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Emperors Canal
Golden Curve
Mayor's residence
Seven Bridges
Skinny Bridge
Amstel Court
Botannical garden
Poorman's Beer Lock
Maritime Museum
Amsterdam
NEMO
START
Sea Palace
Central Station
"IJ" Harbor
Houseboat Museum
Red Deer Brewery
Hotel Pulitzer
Western Church
Anne Frank Hse
Lily Canal
Narrowest House
Northern Church
Posthorn Church
Café Papeneilant
Unicorn Lock
Restaurant "Open"

Red Light District Cruise

Music Building

Click "Start" on the map to begin the cruise. Click "Blue Bridge" for a videoclip. Click "IJ Harbor" for a fragment of the HQ map

Amsterdam Canal Cruise Guide

Welcome aboard!

1. Eastern Dock

We begin the Guided Amsterdam Canal Cruise in the Eastern Dock, Amsterdam's old East harbor. If you'd be sailing across the Southern Sea in the 17th century, approaching the port of Amsterdam, this is the skyline you would see from your ship. Before the station-islands and the station were built, these houses used to stand on the seaside in front of the open harbor



That famous skyline was immortalized many times on paintings by the masters of our Golden Age, portraying the harbor full of sailships. When the station was built, in 1889, there was fierce protest against the project. Preserving that skyline was the main object of those protesters.

[Back to the Map](#)



The Eastern dock shoreline in the 17th century

2. New Metropolis

The big green building is New Metropolis or 'Nemo', the new museum for science and technology. Built in 1992 by the famous Italian architect Renzo Piano, who also designed the Pompidou Center in Paris. The shape of the building is a mirror image of the IJ-Tunnel entrance on which it is founded. According to the architect, it has nothing to do with a ship.



Some facts about the canals

Amsterdam is the most watery city in the world. A full 25% of the city's surface is water. There are 100 km (63 miles) of canals with 1500 bridges going across them. About 500 of these bridges date from the 17th century. The canals were initially built as successive defense moats around a rapidly expanding city. That explains their concentric layout. The world's most intricate system of navigable waterways evolved naturally with the interconnection of the old moats 'inside the city-walls'. In the 17th century, that water-transport system made Amsterdam the richest city in the world

Cars rolling in

Along the canalside, you see low iron railings, that all the boats are tied up on. Those boats were not the reason for the railings. Cars were. In the sixties of the last century, cars rolling into the canals was a plague in Amsterdam. It happened several times each month, meaning much work for the fire department and many claims to the insurance companies. Some car



insurance companies joined forces and financed 130 miles of guardrails to prevent the cars from rolling in. With considerable success: these days it happens only once or twice a month

twice a year. It still does happen though, not all the canals are equipped with guardrails. If it happens to you, if you get into a canal with your car here, a good advice is to stay on or in your car after it gets in the water. The sides of the canals are shallow, the roof of your car will usually stick out of the water. It is tempting to clamber on the roof and then jump on the shore. But if you do that, the fire department will come anyway to salvage your car. They have to get everything out of the water. Afterwards, you will receive a bill for several thousand Euro's for salvage. If you stay on your car, they have to rescue you, and that is free of charge.



Low iron railings to prevent cars from rolling in

Filled in for highways

Many streets in the center have names that refer to canals that used to be there, but were filled up to make highways. At least one canal was filled up for its stench – by royal decree. Behind the Royal Palace on the Dam Square, there used to be a canal. Napoleon Bonaparte's brother Louis was King of Holland from 1806 to 1811. He took up residence in Amsterdam, declared the city to be the capital of the country and had the 17th century City Hall on the Dam Square redesigned to be his palace. His wife Josephine could not sleep from the stench from the canal behind the palace, so the King had it filled up for her. Josephine hated Amsterdam. She only lived in the palace for two months. Recently, there has been a lot of discussion locally about plans to dig out and reopen some of the old canal-streets. Amsterdammers cherish their canals, but the plans met with fierce opposition from local retailers.

Bicycle wrecks

The canals are around 3m (9 ft.) deep, but please subtract about 1 ft. for bicycles. The bottom is lined with bicycle-wrecks. Regular dredging operations produce barges heaping full of bicycle-wrecks.



Dredging for bicycles

[Back to the Map](#)

Red Light District Canal Cruise

Amsterdam is the only ancient city in the world where the Medieval Center is not a Museum but a Red Light District.



Situated along the two oldest canals in the city, 'the oldest profession' in Amsterdam has roots that go back to the Catholic Middle Ages here. The days when you could "close an eye and wash your sins with a confession. A revolution brought Calvinists to municipal power in 1572. The new Protestant rulers were the first to make serious efforts to suppress 'the business of sin' in Amsterdam.

The Red Light District has survived more than 400 years of Municipal vigour against it but it may not live long into the 21st Century.

In the most recent effort to make the district more respectable, City Hall 'invested' 35 million Euro's to buy 61 'windows' from an underworld tycoon. The City wants studios for fashion designers behind those windows. Today, the Red Light District is still a fascinating neighborhood with a very exciting history and an equally exciting present.

The picture on the right shows how the two can periods blend together. Admiral Cornelis Tromp lived in this house. He was a local sea hero in the

17th century. The gable-stone over the front door was recently restored by a local Historical Foundation - to decorate the erotic novelty shop that is currently housed in the basement.

My new eBook:

Red Light District Canal Cruise

will show you the other side of the oldest quarter of Amsterdam - as seen from the window of a Canal Tourboat.

The **Red Light District Canal Cruise** will be published on April 15th 2008, available for download for **\$ 19,95**. If you buy the **Amsterdam Canal Cruise Guide** before **April 15th**, you will get both eBooks for the price of one, as my gift to you to say thank you for buying my first eBook.



[Back to the Map](#)