

Avanti Destinations: Canal Charm

Day 1 Amsterdam

Begin your adventure by using your Canal Bus Pass to get an overview of the city from the canals. Your Pass is good on three different routes of the Canal Bus, which allows you to hop-on/hop-off at any of 16 stops located close to museums, attractions, and shopping venues. Your Pass also includes entrance into one of three museums. For example, the Van Gogh Museum, which contains the world's largest collection of paintings, drawings, and letters by the artist. It also contains works by Van Gogh's peers, both Impressionists and post-Impressionists, so you can compare their work with his.

At 5 p.m., be at Amstour Holland's office at De Ruyterkade 124, 1101 Amsterdam (less than 5-minute walk from Amsterdam Centraal Rail Station) for your Amsterdam-as-a-Local Walking Tour. This Tour is conducted in English and is only offered to Avanti Destinations clients.

Experience Amsterdam's traditional pub culture with a local! Beyond the breweries and coffeeshops that Amsterdam is known for there are many charming pubs tucked in the corners of the historic city center. These pubs are frequented mostly by the locals and not by tourists giving you an authentic experience.

Spend two hours walking around a city center neighborhood (this can be focused on an area of your choosing if you like) and learn not only about the history of Amsterdam and the daily life of the Dutch, but also the history of Dutch beer brands and their local spirit Jenever (also known as Dutch gin). You will visit two local pubs and have two drinks at each pub (local beer, wine, soft drink or a local spirit).

After the walking tour your guide will escort you to the restaurant De Kroonprins and leave you there to enjoy a 3-course dinner with choices for a starter, main dish, and dessert. The restaurant is located a few blocks opposite the Centraal Rail station for easy access to the trams to get back to your hotel, or if it's a lovely evening you can enjoy a stroll along the various canals.

Centrally Located Hotel In Amsterdam, (D)

Day 2 Amsterdam

In addition to the Canal Bus, Amsterdam has an excellent network of trams and busses that you can use to get around. We suggest you begin your day's activities with a visit to the Rijksmuseum, the national museum of the Netherlands. The completely renovated Rijksmuseum tells the story of the Netherlands from the Middle Ages to the 20th century. Including works by Rembrandt, Vermeer, Franz Hals, and more! Maybe find a cozy café for lunch and then walk to the Anne Frank House Museum. Visit the hiding place where Anne Frank wrote her diary during the Second World War. For more than two years, Anne Frank lived secretly with the other people in hiding in the back part of her father's office building. For dinner, we suggest that you head for Leidseplein, the center of nightlife, where you can choose from hundreds of bars, clubs and restaurants.

Centrally Located Hotel In Amsterdam, (B)

Day 3 Amsterdam

This morning, consider beginning your day with a visit to the City of Amsterdam Museum, located in the city center at 92 Kalverstraat. Fascinating displays tell the story of the city from its founding

to its Golden Age in the 1600s. Nearby is the Begijnhof, a charming courtyard which housed a semi-monastic community of women from the Middle Ages until the 1970s. The courtyard also contains the English Church, built around 1392, where the Pilgrims later worshipped before sailing to America. In the afternoon, we recommend an optional excursion to the picturesque villages of Marken and Volendam, stopping along the way to learn about cheesemaking, and to visit windmills.

Centrally Located Hotel In Amsterdam, (B)

Day 4 Amsterdam, Bruges

After breakfast, head for the Central Train station—all the trams go there—and catch your first-class train for Antwerp, where you'll transfer to the train to Bruges. Total travel time is about 3 hours 15 minutes. When you arrive in Bruges, validate your 48-Hour City Card at the train station.

This card gives you free access to more than 20 museums and sights in Bruges, a guidebook, a free sightseeing canal ride and a discount on city and regional busses and trams. Bruges is a perfectly preserved medieval jewel of a city, and it's pleasant to stroll around the cobblestone streets. However, you might begin by taking your free half-hour sightseeing trip on the canals, to get an overview of the city from the water. The entire beautiful city center is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Centrally Located Hotel In Bruges, (B)

Day 5 Bruges

Be sure to visit the Burg, one of the most interesting squares in Bruges, surrounded by beautiful buildings including the Basilica of the Holy Blood and the Town Hall. Also don't miss the Market Square, surrounded by colorful houses and shops. Be sure not to miss the Church of Our Lady; its spire is the tallest structure in the city, and the church contains a masterpiece: the Madonna of Bruges, a sculpture by Michelangelo. This beautiful work of art has been stolen twice: once by the French, in 1794; and once by the Nazis as they were departing the area in 1944. It was recovered two years later by the "Monuments Men" from a salt mine in Austria, which also held Jan Van Eyck's "Adoration of the Lamb" altarpiece, painted in Bruges but on display at the cathedral of Ghent, not far from Bruges.

Centrally Located Hotel In Bruges, (B)

Day 6 Bruges

After breakfast, head to your next Avanti destination!

Centrally Located Hotel In Bruges, (B)