

Sport and fitness

— Active city

The people of Amsterdam aren't averse to exercise – how could they be in a city that's as renowned for its bicycle culture as it is for its canals? These waterways play a key part in the outdoor culture, whether it's cycling along them or simply enjoying the passing scenery from a boat as you float peacefully down them. During the colder months, when the water sometimes freezes, you're likely to spot the locals lacing up their skates and zipping across the ice (if the weather fails to co-operate you can still participate at a range of artificial rinks).

If you prefer your exercise to be a little more traditional there are also gyms (some more punishing than others), pools and tennis courts where you can get your heart rate up, or failing that check out our recommendations for a scenic run or two. And when you're done, refresh and revive at our selection of grooming hotspots and spa destinations. You'll have earned it.

Warmer months
Hot in the city



1
Boat hire, citywide
Drift away

During the warmer months, rent a boat, pack a picnic and float towards the harbour or Amstel River. No licence is required for rentals; just a sober captain over 18 who can handle the intersections.

Mokum Boats rental locations include Centrum, Amstel and Oost. For a snack, dock along the quays at Café Hesp, Hannekes Boom or Waterkant. Or for a swim, head south for the widened section of the Amstel in front of the tHuis aan de Amstel café.

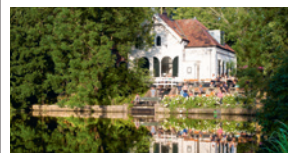
Mokum Boats: Centrum, 351 Nassaukade, 1053 LZ; Amstel, 1 Schollenbrugstraat, 1091 EX; Oost, 65 Mauritskade, 1092 AD mokumbootverhuur.nl

2
Flevopark, Indische Buurt
Activity centre

Flevopark is wedged between the Indische Buurt neighbourhood and Nieuwe Diep Lake. Dutch conservationist and botanist Jac P Thijss led the charge to develop the park to service the city's growing population; it was completed in 1931 for the Jewish community, then bought by the city in 1956 and opened to the public.

Today it's favoured by runners and in warm weather the outdoor pool opens and the lake is perfect for watersports. Barbecues are permitted in designated areas and the former watermill now houses a distillery and tasting room.

Kramatweg, 1095 KD flevopark.nl; nuediep.nl



Colder months
Just chill



1
Ice-skating, citywide
Blade runners

As soon as the layer of ice on top of ditches, canals and lakes is firm, Amsterdammers get their skates on. Not every winter is cold enough nowadays, so from November to February there's an artificial rink in front of the Rijksmuseum, with skate rental and a café serving hot chocolate and glühwein.

Jaap Edenbaan in the east has a 400-metre loop open in the winter and an indoor rink all year round. During sub-zero temperatures, Amsterdamse Bosbaan in the south is the place to skate.

*Rijksmuseum: 5 Museumplein, 1071 DJ; iceamsterdam.nl
Jaap Edenbaan: 64 Radioweg, 1098 NJ; jaapeden.nl*



Sporting events

- 01 Dam tot Damloop:**
This annual 16km road race sees 50,000 participants run from Amsterdam through the IJtunnel and the Dutch countryside to Zaandam.
damloop.nl
- 02 Sail Amsterdam:**
Every five years more than 600 sailing ships from across the globe drop anchor in the IJ. Festivities take place both ashore and onboard the ships.
sail.nl
- 03 Amsterdam Marathon:**
With 16,500 runners, the annual Amsterdam Marathon tours the Eastern Docklands, Zuid, Oud-West and a pretty stretch of the Amstel River.
tcsamsterdammarathon.nl
- 04 Amsterdam City Swim:**
More than 2,000 swimmers dive into the canals in September to swim 2,000 metres, raising funds for Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. Even Queen Máxima has taken part.
amsterdamcityswim.nl

Year-round
Perennial favourites



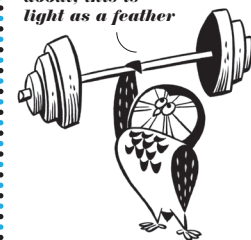
1
High45, De Plantage
Gonna make you sweat

If the thought of a 45-minute fitness class doesn't seem all that daunting, think again. High45 is tough: whole-body tough, enough to make you want to tell the very nice and encouraging instructor to kindly go away.

Barbara den Bak opened this sleek studio in 2016 and bases all of her classes on the principles of high-intensity interval training. Class sizes are small, single passes are available and we can guarantee you'll feel fantastic post-workout. You might just have to wait for the waves of nausea to subside first.

*101 Weesperstraat, 1018 VN
+31 (0)20 890 3158
high45.com*

*I don't know what
you're talking
about, this is
light as a feather*



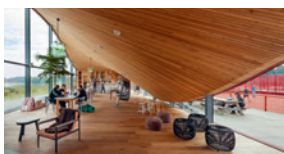
2

Tenniscub IJburg, IJburg
Hi, court

This club is a 30-minute cycle ride (by Amsterdam standards it may as well be halfway to Germany) but if you fancy a game while in town, the MVRDV-designed Tenniscub in IJburg is worth the pedal.

The ruby-red clubhouse with a café and changing rooms looks out over pristine waters and its roof doubles as a grandstand for the 10 clay courts. This public sporting complex was developed to encourage Amsterdammers out to the far-eastern neighbourhood, so visitors don't need a membership and it's open whatever the season.

1 Zandzeggestraat, 1087 SL
+31 (0)20 778 1671
tennisverenigingijburg.nl



Junior service
The club also has a court specifically for children



3

Zuiderbad, Oud-Zuid
Decorative pool

The art deco Zuiderbad, which abuts the Rijksmuseum, was designed as an indoor driving school by Jonas Ingenohl in 1897. It didn't last long and soon became a showroom, then in 1912 opened as a swimming pool. Progressive for its time, it had electric lighting, central-heating and a sand-based water-filtration system in the basement, all of which still function.

While not the best spot for serious swimmers, its mosaic tiling and brass fixtures make a dramatic setting for a few relaxing laps.

26 Hobbemastraat, 1071 ZC
+31 (0)20 252 1390
amsterdam.nl/sport/waar-sporten/zweembaden/zuiderbad

4

Akasha, Oud-Zuid
Underground club

One level below the glass atrium of the Conservatorium Hotel is the Amsterdam outpost for Akasha. For short-term visitors, day passes and monthly membership are available. These afford access to pilates, boxing and yoga classes, the moderately sized but well-equipped gym and the underground spa with its pool, sauna and hamam.

The real treat is in the details, from the smartly designed lockers with retractable coat hangers to the Netflix-enabled screens on the treadmills.

Conservatorium Hotel, 27 Van Baerlestraat, 1071 AN
+31 (0)20 570 0000
conservatoriumhotel.com

Grooming
Looking good



1

Wild Romance, Centrum
Pride and grooming

There's no shortage of good hairdressers in the Dutch capital but for the hat-trick of skilled staff, good music and strong coffee, you should consider a passionate fling with Wild Romance.

A host of seasoned freelancers operate out of the duplex studio, cutting, colouring and styling. A pretty little atrium with basins can be found up top, while a vintage-inspired barber is set up on the lower level. There's also a solid stack of the latest publications on hand including – ahem – one called Monocle. Make your booking online or in person.

62 Spuistraat, 1012 TW
wildromance.net



2

The Barber, Jordaan
Direct male

Avail yourself of a trim and a haircut the classic way in this smart barber's hidden on a cross street of trendy Haarlemmerdijk. A full menu of treatments covers everything from the traditional hot-towel and straight-razor shave to The Connery, the shop's amusingly monickered head shave for the follically challenged.

As well as offering its own range of beard products, aftershaves and oils, The Barber carries a selection from the likes of Hudson Made, Mr Natty and OAK. Oh, and coffee, beer or whiskey is on the house.

24 Binnen Oranjestraat, 1013 JA
+31 (0)20 337 3755
barber.nl



3

Spa Zuiver, Zuideramstel
Bare necessities

To work out the niggles of a long flight or just a long day, head south to Spa Zuiver on the border of the Amsterdamse Bos nature reserve. There's a seemingly endless array of pools, tubs and saunas to dip in and out of, including the outdoor spa and 40-metre lap pool surrounded by forest.

Fellow bathers tend to be nude but if you're not keen on that idea, swimwear is permitted on Tuesdays and Thursdays. There are also squash and tennis courts, as well as a catering service and 31 hotel rooms.

8 Koenenkade, 1081 KH
+31 (0)20 301 0700
zuiveramsterdam.nl

Football: Ajax

For those who concern themselves with such things, Dutch football has a mystical allure – and no team better represents this enchantment than Ajax (see page 77). The club's legend was sealed in the 1970s when, with Johan Cruyff, they won the European Cup three seasons in a row.

If you want to go and watch the latest incarnation of this fabled team, tickets can be bought online and collected at the ground (which can be reached by metro or bus). And if your visit doesn't coincide with a match day, you can take a guided tour instead.

ajax.nl

*Whoops, see you later!
Just call me Johan Wooyff*



Cycling routes

Pedal power



① Noord cycle tour
Waterways and green fields

The city centre isn't always the most relaxing place to wheel around so try the north's rural paths instead.

STARTING POINT: Centraal station, Centrum
DISTANCE: 10km

Rent your *fiets* (bicycle) from MacBike, around the back of Centraal station. Take the 902 ferry to ① *IJplein*, drinking in the views over the city, and once docked pedal northeast along Meeuwenlaan. Cross the first roundabout and just after the road forks take a sharp right onto pretty Nieuwendammerdijk (see page 109), a quaint street with charming old houses.

Take a break in ② *Café 't Sluisje*, a historic *bruin* café in a building that's nearly 500 years old and has a large waterside terrace that's perfect for lunch. Continue straight along the same road, passing fields and waterways as you go, until it ends at a park.

Turn right over the white bridge, immediately left and then keep right on Schellingwouderdijk. After you've passed some football pitches, turn right down Noorder IJdijk and dismount when you reach the start of the ③ *Oranjesluizen*. To cross this series of working locks you'll have to go by foot.

Once you're back on your bike head down Zuider IJdijk, joining the two upper paths nearest the water. At the T-junction turn right and follow the path to a big bridge; wheel your bike up the tracks on the nearby stairway. Head west along Zuiderzeeweg until the junction, where you turn right onto Zeeburgerdijk. Continue for 1.5km until you see the De Gooyer windmill (see page 120) over the water to your right. Once you reach it, it would be impolite not to reward yourself with a beer at adjacent brewery ④ *Brouwerij 't IJ*.

Running routes

Hit the road



① Vondelpark
Park run

DISTANCE: 4.3km
GRADIENT: Flat
DIFFICULTY: Easy
HIGHLIGHT: The stretch along the southern pond
BEST TIME: Take your pick
NEAREST STATION: Rijksmuseum

Start at the main entrance of the park on *Stadhouderskade* and head west under the bridge designed by Piet Kramer in 1947. Next you'll enter the main park; take the first right to follow the road that loops around the pond. Look out for the neo-gothic *Vondelkerk* on the right, designed by Pierre Cuypers, the man behind the Rijksmuseum (see page 91). At the fork in the path, leave the main road and head right on the narrow path that meanders along the edge of the park, passing Roman church-turned-music-venue *Orgelpark*.

As you rejoin the main road, take a sharp right and carry on for about 700 metres. At the end follow the curve to your left and once you've crossed the water (marked by knee-high walls) take a right to run along the narrow path. Rejoin the main road and after about 300 metres take the lakeside path again.

At the next fork, keep left and then head back onto the main road. Veer right, passing "Figure Découpée (L'Oiseau)" in the clearing on your left. This sculpture was designed by Picasso and presented to the city in 1965. Loop right around the pond and on the left look for a blue bridge to the *Blauwe Theehuis* (Blue Teahouse), a modernist institution built in the 1930s. Finish here with a drink or loop around the building and continue on to pass the statue of Dutch poet Joost van den Vondel, after whom the park was named. You'll wind up back at the starting point.



② Outer canal ring
Round trip

DISTANCE: 10km
GRADIENT: Flat
DIFFICULTY: Moderate
HIGHLIGHT: The changing architecture
BEST TIME: Early morning to beat the traffic
NEAREST STATION: Rijksmuseum

Start anywhere on the outer canal ring, depending on where you're staying; we'll start across from the *Rijksmuseum*, going anti-clockwise around Centrum. Avoid the red bike path and stick to the footpath, which sporadically becomes a carpark over the next kilometre. Cross at Weteringlaan and head along the canal past the old *Heineken Brewery*. Cross Westeinde, with De Nederlandsche Bank on your left.

The road inclines to cross the Amstel. Bear right at the Wibautstraat intersection, following the pedestrian crossings. At the statue of *Dr FM Wibaut* run east along the canal to the Olifantsbrug. Cross it, head down the passage through the building ahead, then cross Sarphatistraat and take the wooden bridge to run past the new blocks on Entrepotdok. Follow the road almost to the end, veer right down another passage, then left over the green drawbridge.

Turn right towards Arcam (see page 114), then left along Prins Hendrikkade. Pass by *Grand Hotel Amrâth* (see page 24) then as you pass Hotel NH Collection, veer right to cross the canal. At the next canal turn left then right along Haarlemmerstraat. This final leg is inside the canal ring, an uninterrupted stretch of footpath. At the Apple store head right over the canal and then left to finish by the Rijksmuseum.



③ Westerpark
Canal tour

DISTANCE: 5km
GRADIENT: Flat
DIFFICULTY: Moderate
HIGHLIGHT: Scenic views of canals (and a windmill)
BEST TIME: Mornings if you're a dog-lover
NEAREST STATION: Haarlemmerplein

It's easy to clock some kilometres in Westerpark. The manicured garden dotted with sculptures joins the old gasworks, now restaurants and bars, and tracks extend north and west through the less-maintained greenery.

Start at the Westerpark entrance (at the junction of *Houtmankade* and *Westerpark*), following the main footpath northwest; at the tennis courts follow the paved path as it veers slightly right. You'll soon be running in line with the train and when the path ends cross the thoroughfare (look out for cyclists) and continue along the footpath opposite.

The next leg is a simple loop around the western residential stretch of the parklands, along a gravel path with wild foliage on either side. At the carpark look for the path on your left and follow it down the gentle slope to the end. Continue adjacent to *Sloterdijkweg* for about 200 metres then follow the path as it turns left to re-enter the parklands. Go left again at the next corner and run along the tree-lined footpath, bordered by the residential plots on your left and a commercial complex on your right.

As you approach the cylindrical building of the *Westergasfabriek* (Western Gasworks) you'll reach a junction. If you're feeling fit take a left towards and under the train line for a short lap around a city farm; if you're ready to wind down head straight back towards Westerpark. At the train line follow the path on which you entered the park.