

## Audio tour, written version

Hey there! Down here! Yes now that I got your attention, welcome to Amsterdam. As you can see we are at Amsterdam Central Station. Before we start the tour, I want to remind you that the tour is about freedom through time and space. Since you are going to move a lot and hear a lot of things you don't know, I am going to explain one more time how you enjoy this tour the most. First of all a check list. Do you have your map and can you hear the sound coming from your phone? If yes, great! If the answer is no, team up with your group member. Second, the audio tour will only discuss locations pointed on the map. When traveling from location to location, feel free to set your phone on standby. Thirdly: don't forget to make photo's on every location. Apart from that it will make a great addition to your photobook, I will help you to put all these locations in a historical perspective. Make sure you and the building are in the picture, other aspects are your own artistic choice. I hope you will enjoy your visit to Amsterdam and thank you for taking our tour. Now: you might still be at the station.

This station is built between 1881 and 1889 after a design of P.J.H Cuypers and A.L Van Gendt. The station has six platforms that are accessible via three corridors under 15 tracks. On a daily base, Amsterdam central has 160.000 people that either leave from or arrive in Amsterdam. It is therefore the second busiest station in the Netherlands.

In 1864, Thorbecke who is known for his draft for the Dutch constitution, was the Minister of Domestic affairs and asked the Amsterdam Community Municipality council about their opinion on building the station. The location was approved in 1869.

Since 1997, the central station is being rebuilt for the North-South line that would connect Northern Amsterdam with the South Axis. This exists since 2018. For this rebuilding, the 'midentunnel' was opened in 2000. Both the west and midentunnel got moving staircases and escalators.

Also the platforms 10 to 15 were made longer so trains like Intercity's could come in at larger numbers. Trains like the Thalys or the Eurostar to London could come in at these platforms, which came in handy for airport Schiphol.

The station is expected to grow, as rebuilding should be done in 2030 and should make it possible for 275.000 travelers a day to come in or leave at Amsterdam Central. Trains should travel with higher frequency, delay should be limited and there should be enough space for all travelers on the stations. In short: this station is not done growing and will help further freedom of movement for countless travelers in the future.

Source: [https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Station\\_Amsterdam\\_Centraal](https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Station_Amsterdam_Centraal)

## **Kamer van Koophandel**

A Chamber of Commerce or in Dutch the Kamer van Koophandel (KvK) is an organisation that represents companies and their interests, and manages the Business Register. In the Netherlands, this is a autonomous governing body that is supported by a law from 2007. The budget is financed by the government and by revenue from prices for services that only cover the costs made. The KvK is a non-profit organisation and is an addition to other public and private organizations. It is controlled by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate.

On Dutch overseas territory like the BES-islands, Bonaire, saint Eustatius and Saba, there are two chambres of commerce.

Other services are educating entrepreneurs, regional entrepreneurial support, stimulating innovation and designing and managing places where entrepreneurs can find comprehensive relevant information from public parties.

This party clearly helps entrepreneurs in trading and producing and thus grants them some form of economical freedom. If these entrepreneurs would not have had that information, they would have to spend more time reading documents and calling around, something that is harder for some entrepreneurs than the other.

Source: [https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kamer\\_van\\_Koophandel](https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kamer_van_Koophandel) & [https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kamer\\_van\\_Koophandel\\_\(Nederland\)](https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kamer_van_Koophandel_(Nederland))

## **Anne Frank Huis**

Anne Frank was a Jewish German-Dutch girl that fled Germany in the years before World War 2. In Germany there was a weak labor market and poverty at the time. Adolf Hitler used this and blamed the Jews for the problems in the country. The Frank family moved to Amsterdam, and Otto, Anne's father, started a company that traded in pectine, something that is used in preparing jam.

Anne was raised in the Netherlands and went to school here. Otto had difficulties starting the business, but managed by also selling herbs and spices. However, on the first of September, 1939, Nazi-germany invaded Poland and World War 2 began. On the 10th of May 1940, nazi-germany also invades the Netherlands and within five days the army surrenders. The occupiers implemented laws and rules that made the life of jews difficult and segregated them from other people.

From the 5th of July 1942 they decided to go in hiding in the secret annex of Otto's company. He received help of old-colleges and 4 other people in hiding. You can imagine this not being an ideal situation for a teen to live in.

In

her two years in hiding, she wrote about what happened in the Secret annex, about what she felt and what she thought. She also wrote short-stories and started a novel. This is what helped her through the day. The Dutch Minister of Education in exile called for keeping war diaries and documents, and that gave Anne the idea to keep all her diaries in one story names: Het Achterhuis, translated to The Diary of A Young Girl or The Diary of Anne Frank.

In the end Anne died in Bergen-Belzen in 1944. Her name however remains alive. The Anne Frank House in Amsterdam is a museum that develops and exhibits educative programs and publication with Annes life story. It tries to educate people about antisemitism, prejudices and stereotypes and discrimination and equal rights.

By keeping her memory alive, we never forget how the lack of freedom and discrimination have severe, far-reaching and personal effects. This house is both a memory of an unfree Amsterdam and the demonstration that freedom is a basic human need and right.

**Source:** <https://www.annefrank.org/nl/>

## **Homomonument**

The homomonument is a memorial for all homosexual men and women that have been persecuted for their sexual orientation and to inspire and support them in their battle for recognition, and against oppression and discrimination.

In 1961 the COC thought about building this memorial, but the Second World War gained great attention in the 60's and 70's. In 1970 two youngsters wanted to lay a wreath on the 4th of May at the war monument at the Dam for the persecution of homosexuals in the second world war. They were arrested and the wreath was destroyed. A proposal in 1979 from Bob van Schijndel, member of the PSP homo group, about how jews and also groups like Romani and Travellers got their own memorials, gained broad support and thus the memorial came to be.

The memorial exists out of three triangles. They form one big triangle but all have different symbolic meanings. The pink triangles are chosen because prisoners in concentration camps had a triangle with a specific color corresponding to their reason for being in the camp. Germany homosexuals in those camps had a pink triangle on their uniform. In the end of the 60's this symbol was re-invented as a symbol for equal rights for homosexuals.

The triangle that is half under water is for the present. It points at the national Monument at the dam for the victims of german occupation. The triangle on street level stands for the past and has the tekst of a poem of Jacob Israël de Haan. It points to the Anne Frank House. At last, the triangle that is above street level stands for the future and serves

as meeting point. It points to the HQ of the homo interest organization COC at the time of building.

Annually on the 4th of May, a memorial takes place for the homosexual victims. There is also a short silent march to the Anne Frank house and over the Niek Engelschmanbrug. At 8 'o clock in the evening two minutes of silence are held and then local politicians and people from the LHBT-community hold short speeches.

Apart from these commemorations, every year on Kingsday and Liberation day, and in the week of Pride Amsterdam, several festivities are organized on the homomonument.

**Source:** [https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homomonument\\_\(Amsterdam\)](https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homomonument_(Amsterdam))

### **National monument on the Dam**

The National Monument on the Dam in Amsterdam is a monument for the commemoration of the Second World War in the Netherlands. It is a central element in the Dutch national Remembrance Day. Since 2009 it is also a national monument.

It was initiated by two former-military personnel in the municipality of Amsterdam for building a national monument. Within two years the municipality and Dutch national government agreed on doing so. A temporary colonnade was made in 1947 with eleven urns with soil from execution sites and cemeteries from each province and the corresponding provincial coat of arms.

The monument was revealed on the 4th of May 1956. On 1965 and 1998 it was restored. In 1998 it was fully disassembled and parts of it were impregnated with acrylic resin in Germany. These were parts like the statues, the lions and the top covering of the pylon. The inside of the pylon originally consisted of brick but has been replaced by concrete.

Also a fun fact is that this monument was 'plagued' by hippies in the 60's. They would sleep in the open air until in the 1970's this was officially forbidden by the municipality. This went too far for the hippies after which led to violent riots.

The monument consists of a twenty meter high pillar. The front of the pillar has a relief of four cuffed men. They express the misery of the war. On both sides of the relief are two statues of men with crying dogs at their feet. These men are symbol for the resistance of intellectuals and working class and the dogs are sorrow and loyalty. On the pillar above the four men is a big relief of a woman with a child on her arm. This woman has a wreath on her head and is surrounded by doves. They are the symbols of victory, peace and a new life. At the backside of the pillar you can see doves flying up to show the liberation.

At the back side of the pillar you see a half round memorial wall from with natural stone. In the niches of this wall are several urns placed with soil. The idea behind this soil is, according to the 4 and 5th of

May committee: *“The sand that comes from places where the Dutch were tortured and murdered emphasizes the national character of the monument.”*

**Source:** [https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nationaal\\_Monument\\_op\\_de\\_Dam](https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nationaal_Monument_op_de_Dam) & <https://historiek.net/het-nationaal-monument-op-de-dam/42429/>

## **Oudekerksplein**

Het Oudekerksplein or the Old Church Square is named after the 14th century church situated at the square. Originally a graveyard surrounded this church. However, in 1655 this graveyard was moved outside of the city and so the square was created. It is located within the red-light district of De Wallen.

In 2008 the municipality presented a plan to battle criminal activity, like human trafficking and illegal drugs trade, in the area of the square. As part of the plan, they wanted to gain insight in the activities surrounding square. The plan was to reduce the number of prostitutes and attract more restaurants and shops. However, the sex industry and coffee shops should not be totally replaced. The plan ended in 2018 and was fairly successful.

On the square two statues can be found. The first and most obvious statue is called ‘Belle’ and is meant to honour prostitutes worldwide. It was placed on the square in 2007. The second is less obvious but consists of a hand caressing a female breast located between the cobblestones. It gets called ‘Borstplaat’ or ‘De gestreelde borst’. It suddenly appeared on the square in February 1993 by an anonymous artist. The second statue has the size of 4 tiles and has to be searched for.

The criminalization of drugs and sex services has never done any good to the people that work in these sectors. They will be criminalized and are afraid to enforce their own human rights. They lose their freedom. That's what so great about these statues: prostitutes are seen as legitimate workers and not as pariahs. The statue Belle reads: "Respect sex workers all over the world." The Netherlands are one of the most progressive and free countries in Europe in this respect, with legalization and regulation of prostitution.

**Source:** <https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oudekerksplein>

## **Oude Kerk**

The ‘Oude Kerk’ or ‘Old Church’ is the oldest building in Amsterdam. The oldest parts date from the 13th century. During its long lifetime it has seen many periods where freedom was not always guaranteed.

In 1306 it was dedicated as a Roman Catholic church by the bishop of Utrecht. At that time, it was called the Sint Nicolaaskerk. When the New Church was built on the Dam a hundred years later, people started to refer to this church as the Old Church.

After the Alteration in 1578 the church was transformed from Roman Catholic to a protestant church. The interior of the church reflects this important event. During the iconoclasm and Alteration many statues, altars, painting and more got destroyed. This record makes the church a very important monument not only of the Netherlands but also of Europe. The Roman Catholic community had to move to a hidden church. This is now a museum called Ons' Lieve Heer Op Solder, which we will visit after this stop. Although the building remains, different groups with different identities connect their beliefs to it and include and exclude other groups with it.

The colonial period from 1528 to 1873 has also had an influence on the church. During this time the church got expanded and embellished with among other things goods originating from the colonies. Important people at the time, who contributed to the slavery, were buried in the church. Nowadays, names and family weapons of people connected to the slavery of this period can still be found on places like the windows and panels. An important question now is how we should deal with the reminders of these people who violated the freedom of others in the past.

In 1951 the Protestant community transferred the church to the Stichting de Oude Kerk (The Old Church Foundation). Now it is used as a church with regular church services but also a museum and meeting point for people with different cultures, interests and backgrounds. This church has now multiple functions and is still claimed by one group. It shows how choices of freedom can change or stabilize the status quo through the course of history and how this is a complex process rather than linear.

**Source:** <https://oudekerk.nl/monument/>

### **Ons' Lieve Heer op Solder**

As mentioned before, the Ons' Lieve Heer op Solder was a hidden church for the Roman Catholic church after the reformation of their old church. The church was built on behalf of the owner at the time: Jan Hartman. He was a wealthy Catholic merchant. When the protestant community took over in 1578 around 20 percent of the city's population at the time, were forbidden to express their faith in public. The only public churches allowed were the Protestant churches.

The church was not totally hidden. The Protestant municipality did know about its existence. Religions other than Protestant were tolerated, as the Dutch citizens had freedom of religion. Other religions were not allowed to practice faith in public but were not prohibited to do so at home. As question that can be asked in this context is 'How free are you if you have to hide your faith and identity?'. This question is not only related to the past but is still relevant today.

**Source:** [https://opsolder.nl/?gclid=Cj0KCQjwse-DBhC7ARIsAI8YcWJvyIMffaAapDHI5U1qtfGfsxyeeqmfUEPCQYbpDqoh4OxRyNqBuxYaAnr4EALw\\_wcB](https://opsolder.nl/?gclid=Cj0KCQjwse-DBhC7ARIsAI8YcWJvyIMffaAapDHI5U1qtfGfsxyeeqmfUEPCQYbpDqoh4OxRyNqBuxYaAnr4EALw_wcB)

## **Bushuis**

The Bushuis was built around 1550 and served as the gun storage of Amsterdam. In 1603 part of the building was rented to the VOC, which had just started at the time. Two years later they got access to the whole building.

The Oost-Indische Huis was built in 1604. In this building the Heeren 17, the central board of directors of the six chambers of the Company, held their semi-annual meetings.

The VOC was situated in the building until its disintegration in 1798. It was until 1808 that the colonial administration was seated there. This complex thus speaks of a controversial colonial history with slavery and violation of freedom. Right now, the complex is used by the University of Amsterdam.

**Source:** <https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bushuis>

## **Spinoza monument**

The goal of the state is freedom, so reads the text on the plinth of this monument dedicated to Baruch Spinoza. This is a free interpretation of Spinoza's ideas about freedom. Baruch Spinoza also known as Benedictus de Spinoza was a Dutch philosopher in the 17th-century.

Much of his work and life can be related to freedom. He was born in Amsterdam in a Jewish community. Early in his life he started to get into philosophy inspired by freethinkers like Descartes. He had critical views on the bible and the way it was interpreted. His idea was that God and nature were the same. In 1656 he was banned from the Jewish community. It is not totally clear what the reason for this banishment was. One possible reason is that his banishment might have been an example for the rest of the Jewish community and the Protestant administration of Amsterdam. They wanted to show they were a stable community as they realised that their freedom and safety was only guaranteed if they did not cause any reason for conflict or chaos.

Before he was banned however, he had already decided it would be the best to leave Amsterdam. Through the years he lived in Rijnsburg, Voorburg and Den Haag. His years in Rijnsburg were most productive. Here he met Jan Rieuwertsz, who owned a shop where he sheltered free thinkers like Spinoza and who published his work.

Spinoza is seen as one of the founders of the Enlightenment period. However, for the first two hundred years his works were banned because they would lead to atheism. In one of his works in 1670 he states that the freedom of philosophers is essential for the peace within a state.

**Source:** <https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spinozamonument> & [Benedictus de Spinoza - Wikipedia](#)

## **Portugese synagogue**

The Portuguese synagogue in Amsterdam was built in the seventeenth century. After the Spanish and Portuguese inquisition there was a great inflow of Jewish migrants from those countries. It is not random that those Jewish people fled to Amsterdam. Amsterdam was one

of the first European cities who had the right of freedom of religions. After the Jewish people became wealthier, they decide to build a synagogue, which is still impressive to see this day. The synagogue became an important place of worship for Amsterdams Jewish community.

<https://theculturetrip.com/europe/the-netherlands/articles/10-monuments-you-need-to-visit-in-central-amsterdam/>

### **Auschwitzmonument**

This monument refers to a black page of human history, the second world war and the Shoah or Holocaust. The monument was built as a place to remember all the people who died at camp Auschwitz and is made by Jan Wolkers, a well-known writer and artist in the Netherlands. On the monument there is the text 'Never Auschwitz again'. The idea of the monument is to look in the mirror and see the sky while it is broken. It means that there cannot be an untouched heaven anymore after all the gruels which took place in Auschwitz. Underneath the broken mirrors there are ashes of people who died in Auschwitz. It was a hard topic to decide where the ashes would end and eventually it ended in the Auschwitz Mirror monument.

\*Pauze\*

### **Hollandsche Schouwburg**

An impressive building in Amsterdam is the Hollandsche Schouwburg. Literally it means a dutch theatre. Unfortunately, the building isn't used for theatre anymore. Before the second world war the theatre was a big place where many people went to enjoy a form of art. Here is the unfortunate part of the building. After the invasion of Nazi-Germany the building was used to send people to camps on the border between Nazi-Germany and the Netherlands. The building is standing in a neighborhood where many Jewish people were located. The big transition from a place of fun into a place with bad memories is sad. Due to the Nazi-German use of the building, it is seen as a monument to remember all the people who were send to camps and eventually died.

<https://theculturetrip.com/europe/the-netherlands/articles/10-monuments-you-need-to-visit-in-central-amsterdam/>

### **Tropen museum**

The tropical museum is about world cultures and tell universal human stories like mourning, celebration, art, praying or war and fighting. The goal is to make people curious to the enormous cultural diversity that exists in the world. The museum should tell that we are all human.

It is true that although we have cultural differences that may be celebrated, we all have more in common than we differ. This message is especially important when considering racism and xenophobia.

**Source:** <https://www.tropenmuseum.nl/nl>

### **National Slavery monument**

This monument is a relatively new monument. In 2002 the monument was made to recognize the cruel past with slavery in Suriname and the Dutch Antilles Islands, which were colonies of the Netherlands. In 1863 slavery got forbidden and 139 years later there is the first monument to remember the past. It is a long time between the slavery itself and the monument because it is a hard thing to talk about for most Dutch politician. The past in slavery is something most politician would like to avoid talking about because a sort of shame. In Europe and in the Netherlands we are proud of having a relatively free and democratic political system but we were not so humane with people outside of this geographical area. There was some form of contradictory politics. In short: we were selfish. With this monument, all the people who suffered in the time of slavery get recognition for what was done to them. The monument wasn't just used for remembering but also to talk about a brighter future and current situation.