



AMSTERDAM

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DAY ONE



After dropping our luggage off at the hostel, we spent most of our first day in Amsterdam simply walking around. While navigation is neither of our strong suits, we somehow managed to see almost all of the sights by simply wandering round the tranquil waterside streets. We happened upon Leidseplein square, the nine streets- an area of nine narrow streets intersecting the main canals which are dotted with cafes, galleries, boutiques and vintage shops- Dam square, Amsterdam central station and still had time for tea and cake! Within just a few hours we had discovered the charm of Amsterdam- the variety of beautiful streets of tall, narrow houses combined with the history and culture- all within walkable distance certainly merits its place as a cultural capital of the world. And the best part was, our hostel was in such a prime location that despite our tired feet, we could still spend the evening appreciating the vast Vondelpark that was literally opposite where we were staying.

ANNE FRANK HOUSE

During our busy first day, we managed to find the Anne-Frank house. Despite the vast queue pictured, having already researched before our trip, we decided that this was most likely the least busy time we would find to visit as the queue supposedly lasts longer on the weekend. Therefore we accepted the two hour wait in order to make the most of an opportunity we may never get again.

Visiting the Anne Frank house was unlike anything else I have experienced. To walk amongst history in that way, and experience first-hand the horrific conditions Anne and her family endured for years under Nazi occupation was to finally begin to comprehend the horrors of the anti-Semitic Nazi policy. The museum's extensive collection of resources and information, whilst harrowing, also proved an excellent resource for research for my degree unit on Jewish Persecution.





DAY TWO

The weather forecast was looking grim for our second day in Amsterdam so we decided we should use this as an opportunity to visit some of the museums we had set our sights upon. The weather also unfortunately meant that Ellie decided not to take her camera so as not to break it.

The first museum we went to was the internationally renowned FOAM photography museum. Despite only planning to be in there for half an hour or so, we became so engrossed in the fascinating exhibitions that we must have been there well over an hour despite its relatively small size. It was surprisingly inspirational, with Ellie particularly enjoying their main exhibition which involved in depth videos of artists and photographers explaining the meaning behind their work.

We then, after many recommendations, walked further across the city to NEMO, an extraordinary science museum jutting out into the water, surrounded by floating restaurants. Just the outside of NEMO alone was worth the visit, the shimmering Renzo Piano-designed building looking like something out of a sci-fi movie. The inside was just as impressive- a singularly special museum where everyone, no matter the age, was absorbed and excited by the exhibits. We ate our lunch at the top of the building's roof, offering a panoramic view of the city.

The museum Willet-Holthuysen is a historic canal house restored to its 18th century grandeur. We visited this before the inevitable trip to the notorious Amsterdam sign.



DAY THREE

ON OUR THIRD AND FINAL
DAY, WE DECIDED YOU
COULDN'T COME TO THE
NETHERLANDS WITHOUT
EXPLORING IT BY BIKE. WE
THEREFORE DECIDED TO HIRE
BIKES AND, USING A LITTLE
BOOK OF AMSTERDAM CITY
CYCLING WE BOUGHT
ESPECIALLY FOR THE TRIP,
ATTEMPTED TO EXPERIENCE
THE CITY LIKE LOCALS.





After first taking our time cycling around the Jordaan, appreciating everything from the concentric rings of canals to the cutting-edge modern architecture, we went on an expedition. Despite a few wrong turns that brought us to unexpectedly charming places, we eventually found our destination-a windmill with a rare twist- the bottom had been transformed into a thriving brewery. This picturesque spot was a wonderful find, giving us the true Dutch experience. On our way back towards the centre of the city, we then took a little detour and found a small local market where we bought delicious flatbreads to eat back at the blooming Vondelpark.

JUST NORTH OF HERE WE FOUND OVERTOOM (THE MILL ROAD OF AMSTERDAM WE DECIDED) WITH SOME STAND OUT SHOPS SUCH AS *PIED A TERRE*- THE WORLD'S LARGEST TRAVEL BOOKSHOP. ON OUR TRAVELS WE ALSO MANAGED TO DISCOVER A MAGNIFICENT PICASSO SCULPTURE IN THE MIDDLE OF A PARK, A HISTORIC BANDSTAND AND AN OPEN AIR THEATRE TO NAME A FEW.





We spent the final night of our trip meandering along the canals, Ellie using this last opportunity to photograph the beauty of the scenery and architecture- many pictures of which she then went on to use in the photography guide she made for her extended project qualification.

On reflection, our trip was everything we could have hoped for. The history and culture we experienced was inherently valuable and we will never forget the opportunity given to us to explore a new city in a way I hope Henry Morris would be proud of.



THANK YOU.