



# MEDIEVAL AMERSFOORT

**A creative walking tour through the  
medieval history of Amersfoort**

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Group 14

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Welcome to the city of Amersfoort! In the next two hours you are going to discover this unique historical city through a 6-kilometer walking tour. Your knowledge of the Middle Ages will be enriched by visiting seventeen stops which will lead you through the beautiful and old buildings and streets in this city. The stops include several and various extra elements, whereby this creative photo tour consists of 24 elements with extra background information to stimulate critical thinking and discussions with your partner/group about the environment. Have fun!

**Tour link:**

[https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/editmid=1UuM3JW7kGnro9nTfZoy1g8U8h6zYcVD\\_&usp=sharing](https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/editmid=1UuM3JW7kGnro9nTfZoy1g8U8h6zYcVD_&usp=sharing)

**Starting point: Amersfoort Central Station**

From Utrecht Central Station it is about fifteen minutes by train to Amersfoort CS. After you have arrived at the station, you must walk a ten-minute walk from the central station to the historic city center. The signposts along the road or the metal arrows on the ground will lead you to the starting point, Onze Lieve Vrouwetoren (see figure 1).

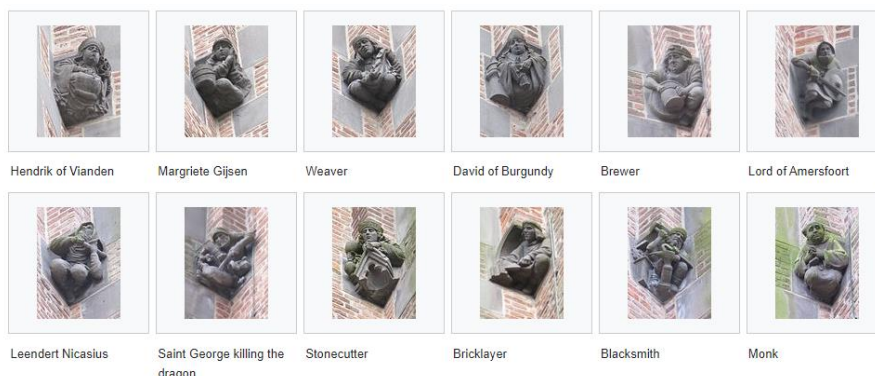


**1. Onze Lieve Vrouwetoren**

The Onze Lieve Vrouwetoren is built between 1444 and 1500. The tower is almost hundred-meter-high and it is the only place in the world where there are still beiaardiers (the occupation of sounding the bells) are being trained. The tower symbolizes the Mother Tereasa and the small tower Christ.



- Question: Can you guess how tall this building exactly is?  
Answer: 98 meters high.
- Question: There are twelve consoles on the tower, designed and made by Ton Mooy during the restoration of 1993-1996 (figure below). Can you spot all of them? Do you know who they are?



## 2. Lieve Vrouwekerkhof

At this location there once stood a impressive chapel, but on one faithful day disaster struck. At this time in 1787 the chapel was used for ammunition storage. One soldier was scraping of the rust on an old grenade, when the spars set it off and the whole storage with it. The chapel went up in flames.

The contours of the old chapel are still visible on the ground of the square.

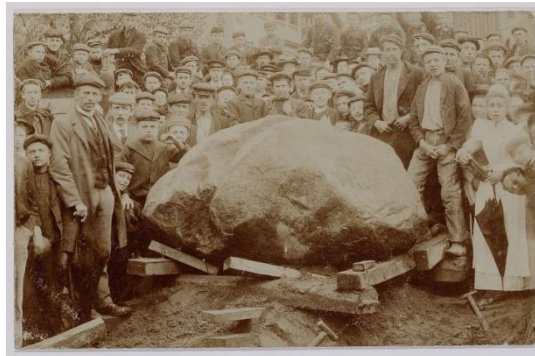
- Question: Can you try to imagine the old chapel for how it was?



## 3. Amersfoortse Kei

The giant rock that weighs over 7000 kilo is the reason that Amersfoort is known as the 'Boulder City' (Keistad). This boulder didn't just show up here. During the ice age a glacier brought it from Scandinavia to a location near Amersfoort.

In 1661 two landowners came up with a bet that resulted in 400 people dragging it to the city, not far from where it is today. Squire Everhard discovered the seven-ton boulder and betted with his friends he could get enough people to carry it inside the city. Well enough four hundred inhabitants showed up and carried it within the city wall. A few years later they buried the boulder, for it to then show up again two centuries later. In 1954 it was placed at its current spot.



## 4. Waterpoort Monnikendam

The water gate is built up out of two towers with a gate bridge in between. It was restored in 1947 with attention to detail, so was the same kind of brickwork used, where there was grain flower mixed in with the cement. To surprise was the bridge damaged in no time, when upon further inspection they discovered that sparrows would eat the bridge away.



### 5. Muurhuizen / synagogue

The Amersfoort's Wallhouses are a remnant of the old city wall. When canons were invented, city walls were obsolete, so around 1500 the wall was broken down. With all the excess bricks Amersfoort build houses that exactly followed the old lines of the city wall.

- Question: What do you think of this attempt to keep historical memories in the new built city?



### 6. Mondriaanhuis

Piet Mondrian is a well-known Dutch painter and was born in this house. He painted in many different styles, such as realism, expressionism, impressionism and cubism. Nowadays, many people know Mondrian for his abstract works, such as Tableau I. Mondrian died in 1944 and nowadays the Mondrian House is a museum about Mondrian's life and his works.

- Question: Do you know any other kinds of his work? Discuss this with your partner/group.



### 7. Plompetoren

There are various names for this tower, such as Dientoren or Latijntje. The tower was probably built at the end of the Middle Ages, however the exact year of construction is not known. For a long time, the tower functioned as a city prison, now it is a monument representing the cultural history of Amersfoort.



## 8. Garden and city wall

Here lies the remains of the second city wall, which was built at the end of the 14th century. In the nineteenth century, the wall was largely demolished. It is striking that the city wall was built with many different stones. This is because at the time the wall was built, the government of Amersfoort had decided that people should pay their taxes and fines not with money, but with stones. That is why the wall consists of so many different stones.

- Question: Try to imagine that each of those stones has a different story!

**Sidenote:** The Scheltussingel/Bloemendalsestraat is a great place to take a break from the tour! Both streets are located alongside the city wall and along the river Eem.



## 9. Koppelpoort

The Koppelpoort is part of the second city wall that was built in the 14th century. The gate functions as both a land gate and a water gate. The gate had to be opened and closed by wheelwrights. Nowadays, you can spin the wheel yourself during guided tours.



## 10. City brewery De Drie Ringen

In the Middle Ages, the beer industry was an important source of income for Amersfoort. In those days, no pure drinking water was used for making beer, but water from the canal! Therefore, many breweries were located at the canal. A few centuries later, the smaller breweries had to make way for the larger, export-oriented breweries. Now you can drink a beer made with drinking water at this city brewery. Super healthy!



### 11. Sint Franciscus Xaverius Church

Shortly after the Reformation and the Iconoclasm in 1566, Catholic church services were not allowed to be held in public. That is why underground churches were established. In 1815, a new constitution was introduced in the Netherlands, which made all religions equal. In 1817, the construction of the church was completed. A Catholic service is still celebrated in the church every Sunday.



### 12. St. Joris op 't Zand

This church dates from the year 1928. The remains of the legendary statue of the Virgin Mary can be seen in the church, whereby the book, what describes the miracles surrounding this statue is also kept here. The oldest image of Amersfoort also hangs here.

- Question: Can you spot the oldest image or the statue? Then try to reconstruct how the city changed throughout time.

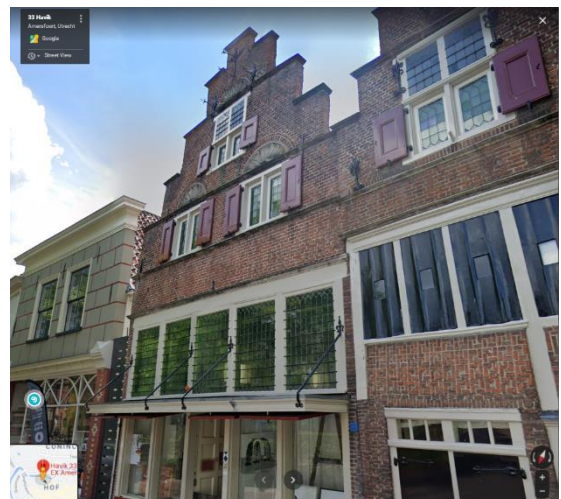


### 13. Havik, inner harbour

The Havik used to be the inner harbor in the oldest shopping and craft district. The Havik forms nowadays an important cityscape, where you imagine yourself back in time.

On the houses with numbers 33 and 35 you see two old buildings with a stepped gable. On the left side are the so-called "targets" of the brewers. In the past, students of the brewers' guild were trained here to become companions or masters. The right part dates from 1618 and used to be a gate to an alley. To turn it into a private house, facades were placed at the front and rear.

Also take a look at the building with number 37 (Address: Havik 37). Over the centuries it has been



constantly adapted to the times and therefore it has many different elements, decorations and architectural styles, from medieval arches and beams to decorations from the rococo and Jugendstil.

### **Witch bridge**

One part of the harbor is the witch bridge, which is located in front of the white house (stop 16). If it was suspected that someone was a witch, she was thrown into the moat from this bridge. Those who floated apparently had hollow bones and that was the proof; sentencing to the stake was inevitable. Anyone who did not float was not a witch, but unfortunately it was already too late.

### **White house**

This White House near the bridge at the Havik used to be a café. The choir members from the Elleboogkerk came here to drink a glass of beer. The youngest choir member had to stand guard and warn as soon as the sermon was over. Had the youngest member of the choir secretly been sitting at the bar, it could happen that the whole choir was back in the church too late.



### **Beer guild**

Amersfoort was a real beer city until well into the 17th century. At the harbor of the Havik, mainly the beer breweries established themselves, which were mainly dependent on shipping for the transport of ice and beer. The brewers formed an important guild.

### **14. Appelmarkt**

During archaeological research in 2009, 13th century finds were found on the Appelmarkt, including a complete beer mug. The results of the archaeological research are of great importance to the history of Amersfoort and that is why a monument was erected in 2011 that refers to this. The 13th century beer stein, a 13th or 14th century wine cup and a 16th century iron lance tip have been incorporated into it.



### **15. Groenmarkt**

The area where you are now, used to be a so-called mandate area. This was a separate jurisdiction in the middle of the city where the city government had no say. The mandate area was created in 1337 when the bishop of Utrecht founded a chapter (executive council) of ten canons (clergy). The clergy lived together in separate houses. Only one of the houses has been preserved and is referred to by the name "Mandate House". The house dates from about 1530 and was named "Onder de Lindeboom" in 1755. It was restored in 1941 and today café Onder de Linde is located here.



### **Sint Joris en de Draak**

On the Groenmarkt is the statue of Saint George, the city pattern of Amersfoort. While nothing is actually certain about his actions, there were many popular, and often unlikely, legends about him. The best known is the story in which Joris defeats the dragon. The dragon symbolized paganism and the killing of a dragon with a spear represents the conversion of pagan land to Christianity.

- Question: Can you think of any other work of art depicting Saint George and the Dragon? One for example is the painting of *Saint George and the Dragon*, made by Salvador Dalí in 1947 and kept in the MOMA, New York.



### **16. St Joris church**

Only the tower of the 13th century St. Joriskerk still contains original parts. Over the years, the church has been renovated and enlarged many times. In 1340 a large part of the city center of Amersfoort burned down, also an important part of the St. Joriskerk. During the lengthy reconstruction, the church was enlarged, so that you can now walk all the way around the tower inside the church.

In its current form, the church dates from 1534. There is much to see in the church, such as three organs, an axillary (chancel closure), a 16th century burial chamber and a baptistery with late Gothic entrance. There are also medieval wall and vault paintings, gravestones from the 17th and 18th centuries and the grave monument of Jacob van Campen, who died in 1657. Jacob van Campen is best known for the construction of the town hall in Amsterdam, nowadays the Royal Palace on the dam. He spent a lot of time at his country house Randenbroek near Amersfoort.



The church used to have an important place in urban life. For example, the church remained open daily from sunrise to sunset, so that strollers, merchants and children could walk in and out. As a result, the city councilors had quite a bit to do with public order in the church. For example, assignments are known to seekers to attack mischievous boys with a big stick and if necessary to take off their hat and outer garment. Dogs were also a nuisance to the sextons. Often the dog butcher was called in to remove the animals. To keep the pigs out, a grid was placed in front of the Gothic entrance to the church.



### **Boterhal**

The boterhal, dating from 1608, stands against the south wall of the St Joriskerk. In 1992, a so-called "jaquemart" was placed on this building: a roof rider with a small carillon. On the hour, St. Joris emerges from the turret who slays the dragon.

- Question: Can you spot the Boterhal on the hour?



### **17. Krommestraat**

The Krommestraat is perhaps the nicest shopping street in Amersfoort. Beautiful clothing boutiques, special toy stores, art and gift shops; you want to go in everywhere. Cozy restaurants can also be enjoyed here. Despite the corona measures, try to visit local beer shops, the cheese houses or the local clothing stores.

### **18. End of the tour:**

After you have enjoyed a few shops or a coffee to-go in the Krommestraat, continue your way through the Torengang and first turn right and then the first street left towards the Onze Lieve Vrouwekerkhof and the Onze Lieve Vrouwetoren!