worth mentioning: the Albert Kuyp market (in the “De Pijp” neighbourhood, just south of the inner ring road), and the Dappermarkt in the East. The Albert Kuyp has, incidentally, also the highest density of heron birds, waiting for the end of market to get their bellyful of fish, French fries and mayonnaise.

6.3 Pancakes

Although much more satisfying than, for example, the Breton “crepes”, having just a single pancake for dinner will leave you wanting for a sizeable dessert. But then, most places will have ice cream or fruit sorbet to complete your meal. Pancakes are also a good alternative if you long for a quick bite in the afternoon. Actually, many of the pancake restaurants in the Netherlands in summer get most of their customers from touring cyclists and families longing for a filling at lunchtime or as an alternative for a tea-time snack.

The Pancake Bakery (Prinsengracht 191, 020-6251333, 3-course menu around €17 excl. drinks) – one of the larger and certainly the most well-known restaurant in Amsterdam does tend to attract a lot of tourists, but offers a wide selection of pancakes and omelettes.

Restaurant Pancakes! (Berenstraat 38, on the corner with the Prinsengracht in the Jordaan, 020-5289797, menu around €15 excl. drinks) – new-style pancakes with not only traditional but also exotic varieties. Apparently including Surinam roti, according to one local commentator on dinersite.nl. Slightly out of the tourist area.

De carroussel (Weteringcircuit) – near the inner-city ring road and the Heineken museum, it’s not a place you would go to for dinner. But if you are strolling around the area between Leidseplein, Frederiksplein and the Ferdinand Bol street, you could well drop in here for a bite.

6.4 Indonesian

Remember that the organised conference dinner is Indonesian as well, and you’ll realise that this is as close to the traditional Dutch dish as you’re likely to come. Indonesian and Chinese-Indonesian (“Chinees-Indisch” in Dutch) restaurants are amongst the most frequent in the Netherlands, both for eat-in and take-away. Only in the last 10 years did the take-away Chinese have to give way to pizza couriers that deliver your dinner at your door step. In the 1950, the large influx of Dutch-Indies people which was triggered by the Indonesian independence, changes the Dutch dinner landscape forever. With then-exotic tastes and large quantities, the “chinees-indisch” restaurants took over.

Kantjil en de Tijger (Spuistraat 291, 020-6200994, € 20 for main course) – right in the city centre, opposite the Spui and near the main shopping area, this one is easy to get to.

Desa (Ceintuurbaan 103, €20 main course) – one of the better Indonesian restaurant with and excellent “rijsttafel”. Out of the city centre and the tourist areas, but still quite close if you know how to get there. We’ll likely be going here for the organised dinner.

Tempo Doeloe (Utrechtsestraat 75, 020-6256718, menu around €35) – quite a busy place off the Rembrandtplein area. Reserve a table if you’re going to be in a large group.

Sahid Jaya (Reguliersdwarsstraat 26, 020 - 626 37 27, menu around €35) – along one of the better streets for authentic restaurants, this restaurant serves good Indonesian food and is (hopefully) not yet spoiled by tourists.

If you are still looking around, most of the Indonesian restaurants you'll see are quite fine, except for those in the known tourist trap areas (i.e., those around the Leidseplein and immediately around the Rembrandtplein).

6.5 Meat and Mexican

There are plenty of mediocre steak houses around, largely in the tourist areas. Avoid these, and head for a steak house a bit further from the main roads. The reguliersdwarsstraat again is a good bet. *Roses Cantina* (Reguliersdwarsstraat 38-40, 020-6259797) – good authentic Mexican food. You may have to wait a while to be seated, or be served for that matter, but the quality of the food is great.

6.6 Traditional Chinese and Indian

Amsterdam's China Town is around the Nieuwmarks and the Zeedijk. There is a whole bunch of traditional (i.e. non-indonesian) chinese restaurant here, with *Nam Kee* being the most famous. And the Dutch movie "The Oysters of Nam Kee" based on the book of Kees van Beijnum will not have lessened their popularity one bit. As far as I remember, it was a good restaurant which was frequented by ethnic Chinese and locals alike, so it's worth giving it a try. And if you don't like the ambiance, pick any of the other restaurants around it.

Nam Kee (Gelderse Kade 117, near the Nieuwmarkt, 020-6392848; and Zeedijk 111-113, 020-6243470) – arguable one of the most famous Chinese restaurants. Today it attracts more and more non-Chinese, but still the food is good.

Memories of India (Reguliersdwarsstraat 88) – quite OK Indian food. At least used to be quite popular with locals and students, although I've not been there for ages now.

6.7 And finally, yes, indeed, ...

And, yes, although I do strongly warn against it, for those of you that are into that sort of thing: marijuana and cannabis (hashish, from "hasjies" in local Amsterdam slang) is indeed widely available in Amsterdam. Look for the cannabis leaf sign in the window of coffee shops: on entry, you will usually be presented not only with a food and drink list, but also with a menu of "wiet" from which to choose. You should have no trouble finding a "coffeeshop" in the centre of Amsterdam: just keep in mind that combining any kind of drug with alcohol makes for a decidedly bad trip, so don't try that. Coffee shops, for this same reason, do not sell alcohol, and thus will do you no good in a pub crawl. They do serve coffee, though, if you ask and insist ... but then, "space cake" is not the harmless tea accompaniment thing that you might take it for.

Over the last 10 years, "smart shops", which will sell you "true to nature" mushrooms and the like, have sprung up like, well, mushrooms. Like many natural substances, they actually do have an effect, so be careful with them as well.

Finally, do make sure that the *wiet* does not inadvertently contaminate your clothes, or you might have problems leaving at Schiphol (or more likely, when entering in your home country).

As for other things, including heroine ("brown"), cocaine ("white"), or XTC (extacy), stay away from these. Apart from having some undesirable side effects in the meeting, the stuff usually sold to tourists is crap: they correctly assume that you cannot see the difference between real cocaine and the inner lining of a luminescent lamp. Or ground-down white coughing pastilles, for that matter. But the dealers are quite fond of such cocaine substitutes, since being caught selling coughing pastilles is not considered an offence, not even in the Netherlands.

7 Things to See and Do

This is just a small subset of things to do while you're in Amsterdam. Maps of the most popular areas are shown at the end of this guide.

Amsterdam has virtually none of the “no-go” areas that seem to plague many of the larger cities, and it's common to see women cycling through the city centre late in the evening or at night. The one crime that is prevalent in Amsterdam, though, is pick pocketing. Never, ever, leave your baggage, cameras, or wallets unattended. Just don't. Watch your laptop bags, keep your camera in front of you, and remember that thieves will happily cut any ropes and cords that just a while ago seemed to keep you and your belongings together. That having been said, physical violence is extremely rare – but if you are threatened, handing over your valuables is really the safest thing to do. Keeping a wallet with (a reasonable amount) of cash handy, and your passports and credit cards tucked away under your shirt, could potentially save your day.

7.1 Visual arts, painting, history

Amsterdam is well-known for its art museums and paintings, both from the Dutch Golden Century (the 17th) as well as some nice modern art. Trouble is, many of the big internationally renowned museum are currently being refurbished and have either re-located their collection, or show only a fraction of what is usually on display. Still, if you like paintings, there is plenty to see in Amsterdam. And another nice benefit of museums: inside it's usually dry and warm...

Amsterdams Historisch Museum⁷

This lesser-known museum, squeezed between the Kalverstraat and the Nieuwezijds, is once of the nicer places to visit. It has a nice collection of historic artefacts and paintings from the heydays of Amsterdam, but also contains a nice presentation of local history, well displayed and organised. You can easily spend an afternoon here if you are into history, and still come out refreshed. The museum occupies the old Citizens' Orphanage (“Burgerweeshuis”), and the building layout is a characteristic composition of buildings and inner courtyards.

Through an alleyway hanged with some very large 17th century pictures you reach the “Begijnhof” (Beguinage)⁸. Tucked away in a quiet spot between the museum and the Spui, it is a rare place in Amsterdam and not to be missed. Walk around and enjoy the garden and chapel whilst eating a sandwich. The entrance to the Begijnhof is through some small covered archways from the Spui, so don't miss it accidentally.

Ons' Lieve Heer op Solder⁹

Ons' Lieve Heer of Solder (“Our Lord in the Attic”) is one of the most remarkable museums in Amsterdam. Behind the characteristic facade of the house by the canal, by now in the centre of the Red Light districts, lies a largely original 17th-century home with a complete hidden Roman Catholic church. This hidden church 'in the attic' was built during the Reformation, when Catholics were forbidden to hold public services. Looking around the unused church today given you a feel for what it was like then, so if you have some time to waste you can sneak up the steep stairs and suddenly find yourself in a church. The building is more interesting than the exhibitions the museum puts on nowadays – it's up to you to consider if the 7 Euro fee puts you off or not.

Rijksmuseum¹⁰

⁷ Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal 357 and Kalverstraat 92, <http://www.ahm.nl/>

⁸ http://www.begijnhofamsterdam.nl/index_engels.html

⁹ Oudezijds Voorburgwal 40, <http://www.opsolder.nl/>

¹⁰ The 19th century Gothic building on the Museumplein, entrance at Jan Luijkenstraat 1, <http://www.rijksmuseum.nl/>

This well-known art and national history museum is currently being renovated, and most of the collection is not on display. But if you want, you can still see the “Masterpieces” (as selected by the curators) including Rembrandt’s Nightwatch, for € 10 per visit. During January queues are not very likely, but if you don’t want to take a chance, buy your tickets on-line via the web site (see URL).

There is a (free) annex to the Rijksmuseum at Schiphol Airport, in the non-Schengen passenger-only “Lounge 2” area behind immigration.

Van Gogh museum¹¹

The Van Gogh museum is one of the few museums on the Square that is open as usual. It’s arguably one of the most popular museums for tourists, with the triangle-shaped containers in which they ship the posters of the most famous paintings conspicuously in view all around the Schiphol departure area. The museum has an impressive collection of Van Gogh paintings, but attempts to put them in context as well, showing relationship to Van Goghs contemporaries, and his followers.

To buy your tickets, go to the on-line shop (URL below), click on the “Tickets and On-line Shop” link and order direct with a Visa or MasterCard. You print your own ticket, after paying your €10 entrance fee. And be sure to allow a couple of hours for your visit.

The Van Gogh museum is a grey 1970’s building located just off the Museum Square, but it’s main entrance is in a side street (Paulus Potterstraat no. 7).

Stedelijk Museum¹²

This museum of contemporary art off Museum Square is being renovated, and what’s left of its collection is now showcased in an annex building close to the Central Station (“Post CS”). If you’re into incomprehensible modern art, it’s worth the trip there. Or you might want to shelter from the rain after visiting the NEMO science museum – but then € 9,- is a lot to pay for shelter without coffee.

Once in a while, though, they have some unique exhibitions. Watch the site for news.

Arts galleries and where to buy art

All art and antiques galleries are on and around the Bloemgracht. They sell serious art at a serious price, but you can probably arrange for them to be sent home. Any shipment costs will be marginal compared to the cost of the art itself ...

7.2 Science and Technology

All of the science and technology museums of Amsterdam have joined together to form “NEMO”, the Science Centre¹³. Although the main focus of the centre seems to be kids and teens, there is a lot to see and do for older geeks as well. For € 11,50 you can enjoy yourself there for many hours. Also the location of NEMO is stunning. Built on top of the entrance to a road tunnel, the entire building is copper plater, giving it it’s distinctly green appearance.

You get to NEMO by walking from the Central Station along the



¹¹ Paulus Potterstraat 7, <http://www.vangoghmuseum.nl/vgm/index.jsp?lang=en>

¹² SMCS, Post CS, Oosterdokskade near Central Station. <http://www.stedelijk.nl/>

¹³ <http://www.e-nemo.nl/>

Oosterdokskade to the east, crossing over a set of jetties and winding your way around a floating Chinese restaurant.

From NEMO, you can walk out the other way, alongside the road which comes out of the tunnel and the Valkenburgerstraat towards the city centre and the Rembrandtplein.

7.3 Artis Aquarium and Zoo

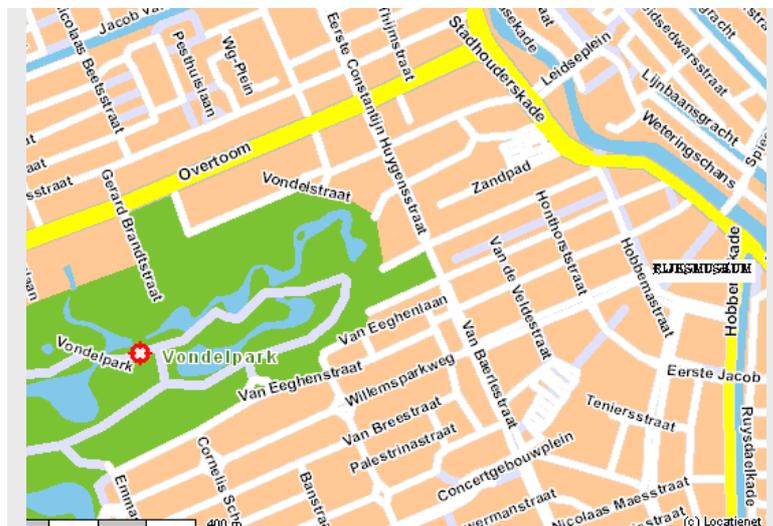
If you don't mind parting with a lot of money (€ 17,50) head for the Artis Zoo and Planetarium¹⁴. Although you will likely scuffle inside because of the weather, the aquarium is still well worth a visit. Built on 1740 wooden poles, it supports basins with one million litres of water. It hosts 300 species of water wildlife, as well as a full-sized replica of an Amsterdam canal, including a rusty bike. The Zeiss planetarium has periodic screening of various celestial phenomena.

The Artis Zoo itself is almost 200 years old (since 1838), and still occupies the same spot quite close to the city centre. In summer, the zoo doubles as a city park for locals, since a season ticket is hardly more expensive than the one-time entry fee.

The tram #9 passes Artis on its way from the Ibis Stopera to the centre.

7.4 Strolling around: parks and sights

If the weather permits, the one place to head to for a bit of fresh air is the Vondelpark, just a few minutes walking away from the bustle of the Leidseplein or the Museum Square. The most conspicuous entrance is just off the Hobbemastraat, the street that links the Leidseplein to the Rijksmuseum.



The park closest to the Ibis Stopera is the *Wertheim Park*, and opposite that there is the *Hortus Botanicus*. The latter is of course really nice, but it does charge an access fee.

Apart from these major parks, most of the canals are actually pretty green, with large trees offering shade in summer, and a bit of shelter in the winter rain (with large raindrops falling down long after the actual rain has stopped). For a different view on the houses along the canals, take a boat tour. A lot of companies offer such tours, most of them departing on the Rokin and just opposite the Centraal Station on the city-side. For the more adventurous amongst you: canal bikes offer you more freedom, but also quite a lot of physical exercise. These can be rented at various spots, also one close to the Leidseplein.

¹⁴ Artis, Plantage Kerklaan 38-40, <http://www.artis.nl/international/>

Amsterdam also features some fine architecture, both old and modern. The “Amsterdam School” of architecture, dating from the late 19th and early 20th century, can be seen at its best in “Oud Zuid” (the “old South”). Tram #5 will take you through part of it. Get off at the “Roelof Hartplein” stop and walk south along the Beethovenstraat. The Apollo laan has most of the stately homes that are interspersed inbetween the 3-4 story (but very up-market!) housing blocks.

Modern architecture had it's way on the far east of the city. Replacing the old dock yard and shunting yards on the “Islands”, the Amsterdam version of Canary Wharf is far more to the human scale than it's London counterpart. Bus #42 from Centraal Station takes you on a round trip around the area.

Lastly you will likely have heard somewhere about the “Wallen”, Amsterdam's Red Light District. You're likely to cross into it by accident when looking for Chinese restaurants on the Zeedijk and the Nieuwmarkt, or on your way to *Ons' Lieve Heer op Solder*. You can stroll about by day or night if you wish, and it's quite safe anytime of day, as is virtually all of Amsterdam. Remember that pimps and hookers alike need a safe and relatively quiet neighbourhood in order not to scare the clientele away ... As everywhere, pick pocketing is the main form of crime around here.

7.5 Shopping

Botiques and department stores now line the once-most famous shopping streets in Amsterdam: de Kalverstraat and the Nieuwedijk. Some of the most decent stores have now moved to the Leidsestraat (beware of the trams crisscrossing this busy shopping street!), or have dispersed throughout the city. More up-marked shopping can be found along the Van Bearlestraat (at the far end of the Museum square) and the P.C.Hoofstraat (closer to the Rijksmuseum and the Leidseplein). Further south, the Beethovenstraat again has a good collection of general-purpose shops and a very fine fresh-fish outlet

Computer supplies can be found along the Ceintuurbaan, between the Sarphatipark and the Ferdinand Bol straat. But, unfortunately, there is nothing comparable to Akihabara in Amsterdam. Not by a long stretch.

By far the best bookstore is “Scheltema”, at the Koningsplein. Recently enlarged and now spanning 5 stories and three former houses, it features a very good collection of scientific books, humaniora, and literature, as well as software, with a majority of English-language titles. A café inside allows you to spend hours in the shop. For more books and literature, “Athenaeum” at the Spui is only 5 minutes walking away.

Care for a language course in Dutch? Intertaal (Van Baerlestraat, 100m from the Concertgebouw) has language courses for Dutch as a second language, as well as many other languages.

7.6 Around Amsterdam

If you have more than a day to spare, and have seen all of Amsterdam you ever wanted to see, consider taking a longer trip to one of the surrounding towns and villages.

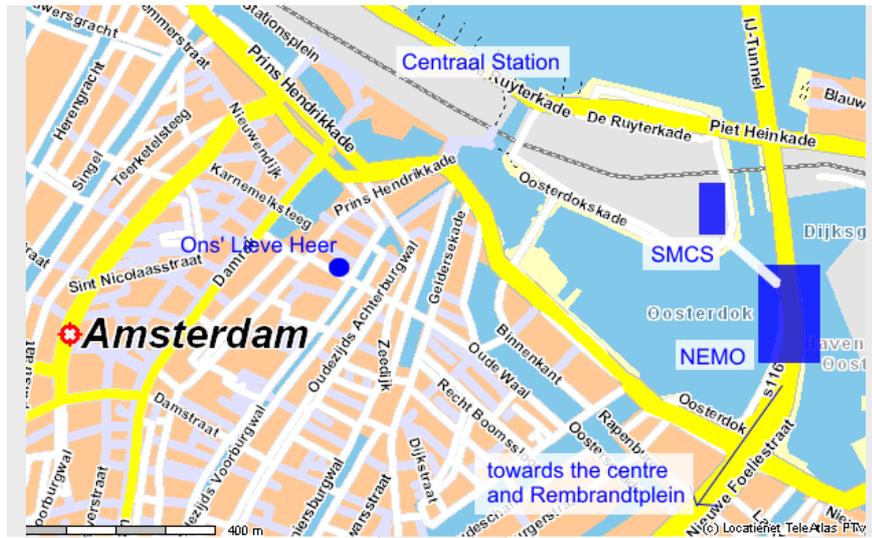
The city of Haarlem is today what Amsterdam could have been if it had not been so overly large. A fine old city, it has a far more “ancient” look to it, and is more cosy than Amsterdam can be. Stroll through the city, buy a detailed map and explore the “hofjes” that are omnipresent there. Don't miss “Teylers Museum”, the oldest museum in the Netherlands, and the only one with a operating “electriseermachine”, a giant apparatus that can generate an electric discharge of several million volts, with sparks over 50 centimetres long. Built in the 18th century, it can still be demonstrated (occasionally) today. The museum also contains fossils, a complete dinosaur skeleton, and a nice collection of ink drawings. Teylers is located along the river Spaarne in the centre of Haarlem. And don't let the dull 19th and 20th century housing around the train station put you off.

Several tour operators run day and afternoon trips to some of the nearby villages. Volendam used to be a bustling fishing port of the (then still saltwater) Zuiderzee, dammed off in 1932 to create a fresh-water inland lake following repeated large-scale flooding of the coastal areas, the latest in 1916 killing . Today, so many tourist busses head there that you are more likely to hear Japanese than Dutch spoken. The island of Marken, linked to the mainland by a 2-mile dike, is slightly better in this respect. Both are about 30-40 minutes by bus (or car) from the city centre, but getting there by public transport is more of a challenge, and takes well over an hour. If you want to get a lot easier to a similarly nice, but smaller, village by public bus, head for Monnikendam (busses #111, #114, or #118 from Central Station will take you there).

8 Maps and Other Useful Graphical Information



Abstract “combinò” map of all trams and metros in Amsterdam. The #9 tram is the yellow line at the right-hand side. The Zones (for the trippenkaart) are delineated by thick white bands.



Museums around the Amsterdam Centraal Station area. A bridge connects the Oosterdokskade to the NEMO building.