

AMSTERDAM



Amsterdam, the greatest planned city of northern Europe, has always been a well-known name in world history and played a central role in the history of the Netherlands. In the 17th century, Amsterdam was the center of the world economy, and today the city is known for its broadminded spirit.

The next time you layover in Amsterdam and you are short on money, here are a few ideas to sidetrack a slam clicking experience.



Start by saving on food and head to Albert Heijn. This countrywide chain dominates the high street as well as the smaller towns in the Netherlands. The chain seems to cater to changing tastes and customer requirements. They have increased their selection of organic products, and their green-labeled own brand yoghurt is recommended as very smooth and mild. They have a terrific selection of prepared meals under 5 Euros and they are renowned for having a decent selection of wines, but you can't get spirits, or even the Dutch gin here. One massive branch of Albert Heijn, called the "Food Plaza", located behind Dam Square, can get very crowded. Try and go in the early morning to avoid the queues.

Another great place to save on food is at Dirk van den Broek. About six blocks from the layover hotel, Dirk is a cut price, rather basic grocery store. There is less choice and less luxury than at Albert Heijn but it is about 10% cheaper. They also have a separate shop selling cut-price alcohol where you can purchase a bottle of beer for 50 cents



If you are in Amsterdam on Wednesday, Friday, or Saturday poke around the open air market across from the layover hotel. They sell everything from underwear to flowers, candy, bakery goods, cheese, and clothing, made to order fish sandwiches and fries at very affordable prices. Open air markets are part of the mainstream of Amsterdam and many are located throughout the city.

Another place you can save money are thrift shops. Locatte, is a few blocks from the hotel. This diamond in the ruff is a treasure where after browsing around the store you might find your treasure. Stroll along the canal from Locatte to the ferry and take in the unique house boats and gardens along the way.



For great sightseeing and people watching...explore Amsterdam by taking a tram from Central Station to the end of the line and back for 1.60 euro. Trams are one of the best ways of getting around Amsterdam. Trams operate Monday to Friday from about 0600 to 2400 (Saturday from 0630 and Sunday from 0730). All trams leave from Central Station - trams 1 and 2 traverse the main canals, tram 17 provides a frequent, fast and dependable service, tram 16 takes a route to Museumplein and Concertgebouw, while trams 9 and 14 go to the Muziektheater and Waterlooplein market.



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My 5 Favorite Gift Items

- ★ Mustard in a Tube
- ★ Stroopwaffle Cookies
- ★ Coffee
- ★ Chocolate
- ★ A Pretty Shopping Bag

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