

**Amsterdam, Netherlands**

**OVERVIEW**

**Introduction**

Tell anyone you're going to Amsterdam and there's a fair chance they'll either sigh with envy or give you a sly nod. Amsterdam's reputation for tolerance laced with sin precedes it, but equally renowned are its scenic and cultural attractions.



Amsterdam hotels are known for their cleanliness and hospitality, its restaurants offer world cuisine, and along the city streets is a shopper's paradise. Most visitors fall in love with the city and return again and again.

Amsterdam is nourished by a wealth of museums, concert halls, and avant-garde theater and dance venues. Its relaxed and tolerant attitudes draw those looking for a creative, anything-goes atmosphere.

Large numbers of beautiful tree-lined canals are bordered by streets with rows of narrow, gabled houses and 17th-century warehouses, making Amsterdam an architectural treasure trove. Amsterdam is much smaller in population (but no less interesting) than many European capitals. As a result, much of the city center can be comfortably explored on foot—or, if you want to look like a true local, by bicycle.

**Must See or Do**

**Sights**—The Westerkerk (West Church) on the Prinsengracht and the spectacular view from its tower; centuries-old houses along the canals; the Anne Frank Huis; the Red-Light District.

**Museums**—Rembrandts at the Rijksmuseum; the Van Gogh Museum; the Stedelijk Museum.

**Memorable Meals**—Smoked eel at Haesje Claes; french fries with mayonnaise or peanut-butter sauce from the rear end of the Albert Cuypmarkt; *kroket* from a takeout window; rijsttafel at Tempo Doeloe; salted or pickled herring from one of the fish stands along the canals.

**Late Night**—Jazz at Bimhuis; drinks and dancing at club Panama in the Eastern Docklands; events at the Nachtheater Sugar Factory, ranging from poetry readings in English to DJ nights.

**Walks**—A stroll that takes in all the sights of Dam Square and the adjacent Red-Light District; a walking tour of the old Jordaan section; a walk in Vondelpark; a guided walking tour from Mee in Mokum of Amsterdam's hidden courtyards.

**Especially for Kids**—The aquarium, planetarium and petting zoo at the Artis Zoo; the goat farm at the Amsterdamse Bos; hands-on exhibits at NEMO Science and Technology Center; the children's section (Kindermuseum TM Junior) of the KIT Tropenmuseum (tropical museum).

## Geography

Dam Square is at the heart of Amsterdam's network of canals, streets and squares. There, you'll find historic structures such as the Royal Palace. The street Damrak connects Dam Square to Centraal Station. Kalverstraat and Rokin, two popular shopping streets, lead from Dam Square to Muntplein and the Flower Market. Farther to the west of Dam is the district of the Jordaan, a picturesque and trendy neighborhood. The Red-Light District lies to the east of Dam Square.

The canals—whose names often end in the word *gracht* or *kade*—wrap around the historic city center in a series of semicircles. One of the innermost canals in the series is the Singel, followed by the Herengracht, Keizersgracht and finally the Prinsengracht. The Singel canal encircles the old center, extending along its western edge and meeting the Amstel River on the center's southern edge. Intersecting the canals are smaller cross-canals and streets.

On the eastern side of the center is the old Jewish Quarter, largely rebuilt, and the Waterlooplein, with the flea market and Stopera (city hall and opera house). To the southwest is Museumplein, the site of several museums, including the Rijksmuseum and the Concertgebouw, the main concert hall.

Nearby Leidseplein is another important square that is frequented by tourists seeking its theaters, restaurants and nightspots. Slightly east of Museumplein, you'll find the former working-class neighborhood De Pijp, now a bustling mixture of stylish cafes, shops and restaurants, not to mention the largest street market in the Netherlands, the Albert Cuypmarkt.

## History

In the early 11th century, dikes were built to tame the Amstel River. By 1240, the small village of Aemstedamme occupied the area that is now Dam Square. Fortunately positioned, Amsterdam grew and spread as it became a bustling port, charging tolls to ships and indulging in trade with many countries.

This trade, fostered by the famed Dutch East India Company, made the Netherlands rich. From the end of the 1500s until the beginning of the 1700s, Amsterdam experienced its Golden Age and became one of Europe's cultural and economic centers. Some of the greatest Dutch artists—most notably Rembrandt—lived during this period.

The spiderweb of canals and streets that gives the city such a distinctive design began to take form in the 1600s. One of the first cities to practice religious tolerance, it drew refugees, adventurers, artists, writers, intellectuals and statesmen from many countries. These immigrants, along with the hardy natives who claimed the land from the sea, have all had a lasting influence.

After World War II and the memories of hardship it incurred began to fade, the city grew quickly, attracting a youthful population. The 1960s were marked by lively counter-culture happenings organized by hippies and "Provos." Also, spurred by a perennial housing shortage, squatters took over deserted buildings in rundown parts of the city, and by the 1980s, clashes with police were becoming common.

Those rebels have grown up now, and redevelopment of the rundown city and harbor areas is well under way. Amsterdam has become increasingly diverse in the past few decades as more immigrants, notably those of Moroccan and Turkish descent, have settled there with their families.

The city is famous for its "live and let live" attitude, though the murders of right-wing politician Pim Fortuyn in May 2000—who was running for the post of prime minister on an anti-immigration platform—and filmmaker Theo Van Gogh in November 2004 caused some division between the ethnic and nonethnic Dutch. Still, Amsterdam is a great place to relax and enjoy yourself.

### **Potpourri**

The Lloyd Hotel in the Eastern Docklands is a showcase for the best of Dutch design, from furniture by Marcel Wanders to breathtaking boiled-wool fabric by Claudy Jongstra.

At the Prostitute Information Center, run by ex-prostitute Mariska Majoor, visitors can see a mock-up of a typical window room.

There are 206 paintings by Van Gogh hanging on museum walls in the city compared with just 22 paintings by Rembrandt.

Amsterdam is also known as the Venice of the North, and it has more canals than the Italian city.

The movie *Ocean's Twelve* was shot in and around the Hotel Pulitzer, the Kloveniersburgwal and Heiligeweg. A key scene was filmed in De Dampkring coffeeshop on the Handboogstraat.

Rembrandt had to leave his home and declare bankruptcy because the company that commissioned his painting *The Night Watch* was dissatisfied with it. The painting is now hailed as one of Rembrandt's masterpieces and can be seen at the Rijksmuseum.

Centraal Station is supported by 8,687 wooden stakes, which were pounded into three artificial islands built to support it.

All public bars and restaurants in Amsterdam are now smoke-free: Coffee shops aren't quite sure whether the ban includes them or not. Currently, you can still smoke your (legal) joint inside, but only if it's 100% marijuana and not laced with tobacco. If you want to smoke a plain cigarette, you must go outside.

New York's Bowery district is named after the Dutch word for a farm, *bouwerij*, and Stuyvesant Street after Peter Stuyvesant, whose statue stands outside Amsterdam's West Indisch Huis.

### **SEE & DO Sightseeing**

The broad plaza outside Centraal Station is a good place to begin a tour—you're likely to end up there anyway at some point during your stay. A walk down Damrak will take you to Dam Square, site of the Royal Palace and National Monument. If you turn toward the National Monument and continue walking, you'll end up in the colorful Red-Light District. This is the oldest part of the city and a neighborhood where quaintness mingles with sex. From there, you can make your way north to the Oude Kerk, the city's oldest church, or continue walking to the southeast and see the Rembrandthuis, the Portuguese Israeli Synagogue and the Jewish Historical Museum.

If you turn toward the Royal Palace at Dam Square and keep walking, you'll be headed in the general direction of the Anne Frank House on Prinsengracht. Also nearby is the Westerkerk, where Rembrandt is buried. The Jordaan, one of Amsterdam's most picturesque districts, is

just beyond Prinsengracht. Other areas worth exploring are around Leidseplein and Muntplein, near the Flower Market.

Museum-wise, Amsterdam offers a wide range of institutions documenting everything from the city's highest cultural achievements to its seediest underpinnings. The must-see museum is the Rijksmuseum. Although the main building is closed for renovations until 2013, the Philips wing is open and all the famous old-master paintings are on display, including *The Night Watch* by Rembrandt. Nearby is the excellent Van Gogh Museum.

The Stedelijk Museum, a major modern-art venue, will show its collection in traveling exhibitions until 2010, when renovations to the permanent facility are expected to be complete. At the other end of the spectrum are bizarre private museums dedicated to sex and drugs, if not rock 'n' roll.

Folks planning to take in many of the local attractions and institutions might consider purchasing a one-, two- or three-day I Amsterdam Card, which entitles holders to free public transportation, discounts for restaurants and attractions, a free canal-boat trip and admission to many museums. A 24-hour pass is 38 euros, a 48-hour pass is 48 euros, and a 72-hour pass is 58 euros. The pass is available from any of the Amsterdam Tourist and Convention Board's VVV offices. <http://www.iamsterdamcard.com>.

For those who love museums, the *museumjaarkaart* may also be worth purchasing. It grants free or reduced-fee admission to more than 400 museums (normally just the permanent collections) throughout the Netherlands (29 are in Amsterdam) and is available at participating museums at a cost of 39.95 euros (19.95 euros for children and young adults up to age 25). A *museumjaarkaart* is valid for one year. <http://www.museumkaart.nl>.

## **Historic Sites**

### **ARCAM**

The ARCAM is the Centre for Architecture in Amsterdam. Anyone interested in architecture and urban planning can consult its collection of documents. It holds exhibitions and provides information on interesting buildings and sites in Amsterdam. Open Tuesday-Saturday 1-5 pm. Admission is free. Prins Hendrikkade 600 (by Centraal Station), Amsterdam. Phone 620-4878. <http://www.arcam.nl>.

### **Dam Square**

This is the site of the National Monument (honoring the dead of World War II), the Royal Palace, Nieuwe Kerk (the New Church, where Queen Beatrix was crowned), Madame Tussauds, and the NH Grand Hotel Krasnapolsky. It's a lively meeting place for tourists, shoppers, businesspeople, street performers, artists and children feeding pigeons. At the south end of Damrak in the center of the city.

### **Homomonument**

This is the world's first memorial to persecuted lesbians and gays. It's constructed from three pink-granite triangles that are reminders of the triangles of pink fabric that homosexuals were forced to wear in concentration camps during World War II. Friends and families of AIDS victims often place flowers at the foot of the monument. On Westermarkt beside the Westerkerk, Amsterdam.

### **Koninklijk Paleis**

The 17th-century Royal Palace was originally Amsterdam's city hall. It became a royal palace by order of Louis Napoleon in 1808. The many impressive rooms shelter Empire-style furniture and valuable paintings by some of Rembrandt's most illustrious contemporaries, such as Govert Flinck and Ferdinand Bol. When open, the hours are daily noon-5 pm. It is closed for the months of June and November and at other dates throughout the year; check the Web site for current details. 7.50 euros adults; 6.50 euros children, students and seniors; free for children younger than 5. Dam Square, Amsterdam. Phone 620-4060.

<http://www.paleisamsterdam.nl>.

### **Oude Kerk**

Dating back to the 14th century, this Gothic structure located in the heart of the Red-Light District is Amsterdam's oldest church. The baroque, oak-encased Great Organ; dark wood, gilded ceiling; Renaissance stained-glass windows; and Lady Chapel have largely been preserved and are all worth a look. Rembrandt's first wife, Saskia, is buried there. The church houses exhibitions of modern art and photography. Open Monday-Saturday 11 am-5 pm, Sunday 1-5 pm. 5 euros adults; 4 euros children, students and seniors; free for children younger than 12. Oudekerksplein 23, Amsterdam. Phone 625-8284. <http://www.oudekerk.nl>.

### **Portuguese Synagogue**

Built by Jews fleeing the Spanish Inquisition in the 1600s and inspired by the architecture of the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, this synagogue is still in active use and is illuminated by more than 1,000 candles and 72 windows. Open April-October Sunday-Friday 10 am-4 pm; November-March Sunday-Thursday 10 am-4 pm, Friday 10 am-2 pm. Religious services are held on Saturday at 9 am. 6.50 euros adults, 5 euros students and seniors, 4 euros children ages 13-17, free for children 12 and younger. Mr. Visserplein 3, Amsterdam. Phone 624-5351. <http://www.esnoga.com>.

### **Westerkerk**

This church boasts the tallest and most beautiful tower in Amsterdam (with spectacular views of the city) and contains the largest nave of any Dutch Protestant church. The burial place of Rembrandt. Open April-September Monday-Friday 11 am-3 pm. Admission to the church is free. The tower costs 5 euros. Prinsengracht 281, Amsterdam. Phone 624-7766. <http://www.westerkerk.nl>.

## **Museums**

### **Amsterdams Historisch Museum**

Housed in a former orphanage, this museum painstakingly and artistically re-creates the life of the city from 1275 to World War II and beyond, with many special exhibits and movies linking the past and present. Open Monday-Friday 10 am-5 pm, Saturday and Sunday 11 am-5 pm. 10 euros adults, 7.50 euros seniors, 5 euros children ages 6-16; free for children ages 5 and younger. Kalverstraat 92 (with a second entrance at Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal 357), Amsterdam. Phone 523-1822. <http://www.ahm.nl>.

### **Anne Frank Huis**

This house is a stirring memorial to the famed, doomed diarist who hid with her family from the Nazis in this tiny annex 1942-44. The small house and the exhibition space next door display sections of Frank's diary along with historical photographs and exhibits about racism and anti-Semitism. There's also a bookstore and cafe. Avoid the summer crowds by visiting after 7 pm. Open mid-March to mid-September daily 9 am-9 pm; mid-September to mid-March daily 9 am-7 pm. 8.50 euros adults, 4 euros children ages 10-17. Prinsengracht 267, Amsterdam. Phone 556-7105. <http://www.annefrank.org>.

### **Cobra Museum voor Moderne Kunst**

This building displays works by an international group of experimental artists who were part of the postwar revolutionary movement based in Copenhagen, Brussels and Amsterdam. Open Tuesday-Sunday 11 am-5 pm. 9.50 euros adults. Sandbergplein 1-3, Amstelveen. Phone 547-5050. <http://www.cobra-museum.nl>.

### **Foam Photography Museum**

Both classic and innovative photography are on show at this museum, as you follow a maze leading through three beautiful canal houses. Foam strives to be a center for photographers and regularly organizes discussion evenings. There's also a bookshop and a cafe. Open daily 10 am-6 pm (Thursday and Friday until 9 pm). 8 euros. Keizersgracht 609, Amsterdam. Phone 551-6500. <http://www.foam.nl>.

### **Hermitage Amsterdam**

The Amsterdam branch of St. Petersburg's State Hermitage is located in the impressive and historic Amstelhof building near Waterlooplein. The Amstelhof was originally constructed in the late 17th century as a charitable nursing home for the elderly. Selections of Russian and European art are featured in the Hermitage. The museum has been expanded to 10 times its former size and marked its grand opening in June 2009. It stages two large-scale, temporary exhibitions each year. Open daily 10 am-5 pm, Wednesday till 8 pm. 15 euros adults. Free for children age 16 and younger. Nieuwe Herengracht 14, Amsterdam. Phone 530-7488. <http://www.hermitage.nl>.

### **Joods Historisch Museum**

The Jewish Historical Museum is located in the old Jewish Quarter in a complex of four restored synagogues from the 17th and 18th centuries and modern buildings. Inside are revered artifacts and chronicles of Jewish culture, religion and history in the Netherlands. Daily 11 am-5 pm. 9 euros adults. Nieuwe Amstelstraat 1, Amsterdam. Phone 531-0310. <http://www.jhm.nl>.

### **Katten Kabinet**

This collection of paintings, sculpture and artifacts depicting cats is housed in a beautiful 17th-century canal house. There are pieces by Picasso and other famous artists as well as a gift shop. A fun stop for cat lovers, but anyone else may be bored. Open Tuesday-Friday 10 am-4 pm, Saturday and Sunday noon-5 pm. 6 euros. Herengracht 497, Amsterdam. Phone 626-9040. <http://www.kattenkabinet.nl>.

### **KIT Tropenmuseum**

This museum of the tropics is an ethnographic treasure-house, illuminating the daily lives of people in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America. There's also a special children's section called Tropenmuseum Junior. Daily 10 am-5 pm. 9 euros adults, 5 euros children ages 6-17. Linnaeusstraat 2, Amsterdam. Phone 568-8200. <http://www.kit.nl>.

### **Madame Tussauds**

Go to the wax museum for face-to-face encounters with famous people from the present and past. Among recent additions is U.S. President Barack Obama. Open daily 10 am-5:30 pm, with occasional late openings. 21 euros adults, 16 euros children ages 5-15. Dam 20, Amsterdam. Phone 522-1010. <http://www.madametussauds.nl>.

### **Nederlands Scheepvaart Museum**

This major maritime museum is housed in a 300-year-old former Dutch naval arsenal. It includes a full-scale replica of an 18th-century ship, with actors carrying out the crew's activities. The museum is closed for renovation until September 2011, but the East Indiaman *Amsterdam* remains open although it has been relocated to the NEMO Science and Technology Center. Kattenburgerplein 1, Amsterdam. Phone 523-2222. <http://www.scheepvaartmuseum.nl>.

### **NEMO Science and Technology Center**

This futuristic, hands-on science center features interactive exhibits about technology, industry, energy and other subjects. A roof terrace is open until 11 pm in summer. The top-floor self-service restaurant can be reached from the street by a pedestrian ramp, and affords one of the best views of the city. Museum open Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-5 pm, also school holidays and Mondays June-August. 12.50 euros adults, free for children younger than 4. Oosterdok 2 (a short walk from Centraal Station), Amsterdam. Phone 531-3118. <http://www.e-nemo.nl>.

### **Rembrandthuis**

This three-story house, where the artist lived 1639-58, is now a museum. It provides insight into his life and holds an important collection of his etchings and drawings, as well as a fascinating series of self-portraits. Open daily 10 am-5 pm. 9 euros adults, 2.50 euros children ages 6-17. Jodenbreestraat 4, Amsterdam. Phone 520-0400. <http://www.rembrandthuis.nl>.

### **Rijksmuseum**

This vast complex, which houses many of the greatest Dutch masterpieces, is undergoing a major renovation and expansion that will last until 2012 or 2013. The Philips wing remains open, displaying more than 400 masterpieces from the 17th century, including major works by Jan Vermeer, Frans Hals and Rembrandt, whose *The Night Watch* is displayed with deserved reverence. Daily 9 am-6 pm, until 8:30 pm on Friday. 12.50 euros adults. Free for children age 18 and younger. Jan Luikenstraat 1 (direct entrance to Philips wing), Amsterdam. Phone 674-7047. <http://www.rijksmuseum.nl>.

### **Rijksmuseum Amsterdam Schiphol**

This exhibition space, located between departure halls E and F, is only accessible to travelers in the airport. Ten Golden Age works as well as regular exhibitions from the Rijksmuseum's permanent collection are on display. Daily 7 am-8 pm. Free admission. <http://www.rijksmuseum.nl/tentoonstellingen/schiphol?lang=en>.

### **Stedelijk Museum**

You'll see a wide-ranging collection of modern Dutch paintings at the city's most important venue for contemporary art exhibitions. Post-World War II artists include De Kooning, Newman, Ryman, Judd, Stella, Lichtenstein, Warhol, Nauman, Middleton, Dibbets, Kiefer, Polke, Merz and Kounellis. The Stedelijk also has a fine collection of pre-WWII works from Cezanne, Picasso, Matisse and Chagall.

The museum on Paulus Potterstraat (Museumplein) is undergoing major renovations—including the addition of a modern entrance building—until 2011. Until then, pieces from the museum's collection are being shown in traveling exhibitions called "Stedelijk in de Stad" all over the city, including the Van Gogh Museum and the Nieuwe Kerk. The Stedelijk Museum Bureau is located at Rozenstraat 59 (near Centraal Station), Amsterdam. Phone 422-0471. <http://www.stedelijk.nl>.

### **Van Gogh Museum**

You'll see hundreds of the artist's paintings and drawings on permanent display, including some of his most famous works: *Sunflowers*, *Iris* and *The Bedroom*. There is also a collection of work by his contemporaries, such as Claude Monet, Henri Toulouse-Lautrec and Paul Gauguin. Also on display are the famed letters between Vincent Van Gogh and his younger brother Theo. Daily 10 am-6 pm, till 10 pm on Friday. 14 euros adults; free for children younger than 17. Paulus Potterstraat 7, Amsterdam. Phone 570-5200. <http://www.vangoghmuseum.nl>.

### **Woonbootmuseum**

The Houseboat Museum depicts life on the 2,000 boats lining the canals. The *Hendrika Maria* (1914) is typical of the industrial river barges that were rebuilt as furnished homes. There's a slide show and models of other boats. Open March-October daily except Monday 11 am-5 pm; November-February Friday-Sunday 11 am-5 pm. Closed most of January. 3.50 euros adults; 2.75 euros children up to 60 in/152 cm tall. On Prinsengracht, opposite No. 296, Amsterdam. Phone 427-0750. <http://www.houseboatmuseum.nl>.

### **Zaanse Schans**

For a taste of traditional Holland, visit this open-air museum 10 mi/16 km northwest of Amsterdam. The picturesque village features architecture, crafts and trades the way they were in the 17th and 18th centuries, and you'll want to photograph the beautiful working windmills. Windmills open daily 9 am-5 pm, though November-February most of the windmills are only open on the weekend (paint mill De Kat and oil mill De Zoeker are only open March-October).

Free admission, but there are separate fees for parking as well as for admission to several buildings. Schansend 1, Zaandam. Phone 075-616-8218. <http://www.zaanseschans.nl>.

## **Neighborhoods & Districts**

### **Centrum**

This is the busy heart of the city, encompassing Leidseplein, Dam Square and Centraal Station. Many nice hotels line the main canals—Singel, Herengracht, Keizersgracht and Prinsengracht—that cut through the area. The popular Leidseplein is full of cafes, theaters, nightclubs, restaurants and bars. The flower market is located on the Singel, just off Leidsestraat. The Rembrandtplein area is where the city's main late-night spots and dance clubs are located. Dam Square and surrounding streets are a main shopping area. There is a large concentration of "coffeeshops" around the Centraal Station area, where marijuana and hashish are sold and smoked. These smoking cafes also exist all over the city, with the possible exception of the Oud Zuid neighborhood.

### **Oostelijk Havengebied**

The area known as Eastern Docklands (between Centraal Station and Zeeburg Island) is a hive of activity. It's an architectural showpiece that some say is destined to become the future city center. Major institutions are being relocated to the area, such as the library's main branch. Spectacular modern buildings line the KNSM and Java islands and its south axis, along with accompanying trendy boutiques and restaurants.

### **Oud Zuid**

The Old South district of Amsterdam is one of the cultural hubs of the city, mainly because it contains the wonderful Museumplein, an open grassy area with the Rijksmuseum, the Van Gogh Museum and the Concertgebouw on its edges. This neighborhood contains the city's most elegant residential area. Two of the most exclusive shopping streets, the P.C. Hoofstraat and Beethovenstraat, are located there, as well as many trendy brasseries and restaurants. In the more westerly part of the neighborhood is Vondelpark, the city's largest green area.

### **Red-Light District**

For better or worse, this is the place that many outsiders associate with Amsterdam. It's also the oldest part of the city and is known as De Wallen because the old city walls were located there. This crowded, colorful neighborhood draws tourists by the thousands with its proliferation of sex shops and dens along narrow streets and canals. Prostitutes pose in illuminated windows, exhibiting their wares, as would-be customers, backpackers, strolling couples and travelers of all ages gape. (When the window shade is down, it means the woman of the house is engaged in business.) The experience is nothing short of surreal.

One way to explore the buildings and monuments of the district is to join a guided tour. If you're visiting De Wallen out of simple curiosity, you might feel more comfortable going during the day, though the night is when the real crowds show up. Taking pictures is taboo and could prove dangerous—at the least you'll risk your camera being thrown into the murky canal, and if you are really unlucky you may still be attached to it. Ignore the street drug dealers. If you go in the evening, avoid deserted streets. There are also plenty of eateries and bars to nourish the tired spectator. Some of the best Chinese and Thai restaurants are located in Amsterdam's Chinatown, which occupies a small area of the Red-Light District around the Zeedijk and Geldersekade.

A plan called Project 1012 (named after the local area code) has been launched to clean up the neighborhood. The city is buying up windows and plans to replace them with galleries, artists' workshops, restaurants and high-end bars. Some windows already display fashion, but the plan to turn the whole district into a shopping paradise is met with major protests from locals and tourists alike.

To reach the Red-Light District, head east from Dam Square.



### **The Jordaan**

A onetime working-class and immigrant area, the Jordaan has been gradually gentrified into a trendy quarter of galleries, boutiques, cafes and antiques shops. Located northwest of Dam Square and 10 minutes from Leidseplein, the Jordaan is a labyrinth of twisting alleys and streets—confounding to mapmakers, but pleasing to bohemians and culture vultures. It's quieter than the city center and a nice place to stroll.

Some locals complain about the new sheen on the classic old buildings and the pricing-out of the original inhabitants. Nevertheless, the double-edged sword of urban revitalization has carved out a tourist-friendly neighborhood whose canals and narrow streets make it one of the most picturesque in Europe. Many of the houses are topped by gable stones, which (before the advent of numbered addresses) were carved or painted with pictures representing the occupations of their inhabitants.

Between a number of the buildings are *hofjes*, small private gardens that delight the eye and nose in the spring. Unfortunately, most of the gardens are hidden from the street and are accessible only by doors on the sidewalk. These are generally locked, but some residents keep theirs open as a consideration to visitors. A special walking tour of the Jordaan is available through the group Mee in Mokum. It is probably the best way to view these courtyards. Guides also explain many of the interesting gable stones.

### **Parks & Gardens**

#### **Hortus Botanicus**

The University of Amsterdam operates the city's botanical garden. Though it's rather small, it's conveniently located between the Joods Historisch Museum and Artis Zoo. Established in 1638, the Hortus offers regular art exhibitions, such as sculpture gardens and other plant-related art. Its butterfly house is nothing short of spectacular. The Orangerie, a historical monument, houses a cafe with one of the loveliest terrace views in Amsterdam. Open Monday-Friday 9 am-5 pm, Saturday and Sunday 9:30 am-5 pm, till 4 pm December and January, and till 7 pm July and August. 7.50 euros adults, 3.50 euros children ages 5-14. Plantage Middenlaan 2a (Tram 9 or 14 from Centraal Station), Amsterdam. Phone 625-9021. <http://www.dehortus.nl>.

#### **Vondelparck**

A few blocks west of the Rijksmuseum and south of Leidseplein, this bustling park has placid ponds and meandering paths that are popular with joggers. During the 1960s, this was a famous meeting place for hippies from all over the world, and there's still lots of free, youth-oriented entertainment on Saturday afternoons in summer. Just about any nice day brings out plenty of joggers, walkers, skaters, musicians, jugglers, Frisbee-throwers, dog-walkers, ice-cream vendors and all sorts of other sun-seeking citizens. The park also has a rose garden, a large outdoor sculpture by Picasso, a few cafes and refreshment stands, and the national Filmmuseum, which screens films from its collection year-round and offers open-air screenings in the summer. <http://www.vondelparck.nl>.

### **Wineries, Breweries & Distilleries**

#### **Heineken Experience**

Though Heineken has stopped production at this former brewery, you can still take a tour of the old factory and learn how beer is made. The renovated brewery features a minibrewery, the Brew U simulator, a tasting bar and the "Stable Walk," where visitors can see Heineken's iconic Shire horses. A visit takes approximately 90 minutes, and two drinks are included. Open daily 11 am-7 pm (last tickets sold at 5:30 pm). Closed 1 January, 30 April and 25 and 26 December. 15 euros adults. Stadhouderskade 78, Amsterdam. Phone 523-9435. <http://www.heinekenexperience.com>.

## **Zoos & Wildlife**

### **Artis Zoo**

One of the oldest zoos in Europe, Artis Zoo contains more than 6,000 animals. It also has a geological museum, petting zoo, aquarium and planetarium. Daily 9 am-5 pm (till 6 pm in summer). 18.50 euros adults, 15 euros children ages 3-9. Plantage Kerklaan 38-40, Amsterdam. Phone 278-4796. <http://www.artis.nl>.

## **Nightlife**

Nightclubs, dance clubs, cafes and taverns offer plenty of after-dark options. In summer, the sidewalk bars are crowded until late, and street performers entertain in the public squares.

Jazz is popular on the live-music scene, and the city offers abundant opportunities to enjoy live acts. Nightclubs and late-night dance clubs are clustered around Leidseplein and Rembrandtplein. DJ bars line the Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal.

Amsterdam has a reputation for its thriving gay scene, and there are many bars and nightclubs catering to gay people in the Red-Light District and along Amstel, Reguliersdwarstraat, Warmoesstraat and Kerkstraat.

Most nightclubs are open until 4 or 5 am. Bars tend to close a few hours earlier.

## **Bars, Taverns & Pubs**

### **Cafe de Prins**

Just across the canal from the Anne Frank Huis, this traditional cafe with a young crowd is a good place to stop for a cozy coffee or a Belgian *witbier* with lemon on the sunny street-side terrace. The cafe also serves a range of food 10 am-10 pm. Open daily 10 am-1 am. Prinsengracht 124, Amsterdam. Phone 624-9382. <http://www.deprins.nl>.

### **Cafe de Tuin**

A traditional brown cafe in a now-gentrified working-class neighborhood, Cafe de Tuin is the place for a morning coffee, a lunchtime sandwich or drinks and late-night conversation. Open Sunday-Thursday 10 am-1 am, Friday and Saturday 10 am-3 am. Tweede Tuindwarstraat 13, Amsterdam. Phone 624-4559.

### **De Drie Fleschjes**

Once you enter this dark little tasting room in the vicinity of Nieuwe Kerk, you'll feel like you have stepped into a Frans Hals painting. Nothing has changed since 1650, and you'll find more than 50 taps and a battery of strange-looking, hand-painted bottles. The Dutch call these cafes *proeflokaalen* (tasting bars). Ask to taste the Korenwijn: It's one of the best Dutch *jenever*s around. Open Monday-Saturday noon-8:30 pm, Sunday 3-8 pm. Gravenstraat 18, Amsterdam. Phone 624-8443.

### **De Twee Zwaantjes**

The Two Little Swans is a great place to sample true Jordaan atmosphere, where locals grab the microphone to sing popular *smartlappen* (cheesy Dutch pop songs). Almost always filled to the max. Open daily 11 am-11 pm, Friday and Saturday until 3 am. If there are no customers it closes, so the hours are shorter in winter and when the weather is bad. Prinsengracht 114, Amsterdam. Phone 625-2729. <http://www.detweezwaantjes.nl>.

### **Mulligans**

Amsterdam is not that far from Dublin, so it's not surprising to find a good Irish pub where you can tap your feet to Irish folk music and down a few pints of Guinness. Open Monday-Thursday 4 pm-1 am, Friday 4 pm-3 am, Saturday 2 pm-3 am, Sunday 2 pm-1 am. There is a smoking room that is open until midnight, and until 2 am Friday and Saturday. Amstel 100, Amsterdam. Phone 622-1330. <http://www.mulligans.nl>.

### **Wijnand Fockink**

Follow the little alleyway next to the massive NH Grand Krasnapolsky Hotel behind the Dam monument, and you'll reach this *jenever proeverij* (*jenever* being Dutch gin and *proeverij* being the place to taste it). It's been making its own *jenever*s since the 1600s, flavored with spices and fruits from the Dutch island of Texel. Some blends are known for their curative powers, though others, such as the lemon, are just plain delicious. Daily 3-9 pm. Pijlsteeg 31, Amsterdam. Phone 639-2695. <http://www.wynand-fockink.nl>.

### **Dance & Nightclubs**

#### **Escape**

One of Amsterdam's largest dance clubs, Escape features a dazzling light show. The cafe serves a three-course meal for 40 euros, which includes entry to the club. The cafe is open daily for lunch and dinner; last dinner reservation at 10 pm. The club is open Thursday-Sunday 11 pm-4 or 5 am. Rembrandtplein 11, Amsterdam. Phone 622-1111. <http://www.escape.nl>.

#### **Nachttheater Sugar Factory**

This small nightclub just off the Leidseplein is surprisingly cozy, especially during English-language poetry and theater events. It has regular dance nights too, with an emphasis on jazzy and funky sounds. Wednesday features rock and pop, Thursday is house and techno, and Sunday is jazz. Opening times vary with events. Lijnbaansgracht 238, Amsterdam. Phone 627-0008. <http://www.sugarfactory.nl>.

#### **Live Music**

#### **Bimhuis**

This place regularly hosts visiting U.S. jazz musicians as well as those from other European cities, with events most nights of the week. Times vary. Piet Heinkade 3, Amsterdam. Phone 788-2188. <http://www.bimhuis.nl>.

#### **Bourbonstreet**

New Orleans meets Amsterdam in this small moody jazz and blues club hidden between the tourist restaurants on Leidseplein. Monday is blues night, Tuesday is open jam night. Open Sunday-Thursday 10 pm-4 am, Friday and Saturday 10 pm-5 am. Live music from 10:30 pm. Free entry before 11 pm. Leidsekruisstraat 6-8, Amsterdam. Phone 623-3440. <http://www.bourbonstreet.nl>.

#### **De Badcuyp**

This laid-back club in the hip Pijp neighborhood features live music with an accent on soul, funk, jazz, Latin and African styles. There are salsa workshops, Cuban dance cafes, swinging jazz jam sessions and a spicy cafe serving cuisine to match the music. Cafe open Tuesday-Sunday 11 am-9:30 pm. Club opening times vary according to the program. Eerste Sweelinckstraat 10, Amsterdam. Phone 675-9669. <http://www.badcuyp.nl>.

#### **Jazz Cafe Alto**

There's music every night at this jazz hangout, with salsa and Latin music on Tuesday and Hans Dulfer and his band performing on Wednesday. Nightly from 9. Music starts around 10 pm. No cover. Korte Leidsedwardsstraat 115, Amsterdam. Phone 626-3249. <http://www.jazz-cafe-alto.nl>.

#### **Paradiso**

Famous bands from all over the world play at this legendary club. Strong on indie music. Open nightly. Weteringschans 6-8, Amsterdam. Phone 626-4521. <http://www.paradiso.nl>.

#### **Performing Arts**

This is a city rich in music, dance and theater, from the traditional European arts of ballet and opera to some of the most modern and provocative performances. Amsterdam is well-served by venues to house this wide array of arts and styles, from grand and central to intimate and out-of-the-way.

## **Music**

### **Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra**

The Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra is based in the Concertgebouw, known as one of the finest concert halls in the world, both acoustically and architecturally. The building was completed in 1888, and the orchestra first played there in November of that year. The orchestra was given the title "Royal" by Queen Beatrix upon its centenary in 1988. Jacob Obrechtstraat 51, Amsterdam. Phone 305-1010. <http://www.concertgebouwwork.nl>.

### **Ticket Brokers**

The main office of the VVV, the tourist office opposite Centraal Station, will make theater reservations for a fee. In-person reservations only (no telephone requests). Open Monday-Saturday 9 am-6 pm, Sunday 9 am-5 pm. Phone 201-8800. **Amsterdam Uitburo**

The AUB Ticketshop has free publications listing what's happening around Amsterdam. Open Monday-Saturday noon-7:30 pm, Sunday noon-6 pm. Its telephone information service is available daily 9 am-8 pm. Surcharge of about 3 euros per ticket. Leidseplein 26 (on the corner of Marnixstraat), Amsterdam. Phone 795-9950. <http://www.aub.nl>.

## **Venues**

### **Koninklijk Theater Carre**

One of the city's finest theaters was once a circus, and after modernization has become one of the best performing spaces in Amsterdam. Productions include drama and musicals, comedy, cabaret, music concerts and opera. Amstel 115-125, Amsterdam. Phone 0900-252-5255 (calls cost 1.30 euros per call). <http://www.theatercarre.nl>.

### **Muziekgebouw**

The Muziekgebouw juts out over the water in the Eastern Docklands and features award-winning architecture designed to showcase the world-class opera and classical music performances that take place in its two concert halls. It is worth the visit just to see the building. Piet Heinkade 1, Amsterdam. Phone 788-2000, Monday-Saturday noon-6 pm. <http://www.muziekgebouw.nl>.

### **Muziektheater**

Home to the Netherlands Opera, the Holland Symfonia and the Netherlands National Ballet, the Muziektheater was the subject of riotous campaigns to have its controversial construction halted in 1986. Housing in the city had to be torn down to make way for the building, which also incorporates the Stadhuis (Town Hall). Music, opera, ballet and modern dance are all performed there regularly. Waterlooplein 22, Amsterdam. Phone 625-5455 (box office). <http://www.hetmuziektheater.nl>.

### **Stadsschouwburg**

Drama, dance and opera are all staged at the 1894 Municipal Theater, which was also home to the Netherlands National Ballet and Netherlands Opera until the Muziektheater was built. Leidseplein 26, Amsterdam. Phone 624-2311. <http://www.ssba.nl>.

### **The Concertgebouw**

The city's premier concert hall opened in 1888 and today hosts performances by the world-renowned Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, as well as international ensembles and artists, who appreciate its wonderful acoustics, among the best in the world. Concertgebouwplein 10, Amsterdam. Phone 573-0573 for information or 0900-671-8345 (1 euro per call) for tickets. <http://www.concertgebouw.nl>.

## Shopping

The Dutch have always been great traders, and in Amsterdam, shoppers are spoiled by the enormous diversity of shops. Leidsestraat, Kalverstraat, Nieuwendijk and Damrak are the classic shopping routes where the department stores, boutiques and souvenirs are concentrated. The more exclusive shops—international fashion houses, boutiques, jewelers and exclusive shoe shops—are mainly along Van Baerlestraat, P.C. Hoofstraat and Rokin.

Try exploring the narrow streets between the canals, which are crammed with unexpected little shops. The best area is the Negen Straatjes (Nine Streets), which forms a grid connecting the three main canals in the Western Canal Belt, south of Radhuisstraat. There you'll find hundreds of delightful places to shop and sip a beer or coffee.

The Jordaan district has an old-time atmosphere, with narrow streets and quaint shops. Haarlemmerstraat, near Centraal Station, has come into its own with fashionable boutiques, foodie shops and restaurants. For a shopping mall, head to Kalvertoren or Magna Plaza.

No trip to Amsterdam is complete without a visit to the Flower Market. The Albert Cuyp Markt, Waterlooplein flea market and Noordermarkt, where there's a farmers market every Saturday, offer old-world charm, and you can also find fun souvenirs and gifts to take home.

Amsterdam is also a center of the diamond trade, and not surprisingly, prices are often more reasonable there than elsewhere. Guided tours of diamond workshops let you see (usually fairly small) diamonds being cut and polished as they have been for centuries.

If shopping for cheeses or wines, keep in mind that some shops, such as Abraham Kef on Marnixstraat, regularly set aside times for wine and/or cheese tasting.

**Shopping Hours:** Regular shopping hours are Monday 1-6 pm, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 9:30 am-6 pm, Thursday 9:30 am-9 pm, and Saturday 9:30 am-5 pm. Many businesses close on Sunday, and a number remain closed Monday. The exceptions are large downtown stores, which are generally open Sunday noon-6 pm. Large supermarkets stay open till 8 pm daily.

### Antique Stores

You may be able to pick up a bargain in one of more than 100 specialized antiques shops on and around the Spiegelgracht near the Rijksmuseum. The Jordaan is less chic but also touts many antiques. Don't be deterred by stated opening times; many dealers prefer to open by appointment. Most dealers will arrange to ship items, even large furniture, abroad. There are no export restrictions on antiques in the Netherlands. **Archea Ancient Art**

This shop carries certified art objects from ancient civilizations (5000 BC-AD 700). Open Thursday, Friday and Saturday 11 am-5:30 pm and by appointment. Nieuwe Spiegelstraat 37 a-1, Amsterdam. Phone 625-0552. <http://www.archea.nl>.

### De Looier Kunst & Antiekcentrum

This large indoor art and antiques market is located in the Jordaan. More than 80 dealers with extra nonprofessional tables on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday. Open Saturday-Thursday 11 am-5 pm. Elandsgracht 109, Amsterdam. Phone 624-9038. <http://www.looier.nl>.

### Galerie Lieve Hemel

This airy former bank specializes in paintings by the contemporary Dutch trompe l'oeil school. The gallery's everyday items recreated in wood—such as a coat hanging on a door, a tablecloth on an occasional table and a bow tie—by Italian ornamental sculptor Livio De Marchi are guaranteed to elicit a giggle. Open Tuesday-Saturday 11 am-6 pm (and by appointment). Nieuwe Spiegelstraat 3, Amsterdam. Phone 623-0060. <http://www.lievehemel.nl>.

### **Jan Beekhuizen**

You'll find antique furniture and tiles there, but the shop specializes in antique European pewter. Open Monday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm. Nieuwe Spiegelstraat 49, Amsterdam. Phone 626-3912. <http://www.janbeekhuizen.nl>.

### **Van Dreven**

For 16 years, Fred van Dreven has been a fixture in the quarter with his wonderful collection of clocks, musical boxes and barometers. The collection is constantly changing but always fascinating. Items have included an 1820 musical pocket watch for just under 15,000 euros, a tiny Swiss silver-enameled travel clock for only 3,500 euros and an elaborate 18th-century Dutch longcase clock with an automated painted scene of rocking boats (price on request). There are regular tours, demonstrations and workshops on clockmaking. Open Monday-Friday 11 am-5:30 pm, Saturday 11 am-5 pm (and by appointment). Nieuwe Spiegelstraat 38, Amsterdam. Phone 428-8442. <http://www.antique-horology.org/vandreven>.

### **Wildschut Antiquiteiten**

Superbly crafted wooden chests, wardrobes and other large furniture can be restored and fitted to your wishes. Experienced with shipping abroad. Open Friday and Saturday 11 am-6 pm, Sunday 1-6 pm, and by appointment. Eerste Looiersdwarstraat 8-B, Amsterdam. Phone 2187-6724. <http://www.wildschut-antiek.nl>.

### **Bookstores**

#### **A la Carte**

This shop sells a large selection of travel books and guides in many languages, as well as globes, maps and international postcards. Open Monday 1-6 pm, Tuesday-Friday 10 am-6 pm (April-September Thursday till 9 pm), Saturday 10 am-5:30 pm, Sunday noon-5 pm. Utrechtsestraat 110, Amsterdam. Phone 625-0679. <http://www.reisboekhandel-alacarte.nl>.

#### **American Book Center**

This store carries plenty of hardbacks, paperbacks and magazines on every subject, in addition to a selection of calendars and a bargain-fiction section that competes with your favorite bookshop at home. Open Monday 11 am-8 pm, Tuesday-Saturday 10 am-8 pm (Thursday until 9 pm), Sunday 11 am-6:30 pm. Spui 12, Amsterdam. Phone 625-5537. <http://www.abc.nl>.

#### **Athenaeum Boekhandel**

With its fetching art-nouveau hallmarks and red-and-white awning, this bookshop is the embodiment of old-school élan. It offers a selection of newspapers and magazines from around the world as well as books. Open Monday 11 am-6 pm; Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday 9:30 am-6 pm; Thursday 9:30 am-9 pm; Friday 9:30 am-6:30 pm, Sunday noon-5:30 pm. Spui 14-16, Amsterdam. Phone 514-1460. <http://www.athenaeum.nl>.

#### **The Book Exchange**

You can exchange your books there for money or for other interesting books. Open Monday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday 11:30 am-4 pm. Kloveniersburgwal 58, Amsterdam. Phone 626-6266. <http://www.bookexchange.nl>.

#### **Waterstone's**

This British chain has a large stock of English-language books on its three floors. Open Sunday 11 am-6 pm; Monday-Wednesday and Friday 9:30 am-6:30 pm; Thursday 9:30 am-9 pm; Saturday 10 am-6:30 pm. Kalverstraat 152, Amsterdam. Phone 638-3821. <http://www.waterstones.com>.

## Department Stores

### De Bijenkorf

Amsterdam's best luxury department store overlooks the Dam and the Royal Palace. All the international cosmetic houses are represented in the center section of the ground floor. On the upper floors, you'll find everything from furniture to anoraks. Open Monday 11 am-7 pm, Tuesday and Wednesday 10 am-7 pm, Thursday and Friday 10 am-9 pm, Saturday 9:30 am-7 pm, Sunday noon-7 pm. Dam 1, Amsterdam. Phone 0900-0919 (0.15 euro per minute). <http://www.bijenkorf.nl>.

### HEMA

This Dutch chain with 11 stores around Amsterdam is known for quality and cool design at low prices. Many locations have inexpensive cafeterias. HEMA sells clothing, toys, tools, cosmetics, paper goods and household wares. In the cheese section, you can buy pungent smoked sausage (*worst*), which is served hot from a large pot. Open Monday 10:30 am-6:30 pm; Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 9:30 am-6:30 pm; Thursday 9:30 am-9 pm; Friday 9:30 am-6 pm; Sunday noon-6 pm. Nieuwendijk 174-176, Amsterdam. Phone 623-4176. <http://www.hema.nl>.

### Metz and Co.

This upscale but smallish department store specializes in luxury items, designer fashions and accessories. In the basement, you can find an interesting array of designer housewares, and on the top floor is a great cafe with spectacular views of Amsterdam. Open Monday 11 am-6 pm, Tuesday-Saturday 9:30 am-6 pm and Sunday noon-5 pm. Leidsestraat 34 (Keizersgracht), Amsterdam. Phone 520-7020. <http://www.metz-co.com>.

### Vroom en Dreesmann

This large department store is good for basic items. Also has a recommendable self-service restaurant (La Place) and bakery. Open Monday 11:30 am-7:30 pm; Tuesday and Wednesday 9:30 am-7:30 pm; Thursday 10:30 am-9 pm; Friday and Saturday 10 am-8 pm; Sunday noon-6:30 pm. Kalverstraat 203, Amsterdam. Phone 0900-235-8363 (0.15 euros per minute). <http://www.vroomendreesmann.nl>.

## Galleries

### Artvisie-Galerie Amsterdam

This gallery specializes in contemporary sculpture and pictures, displayed in a minimalist way in a sparse white space. Open Wednesday-Sunday noon-6 pm, Monday and Tuesday by appointment. Nieuwe Spiegelstraat 57, Amsterdam. Phone 207-751375. <http://www.galerie-amsterdam.nl>.

### Eduard Kramer

This crammed shop sells beautiful tegels (Dutch tiles) in all colors, dating from the 17th century, including the famous Delft blue pottery. The oldest tile was made in 1540. Open daily except Sunday 10 am-5 pm. Nieuwe Spiegelstraat 64, Amsterdam. Phone 623-0832. <http://www.antique-tileshop.nl>.

### Glasgalerie Kuhler

This gallery specializes in studio-glass works, particularly by French and German artists. Open Wednesday-Saturday noon-6 pm, first Sunday of the month 1-4 pm, and by appointment. Prinsengracht 134, Amsterdam. Phone 638-0230.

### Jaski Art Gallery

Specializing in Dutch contemporary art, Jaski has an emphasis on the CoBrA movement (Copenhagen, Brussels and Amsterdam). Daily noon-6 pm. Nieuwe Spiegelstraat 29, Amsterdam. Phone 620-3939. <http://www.jaski.nl>.

## Markets

### Albert Cuyp Markt

This is the Netherlands' largest street market and a multicultural experience. All types of food, clothing, textiles, plants and flowers. Open Monday-Saturday 9 am-6 pm. Albert Cuypstraat

(at Ferdinand Bolstraat), Amsterdam. <http://www.albertcuypmarkt.com>.

### **Flower Market**

This famous market is on a row of barges moored permanently on the Singel, between Muntplein and Koningsplein. Open Monday-Saturday 9 am-5:30 pm, Sunday 11 am-5:30 pm.

### **Noordermarkt**

This general goods and food market takes place around the old wood-and-stone Noorderkerk (North Church). Open Monday 9 am-1 pm, Saturday 9 am-5 pm. On Saturday there's an organic produce and "eco" goods market 9 am-3 pm.

### **Spui Market**

This outdoor book and art market takes place on Spuiplein. Books are sold Friday 10 am-6 pm, and the art market takes place March-December Sunday 10 am-3 pm. <http://www.artplein-spui.nl>.

### **Stamp Market**

This outdoor market is held along Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal behind the Amsterdams Historisch Museum. Open Wednesday and Sunday 11 am-4 pm.

### **Waterlooplein**

This well-known outdoor flea market is worth the time to browse through it. You can find everything there from cheap and cheerful clothes and leather goods to tourist-tacky, antiques and downright junk. Open daily except Sunday 9 am-5 pm. <http://www.waterloopleinmarkt.nl>.

### **Shopping Areas**

#### **De 9 Straatjes**

This area called the "nine little streets" between Radhuisstraat and Leidenstraat is full of quirky shops, with narrow streets reminiscent of a bygone age. You'll find crafts, fashion, jewelry, food and much more as well as plenty of enticing coffee shops while enjoying the medieval architecture.

#### **Haarlemmerstraat**

Near Centraal Station, this street offers many one-of-a-kind stores and trendy brasseries and restaurants.

#### **Kalvertoren**

This shopping center has about 30 stores, specialty shops and restaurants. Its stairs, escalator and glass elevator take visitors to the Cafe & Brasserie Kalvertoren on the top floor for a good view of the entire city. Located next to the Munttoren and Flower Market. Shop hours are generally Monday 11 am-6:30 pm, Tuesday-Saturday 10 am-6:30 pm (Thursday till 9 pm), Sunday noon-6:30 pm. <http://www.kalvertoren.nl>.

#### **Magna Plaza**

Once the main post office, the building has been beautifully restored and converted into a striking indoor shopping complex with lots of specialty shops. Open Monday 11 am-7 pm; Tuesday-Saturday 10 am-7 pm (Thursday till 9 pm); Sunday noon-7 pm. Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal 182 (at Raadhuisstraat, just behind Dam Square), Amsterdam. <http://www.magnaplaza.nl>.

#### **Nieuwespiegelstraat**

This street is the heart of Amsterdam's art and antique trade, and there are many and varied galleries to browse. Some are long-established; others have changed hands frequently. <http://www.nieuwespiegelstraat.com>.

#### **The Jordaan**

An atmosphere all its own, the Jordaan has narrow streets, picturesque canals and quaint little shops—some housed in 17th-century buildings. Secondhand shops and trendy boutiques make it a haven for students and artists. Many of the antiques dealers in the area specialize in art



nouveau and art-deco items and will arrange shipping abroad for antique furniture. Be sure to visit the antiques market De Looier on the Elandsgracht. Also, the Jordaan is a tempting route for a stroll. Just across the canal from the Anne Frank Huis, a six-minute walk west of Dam Square.

### **Specialty Stores**

#### **Amsterdam Watch Company**

Fascinating collection of restored vintage watches. Some brands are hard to find anywhere else. Open Tuesday-Friday 11 am-6 pm, Saturday 11 am-5 pm. Reesstraat 3, Amsterdam. Phone 389-2789. <http://www.amsterdamwatchcompany.nl>.

#### **Brilmuseum**

This store sells eyeglass frames that range from the traditional to the truly bizarre. There's also a museumlike display devoted to the history of eyewear. Open Wednesday-Friday noon-5:30 pm, Saturday noon-5 pm. Gasthuismolensteeg 7, Amsterdam. Phone 421-2414. <http://www.brilmuseumamsterdam.nl>.

#### **Condomerie Het Gulden Vlies**

This shop located at the border of the Red Light district claims to be the oldest specialized condom shop in the world, and it does have interesting stories to tell about the condom trade in the 18th century, when less affluent clients needed to rely on washed second-hand condoms made of lambs' bladders and ribbons. Charles Goodyear ended that misery in 1839 with processed natural rubber. Progress never looked better than in this shop with its vast assortment from superfine to superfunny to superflashy. The philosophy there certainly is not "one size fits all." Open daily except Sunday noon-6 pm. Warmoesstraat 141, Amsterdam. Phone 627-4174. <http://www.condomerie.com>.

#### **Coster Diamonds**

Diamonds, diamonds, diamonds. Walk in and join a free tour, but if you want to buy something custom-made, an appointment is needed. Daily 9 am-5 pm. Paulus Potterstraat 2-8 (near the Rijksmuseum), Amsterdam. Phone 305-5555. <http://www.costerdiamonds.com>.

#### **Geels & Co.**

The staff members are specialists in coffee, tea and related paraphernalia. The interior hasn't changed much in 150 years. A small museum upstairs is open 2-4:30 pm on Saturday afternoon. Open Monday-Saturday 9:30 am-6 pm. Warmoesstraat 67, Amsterdam. Phone 624-0683. <http://geels.nl>.

#### **Hogendoorn & Kaufman**

This store offers the finest names in crystal and porcelain, with a wide selection of Royal Delft and Makkum. Unique limited editions are available. Open Monday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday noon-6 pm. Rokin 124, Amsterdam. Phone 638-2736. <http://www.hogendoorn-kaufman.com>.

#### **Jacob Hooy**

Since 1743, this shop has been dealing in all sorts of fancy herbs, spices and teas. Worth visiting to see the old-time interior even if you're not going to buy anything. Open Monday 1-6 pm, Tuesday-Friday 10 am-6 pm, Saturday 10 am-5 pm. Kloveniersburgwal 12, Amsterdam. Phone 624-3041. <http://www.jacobhooy.nl>.

#### **Kerkhof**

A favorite shop of clothing designers, Kerkhof stocks an extensive collection of trims, tassels, ribbons, laces and other accoutrements of fancy dress. Open Monday 11 am-6 pm, Tuesday-Thursday 10 am-6 pm. Wolvenstraat 9, Amsterdam. Phone 623-4666.

#### **Mechanisch Speelgoed**

A paradise for kids, this tiny old-fashioned shop in the Jordaan is crammed with traditional toys, from tin drums to teddy bears to snow globes. Open Monday, Tuesday and Thursday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm. Westerstraat 67, Amsterdam. Phone 638-1680.

### **Puccini Bomboni**

This fine shop sells delicious handmade chocolates. Open Sunday and Monday noon-6 pm, Tuesday-Saturday 9 am-6 pm. Staalstraat 17, Amsterdam. Phone 626-5474. <http://www.puccinibomboni.com>.

### **Shoebaloo**

Fancy shoes and bags sold in a shop with a spectacular, futuristic space-ship design and sophisticated ambient lighting. Barbarellas of the 21st century will feel right at home there, so take your camera. Open Monday noon-6 pm; Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Thursday 10 am-9 pm, Sunday 1-6 pm. PC Hoofstraat 80, Amsterdam. Phone 671-2210. <http://www.shoebaloo.nl>.

### **Wegewijs Kaas**

Choose from hundreds of different cheeses, domestic and foreign, made from goat, sheep and cow milk. Open Monday-Friday 9 am-6 pm, Saturday 9 am-5 pm. Rozengracht 32 (trams 13, 14 and 17), Amsterdam. Phone 624-4093. <http://www.wegewijs.nl>.

### **Young Designers United**

Excellent showcase for young Dutch fashion and accessories designers. A small collection that includes a great variety of styles you won't see elsewhere. Designer fashion at very affordable prices. Open Monday 1-6 pm, Tuesday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm. Keizersgracht 447, Amsterdam. Phone 626-9191. <http://www.ydu.nl>.

## **DINING**

### **Dining Overview**

Practically every cuisine in the world can be found in Amsterdam, from sophisticated French fare to the renowned Indonesian rijsttafel. Enjoy an Argentinean steak in a decor that evokes the vast pampas, dine on a pleasure boat cruising the canals, stop at any of the inexpensive Middle Eastern grills that seem to be on every other block, or try one of the small Chinese restaurants lining the Zeedijk and its many cross streets.

Smoking is now banned in public places in Amsterdam, including restaurants. However, restaurants may designate an area, completely closed off from the rest of the premises, as a smoking area. Service is not provided in these areas, and you'll need to return to the bar to buy drinks.

At least once, you should try a paper cone of french fries served with mayonnaise, peanut-butter *sate* sauce or any of an ever-increasing number of exotic condiments. The best french fries are called *vlaamse frites* (Flemish fries). Other Dutch specialties reflect the locals' close relationship with the sea, such as smoked eel and raw or pickled herring (which is usually eaten whole with chopped onions and gherkins).

In winter, locals savor hearty meals of mashed potatoes combined with vegetables such as endive, cabbage, onions and carrots (*stampot*) topped with delicious smoked sausage (*rookworst*). Another cold-weather favorite is *snert* (also called *erwtensoeep*), a thick pea soup usually served with sausage.

Make a meal of the *pannenkoeken*, large Dutch pancakes with bacon, cheese, apples or other ingredients mixed into the batter; or *poffertjes*, tiny pancakes with powdered sugar. Cafes often serve a plate of three fried eggs with ham or cheese, known as an *uitsmijter*. The Dutch usually have it for lunch, although it also makes an excellent breakfast.

The hearty Dutch breakfast consists of a selection of breads, local cheeses, sliced meats, butter, chocolate sprinkles called *hagelslag* and jam. Lunch is generally a snack, with dinner being the main meal, eaten between 6 and 8 pm. Most restaurant kitchens close by 10 pm.

Reservations are advisable because restaurants are often small and may be crowded during peak periods.

The Dutch are famous for their gin (*jenever*) and beer (*bier*). A popular winter drink is a rich herbal liqueur called Beerenburg. Bottled imported wines are expensive, but a carafe of house wine is of good quality for the most part. The Dutch drink their coffee strong, usually with cream and sugar, or opt for a *kofie verkeerd*, the Dutch version of a latte, that contains more milk than coffee. Tea is normally taken weak and without milk.

Expect to pay within these general guidelines, based on the cost of a dinner for one, not including drinks, tax, tip and service charge: \$ = less than 10 euros; \$\$ = 10 euros-25 euros; \$\$\$ = 26 euros-50 euros; and \$\$\$\$ = more than 50 euros.

### **Local & Regional**

#### **Belgisch Restaurant Lieve**

Excellent Belgian restaurant serving an imaginative menu. Lots of fish and a good vegetarian selection, as well as interesting meat options. You can choose from three types of menu—the *huiskamer*, which is basic home cooking; the *gastronomique*, which is more expensive; and the *barok*, which is platters to share. Of course, it has a great selection of Belgian beers. Friendly service. Daily for dinner. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Herengracht 88, Amsterdam. Phone 624-9635. <http://www.restaurantlieve.nl>.

#### **De Keuken van 1870**

This bright and cheerful restaurant was founded in 1870 as a soup kitchen for the poor. The smoke-darkened wood has been replaced with a light, airy atmosphere, but the prices are still budget. The menu is full of classic Dutch dishes, albeit updated by the use of garlic and herbs. The menu changes daily. Open Monday-Saturday for dinner. \$-\$\$\$. No credit cards, but does accept some debit cards. Spuistraat 4, Amsterdam. Phone 620-4018. <http://www.keukenvan1870.nl>.

#### **d'Vijff Vlieghe**

This temple of "New Dutch Cuisine" was created by the famous art dealer Nicolaas Kroese, who combined five buildings (the "five flies") to create a culinary art space that is unique in Amsterdam. The history of this restaurant is much older though—a tavern has existed there since 1627. The rooms are decorated with antiques, and the Rembrandt room even has original etchings by Rembrandt. The French-influenced Dutch food is made, as far as possible, using organic ingredients, and the exotic recipes, vegetables, herbs and spices have been brought back by Dutch sailors. Daily for dinner only. Reservations required. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Spuistraat 294-302, Amsterdam. Phone 530-4060. <http://www.d-vijffvlieghe.com>.

#### **Haesje Claes**

At this restaurant, you can sup on Dutch specialties while enjoying the traditionally decorated Dutch interior. Nearby is the Amsterdam Historical Museum, original site of a public orphanage founded by the restaurant's namesake. Daily for lunch and dinner. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Spuistraat 273-275, Amsterdam. Phone 624-9998. <http://www.haesjeclaes.nl>.

#### **The College Hotel Restaurant**

Revives Dutch cuisine from yesteryear. The results are innovative and surprisingly palate-pleasing; think North Sea aquarium soup and veal-and-mackerel with quail eggs. Open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Roelof Hartstraat 1, Amsterdam. Phone 571-1511. <http://www.thecollegehotel.com>.

#### **The Pancake Bakery**

Located in a 17th-century warehouse, this place serves the best pancakes in town. Large selection of typical Dutch *pannenkoeken* and other basic dishes as well as interesting international pancake fillings. You can start with a hearty pancake, and if that doesn't fill you up, the dessert pancakes are heavenly. The place is always full, but don't let that stop you—

the wait passes quickly. Daily for lunch and dinner. Reservations not accepted. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Prinsengracht 191, Amsterdam. Phone 625-1333. <http://www.pancake.nl>.

### **Breakfast & Brunch**

#### **Cafe Nielsen**

This is possibly the best spot in town for a healthy breakfast, lunch or just coffee and cake. Delicious organic food, including vegetarian choices, in clean surroundings. Everything is made fresh on the premises. Open Tuesday-Friday 8 am-4 pm, Saturday 8 am-6 pm, Sunday 9 am-5 pm. \$\$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Berenstraat 19, Jordaan, Amsterdam. Phone 330-6006.

### **Cafes & Tearooms**

#### **Cafe Americain**

This art-nouveau cafe in the Amsterdam American Hotel on the Leidseplein is a favorite place to meet for coffee, an after-theater drink or Sunday brunch. It offers a relaxed atmosphere under high, vaulted ceilings. You can enjoy newspapers at the reading tables. Daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Leidsekade 97, Amsterdam. Phone 556-3000. <http://www.edenamsterdamamericanhotel.com>.

#### **Cafe de Jaren**

A grand cafe and brasserie, this place has a two-tier balcony and a terrace overlooking the Amstel River. The interior is equally spacious, and the selection of English reading material is nice, too. Child friendly. Open Sunday-Thursday 9:30 am-1 am, Friday and Saturday 9:30 am-2 am. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Accepts Visa and MasterCard only. Nieuwe Doelenstraat 20-22, Amsterdam. Phone 625-5771. <http://www.cafedejaren.nl>.

#### **Cafe Luxembourg**

This favorite cafe is open year-round for breakfast, lunch, dinner and late-night. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Spui 24, Amsterdam. Phone 620-6264. <http://www.luxembourg.nl>.

#### **Cafe-Restaurant Vertigo**

Located at the entrance to the Filmmuseum in Vondelpark, Vertigo has the largest—and arguably the most beautiful—terrace in Amsterdam, with a wonderful view of the Vondelpark. Daily 11 am-1 am. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Vondelpark 3, Amsterdam. Phone 612-3021. <http://www.vertigo.nl>.

### **Continental**

#### **Blauw aan de Wal**

Hidden away at the end of a cul-de-sac in the Red-Light District is a secret garden and a romantic restaurant that offers French and Italian masterpieces. Try the world-famous chocolate tart. Open Tuesday-Saturday for dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Oudezijds Achterburgwal 99, Amsterdam. Phone 330-2257. <http://www.blauwaandewal.com>.

### **Bond**

A dramatic palette of black and gold makes this eatery slightly ostentatious and totally in step with its posh Oud Zuid location close to the Museumplein. Loungelike, yet suitable for a business dinner. The Continental fare leans heavily toward the French kitchen. Open Monday-Friday for lunch and dinner, Saturday for dinner only. Reservations required. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Valeriusstraat 128b, Amsterdam. Phone 676-4647. <http://www.restaurantbond.nl>.

### **Brasserie Senz**

This upscale brasserie is located in Amsterdam's chic Zuid neighborhood by the Museum Quarter. It's an equally popular venue for business lunches or romantic meals on the terrace (April-October). The cuisine is Continental, and everything is freshly made, even the ice cream and bonbons. Open Monday-Friday for lunch and dinner, Saturday and Sunday for dinner only. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Emmastraat 29, Amsterdam. Phone 670-8321. <http://www.senz.nl>.

### **Cafe Spargo**

This laid-back, trendy bar and eatery in the east of Amsterdam is located close to the Tropenmuseum. The chef executes a light Continental cuisine that is presented in a simple, modern fashion. You won't find more pleasant waiting staff in the Netherlands. In the summer, this restaurant boasts one of the best terraces in the city. In winter, there is live music on the weekends, and Ajax football matches are screened live. Daily for dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. No credit cards. Linnaeusstraat 37a, Amsterdam. Phone 694-1140. <http://www.cafespargo.nl>.

### **De Silveren Spiegel**

The food rivals the ambience and service. Dine on superb Dutch cuisine in a beautiful historic house dating from 1614. Top wines are available, but the house wine is very good. Open daily except Sunday for dinner. Reservations required. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Kattengat 4, Amsterdam. Phone 624-6589. <http://www.desilverenspiegel.com>.

### **In de Waag**

Built in 1430 as the gatehouse to the city, this structure served for a couple of centuries as the weigh station for goods entering Amsterdam. Today, it's an elegant cafe and restaurant. Mostly pan-fried dishes for dinner. Daily for lunch and dinner. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Nieuwmarkt 4, Amsterdam. Phone 422-7772. <http://www.indewaag.nl>.

### **Odessa**

A winning combination of tasty food and a good location, this restaurant is on a docked boat that has a large deck ideal for sitting, standing, eating, drinking and dancing. The interior is hip, and the food is a mix of fusion and international. Friday and Saturday nights feature dance music and a DJ from 10 pm. Some Sundays during summer, Odessa puts on a popular all-you-can-eat barbecue with lounge music. Open April-September daily for lunch and dinner; October-March Wednesday-Saturday for dinner. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Veemkade 259, Amsterdam. Phone 419-3010. <http://www.de-odessa.nl>.

### **Plancius**

Located opposite the zoo, this venue makes for a pleasant dining experience, especially after a visit with the animals. The international menu is varied, and people especially love the desserts. Child friendly. Daily for brunch, lunch and dinner. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Plantage Kerklaan 61a, Amsterdam. Phone 330-9469. <http://www.restaurantplancius.nl>.

### **Proeverij 274**

This intimate restaurant in the Jordaan features informal dining indoors or on the terrace with a view of the Prinsengracht. The dishes are as innovative as they are tasty. Daily for dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Prinsengracht 274, Amsterdam. Phone 421-1848. <http://www.proeverij274.nl>.

### **Spring**

Diners are assured of a memorable culinary experience at this stylish eatery close to the Museumplein. The deft handling of seasonal products results in a light, and very tasty, international cuisine. With a wine list of more than 130 vintages, you need never go thirsty there. Open Monday-Friday for lunch and dinner, Saturday for dinner only. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Willemsparkweg 177, Amsterdam. Phone 675-4421. <http://www.restaurantspring.nl>.

### **Seafood**

#### **Brasserie Bark**

Close to the Concertgebouw, this restaurant is frequented by theatergoers and stays open until after midnight. It's constantly busy. There is a large choice of seafood dishes and always one vegetarian entree. It is not a romantic venue—tables are crowded together—but the food rises above the ambience. Open Monday-Friday for lunch and dinner, Saturday and Sunday for dinner only. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Van Baerlestraat 120, Amsterdam. Phone 675-0210. <http://www.bark.nl>.

## **Other Options**

### **De Portugees**

Authentic Portuguese dishes a 10-minute walk from Central Railway Station. The side-by-side tapas bar and restaurant are under the same management. Try *carne de porco com ameijoas* (pork meat with clams), *leitao no forno* (roast suckling pig), *bife tres pimentas* (beef fillet with three kinds of crushed peppers) and several versions of *bacalhau* (codfish). There's a sing-along on Wednesday evening. Open daily except Monday for dinner. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Zeedijk 28A and Zeedijk 39A, Amsterdam. Phone 427-2005. <http://www.deportugees.com>.

### **Supperclub**

Recline on beds in this cavernous all-white space as you enjoy DJs, musical acts, fashion shows and any number of other surprises, along with a five-course set dinner. Open daily for dinner and late-night. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Jonge Roelensteeg 21, Amsterdam. Phone 344-6400. <http://www.supperclub.nl/html/amsterdam>.

## **SECURITY**

### **Etiquette**

Business travelers from North America will find the Netherlands one of the most comfortable countries to visit in Western Europe, because Dutch culture is in many respects quite similar to that of the U.S. and Canada. Be prepared, however, for more bluntness and criticism and less tact. The Dutch pride themselves on speaking English (and usually two to three additional languages) fluently. For many businesses, English is the preferred (if not mandatory) language.

**Appointments**—It is not necessary to use an intermediary to make contacts or schedule meetings. The Dutch mainly do business by appointment. Business appointments should be made as far in advance as possible—anywhere from several days to several weeks before your visit. Keep in mind that many Dutch businesspeople are away on extended holidays in summer.

Punctuality is important in business dealings, although the Dutch are usually flexible and tolerant of delays because of traffic jams and road-construction detours. An excuse for lateness that you will hear at least once is "the bridge was open" (boats usually have priority over car traffic). In summer, when there are a lot of boats on the canals, the bridges are open a number of times per day to prevent the occurrence of boat jams.

**Personal Introductions**—A handshake is a common form of greeting between men and women. Kissing three times on alternating cheeks (left, right, left) is a traditional Dutch greeting (and parting) custom for people of the opposite sex and often those of the same sex, although it is more common among women than men. This custom also extends to familiar business partners, though you should allow your Dutch acquaintance to take the lead in this regard. If he or she does initiate the greeting, you should reciprocate: Failing to do so could be taken as an insult.

It is appropriate to stand when someone is being introduced to you, and to do otherwise could be interpreted as a snub. Business cards are used in the Netherlands in a traditional manner. There is no need to have your card translated into Dutch. It may surprise you that many of the cards you receive from Dutch colleagues will be in English. Refer to your acquaintances by their titles and last names until they invite you to do otherwise.

**Negotiating**—Business is usually conducted in the office. Although the Dutch are generally reserved and formal, how quickly people get down to business in a meeting varies with the age (and/or upbringing) of the person with whom you are dealing. You may find business conversations with younger people more informal in tone. Although there may be time for small talk before a meeting, it usually ends once the business discussions have begun.

**Business Entertaining**—Meals are usually treated as a break from business proceedings or a celebration of an agreement, although they can sometimes be part of the meeting. Lunch and dinner are the most common meals for business gatherings, with dinner being the most popular. A business breakfast is rare. Business lunches occur between noon and 1 pm, and a business dinner usually begins around 7:30 pm. Business meals typically take place in a restaurant.

It is quite a compliment to be invited to a private home for a meal, as the tendency is for Dutch people to keep their homes private, open only to close family members and friends. If invited to a private home, it's common courtesy to take a gift of flowers and/or wine for your hosts, but it shouldn't be extravagant.

At meals, it is appropriate to eat everything served. If there is something you do not like and you leave it on your plate, then you may be asked if you would like something else. Occasionally you may need to eat with your hands, but avoid it when you can and follow the lead of your hosts.

Although alcohol is quite prominent in the Dutch and European cultures, it isn't considered unusual if you don't drink. To say "cheers" in Dutch say *proost* (rhymes with *boast*). Quite often in small gatherings where people actually clink their glasses, it's appropriate to look people in the eye when you clink.

Unless you have been specifically invited out to eat at the invitation and expense of someone, expect to go Dutch and pay for your portion of the bill. A 5%-10% tip is appreciated if the service is good. When paying by credit card, extra tips are usually given in cash.

**Body Language**—When engaged in conversation, the Dutch usually maintain some distance between one another. Friendly gestures such as a pat on the back are not common, because the Dutch are usually rather formal in relationships. All of the general hand gestures are fairly typical. Be careful, however, about pointing at or touching your index finger to your forehead between your eyebrows while looking at someone, as it may be taken as a sign that you are referring to that person as an idiot.

**Gift Giving**—It is not especially common to give gifts in business situations, but it is an impressive gesture. The kinds of business gifts that are considered appropriate are fine wines or other spirits. It may be a good idea to find out what your business host enjoys.

The amount you spend on a business gift depends upon how big an impression you wish to make. When it comes to fine wines, for example, many Dutch people know by the label what's fine and what's not. The Dutch standard for the price range of gifts starts at about 20 euros for a gift for a young manager. If you are given a gift, you should open it immediately in the presence of the giver. Thank-you notes are appropriate and appreciated, preferably handwritten.

**Conversation**—The most common topic of small talk in the Netherlands is the weather. Vacation destinations are also a popular and safe topic. The Dutch also love to talk about politics. (There are 15 to 20 political parties in the country, depending on the time of year and the type of election, and political talk shows are very popular on Dutch television.) Your Dutch acquaintances will probably enjoy the chance to discuss politics with a visitor, but exercise some caution to avoid problems. It's usually wiser to ask questions about Dutch issues rather than stating opinions.

## Personal Safety

Violence occurs less frequently in Amsterdam than in many European cities, so simple precautions usually suffice. However, pickpockets do operate regularly. Watch your wallet or handbag, especially on public transportation and in department stores, and watch your bags when waiting for a train or bus. Be wary of strangers trying to distract you while you're using an ATM.

Be alert if you walk around the Red-Light District, especially at night. The Red-Light District is a major tourist attraction, and there are plenty of noncustomers there just looking around. If you choose to walk around this area alone, stick to main, well-lit streets. Keep your camera well-stowed; taking pictures is not appreciated and will lead to immediate problems.

Trafficking in either hard or soft drugs is illegal. However, soft drugs (marijuana and hashish) are sold in so-called coffee shops, which are easily identified by their window displays. (Confusion with regular coffee shops is highly unlikely.) The soft-drug coffee shops are allowed to sell small quantities only (no more than 5 grams per person), which can be smoked there or taken to go. The minimum age for this is 18. Police vigorously prosecute those who possess or sell hard drugs, such as heroin or cocaine.

For more information, contact your country's travel-advisory agency.

## Health

No special vaccinations are necessary to enter the Netherlands, and health facilities are good. Tap water is safe to drink, and food preparation in restaurants meets high sanitation standards.

All hotels have English-speaking physicians on 24-hour call. The national (and Europe-wide) emergency telephone number is 112, which is a 24-hour service that contacts ambulance, fire and police departments. The Centraal Doktersdienst is a 24-hour doctor service (phone 592-3434). For a 24-hour dental referral, phone 0900-821-2230.

For more information, contact your country's health-advisory agency.

## Dos & Don'ts

Do take a boat trip: The city is at its loveliest from the water.

Don't bother trying to speak Dutch unless you know more than a couple of words. Most locals speak English well.

Do leave the athletic shoes, shorts and baseball cap at home if you want to pass for a local.

Don't walk in the bicycle paths (narrow lanes sometimes marked with a white cycle symbol).

Do try raw herring with chopped onions and pickles or, at the very least, the great *frites*.

Don't miss the appropriately situated 3-D bronze rendition of Rembrandt's *The Night Watch* in Rembrandtplein.

Do make an evening pit stop at the Magere Brug (Skinny Bridge). Of Amsterdam's 1,280 or so bridges, it's arguably the most beautiful, lit up as it is at night. Hardly surprising, then, that it's a popular smooching site.



Don't overlook the city's green lung, the Vondelpark. It's located in the south of Amsterdam, just a five-minute walk from the Leidseplein and within walking distance from the Museumplein. The Vondelpark is a perfect respite from the beaten tourist path.

## **FACTS**

### **Geostats**

**Passport/Visa Requirements:** A passport, but not a visa, is required for citizens of Canada and the U.S. Passports must be valid for three months following your return. All travelers should have proof of onward passage. Reconfirm travel document requirements with your carrier before departing.

**Population:** 1,031,000.

**Languages:** Dutch. English is widely spoken—it's taught in the schools.

**Predominant Religions:** Christian (Roman Catholic, Dutch Reformed), Jewish and Islamic, though many other religions are represented.

**Time Zone:** 1 hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (+1 GMT). Daylight Saving Time is observed from the end of March to the end of October.

**Voltage Requirements:** 220 volts.

**Telephone Codes:** 31, country code; 20, city code; 06, mobile numbers;

### **Money**

#### **Taxes**

Value-added tax in The Netherlands is 6% for foods and essentials and 19% on nonfood items and luxury goods. With a little paperwork, non-EU citizens can obtain a tax refund for purchases of more than 50 euros in a single store during a single day. Refunds usually amount to about 15% of the purchase price.

You need to present several documents to the VAT refund officer at the airport before departure to get a refund: the article you purchased, the receipt, a refund form (which must be picked up at the place of purchase), and your passport and ticket. Note that only *unused* articles are eligible for a refund. If everything is in order, the VAT refund officer will give you your refund. (For your own convenience, see the VAT officer before checking your bags and have your purchases in an easy-to-reach place.)

Private VAT refund services, located at the airport, will give you an immediate refund minus a fee, which is usually a percentage of the refund.

If you are traveling to other countries in the European Union, you can claim your refunds only at your exit point from the EU. In other words, if you're traveling on to Austria and France and are departing the EU from Paris, you have to claim the VAT refunds from all three countries at the airport in Paris. Keep in mind, too, that the duty-free shopping at Schiphol Airport itself is excellent, and no VAT is charged.

### Tipping

Tipping is not something that is expected in Amsterdam as service charges are included in hotel, restaurant, shopping and taxi bills. North American visitors may have some difficulty with this, but be advised that the pay structure of workers in these service industries does not make them rely on tips to make up their wages. The Dutch usually round up their bill to the nearest euro. There is also nothing wrong with leaving a small tip for exceptionally good service.

### What to Wear

There are no restrictions on dress, although the Dutch are fairly conservative dressers themselves. Normally men wear suits and ties for business meetings (women wear equivalent business apparel), but good-looking, casual attire works fine in most other situations. Men should pack a coat and tie and women a nice skirt or dress to wear to upscale restaurants. A sweater is handy for night, even in summer, and a waterproof jacket is a good idea any time of year. Pack a small folding umbrella, too.

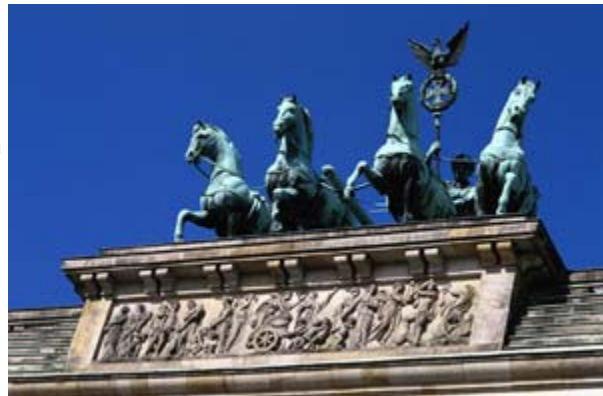
Amsterdam has a terrible problem with uncurbed dogs. You should not only watch where you walk but take care to always check the soles of your shoes before heading indoors. Also, because of cobblestoned streets and rough/uneven pavement, women need to be very careful if wearing high heels. Flat, nonslippery footwear is best for biking.

## Berlin, Germany

### OVERVIEW

#### Introduction

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of the city, Berlin, Germany, has restlessly reinvented itself as a political, business and entertainment center. But even before its roller-coaster ride through the 20th century, 19th-century author Karl Scheffler remarked that the city was constantly on the verge of *becoming*, never in a state of *being*. Thus, Berlin is often heralded as "the ever-changing city."



The glass dome of the Reichstag crowns the government quarter, with its straight band of office buildings and the sleek, curving glass hall of the Hauptbahnhof, the main train station. South of the Brandenburg Gate, a cluster of skyscrapers and an eye-catching tentlike structure, modeled after Japan's Mount Fuji, define the rebuilt Potsdamer Platz—a center of activity in the storied Berlin of the 1920s and now a bustling development built next to the formerly divided city's no-man's land, which sat as an empty sandlot for many years.

A rediscovery of the waterfront is in full swing, as restaurants, nightclubs and cafes position themselves along the Spree River and the city's many canals. Architecture, much of it in glass and steel, is definitely the calling card of the New Berlin, but the city's many parks, canals and forest-rimmed lakes are still its loveliest real estate. One of Berlin's newest attractions is the Jewish Museum, a massive architectural thunderbolt housing two millennia of German Jewish history.

The city is full of history and charm, but with a rebellious attitude. Generally less expensive than its European counterparts, Berlin is a lot more spacious, and its mix of cultural and countercultural extravaganzas is unrivaled. History, politics and social preferences collide there, which is precisely what gives Berlin its unique and diverse character.

## Must See or Do

**Sights**—The Reichstag and its dome; Brandenburg Gate; Potsdamer Platz; the Memorial Church and Kurfurstendamm; Charlottenburg Palace; the Soviet War Memorial in Treptower Park; remnants of the Wall; a day trip to Potsdam's Schloss Sanssouci; the city views from the Fernsehturm; Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe; Bebelplatz; Gendarmenmarkt.

**Museums**—The Pergamon Museum with its famous altar; art at the Gemaldegalerie (old masters), Alte Nationalgalerie (19th-century paintings and sculpture), and the Neue Nationalgalerie and Hamburger Bahnhof (modern and contemporary); the famous bust of Nefertiti at the Neues Museum; the stunning architecture and thought-provoking exhibits at the Jewish Museum; a trip through time at The Story of Berlin; Deutsche Kinemathek—Museum fur Film und Fernsehen.

**Memorable Meals**—The highly acclaimed international fare at VAU and Fischers Fritz; lamb chops at Borchardt; Alsatian specialties at Gugelhof.

**Late Night**—Cabaret or a revue show at the Wintergarten or Bar jeder Vernunft; a cocktail at Newton Bar or Greenwich; a beer on a summer night in the garden at Cafe am Neuen See; dancing to the rhythms of house and funk at Sage Club; enjoying the Spree River view in Watergate.

**Walks**—Strolling down Unter den Linden or around the trendy Oranienburger Strasse and Hackescher Markt areas; walking through the vast Tiergarten; shopping along Friedrichstrasse or Kurfurstendamm; along the shores of the Spree River behind the Reichstag; exploring the graffiti in Mauer Park by the high swings.

**Especially for Kids**—Interactive displays and demonstrations at the Deutsches Technikmuseum; a huge variety of animals, fish and reptiles at Zoologischer Garten and Aquarium in Berlin's west; lots of newborn animals at the Tierpark Zoo in Berlin's east.

## Geography

Berlin lies in northeastern Germany. The Spree River snakes through the city, and the Havel River runs near its western border. Forests and lakes are predominant features of the landscape, making up close to 25% of the city's total area.

The city is divided into districts called *bezirke*. The oldest district is called Mitte, and it stretches from the Brandenburg Gate to Alexanderplatz. Unter den Linden, Friedrichstrasse, Museumsinsel and other historical sites are located there. Encircling Mitte, in clockwise fashion, are the districts of Prenzlauer Berg, Friedrichshain, Kreuzberg, Tiergarten and Wedding. Charlottenburg, Wilmersdorf and Schoneberg, to the west of Mitte, are also considered part of central Berlin.

The city doesn't have just one center where its attractions and entertainment can be found. Breitscheidplatz, with the Memorial Church, is generally thought of as the main western center. The zoo and Zoologischer Garten station (referred to simply as Zoo), the boulevard Kurfurstendamm (often called Ku'damm) and the Europa Center are all nearby. Alexanderplatz (or simply Alex) in Berlin Mitte is an important transportation hub and the main eastern center. Potsdamer Platz, where the Wall once divided east and west, is the city's high-profile entertainment, retail and office center.

## History

Berlin actually began as two trading settlements, Colln and Berlin, located on both sides of the Spree River, in the mid-1200s, though current archeological findings date the city as far back as 1183. It took almost 500 years before the two towns were officially merged into one city, which retained the name Berlin. However, Berlin's rise to prominence began in the mid-1400s when Hohenzollern princes, the rulers of the Kingdom of Prussia (present-day Brandenburg), named it their official residence. Its importance and size grew, and in 1701, it became the Kingdom of Prussia's capital.

Prussia's power and Berlin's prestige grew significantly during the reign of Friedrich II (Frederick the Great) in the mid-1700s. Many of the prominent buildings on the eastern end of Unter den Linden were built during that time. Although Prussia gained much of its strength and prestige through military might, Berlin, meanwhile, became a center for the Enlightenment.

As citizens' movements swept Europe in 1848, a revolt by the middle class took place in Berlin in March of that year, but the monarchy was able to quash the uprising and hold on to power. In 1871, following Prussia's triumph in the Franco-Prussian war, the various German principalities united to form imperial Germany under the rule of the Prussian Kaiser Wilhelm I, who then ruled a unified nation. Spurred on by massive industrialization, Berlin went through one of its biggest boom periods. Its population and area doubled repeatedly, reaching 2 million around 1900, and 4 million by 1920.

The Weimar Republic was proclaimed after Germany's defeat in World War I. The war caused little physical damage to the city but left the whole country reeling. The new powers were unable to pay for reparations, and hyperinflation soon followed. Berlin saw dramatic political and social change, and there was much social disorder in the city, where followers of the left and right staged bloody battles in the streets. Despite the city's problems, the 1920s saw Berlin develop into a vibrant cultural and intellectual center where art, theater and the vaudevilles flourished. The era became known as the "Golden Twenties." However, the unstable Weimar Republic faltered with the depression as the stock market crash of 1929 left hundreds of thousands unemployed.

The brief period of democracy came to an end in 1933, when Hitler was named chancellor and granted emergency powers. He dismantled the republic, and the Nazi party established a dictatorship. Jews became the scapegoat of the economic and social ills. On the night of 9 November 1938, synagogues and other Jewish properties were burned.

Germany invaded Poland in 1939, setting off World War II. The mass deportation of Berlin's Jewish population began in October 1941, followed a few months later by the Wannsee conference, at which Nazi officials committed themselves to the "final solution" for Jews. This dark period of history, now known as the Holocaust, led to the extermination of millions of Jews and other "enemies of the state."

By the end of World War II, one-third of Berlin's buildings had been destroyed, its overall population had decreased by more than 1 million, and its Jewish population had fallen by more than 150,000 as a result of emigration and extermination in death camps.

After World War II, Berlin was split into four occupation sectors divided among Great Britain, France, the U.S. and the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union blockaded the three western sectors for 11 months in 1948 and 1949, which sparked a massive airlift by the Western powers. The German Democratic Republic was proclaimed in East Berlin, its capital, in October 1949. The three western sectors, although officially under occupation by the Western allies, became a city-state linked to the Federal Republic of Germany, which had its capital at Bonn. The Berlin Wall went up in August 1961 and sealed the division of the city into east and west for three decades.

On 9 November 1989, the Wall surrounding the western sector was opened, setting the stage for the reunification of Germany on 3 October 1990. In June 1991, the united German Parliament voted to move itself and parts of the federal government from Bonn to Berlin, which occurred gradually through the end of the 1990s. Since the fall of the Wall and reunification, Berlin has experienced dramatic physical and social change as the reborn capital and cultural center of Germany.

Following reunification, the anticipated economic boom didn't happen, and many company headquarters left the city. However, as former Mayor Klaus Wowereit stated in 2004, "Berlin is poor but sexy." What the virtually bankrupt city lacks in capital and industry, it makes up for in cultural and educational charm. The city is a magnet for young people, artists, intellectuals, students and musicians. With the arrival of a younger crowd, the old center Berlin Mitte (formerly in the Eastern sector) is now bursting at the seams with eccentric shopping havens and a glittering nightlife.

### **Potpourri**

Geographically speaking, Berlin is in central Europe. As the crow flies, the German capital is closer to Warsaw than it is to either Paris or London. It's also closer to Prague than it is to Frankfurt or Munich.

Berlin has the largest population of Turks of any city outside of Turkey.

In size, but not population, Berlin is larger than New York City (all five boroughs).

During the 11 months of the Berlin airlift, 250,000 flights took place, transporting 2,324,257 tons of goods. Forty-one British, 31 Americans and five Germans lost their lives.

In Berlin's Lustgarten between the Berliner Dom and the Altes Museum, Prussia's first potatoes were planted in 1649.

Marlene Dietrich, Germany's most famous actress, is buried in the small cemetery Stubenrauchstrasse in Schoneberg's Friedenau quarter.

The hat Napoleon lost in the battle of Waterloo is on display in the Deutsches Historisches Museum.

*Dirty Dancing* was the first movie seen by East Berliners after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

The Hotel Adlon, located near the Brandenburg Gate and by Unter den Linden, is not only famous for its exorbitant prices, but also because it is where Michael Jackson's infamous baby-swinging incident took place.

Because of its historic setting and affordable rates, Berlin has become a favorite Hollywood film location. Many celebrities, such as Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, have come to love the city's unconventional atmosphere. On any given day, you could easily bump into Jared Leto in a flea market or catch Will Smith at a red carpet premiere in Potsdamer Platz.

Berliners are famous for their honesty and quick wit. Germans lovingly call the straightforwardness trait *Berliner schnauze* (Berlin nozzle). Expect to hear an opinion, well-researched or not.

Berlin's different *bezirke* (districts) are often called *kiez*, a word that is derived from the Slavic word *chyza*, which means "hut." Berliners are very attached to the *kiez* they live in and stress the individual character of their districts.

## **SEE & DO**

### **Shopping**

You won't find huge malls in Berlin, but there are plenty of places to shop. Kurfurstendamm and Tauentzienstrasse have posh department stores and designer boutiques. Along Ku'damm's side streets you'll also find sophisticated fashions and funky doodads. The streets around Savigny Platz probably have more boutiques per square foot/meter than any other Berlin neighborhood. Many local designers sell their creations there.

Berlin has a plethora of vintage second-hand shops and flea markets full of all kinds of quirky retro gear. Dig through antique treasures such as books, attire, cool black-and-white photographs and knick-knacks at the weekend flea markets at Boxhagener Platz, Friedrichshain and Mauer Park, Prenzlauer Berg.

Friedrichstrasse in Mitte is another good shopping area, particularly around Quartier 205, 206 and 207, three swanky buildings connected by underground passages. Bergmannstrasse in Kreuzberg has several hip stores and cafes, but the area around Hackescher Markt in Mitte is the center of the fashionably cool. Be sure to roam the side streets and courtyards as well.

Also check out Potsdamer Platz Arkaden, a mall with a good combination of boutiques and stylish department stores. The famous KaDeWe offers just about everything under the sun.

**Shopping Hours:** Standard business hours for department stores and stores in the main shopping areas are Monday-Saturday 10 am-8 pm. Smaller neighborhood shops may close at 6 pm on weekday evenings and as early as 1 pm on Saturday—some may not open at all. All stores are closed Sunday, with the exception of international newsstands, some souvenir shops and some supermarkets (often in train stations).

### **Department Stores**

#### **Galleries Lafayette**

The design of the interior, especially the two glass cones penetrating the five floors, is just as interesting as the merchandise. The emphasis is on French fashions and accessories. The gourmet food department in the basement is filled with wines and other French specialties, including fresh truffles in season. Open Monday-Saturday 10 am-8 pm. Friedrichstrasse 76-78, at the corner of Französische Strasse (U-Bahn: Französische Strasse), Mitte, Berlin. Phone 209-480. <http://www.gallerieslafayette.de>.

#### **KaDeWe**

Kaufhaus des Westens (Department Store of the West), or simply *kah-day-vay*, has eight floors with everything from designer clothes to fine porcelain and cooking utensils. The sixth floor is a culinary dreamland with an incredible array of prepared and unprepared foods, and there's the Wintergarten cafeteria on the top floor. Open Monday-Friday 10 am-8 pm, Saturday 9:30 am-8 pm. Tauentzienstrasse 21-24, at Wittenbergplatz (U-Bahn: Wittenberg Platz), Schöneberg, Berlin. Phone 21210. <http://www.kadewe.de>.

### **Markets**

#### **Berliner Kunst- und Nostalgiemarkt**

Go there for arts and crafts and kitsch. Open Saturday and Sunday 11 am-5 pm. Am Kupfergraben (along the canal across from Museumsinsel), Mitte, Berlin.

#### **Boxhagener Platz Flohmarkt**

Though its set in a tiny square, the Boxhagener Platz flea market is a favorite among locals. The Sunday flea market has a varied collection of old records, antiques and the latest

creations by up-and-coming designers. Saturday is dedicated to the farmer's market. The surrounding area is filled with rows of coffee shops and restaurants. Saturday 8 am-1:30 pm, Sunday 9 am-6 pm. Boxhanger Platz, Friedrichshain (U-Bahn: Frankfurter Tor), Berlin. <http://www.boxhagenerplatz.de>.

#### **Flohmarkt am Mauerpark**

The Mauerpark Flea Market is arguably the city's largest and liveliest. A mix of treasure and junk, it's a great place to explore and spend the afternoon. The area, next to the popular Mauer Park, teems with local musicians eager to play their best beats. Sunday 8 am-6 pm. Bernauer Strasse, Prenzlauer Berg (U-Bahn: Eberswalder Strasse), Berlin. <http://www.mauerparkmarkt.de>.

#### **Markt am Kollwitzplatz**

This area, with its cobblestoned streets and classic buildings, has a European charm. You'll find everything from homemade goat cheese to pea soup served out of a surplus Soviet-army soup wagon. Open Saturday 9 am-4 pm. Kollwitzplatz, Prenzlauer Berg, Berlin.

#### **Tiergarten/Charlottenburg Flohmarkt**

This flea market has collectibles from the early 1900s, ranging from furniture to toasters. Some vintage clothing. An art market continues farther up the street with ceramics, jewelry, clothing and more. Saturday and Sunday 10 am-5 pm. Strasse des 17 Juni (between Charlottenburger Tor and the Tiergarten S-Bahn station), Charlottenburg, Berlin. Phone 2655-0096.

#### **Turkish Market**

This market has exotic foods and spices. Generally, there's a nice selection of fish and organic produce, as well as fabrics and household articles. Open Tuesday and Friday noon-6:30 pm. Maybachufer (along the canal bank, beginning at Kottbusser Damm), Kreuzberg, Berlin. <http://www.tuerkenmarkt.de>.

#### **Winterfeldtmarkt**

This market is as much a social occasion as a shopping experience. Produce, prepared foods, flowers and crafts. Open Wednesday and Saturday 8 am-1 pm. Winterfeldtplatz, Schöneberg, Berlin. <http://winterfeldtplatz.corbida.de>.

#### **Shopping Areas**

##### **Quartier 205, 206, 207**

These three stylish blocks are connected by underground passageways. Quartier 205 has Galeries Lafayette. Quartier 206 has a department store on the second floor, also called Quartier 206—it's really a series of posh shops with designer clothes, fine furniture and accessories. Gucci, Cerruti, Donna Karan and Strenesse are other big-name occupants. The retail bonanza continues in Quartier 207. Friedrichstrasse (between Französische Strasse and Mohrenstrasse), Mitte, Berlin. <http://www.quartier205.com>. <http://www.quartier206.com>. <http://www.q207.de>.

#### **Specialty Stores**

##### **2211**

This Mitte boutique specializes in essentials and luxuries, which means everything from practical desk furniture to candlesticks and bubble bath. Open Monday-Friday noon-7 pm, Saturday noon-6 pm. Altmstadtstrasse 5 (U-Bahn: Weinmeister Strasse), Mitte, Berlin. Phone 9700-4664. <http://www.2211berlin.de>.

#### **Anastati—Luxus 2nd Hand**

Can't afford those gorgeous Gucci dresses, Prada shoes or Yves Saint Laurent suits? Buy them secondhand, usually in excellent shape, in this shop. If you're lucky, you can get your new outfit for as low as 5% of the original price. Monday and Tuesday noon-4 pm, Thursday and Friday 3-7 pm, Saturday noon-4 pm. Auguste-Viktoria Strasse 1 (S-Bahn: Halensee), Berlin. Phone 8170-0004. <http://luxus-2nd-hand.de>.

**Atelier Hinrich Kroger**

Beautiful vases, plates and dinner service, all uniquely handmade. Many have tasteful erotic designs. Vases cost 50 euros-4,000 euros. Wednesday-Friday 2-6 pm, Saturday 2-4 pm. Gipsstrasse 13 (U-Bahn: Weinmeisterstrasse), Mitte, Berlin. Phone 282-2729. <http://www.galerie-hinrich-kroeger.de>.

**Berliner Filmantiquariat**

Europe's largest shop for vintage movie posters, programs, magazines and books is a true treasure trove for film buffs. It claims to stock 1 million original movie posters. Open Monday-Friday noon-7 pm, Saturday 10 am-2 pm. Pestalozzistrasse 93 (U-Bahn: Savignyplatz), Charlottenburg, Berlin. Phone 5449-3057. <http://www.berlinerfilmantiquariat.de>.

**Berlinomat**

Calling itself a platform for Berlin design, this Friedrichshain shop along the former Stalinallee has a wide collection of clothing, jewelry and furniture that are all in some way distinctly Berlin. A great collection of work by more than 100 Berlin-based designers. Monday-Friday 11 am-8 pm, Saturday 10 am-6 pm. Frankfurter Allee 89 (U-Bahn: Frankfurter Tor), Friedrichshain, Berlin. Phone 4208-1445. <http://www.berlinomat.com>.

**Da capo Schallplatten Antiquariat**

Great selection of old vinyl records, with lots of jazz, soul, reggae, rock and classical music. Tuesday-Friday 11 am-7 pm, Saturday 11 am-4 pm. Kastanienallee 5, Prenzlauer Berg, Berlin. Phone 448-1771. <http://www.da-capo-vinyl.de>.

**Druckerey Martin Schroder**

This is the only remaining manual typesetting company in Berlin. It uses an old typesetter made in 1900 that prints beautiful business cards and writing paper made to order. Prices are high, but so is the quality. Wednesday 3-6 pm or by appointment. Schonensche Strasse 38 (U-Bahn: Vinetastrasse), Prenzlauer Berg, Berlin. Phone 4700-4312. <http://www.druckerey.de>.

**Dussmann das Kulturkaufhaus**

Carries a wide selection of books, audio books, CDs and DVDs. Claims to have the largest selection of classical music worldwide. Monday-Saturday 10 am-midnight. Friedrichstrasse 90 (U-Bahn: Friedrichstrasse), Mitte, Berlin. Phone 2025-1111.

**Fassbender & Rausch**

The Reichstag, the Brandenburg Gate, the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church—all massive chocolate reproductions. No sampling of the landmarks allowed, but this enormous chocolate store carries a wide range of homemade chocolates. Be warned, it is hard to leave. Chocolate bars with the landmarks on the wrappers make great souvenirs or snacks for the trip home. Around Christmas, a 10-ft/3-m chocolate Santa appears. Not to be missed. Open Monday-Friday 10 am-8 pm, Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday noon-8 pm. Charlottenstrasse 60 (U-Bahn: Französische Strasse), Mitte, Berlin. Phone 2045-8443. <http://www.rausch-schokolade.de>.

**Globetrotter Ausrüstung**

Fabulous megastore for travelers. Outdoor fashion, camping articles, rucksacks, sleeping bags, extreme sports equipment, books and maps. They have everything you need whether you want to climb Mount Everest, go trekking in the Sahara, traverse Antarctica, conquer the Pacific with a canoe or just go camping at the nearby Brandenburg and Mecklenburg lakes. Monday-Friday 10 am-8 pm, Saturday 9 am-8 pm. Schloßstrasse 78-82 (U-Bahn: Rathaus Steglitz), Steglitz, Berlin. Phone 850-8920. <http://www.globetrotter.de>.

**Gretas Konfituren**

Owner Greta Fonfara was dubbed "Lady Marmalade" by a major Berlin newspaper, and once you've tasted her homemade jams and jellies you will understand why. Greta makes about 150 varieties of jam, and though the fruits vary according to the seasons, every single concoction is a treat. Try strawberry jam with Chianti wine and green pepper, black currant jam with cassis or mango jam with fresh coconut—your breakfast toast will never taste the



same again. You can meet Greta every Saturday at the Karl-August-Markt in Charlottenburg 8 am-2 pm. Nassauische Strasse 62 (U-Bahn: Hohezollernplatz or Blissestrasse), Wilmersdorf, Berlin. Phone 861-2193. <http://www.gretas-konfituieren.de>.

### **Grober Unfug**

This shop stocks anything that has to do with comics. A huge selection of magazines, including original Japanese anime and manga, T-shirts, DVDs, cups, trading cards and posters. Only authentic, licensed products are sold there. Monday-Wednesday 11 am-7 pm, Thursday and Friday 11 am-8 pm, Saturday 11 am-6 pm. Weinmeisterstrasse 9 (U-Bahn: Weinmeisterstrasse), Mitte, Berlin. Phone 281-7331. <http://www.groberunfug.de>.

### **Harry Lehmann Parfum**

It's easy to miss this little time-warped store that mixes the most wonderful perfumes in Berlin, if not Germany. For 80 years, the Lehmanns have sold their own unique creations in simple flacons. If you are unsure what you want, let owner Lutz Lehmann guide you. He will compose an original scent for you that perfectly matches your personality. You can register the exact mixture and reorder it time and again. Monday-Friday 9 am-6:30 pm, Saturday 9 am-2 pm. Kantstrasse 106 (S-Bahn: Charlottenburg and U-Bahn: Wilmersdorfer Strasse), Charlottenburg, Berlin. Phone 324-3582. <http://www.parfum-individual.de>.

### **Kleidzeitlos**

The name literally means "timeless clothing," and this Mitte shop is a great place for innovative designs for men and women. Carries clothing by a number of Berlin designers. Open Monday-Friday noon-8 pm, Saturday noon-4 pm. Steinstrasse 2 (S-Bahn: Hackescher Markt), Mitte, Berlin. Phone 2759-2673. <http://www.kleidzeitlos.de>.

### **KPM**

This store is a showroom for Royal Prussian porcelain. There is also a factory gallery in the historic Ofenhalle (Wegelystrasse 1, Tiergarten; phone 3900-9215). Open Monday-Saturday 8 am-8 pm. Kurfurstendamm 27 (U-Bahn: Uhlandstrasse), Charlottenburg, Berlin. Phone 8862-7961. <http://www.kpm-berlin.de>.

### **Leila-M**

One of the best Berlin record stores, with lots of independent labels and music made in Berlin. A second store close by, called 7 Tons of Music, has a great stock of second-hand vinyl records and CDs (Rosa Luxemburg Strasse 3). The staff is very knowledgeable about what's happening in the fast-moving Berlin music scene. Monday-Friday noon-8 pm, Saturday 1-8 pm. In the Kino Babylon, Rosa Luxemburg Strasse 30 (U-Bahn: Alexanderplatz), Mitte, Berlin. Phone 2408-5419. <http://www.leila-m.de>.

### **Meissener Porzellan**

This store acts as a showroom for the famous porcelain from Meissen in Saxony. Open Monday-Friday 10 am-7 pm, Saturday 10 am-6 pm. Unter den Linden 39b (S-Bahn: Unter den Linden), Mitte, Berlin. Phone 2267-9028. <http://www.meissen.de>.

### **Mondos Arts**

"*Ostalgia*" rules supreme in this shop, which stocks just about everything that East Germans threw away before the movie *Goodbye Lenin* brought back nostalgic feelings about the defunct German Democratic Republic. Monday-Friday 10 am-7 pm, Saturday 11 am-4 pm. Schreinerstrasse 6 (U-Bahn: Samariterstrasse), Friedrichshain, Berlin. Phone 4202-0225. <http://www.mondosarts.de>.

### **Revanche de la Femme**

Beautiful, sexy and high-quality corsets made in France, Italy and Britain for discerning females. Lots of celebrities love the place, but discretion is highly prized there. It carries waist cinchers, underbust, halfbust, fullbust corsets and comfortable zip corsets. Beautiful and extravagant bolero jackets, skirts, dresses and gowns, too. You're sure to find something to buy. Monday-Friday 11 am-7 pm, Saturday 11 am-3 pm. Uhlandstrasse 50 (U-Bahn: Hohenzollernplatz), Wilmersdorf, Berlin. Phone 8510-3878. <http://www.rdlf.de>.

### **Schonhauser**

You'll find design objects and furniture from the 1970s, along with modern bric-a-brac. Open Monday-Friday noon-8 pm, Saturday 11 am-4 pm. Neue Schonhauser Strasse 18 (S-Bahn: Hackescher Markt), Mitte, Berlin. Phone 281-1704. <http://www.schoenhauser-design.de>.

### **Smyrna Kuruyemis**

There is a wonderful display of nuts and dried fruits (no chemical additives), as well as coffee, tea and other Turkish products. Daily 9 am-2 am. Oranienstrasse 27 (U-Bahn: Gorkitzer Bahnhof), Kreuzberg, Berlin. Phone 6110-7181.

### **Sterling Gold**

The store carries secondhand evening, ballroom and cocktail fashions from the 1950s through the '80s. Open Monday-Friday noon-8 pm, Saturday noon-6 pm. Oranienburger Strasse 32, in Heckmann Hofe (S-Bahn: Oranienburger Strasse), Mitte, Berlin. Phone 2809-6500. <http://www.sterlinggold.de>.

### **Stilwerk**

A self-proclaimed Institute of Good Taste, this design center carries interior furnishings and accessories. A sofa may be too big to carry home, but it's a good place to go for inspiration. Open Monday-Friday 10 am-7 pm, Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday 2-6 pm. Kantstrasse 17 (at the corner of Uhlandstrasse; S-Bahn: Savigny Platz), Charlottenburg, Berlin. Phone 315-150. <http://www.stilwerk.de>.

### **Unikat Taschenmanufaktur**

Bags are (almost) a girl's best friends. Constance and Katrin manufacture individual, fancy and funky bags; each one is unique. The ladies work a lot for the movie industry. Auguststrasse 86 (U-Bahn: Rosenthaler Platz), Mitte, Berlin. Phone 9789-4504. <http://www.unikat-taschenmanufaktur.de>.

## **DINING**

### **Dining Overview**

Berlin has seen dramatic changes—for the better—in its dining scene. Good restaurants are sprouting up all the time, particularly in the districts of Mitte and Prenzlauer Berg.

Old-style German cooking varies greatly by region. It is very good but often heavy, usually centered on roasted meat (*braten*) with potatoes and a vegetable on the side. Make sure to try some of the regional specialties—white asparagus is a great local favorite when it is in season in spring—you will invariably see signs everywhere for *spargelzeit* (asparagus time). *Eisbein*, a tangy pig knuckle, is another classic that tastes better than it sounds.

Nouvelle German cuisine serves up smaller portions of more delicately prepared dishes. Vegetarian and health-conscious dishes are also appearing on menus with greater frequency. Note that many upmarket restaurants offer a quite affordable set menu for lunch, at the same quality as dinner.

With its large foreign-born population and the cosmopolitan tastes of Berliners of all backgrounds, Berlin also has a wide range of dining options. In summer, many restaurants set up tables outside on sidewalks or in gardens. There are also several moored canal boats and barges where you can dine or enjoy a drink alfresco. In most cases, it's customary to seat yourself in a restaurant—you don't have to wait to be seated.

Generally speaking, breakfast is served 7-11 am, lunch noon-4 pm and dinner 6 pm-midnight. At many restaurants, you can linger well past midnight. One of the great treats of any visit to Berlin is weekend brunch. Cafes outdo one another—and often their own previous spreads—with all-you-can-eat treats. Berliners often spend entire weekend days at brunch. Cafes

around Kollwitz Platz in Prenzlauerberg offer some of the most attractive options. Wander around the plaza and surrounding streets—or pop into local favorite Cafe November.

Expect to pay within these general guidelines, based on the cost of dinner for one, not including drinks or tip: \$ = less than 10 euros; \$\$ = 10 euros-20 euros; \$\$\$ = 21 euros-40 euros; and \$\$\$\$ = more than 40 euros. Many smaller restaurants do not accept credit cards.

## Local & Regional

### ALvis Restaurant

Tasty Brandenburg cuisine made of fresh regional products. Dishes such as *eisbein* (pork knuckle) and pea soup with bacon sound rustic but are very good. Breads and noodles are all homemade. Idyllic garden with ivy-clad walls. Daily for lunch and dinner. \$\$\$. Albrechtstrasse 8 (S-Bahn: Friedrichstrasse), Mitte, Berlin. Phone 3088-6560. <http://www.alvis-restaurant.de>.

### Henne

Owned and operated by the same family since the 1930s, this no-frills restaurant still has some Old Berlin charm. The ornate bar with art-deco tiles is especially beautiful. As the name implies, there's only one dish—chicken—but not your bucket-bird variety. It's crispy, juicy and straight off the rotisserie, served with potato salad or coleslaw. Check out the picture of former U.S. President John F. Kennedy on the wall—he ate there in 1963—just steps from the Wall. Beautiful beer garden. Open Tuesday-Sunday for dinner. \$. No credit cards. Leuschnerdamm 25 (U-Bahn: Moritz Platz), Kreuzberg, Berlin. Phone 614-7730. <http://www.henne-berlin.de>.

### Konnopke's Imbiss

Directly under the arches of the viaduct of an underground line, right in the middle of one of Berlin's busiest intersection, this foodstall serves the best-known currywurst in town. It is served spicy, *ohne Pelle* (without casing) and if you ask for the secret of the sauce, they will just tell you that a ketchup tree grows in the garden. Berliners can argue for hours about which place has the best currywurst. What is known for sure is that it was invented by a lady named Herta Heuwer in September 1949, when she got bored and laced the ketchup with chilli powder, Worcester sauce and spices, and poured it all over a skinless pork bratwurst. Monday-Friday 6 am-8 pm, Saturday noon-7 pm. \$. No credit cards. Schonhauser Allee 44a (U-Bahn: Eberswalder Strasse), Prenzlauer Berg, Berlin. Phone 447-765.

### Neugrüns Koche

Only bio-dynamic products are used for refined creative concoctions of regional Brandenburg specialities. The duck liver with local onion apples is particularly delicious. Monday-Saturday for dinner. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. No credit cards. Schonhauser Allee 135a (U-Bahn: Schonhauser Allee), Prenzlauer Berg, Berlin. Phone 4401-2092. <http://www.neugruenskoeche.de>.

### Zur Letzen Instanz

This is Berlin's oldest restaurant (dating from 1621), and Napoleon reportedly dined there. So did Charlie Chaplin. Good soup in a cozy environment. Daily for lunch and dinner. \$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Waisenstrasse 14-16 (U-Bahn: Klosterstrasse), Mitte, Berlin. Phone 242-5528. <http://www.zurletzteninstanz.de>.

## Cafes & Tearooms

Cafes are popular among Berliners because they fill so many needs. Many of them serve breakfast from early morning to midafternoon, light bistro fare from noon to early evening and drinks well into the night. Most importantly, they dish out *kaffee und kuchen* (coffee and cake), an afternoon ritual not to be missed. Apart from food and drink, cafes are also good places to socialize, people-watch or read a newspaper. **Barcomi's**

This deli-style cafe, in a beautiful courtyard, serves coffees (many flavored variations of an excellent Guatemalan blend) and a tasty selection of soups, sandwiches, bagels, cakes, cookies and muffins. Daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner. \$. Most major credit cards. Sophienstrasse 21, in the second courtyard (S-Bahn: Hackescher Markt), Mitte, Berlin. Phone 2859-8363. <http://www.barcomis.de>.

### **Barist**

This is a good spot for a cup of coffee, a snack or a whole meal. In the warmer months, tables are set up outside. Daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner. \$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Am Zwinrgraben 13 (in the S-Bahn arches at Hackescher Markt), Mitte, Berlin. Phone 2472-2613. <http://www.barist.de>.

### **Berlinski**

If you're craving some warm homemade soup or fresh salads, then Berlinski is the perfect spot. Its fish-and-chips are the perfect comfort food for a rainy day, but the restaurant's outdoor seating is also a great location to people watch on the busy and hip street of Kastanienallee. Lunch served daily. \$. No credit cards. Kastanienallee 23, Prenzlauer Berg (U-Bahn: Eberswalder Strasse), Berlin. Phone 5105-7686.

### **Cafe am Neuen See**

A lovely lakeside cafe and *biergarten*—this is the place to be on fine-weather days. Good for coffee and cake, complete meals or just a beer. Service can be problematic at times. Daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner. \$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Lichtenstein Allee 2, in the park, on Neuer See (S-Bahn: Tiergarten), Tiergarten, Berlin. Phone 2544-9300.

### **Cafe am Ufer**

A popular meeting spot for Sunday breakfast, but it's nice any time (especially Tuesday and Friday when the nearby Turkish market takes place). In the warmer months, tables are placed on a large terrace overlooking a canal. Daily for breakfast (served all day), lunch and dinner. \$-\$\$\$. No credit cards. Paul Lincke Ufer 42 (U-Bahn: Schonleinstrasse), Kreuzberg, Berlin. Phone 6162-9200. <http://www.cafe-am-ufer.de>.

### **Cafe Cinema**

Cafe Cinema is a cozy spot where you can enjoy delicious coffee and intimate conversations. It is also the oldest bar in the city, and once you step inside the candlelit cafe you'll feel as though you've been transported to 1920 Berlin. Rosenthaler Strasse 39, Mitte (S-Bahn: Hackescher Markt), Berlin. Phone 280-6415.

### **Cafe Einstein**

Housed in an old villa, this is a very popular cafe in the Viennese coffeehouse mold. Try the *apfelstrude* with warm vanilla sauce. Express branches are sprouting up all over the city, but this location is the original and the nicest. Daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Kurfurstenstrasse 58 (U-Bahn: Nollendorf Platz), Schoneberg, Berlin. Phone 261-5096. <http://www.cafeeinstein.com>.

### **Cafe im Literaturhaus Berlin**

The *wintergarten* (terrace) in this cafe—part of the Berlin literary society—is one of the most pleasant spots in the city for a drink. Great bookstore downstairs, and the Kathe Kollwitz museum next door should not be missed. Daily 9:30 am-1 am. Fasanenstrasse 23 (U-Bahn: Uhlandstrasse), Charlottenburg, Berlin. Phone 887-286 or 882-5414. <http://www.literaturhaus-berlin.de>.

### **Cafe November**

Near Prenzlauerberg's Kollwitz Platz, this neighborhood favorite offers reasonable meals and one of the most reliable brunches around. Great outdoor seating and cozy in winter—though it often fills fast on weekends, and brunchgoers tend to linger (and eat) for hours. Daily for breakfast, lunch, dinner and weekend brunch. \$-\$\$\$. No credit cards. Husemanstrasse 15 (U-Bahn: Senefelder Platz), Prenzlauer Berg, Berlin. Phone 442-8425. <http://www.cafe-november.de>.

### **Cafe Tomasa-das Original**

This place arguably has the most creative and extensive breakfast buffet in town. Right in the heart of Schoneberg. Fills quickly on weekends. Open Monday-Thursday 8 am-1 pm, Friday and Saturday 8 am-2 pm. \$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Motzstrasse 60, Schoneberg (U-

Victoria Luise Platz), Berlin. Phone 213-2345. <http://www.tomasa.de/schoeneberg>.

### **Opernpalais Unter den Linden**

An elegant, classic cafe next to the Staatsoper—it's popular with a mature (as in older than 60) crowd. Huge selection of cakes, as well as light meals. Daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner. \$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Unter den Linden 5 (S-Bahn: Friedrichstrasse), Mitte, Berlin. Phone 202-683. <http://www.opernpalais.de>.

### **Tadschikische Teestube**

Authentic Tajik tea house, with a great Asian feeling. The carpets were a Soviet gift in 1974. Guests sit on pillows (and a few chairs) to enjoy 30 varieties of teas dispensed from an impressive samovar during an authentic Russian tea ceremony. On Tuesday in winter, Russian fairy tales are read at 6 pm. Open Monday-Friday 5 pm-midnight, Saturday and Sunday 3 pm-midnight. \$-\$\$\$. No credit cards. Am Festungsgraben 1 (S-Bahn: Friedrichstrasse), Mitte, Berlin. Phone 204-1112.

## **SECURITY**

### **Etiquette**

Too much can be made of the efficiency and stolid character of the German people, but these traits are more likely to come to the fore in a business setting than anywhere else. Maintaining a serious, no-nonsense demeanor will likely be to your advantage, as will a solid grounding in the details of your proposals.

**Appointments**—Punctuality may not have been invented in Germany, but it is a prized virtue. It's very important to be on time for all engagements, business and otherwise. Though most Germans speak English well, you can't expect that all meetings will be conducted in English. If you don't speak German, arrive prepared with a translator or ask in advance whether one will be necessary.

**Personal Introductions**—Firm handshakes are the common greeting for both men and women, though a woman should make the practice clear by offering her hand. Make eye contact, but not too intensely, and give a brief nod upon introduction. Use the German form of title: Herr for men and Frau for most women (Fraulein is usually only used for women younger than age 18, and it's a bit antiquated). Continue using the person's title and last name until instructed otherwise. Germans do not smile easily at people they don't know well, so don't expect your smiles to be returned.

**Negotiating**—Meetings generally have a formal and serious atmosphere. In general, not much time is taken up with pleasantries: German businesspeople are direct and to the point, and they expect the same from their foreign counterparts. Though talks may move briskly, the decision-making process may take longer: It usually involves many people who may not be in attendance at your meetings. Do your homework, and have supporting information close at hand. Germans like empirical evidence and facts.

**Business Entertaining**—Lunch is the meal most commonly attended in a business setting. Follow your host's example with regard to mixing social and business discourse during the meal.

**Body Language**—Generally, Germans are not physically expressive. Gesturing is minimal. Posture is important, so try to avoid slouching in your seat.

**Gift Giving**—In Germany, gift giving is not common in a business context. When giving gifts to an acquaintance, note that flowers have particular meaning: Roses are for intimate acquaintances only, and lilies are used for funerals. (Avoid giving an even number of flowers.) Avoid personal gifts such as perfume or clothing.

### **Personal Safety**

Berlin sees its fair share of crime, but still it's a relatively safe large city. Visitors should use common sense and be aware of their surroundings. In particular, do not ride public transportation late at night—most notably on the weekends when the crowds can be a bit rowdy from a night out—or to the outer suburbs, especially to the easternmost fringes.

Major areas to avoid include Lichtenburg, Marzahn and Hohensch because of high crime rates and the presence of neo-Nazi groups. Although neo-Nazis are (unfortunately) still a problem, Berlin's urban center is a multicultural mix of people from all over the world.

Riding the train in the city center, even late at night, is not likely to give you any problems. However, keep an eye out for pickpockets and purse snatchers in and around train stations, on some crowded buses and on busy streets that are obvious tourist areas. Be particularly alert around the Lichtenberg, Zoologischer Garten and Kottbusser Tor train stations, which are notorious for drug activity.

Violent demonstrations often erupt on 1 May (Labor Day) in Kreuzberg, and the area should be avoided then. Demonstrations on Kollwitz Platz in Prenzlauer Berg have become much more peaceful in recent years, but it doesn't hurt to be cautious. Political demonstrations are a frequent occurrence, particularly on Unter den Linden. Although these attract a large and often intimidating police presence, there is little danger to bystanders.

If you find yourself in a precarious situation or are the victim of a crime, call the police (*polizei*) at 110. Other emergency numbers include the fire brigade (*feuerwehr*) at 112 and the ambulance at 19222.

For more information, contact your country's travel-advisory agency.

### **Health**

Aside from commonsense safety basics, no special health precautions are necessary in Berlin. Be sure to pack appropriate clothing for the season, and if you're prone to allergies, it is wise to pack antihistamines and other medicines if you're visiting in the spring.

Health care and sanitation in Berlin are very good, and many health-care professionals speak English. All pharmacies (*apotheken*, not *drogerien*) display a sign near the door indicating the nearest pharmacy with after-hours service that particular night. You can also call 11880 for schedules and locations (in German only) or the American Hotline (phone 0177-814-1510) for a doctor referral. You can view the U.S. Consulate for American Citizen Service's list of English-speaking doctors at <http://germany.usembassy.gov/acs/lists.html>.

German pharmacists are very thorough, so be sure that you have your prescription for any medications you might need (apart from the basic pain relievers, antacids and so on), as they won't fill it without one.

In case of an accident or an emergency, the university hospital, Charite Universitätsmedizin Berlin, at Schumannstrasse 20-21, Mitte, is the oldest and best-known hospital in the city. Its emergency entrance is located at Luisenstrasse 65. Phone 45050. <http://www.charite.de>.

If you need first aid or emergency assistance, call 4505-31000. Don't forget to purchase travel health insurance before your trip, although hospitals won't refuse emergency cases.

For more information, contact your country's health-advisory agency.

### **Disabled Advisory**

Berlin's public transportation system is well-equipped to serve people with disabilities. The city has 62 U-Bahn stations and 120 S-Bahn stations that are equipped with wheelchair-accessible elevators and ramps, and 14 tram lines use cars with low entries. About 90% of public buses have a moveable ramp for wheelchairs, which are indicated by a wheelchair sign or one that states *behindert* (disabled) and/or *ausgestattet* (outfitted). Most stations and elevators are also fitted to assist the blind with buttons in Braille and train announcements and schedules stated over a loudspeaker.

For information regarding travel mobility, the Berliner Verkehrsbetriebe (BVG) Web site (<http://www.bvg.de>) has a special section on barrier-free travel. Call the hotline at 180-5512-512 to reserve seats, for boarding assistance or to get more information. It also publishes a PDF file of the actual public transport plan with symbols that mark wheelchair access.

Some streets can be difficult to maneuver because of their cobblestoned surfaces, but there are many wheelchair ramps and elevators available. Most museums and public buildings are wheelchair accessible as well. For extensive listings of places with easy access for the disabled, as well as for any other questions you may have, phone 7477-7115 or visit <http://www.mobidat.net>. You may also call the coordinating center for Berlin mobility services at 864-9100.

For transportation, information and wheelchair rental, call Verband Geburts und anderer Behinderte at 341-1797. Service Ring Berlin also rents wheelchairs (phone 859-4010). For transportation only, call Berliner Behindertenverband at 9270-3630. Should your wheelchair need repairs, call 0180-111-4747 for 24-hour service. You can also rent a wheelchair through this number.

### **Dos & Don'ts**

Don't think that it is easier to get around by car than by public transport. It's not. The underground, train, bus and tram systems are excellent, with trains departing every few minutes to practically anywhere in the city center. Parking can be a real challenge, so avoid cars.

Don't think that your credit card can be used everywhere. Debit cards, especially the European EC cash cards, are often the only type of card accepted. It is wise to check in advance or to carry sufficient cash on you. Even in places that accept credit cards, you can often earn a 5% discount by paying cash instead.

Don't be offended by the local straightforward and often dry sense of humor. Berliners are famous for saying exactly what they think. It is a local custom that is never intended to be rude or disrespectful.

Don't forget to always have spare change handy, because nearly all public restrooms, even those in some fast food places or stations, require a small fee of about 0.50 euros-1 euros.

Do make sure not to cross the street against a red traffic light. It is not only illegal, but you might earn yourself some raised eyebrows.

Do make sure you enjoy a Sunday brunch in one of Berlin's countless cafes. Sunday brunches are a real institution in Berlin and are an excellent way of absorbing the casual and intellectually stimulating vibe of the city.

Do learn a few key phrases in German, such as "*danke*" (thank you), "*bitte*" (please or you're welcome), "*guten tag*" (good day), "*entschuldigung*" (excuse me or sorry), and "*auf wiedersehen*" and "*tschuss*" (formal and informal goodbye, respectively). Your effort will be much appreciated. Locals tend to be standoffish when asked for directions or general queries, but beginning an introduction with even the most basic phrases, such as "*Entschuldigung, sprechen sie Englisch?*" (Excuse me, do you speak English?) makes a huge difference. Berliners appreciate the effort, and once they warm up to you they will go out of their way to help you.

Do watch out when you are using the sidewalks in Berlin as dog poo and rowdy cyclists can ruin your day in a heartbeat.

Do remember that all of Berlin's shops are closed on Sunday.

## **FACTS**

### **Geostats**

**Passport/Visa Requirements:** Passports and return tickets are required of Canadian and U.S. citizens. Reconfirm travel document requirements with carrier before departure.

**Population:** 3,406,000.

**Languages:** German. English is widely understood, particularly by younger Berliners. Turkish is also widely spoken.

**Predominant Religions:** Christian (Protestant, Roman Catholic).

**Time Zone:** 1 hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (+1 GMT). Daylight Saving Time is observed from the last Sunday in March to the last Sunday in October.

**Voltage Requirements:** 220 volts, 50-cycle AC. Wall sockets take round two-prong plugs. Converters (*trafos*) and adapters are sometimes available in larger hotels and department stores.

**Telephone Codes:** 49, country code; 30, city code;

### **Money**

#### **Taxes**

Most goods and services, including restaurant bills, have a 19% value-added tax (VAT), or *mehrwertsteuer* (MwSt) in German, which means that tax is already included in the marked price. A reduced tax rate of 7% is applicable to food purchases in grocery stores, books, magazines, newspapers, flowers and transports. The reduced rate also applies to hotel accomodation but not to breakfast and other services offered in hotels.

To avail of the Global Refund, which allows you to get up to 12.7% back, you must live outside of the European Union and make a purchase of 25 euros or more in one store. Fill out the checks and then have them stamped by customs officials at the airport (you'll be required to show your purchases to the officials). Alternatively, if you are traveling to other EU countries, you must process a final claim with customs officials in the last EU country you visit. You may also opt to mail in your checks with the officially marked envelope. To learn more, visit the official Web site at <http://www.globalrefund.com>.



### Tipping

Although a service charge is often included in a restaurant bill, you can round the tab up by around 5%-10% if you're extremely pleased with the service. It is not common to leave the tip on the table—pay the server directly. Tell the server the total amount to keep, including the tip. If you don't want any change back, just say "*Stimmt so.*" Give taxi drivers a 10% tip.

### Weather

Located in northeast Germany, Berlin has a temperate climate. Spring is generally mild and occasionally cold. Rain is common in May and June. Summer is mild with occasional heat waves or cool, cloudy, rainy days. Conditions often change dramatically during the course of a day. Average highs in July are around 75 F/24 C.

Autumn is usually cool and short, and winter months can be bitterly cold and damp. Average lows in January are 26 F/-3 C, but it can get much colder.

### What to Wear

Style and fashion are given free rein in Berlin. In general, an anything-goes attitude prevails everywhere, from restaurants and nightclubs to the opera. Upscale clubs will insist on elegant clothing, though. For business attire, suits for men and dresses or suits for women are standard.

The warmer months allow you to dress as comfortably as you wish, though it is advisable to take a light jacket and/or a small umbrella because of the frequent weather changes throughout the day. Colder months of winter and even early spring require a heavy coat or at the very least, several layers of warm clothing. Scarves, gloves or mittens and earmuffs are also recommended.

## Stockholm, Sweden

### OVERVIEW

#### Introduction

Stockholm, Sweden, is a city of contrasts. Unspoiled architecture dating back centuries is complemented by the best in modern Scandinavian design. Stockholm's appreciation of its culture and heritage shows in its theaters, concert halls and galleries, which showcase a rich variety of artistic innovations.



The seasons provide a sharp distinction, too. Stockholm in summer is green and blue, with its attention on the water. In winter, Stockholm is white and frozen, with a sense of stillness and calm, the afternoon darkness punctuated by candlelit cafes and bars.

The waterways surrounding Stockholm's islands clearly define the city's various quarters. From the bohemian cliff-top cafes of Sodermalm and the 17th-century cobbled streets of Gamla Stan to the luxury boutiques of Ostermalm and the parkland calm of Djurgarden, you're never more than a bridge away from a completely different city experience. Flecked with sailboats and ferries in summer, Stockholm's great tree-fringed waterways are often iced over, snow-covered and misty in winter, creating the illusion of a city in the clouds—the perfect setting for the Nobel Prize ceremonies that take place in Stockholm every year.

## Must See or Do

**Sights**—A stroll around Stadhuset (City Hall) and the view from its tower; a visit to the royal residence, Drottningholm, with its large gardens, palaces and theater; a ferry ride between Gamla Stan and Djurgarden.

**Museums**—The Vasa Museum and its restored warship; contemporary art at the Moderna Museet; the atmospheric Museum of Medieval History.

**Memorable Meals**—A Nobel Prize dinner at Stadshuskallaren; classic seafood dishes at Wedholms Fisk; the Grand Verandan's smorgasbord; dinner with a view at Gondolen; traditional Swedish food in Stockholm's oldest restaurant, Den Gyldene Freden.

**Late Night**—Whiling away the hours at Cafe Opera; jazz at Fasching Jazzklubb; dancing on the terrace at Berns during a summer sunrise.

**Walks**—Strolling the cobblestoned streets of Gamla Stan; exploring Djurgarden; taking in the spectacular view of the city from Monteliusvagen.

**Especially for Kids**—Grona Lund amusement park; Skansen, especially its zoo; Junibacken, the home of the beloved Pippi Longstocking character.

## Geography

The Stockholm area lies between the Baltic Sea and Lake Malaren. Made up of 14 islands and part of the mainland, it has more than 50 bridges connecting all of its different parts. One of the largest archipelagos in the world lies east of Stockholm—some of the 25,000 islands are easily accessible from the city center.

The heart of Stockholm is Gamla Stan (Old Town), which has narrow cobblestoned streets and tourist-friendly shops in buildings dating to the 15th century. It's situated on three islands: Stadsholmen (the largest and the one usually indicated as Gamla Stan on maps); Helgeandsholmen (where the parliament building is located); and Riddarholmen.

The main business and shopping district lies north of Gamla Stan. Officially it's called Norrmalm, but ever since the central train station was built, locals just refer to it as "city center." Norrmalm is roughly bordered by the fruit vendors at Hotorget (Hay Square) to the north, Ostermalm to the east, Kungsholmen to the west and, across the water, Gamla Stan to the south.

Ostermalm resembles parts of Paris, with large tree-lined boulevards and avenues. Strandvagen, Karlavagen, Valhallavagen and Narvavagen are the major thoroughfares there. Ostermalm has developed into one of Stockholm's most affluent residential districts, partly because it's near Djurgarden—open space that was once a royal park.

To the south of Gamla Stan is the mainland area of Sodermalm. Filled with trendy restaurants, shops and popular discos, this busy neighborhood (often called "Soder") is worth a visit for its progressive ambience.

## History

Regent Birger Jarl founded Stockholm in 1252, when he built the Tre Kronor (Three Crowns) castle and the city walls. The city originally occupied the area known today as Gamla Stan (Old Town), but expansion began as early as the 1300s. During that century and the next, the areas of Norrmalm and Sodermalm became part of Stockholm.

Throughout the 1400s, the close union between Sweden and its neighbors Norway and Denmark evolved into a power struggle, and by the beginning of the 16th century, Denmark was attempting to assert military control over Sweden. Matters came to a head in 1520, when the nobleman Gustav Vasa finally rallied enough troops to eject the Danish king from Sweden. The resulting monarchy, first headed by Gustav Vasa, used Stockholm as its base of power, but the city didn't officially become the capital of Sweden until 1634. All the while, Stockholm maintained its status as an important trade center, controlling access to Lake Malaren from the Baltic Sea.

The arrival of steamships and trains in the 1800s increased the city's international trade and, as a result, its prosperity. During this period, new construction engulfed Stockholm, and much of the city was rebuilt. Residents began moving out into the suburbs, and the city of today began to take shape. Sweden remained neutral during World War I and World War II, which helped Stockholm preserve its historical center from the destruction that forced other European cities to rebuild throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Today, Stockholm is a cosmopolitan city that remains one of the business centers of northern Europe.

### **Potpourri**

Alfred Nobel was the founder of the Nobel Foundation and the inventor of dynamite. The prize was funded by his oil production business in Azerbaijan.

Greta Garbo, the legendary Swedish actress, was born in 1905 in Stockholm's then-poor district of Sodermalm. She died in New York City, but her ashes were taken back to Sweden and were buried in 1999 at the cemetery of Skogskyrkogarden, 4 mi/6 km south of Stockholm.

The Stockholm syndrome (a mental or emotional state in which hostage victims begin to relate to their captors) was named after a robbery in Stockholm in 1973. During the robbery, the hostages defended their captors and caused problems for police after they were released. Psychologist Nils Bejerot coined the phrase after working on the case.

There are more single-person households in Stockholm than in any other capital.

The two major non-Swedish nationalities living in the city of Stockholm are Finns and—believe it or not—Iraqis. Sweden has taken in more Iraqi refugees than any other country. The city of Sodertalje south of Stockholm has even been nicknamed "Little Baghdad."

It is never completely dark in Stockholm mid-June to mid-July.

### **SEE & DO Sightseeing**

Stockholm is great for walking: It's dotted with relaxing parks to break up your sightseeing. Start your tour in Gamla Stan (Old Town), the historical heart of Stockholm. It has narrow streets, quaint shops and cobblestoned squares. From Stortorget, the scenic square in the center of Gamla Stan, you can visit the majestic Stockholm Cathedral, the Royal Palace, the Nobel Museum and Riddarholmskyrkan (a baroque church that houses the tombs of Swedish royalty).

Other sites are clustered on the island of Djurgarden, once the hunting reserve of Swedish kings. Skansen, an open-air museum there, has 150 traditional buildings, some of which date to the 18th century. The Vasa Museum houses the *Vasa*, a massive 17th-century warship that was recovered from the harbor and restored. Other interesting museums in close proximity include the Moderna Museet, the National Museum, the Museum of Medieval History and the Nordic Museum.

Much more seaworthy than the *Vasa* are the boats providing tours around the harbor and freshwater Malaren Lake. You can also visit the palace in Drottningholm, the current residence of the Swedish royal family. The palace's Court Theater still uses the original 18th-century sets and stage mechanisms.

### **Historic Sites**

#### **Drottningholms Slott**

This palace is nicknamed the "Versailles of the North." It was built in the 17th century, and its rooms are lavish. Despite the fact that the royal family actually lives there, in the south wing, much of the residence is open to the public. A park with three gardens surrounds the palace: the formal garden with a symmetrical layout, a rococo-inspired garden and the English Park.

While you're there, don't miss the famous Court Theater. It's one of the few surviving theaters that still makes use of sets and stage mechanisms from the 18th century. (In summer, the theater hosts a festival of opera and ballet performances.) The charming Kina Slott (Chinese Pavilion) is a museum containing Asian art, including porcelain from the Ming dynasty. It's a 10-minute walk from the castle, and in summer there's a shuttle bus.

To get to Drottningholm, take the subway to Brommaplan, then any bus between 301 and 323. You can also take a ferry from beside the City Hall (phone 5871-4000), which takes 50 minutes. The palace is open to visitors May-August daily 10 am-4:30 pm, September daily 11 am-3:30 pm and October-March Saturday and Sunday noon-3:30 pm, April Saturday and Sunday 11 am-3:30 pm. Guided tours (in English) of the palace are included in the entrance fee. 80 SEK adults, 40 SEK children ages 7-18. Phone 402-6280. <http://www.royalcourt.se>.

#### **Kungliga Slottet**

The 18th-century Royal Palace, one of the largest in Europe, has 608 rooms. Only some of them—the state apartments—are open to the public. While admiring them, be sure to notice the gorgeous tapestries. Within the palace walls there are several minor museums. The Gustav III Museum contains royal gifts; Tre Kronor relates the history of the original medieval castle that burned down more than 300 years ago; and the Royal Treasury houses the royal jewels. On Saturday, you can watch the colorful changing of the guard at noon in the center court. Hours for the Royal Palace vary seasonally. Open first two weeks of September and second half of May daily 10 am-4 pm; mid-September to mid-May Tuesday-Sunday noon-3 pm; first week of June, July and August daily 10 am-5 pm. 100 SEK for each museum or a 140 SEK combination ticket for all sites; children ages 7-18, 50 SEK for each museum or a 70 SEK combination ticket to all sites. Slottbacken 6, Gamla Stan, Stockholm. Phone 402-6000. <http://www.royalcourt.se>.

#### **Riddarholmskyrkan**

Since the 16th century, this church has been the burial place for Sweden's royalty. The oldest part of the church, Grey Friars' abbey, dates to the 1200s. The church later became a Franciscan monastery, and today it's one of the best-preserved examples of a Franciscan cathedral in northern Europe. The tower was added during the Reformation but was destroyed by lightning in 1835. (It was rebuilt of iron to prevent a similar disaster.) The church is no longer used for religious purposes and is now only a royal memorial. May through mid-September daily 10 am-4 pm, until 5 pm June-August. Guided tours in English 3 pm and are included in the entrance fee. 30 SEK adults, 15 SEK children ages 7-18. Riddarholmen, Gamla Stan, Stockholm. Phone 402-6130. <http://www.royalcourt.se>.

#### **Riksdagshuset**

The Houses of Parliament occupy a late-1800s building filled with exquisite art. To watch the government in action, stop in at the public chamber gallery. Guided tours are also available. For information on these tours, phone their pre-recorded visitor information line at 020-349-900. Riksgatan 1, Gamla Stan, Stockholm. Phone 786-4000 main number. <http://www.riksdagen.se>.

### **Stadhuset**

City Hall, built 1911-23, is the center of Stockholm's local government. But don't let that put you off—it's also home to some of the most stunning interiors in the city. The Blue Hall is the venue for the annual Nobel Prize Banquet. (Its walls, constructed from handmade red bricks, were deemed by the architect to be too beautiful to paint blue.) With 19 million pieces of gold leaf and glass, a mosaic in the Golden Hall depicts Stockholm as a bridge between East and West. Even the council chamber is noteworthy for its ceiling, whose structure represents an upturned Viking ship. And from the top of the tower, there's a dizzying but spectacular view of the city.

The building is open Monday-Friday during business hours. There are guided tours in English daily at 10 am, 11 am, noon and 2 pm. The tower is open in April Saturday-Sunday 10 am-4pm, May-September daily 9 am-4 pm, until 5 pm June-August. Admission 80 SEK adults April-October, 50 SEK November and December; children ages 12-17, 40 SEK April-October, 20 SEK November and December. Hantverkargatan 1, Kungsholmen, Stockholm. Phone 5082-9058. <http://www.stockholm.se/cityhall>.

### **Storkyrkan**

Stockholm's main Gothic cathedral (the facade is baroque style) dates back to the 1300s. Historically, it's been the site of royal coronations. The main attraction is Bernt Notke's medieval sculpture of *St. George and the Dragon* (1489), but don't miss the parhelion painting on the right wall as you walk in. As well as recording an unusual light phenomenon that took place in 1535, it is also said to be the oldest surviving picture of the city. Open May 9 am-4 pm; June 9 am-5 pm (until 4 pm on Sunday); July and August 9 am-6 pm (until 4 pm on Sunday); September 9 am-4 pm; October 10 am-4 pm, Sunday 9 am-4 pm. 40 SEK adults. Trångsund 1 (take photographs of the exterior from Slottsbacken but enter at Trångsund), Stockholm. Phone 723-3016. <http://www.stockholmsdomkyrkoforsamling.se>.

### **Museums**

#### **Moderna Museet**

The Modern Museum houses one of the world's most comprehensive collections of modern art. With works by Salvador Dali, Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Paul Klee, Georges Braque, Jackson Pollock and Andy Warhol, the big names are well represented, but there's far more to the museum than a few star attractions. The photographic collection contains 300,000 items, and regularly changing temporary exhibitions display the work of Swedish and international artists from 1900 to the present. Open Tuesday 10 am-8 pm, Wednesday-Sunday 10 am-6 pm. 80 SEK adults, free for children 18 and younger. On Skeppsholmen, an island in the central part of the city (accessible by foot, bus or boat from Slussen), Stockholm. Phone 5195-5200. <http://www.modernamuseet.se>.

#### **Museum of Medieval History**

Located in old medieval vaults under one of Stockholm's many bridges, this museum is loaded with atmosphere. The exhibits depict the history, politics, religion and daily life of medieval Stockholm. Open Tuesday and Thursday-Sunday noon-5 pm, Wednesday noon-7 pm. Free. Stromparterren, Norrbro, Stockholm. Phone 5083-1790. <http://www.medeltidsmuseet.stockholm.se>.

#### **Nationalmuseum**

Sweden's largest art museum displays works in various media from around the world: paintings, sculpture, drawings and crafts. The 17th-century Dutch and 18th-century French collections probably contain the best pieces in the museum, and the Nationalmuseum also attracts some of the best traveling exhibits in Europe. English-language audio tours can be rented at the entrance. Wonderful gift shop and restaurant. Open June-August Wednesday-Sunday 11 am-5 pm (until 8 pm on Tuesday); September-May Tuesday and Thursday 11 am-8 pm, Wednesday and Friday-Sunday 11 am-5 pm. 100 SEK adults; free to children younger than 19. Sodra Blasieholmshamnen (next to Grand Hotel), Stockholm. Phone 5195-4300 or 5195-4410 (24-hour information line). <http://www.nationalmuseum.se>.

### **Nobel Museum**

The exhibits at this museum, housed in the 1776 former stock exchange building, seek to put the achievements of Nobel Prize winners in historical context. Dozens of short films explain why, for instance, a German journalist won the Peace Prize in the 1930s. You can also access all sorts of Nobel-related history, so if you want to read author William Faulkner's famous acceptance speech from 1949, this is the place. September-May daily 11 am-5 pm (Tuesday till 8 pm); May-September daily 10 am-5 pm (Tuesday till 8 pm). Guided tours in English daily at 11:15 am and 3 pm at no extra cost. 70 SEK adults, free for children 17 and younger. Stortorget 2, Gamla Stan, Stockholm. Phone 5348-1800. <http://www.nobelmuseum.se>.

### **Nordic Museum**

This museum explores the history and culture of the Swedish people. The building itself is a gem—it looks like a royal palace. June-August daily 10 am-5 pm; September-May Monday-Friday 10 am-4 pm, Wednesday until 8 pm, Saturday and Sunday 11 am-5 pm. 80 SEK adults, free for children 18 and younger. A free audio tour in English can be picked up at the entrance. Djurgardsvagen 6-16, Djurgarden, Stockholm. Phone 5195-4600. <http://www.nordiskamuseet.se>.

### **Ostasiatiska Museet**

This Museum of East Asian Art, located in a former building for the Royal Bodyguards of King Karl XII, is one of the most important collections of Chinese art outside of China. Many of the most valuable pieces are from the private collection of King Gustav VI Adolf. Tuesday 11 am-8 pm, Wednesday-Sunday 11 am-5 pm. 60 SEK adults, free for children 19 and younger. Tyghusplan, Skeppsholmen, Stockholm. Phone 5195-5750. <http://www.ostasiatiska.se>.

### **Skansen**

You can learn about the Swedish way of life in bygone eras at this open-air museum, which was one of the first of its kind. Once you've witnessed the traditional methods of making glass, pottery, bread and even medicine, it's hard to resist investing in a few items. In addition to the 150 historical buildings, there's an outdoor stage (host of many big events at Christmas, New Year's and midsummer), cafes and a zoo. The zoo has a popular collection of Nordic animals, such as bears, wolves, lynx and gray seals; it also has an aquarium and terrarium that can be visited for an additional fee.

During summer, docents in traditional dress re-enact life as it was in rural and urban Sweden during the 17th and 18th centuries. Visitors are encouraged to interact with the "inhabitants." It's a nice spot for a picnic lunch, and in winter, Skansen's Christmas Market is a great place to get into the spirit of the season. Open daily May, June and September 10 am-8 pm; July and August 10 am-10 pm; October and April 10 am-4 pm; November 10 am-3 pm. Admission fees vary: adults 50 SEK-140 SEK, children 20 SEK-50 SEK. See Web site for details. Djurgardsslatten 49-51, Djurgarden, Stockholm. Phone 442-8000. <http://www.skansen.se>.

### **Vasa Museum**

This museum features the royal warship *Vasa*, built in 1628. The ship sank on its maiden voyage before it left the harbor. It was salvaged in 1961 and painstakingly restored. In addition to the ship itself, there's a short film about the recovery and the restoration. Open daily 10 am-5 pm (Wednesday till 8 pm). 110 SEK adults, free for children younger than 19. On Wednesday, admission is 75 SEK. Galarvarsvagen 14, Djurgarden, Stockholm. Phone 5195-4800. <http://www.vasamuseet.se>.

### **Vin and Sprithistoriska Museet**

The Museum of Wine and Spirits explores the history of aquavit, vodka and Swedish drinking traditions. The tour is very interesting (and refreshing, if you choose to visit the tasting room). Open Tuesday 10 am-7 pm, Wednesday-Sunday 10 am-4 pm (with free entrance 10 am-noon). 50 SEK adults. Free for children younger than 17. Dalagatan 100, Norrmalm, Stockholm. Phone 5191-8650. <http://www.vinosprithistoriska.se>.

### **Waldemarsudde**

Prince Eugen's former home contains his impressive private collection of paintings, which he left to Sweden upon his death in 1947. The collection includes both his own work and pieces by his contemporaries. Open Tuesday-Sunday 11 am-5 pm (Thursday till 8 pm). 95 SEK adults, free for children age 19 and younger. Prince Eugens Vagen 6, Djurgarden, Stockholm. Phone 5458-3700. <http://www.waldemarsudde.com>.

### **Parks & Gardens**

#### **Bergianska Trädgården**

This fantastic botanical park and garden is a short walk from the University and Natural History Museum, and it's a delightful place to stroll among the well-tended flowers and plants. It was founded in the 18th century by brothers Peter and Bengt Bergius and later donated to the Academy of Sciences. Especially worthwhile to visit is the Edvard Andersson Greenhouse—it displays flora from the Mediterranean climate. To get there take Bus 40 or T-ban Universitet. Daily 11 am-5 pm. 50 SEK. Veit Wittrocks vag 5, Stockholm. Phone 5459-1700. <http://www.bergianska.se>.

#### **Kungsträdgården**

The King's Garden is in the city center and has a view of the Royal Palace and the Grand Hotel. A famous statue of Karl XII shares this space with many swanky cafes. There are outdoor concerts in summer and an ice-skating rink in winter. Access via Hamngatan at one end or Stromkajen at the other.

#### **Ralambsholvsparken**

Located on Kungsholmen, this park is set on the shore of Lake Malaren. It's a fine place for a walk along the water, with a path that runs from City Hall to Vasterbron (the Western Bridge). Under the bridge you'll find a grassy lawn and sandy beach.

#### **Tantolunden**

Snuggled into the southern slopes of Sodermalm are hundreds of tiny cottages and picturesque gardens. Locals have tended the gardens since the late 19th century. Admire the flowers in the spring and the fruits in the autumn. The area is a 10-minute walk from either Hornstull or Skanstull subway stations.

### **Amusement Parks**

#### **Grona Lund**

You'll find outdoor rides, arcades, shows, concerts and small cafes at this amusement park. You can easily spend an entire day there, and it's not just for children. There are often concerts on weekend evenings. Open May-September. Call or visit the Web site for details. 80 SEK entry for ages 7-64; 90 SEK June 12-August 15. Lilla Allmanna Grand 9, Djurgarden, Stockholm. Phone 5875-0100. <http://www.gronalund.com>.

### **Other Options**

#### **Junibacken**

Although primarily based on the stories of Astrid Lindgren, Junibacken also brings to life characters from other Swedish children's writers. The centerpiece is an enchanting train ride through the worlds of *Pippi Longstocking*, *Emil of Lonneberga*, *Karlsson on the Roof* and many other favorites. There's also an old-fashioned cafe and Sweden's largest bookshop for children. Open January-May and September-December Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-5 pm; June and August daily 10 am-5 pm; July daily 9 am-6 pm. 125 SEK adults (145 SEK 28 July-August); 111 SEK children ages 2-15 (125 SEK 28 July-August). Galarvarvsvagen, Djurgarden, Stockholm. Phone 5872-3000. <http://www.junibacken.se>.

### **Shopping**

Stockholm is a fun place to shop or simply browse. Stores are clean, with friendly staff, and the high quality of items is reflected in prices, so you may find things to be fairly expensive, but you get what you pay for.

In the Norrmalm area, the best shopping streets are Drottninggatan, Kungsgatan and Biblioteksgatan. Stop in at the well-known Nordiska Kompaniet department store (known simply as "NK"), which was founded in the 1800s, or take a more affordable trip to PUB or Ahlens City. Gamla Stan is the place to shop for souvenirs and Swedish crafts. The area around Upplandsgatan in Vasatan is where you should look for antiques. Also check out the shops of the major museums, which are excellent.

**Shopping Hours:** Monday-Friday 10 am-6 pm, Saturday 10 am-5 pm. Some larger stores are also open Sunday noon-4 pm. Many stores in downtown Stockholm stay open until 7 pm on weeknights. Suburban shopping malls can be open as late as 9 pm.

### **Department Stores**

#### **Ahlens City**

This is the largest department store in Sweden, with apparel, household goods, music and more. Open Monday-Friday 10 am-9 pm, Saturday 10 am-7 pm, Sunday 11 am-6 pm. Klarabergsgatan 50, Norrmalm, Stockholm. Phone 676-6000. <http://www.ahlens.com>.

#### **NK**

The extensive clothing departments feature North American as well as European styles. The interior-design section is worth a peek, too. Open Monday-Friday 10 am-8 pm, Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday noon-5 pm. Hamngatan 27, Norrmalm, Stockholm. Phone 762-8000. <http://www.nk.se>.

#### **PUB**

This department store has a great selection of clothes for every member of the family, as well as software, kitchen appliances, tools, furnishings, books, gifts and sporting goods. It even has coffee shops, restaurants and hair salons—all in two giant buildings. Open Monday-Friday 10 am-7 pm, Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday noon-5 pm. Kungsgatan at Hotorget, Norrmalm, Stockholm. Phone 402-1611. <http://www.pub.se>.

### **Galleries**

#### **Puckeln**

The center of Stockholm's thriving art scene sits on a raised side street above Hornsgatan. There are about a dozen workshops and galleries, with everything from paintings and sculptures to jewelry and glass. Opening times vary, but go between noon and 4 pm to be on the safe side. Hornsgatan, Södermalm, Stockholm. <http://www.puckeln.com>.

### **Markets**

#### **Hotorget**

This outdoor market offers fresh produce, dried fruit, flowers and a large selection of exotic foodstuffs from Africa, the Middle East and Asia. On Sunday, it's more of a flea market. Most vendors are open 10 am-6 pm. Hotorget, Norrmalm, Stockholm.

#### **Hotorgshallen**

This indoor food market under Hotorget has delicatessens, cafes and shops selling fresh meat, cheese, exotic teas and coffees, and traditional Swedish produce. Open Monday-Thursday 10 am-6 pm, Friday 10 am-6:30 pm, Saturday 10 am-4 pm. Hotorget, Norrmalm, Stockholm. Phone 5084-4048. <http://www.hotorgshallen.se>.

#### **Ostermalmshallen**

This indoor food market is one of Stockholm's largest—and a local favorite. Built in 1889, its family-owned shops and restaurants offer the best variety in Stockholm. Great smells, lots to watch. The small cafes are definitely worth sampling. Open Monday-Friday 9:30 am-6 pm (till 6:30 pm on Friday), Saturday 9:30 am-4 pm. Ostermalmstorg, Ostermalm, Stockholm. <http://www.ostermalmshallen.se>.



### **Street**

This variety market is full of local artists, craftspeople and grassroots thinkers peddling their wares, services or ideas. Included in the expansive indoor area is a restaurant and cafe serving locally produced foods and beverages. Open May-September Saturday and Sunday 11 am-4 pm, but call first. Hornstulls Strand, Stockholm. Phone 669-4780.

### **Shopping Areas**

#### **Biblioteksgatan**

All the big names are in this upscale quarter. Designer boutiques jostle with jewelers for your patronage. Plenty of cozy cafes line the side streets—but they're pricey, too. Open Monday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm. Biblioteksgatan, Norrmalm, Stockholm. <http://www.biblioteksgaten.se>.

#### **Gallerian**

This is central Stockholm's main shopping gallery, with 60 shops and cafes offering clothing, electrical products, gifts and home goods. Open Monday-Friday 10 am-7 pm, Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday 11 am-4 pm. Hamngatan 37, Norrmalm, Stockholm. <http://www.gallerian.se>.

#### **Osterlanggatan/Vasterlanggatan**

Osterlanggatan is the lesser-trafficked twin of Vasterlanggatan. It provides a more authentic option of shopping for craft and entrepreneurial designers' boutiques. There are a handful of quality boutiques among the masses of tourist shops on Vasterlanggatan. Gamla Stan, Stockholm.

#### **Sturegallerian**

This shopping arcade offers more exclusive luxury items than the large department stores. You could spend a day wandering through the shops. Fortunately, there are many cafes where you can stop for a break. Open Monday-Friday 10 am-7 pm, Saturday 10 am-5 pm, Sunday noon-5 pm. Grev Turegatan 9 (at Stureplan), Norrmalm, Stockholm. Phone 453-5067. <http://www.sturegallerian.se>.

### **Specialty Stores**

#### **10-gruppen/10 Swedish Designers**

This fabulous designer shop is renowned for its bags made of bright and bold-patterned fabrics. They make great gifts, and include some of the most beautiful toiletry bags you will ever come across. Tiogruppen has designed more than 700 unique patterns for just about anything you can cover with cloth. Open Monday-Friday 10 am-6:30 pm, Saturday 11 am-5 pm, Sunday noon-4 pm. Gotgatan 25, Sodermalm, Stockholm. Phone 643-2504. <http://www.tiogruppen.com>.

#### **125 kvadrat**

Authentic Swedish arts and crafts at its best, with many artists available for a chat in the shop. There are beautiful things made of gold, silver, glass and metal, as well as ceramics and textiles. Open Monday-Friday 11 am-6 pm, Saturday and Sunday 11 am-4 pm. Kocksgatan 17, Sodermalm, Stockholm. Phone 640-9777. <http://www.125kvadrat.com>.

#### **Blas & Knada**

Showcase for Swedish glass and ceramics design, all of high quality. One or two working artists are always available at the shop, which gets most busy on Saturday. Limited editions and unique artwork, and products change frequently. Open Tuesday-Friday 11 am-6 pm, Saturday 11 am-4 pm, Sunday noon-4 pm. Hornsgatan 26A, Sodermalm, Stockholm. Phone 642-7767. <http://www.blasknada.com>.

#### **Carl Wennberg**

This is an outlet of the famous Lappish handicraft shop in Kiruna that was opened perhaps 100 years ago. The beautiful, authentic art and handicrafts—great souvenirs made of leather, wood and tin—are those of the Sami people. These indigenous people have lived all across Northern Scandinavia for 9,000 years, but now their numbers are reduced to only about 70,000. Open Monday-Friday 10 am-6 pm, Saturday 11 am-3 pm. Svartmangatan 11, Gamla

Stan, Stockholm. Phone 201-721. <http://www.wennberg.com>.

### **Chokladfabriken**

Heavenly delicacies made of chocolate and marzipan. You can try the pralines and petits fours in the cafe of the shop—with a cup of excellent, thick hot chocolate, of course. Additional locations at Regeringsgatan 58 and Grevgatan 37. Open Monday-Friday 10 am-6:30 pm, Saturday 10 am-5 pm. Renstiernas gata 12, Sodermalm, Stockholm. Phone 640-0568. <http://www.chokladfabriken.com>.

### **DesignTarget**

This small chain of stores specializes in the best of modern Scandinavian design, from stunningly useful household items to hilariously useless gadgets and gizmos. There's fun to be had just browsing and trying to guess what the products do. Open Monday-Friday 10 am-7 pm, Saturday 10 am-5 pm, Sunday noon-5 pm. Gotgatan 31, Sodermalm, Stockholm. Phone 644-1678. <http://www.designtarget.se>.

### **Efva Attling**

Evfa started her career as a popular model and singer but is now a well-known designer and silversmith. Her jewelry is beautiful and avant-garde. Top stars including Madonna, Kylie Minogue and Jennifer Aniston love her creations. She also designs a very interesting collection of eyewear and crystals. There is a second location at at Hornsgaten 42 (phone 714-9974). Open Monday-Friday 10:30 am-6 pm, Saturday 11 am-4 pm. Hornsgatan 44, Sodermalm, Stockholm. Phone 642-9949. <http://www.efvaattlingstockholm.com>.

### **Guðrun Sjøden**

Colorful ladies' fashions made of natural materials, with vibrant patterns and simple but striking style. Open Monday-Friday 10 am-6:30 pm, Saturday 10 am-4 pm, Sunday noon-4 pm. Regeringsgatan 30, Norrmalm, Stockholm. Phone 149-595. <http://www.gudrunsjoden.com>.

### **IKEA**

This is the original Swedish furniture and accessories store. Get it all right from the source at bargain prices. Open daily 10 am-8 pm. Kungens Kurva, Skarholmen, Stockholm. Phone 439-050. <http://www.ikea.se>.

### **Konsthantverkarna**

This shop specializes in arts and crafts, pottery, jewelry and other handmade gifts from Sweden. Open Tuesday-Friday 11 am-6 pm, Saturday 11 am-4 pm. Sodermalmstorg 4, Slussen, Norrmalm, Stockholm. Phone 611-0370. <http://www.konsthantverkarna.se>.

### **Svensk Hemslojd**

High-quality but affordable traditional Swedish handicrafts made of ceramic, wood, cast iron, wool or linen. Open Monday-Friday 10 am-6 pm, Saturday 10 am-3 pm. Sveavagen 44, Norrmalm, Stockholm. Phone 232-115. <http://www.svenskhemslojd.com>.

### **Tjallamalla**

Trendy fashion for ladies and gentlemen, created by a bunch of lesser-known but very promising Swedish designers. In this shop you'll find a lot of unique clothes, shoes and jewelry not available anywhere else in the world. Open Monday-Friday noon-6 pm, Saturday noon-4 pm, Sunday noon-3 pm. Bondegatan 46, Sodermalm, Stockholm. Phone 640-7847. <http://www.tjallamalla.com>.

### **Tomtar & Troll**

Luck-bearing fuzzy gnomes called *tomtar* (popular lucky charms in Sweden), hairy Swedish trolls and black witches on broomsticks are all hand-sewn and -painted by Kicki Floden and Maiha Tahko. Open Monday-Friday 11 am-6 pm, Saturday 11 am-4 pm. Sodra Benickebrinken 4, Gamla Stan, Stockholm. Phone 810-5629. <http://www.tomtar.se>.

## **DINING**

## Dining Overview

From fast food to haute cuisine, Stockholm offers all the dining options that a visitor would expect from a modern European capital city.

If you're looking for traditional Swedish fare, then fresh, locally caught fish is often the anchor of the menu along with potatoes seasoned with dill. But keep an eye out for elk and reindeer, too—commonly served with lingonberry or cloudberry jelly. The smorgasbord is a treat not to be missed, particularly at holiday times such as Christmas or midsummer. The contents of the Swedish smorgasbord vary according to family traditions but often include pickled and fried herring, roast ham, Jansson's temptation (potatoes, onions and anchovies roasted in cream), beetroot salad, meatballs, sausages and marinated salmon.

Of course, you'll want to have a glass of aquavit in hand for regular toasts (it comes in dozens of subtle and not-so-subtle flavors).

Stureplan, Slussen, Kungstradgarden and Ostermalm have the highest concentrations of restaurants and are within walking distance of the city center. You can also stroll along the medieval streets of Gamla Stan and discover hidden specialty restaurants.

Breakfast is included at most hotels but otherwise is difficult to find. Lunch is typically served 11 am-1 pm, where the daily specials (*dagens rätt*) usually provide the best value. Dinner is usually held 5-8 pm, with most people preferring to eat between 7 and 8 pm.

Expect to pay within these general guidelines for a dinner for one, not including drinks or tip: \$ = less than 200 SEK; \$\$ = 200 SEK-400 SEK; \$\$\$ = 401 SEK-700 SEK; \$\$\$\$ = more than 700 SEK.

### Local & Regional Bistro Sud

A lively atmosphere and beautifully prepared food explain Bistro Sud's popularity. The menu isn't huge, but it's well-balanced, and the desserts are excellent. There's also a small bar that attracts a regular clientele. Daily for dinner, Saturday and Sunday for brunch also. Reservations recommended. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Swedensborgsgatan 8a, Sodermalm, Norrmalm, Stockholm. Phone 640-4111.

### Clas pa Hornet

Excellent Swedish gourmet dishes served with a Mediterranean twist, all in a small red wooden house that dates from the 18th century. Open Monday-Friday 11:30 am-midnight, Saturday 5 pm-midnight. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Surbrunnsgatan 20, Vasastan, Stockholm. Phone 165-136. <http://www.claspahornet.se>.

### Den Gyldene Freden

The name means "The Golden Peace," and having served food since 1722, the place is as good as dining gets in Stockholm. Many of Sweden's best-loved folk singers and poets have been regulars, and the atmosphere retains an intimate, historical feel. The ground-floor bistro serves traditional Swedish meals, and the more formal restaurant in the vaulted basement offers top-notch modern cuisine. Open Monday-Saturday Monday-Friday 11:30 am-2:30 pm and 5 pm-10 pm, Saturday 1 pm-11 pm. Closed Monday in July. Reservations recommended. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Osterlanggatan 51, Gamla Stan, Stockholm. Phone 249-760. <http://www.gyldenefreden.se>.

### Djurgardsbrons Sjocafe

This wonderful restaurant by the water is a great place to relax and enjoy traditional Swedish cuisine. It's by the bridge that connects Ostermalm and Djurgarden, a pleasant 10- to 15-minute walk from the city center. Daily for lunch and dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Galarvarvsvagen 2, Djurgarden, Stockholm. Phone 660-5757.

### **Edsbacka Krog**

You have to leave the city limits for a 20-minute taxi ride in order to dine at what may be Sweden's best restaurant, and it's worth every bit of the 9 mi/15 km. The setting is near the Edsbacka castle, north of Stockholm, and the building itself dates back to 1626. Christer Lingstrom's Swedish cuisine served with a French touch regularly receives rave reviews. The stunning wine list is probably Sweden's best. If you can't splurge, try the slightly less-expensive bistro, which offers culinary samples for lunch on weekdays. Open Monday-Saturday for dinner. Reservations a must. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Sollentunavagen 223, Sollentuna. Phone 631-0034. <http://www.edsbackakrog.se>.

### **Grand Verandan**

Go hungry and give yourself plenty of time for a traditional Swedish smorgasbord of the highest standards. Try the Swedish punch or Brannvin, a Swedish vodka first made in 1467. Daily 7 am-11 pm. Reservations recommended. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. In the Grand Hotel, Sodra Blasieholmshamnen 8, Stockholm. Phone 679-3586. <http://www.grandhotel.se>.

### **Kaknastornet**

This restaurant serves traditional Swedish and Continental cuisine. Along with the fine dining, there's a great view of Stockholm from the top of its tower. In the evening, you can watch the ferries leaving for Finland. Daily for lunch and dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Morka Kroken 28-30, Stockholm. Phone 667-2180. <http://kaknastornet.se>.

### **Malardrottningen Cafe**

The atmosphere aboard the luxury yacht once owned by American heiress Barbara Hutton is pleasant—and the Swedish cuisine is tasty. Open Tuesday-Saturday for dinner only. Reservations recommended. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Visa and MasterCard accepted. Riddarholmen, Stockholm. Phone 5451-8780. <http://www.restaurangmalardrottningen.se>.

### **Stadshuskallaren**

The menu is unusual: Groups of eight or more can choose one of the extravagant dinners served at past Nobel Prize banquets. (The menu begins with the 1901 meal.) Smaller parties are automatically served last year's offering. The ambience is distinguished, the dress code is formal, and the food is served on the classic Nobel table settings—the same crockery, cutlery and glassware used at the actual event. You are not, however, encouraged to make an acceptance speech after finishing your meal. Open Monday-Friday for lunch and dinner, Saturday for dinner only. Reservations required one day in advance; five days in advance for groups of eight or more. Jacket and tie required for men. \$\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Stockholm City Hall, Stockholm. Phone 506-32200. <http://www.stadshuskallaren.gastrogate.com>.

### **Sturehof**

This restaurant is located at the most common meeting place in Stockholm: "the mushroom" at Stureplan. You'll recognize it when you see it. You can order sampler plates of traditional Swedish foods, along with some of the best fish and meat dinners in town. Daily for lunch and dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Stureplan 2, Stockholm. Phone 440-5730. <http://www.sturehof.com>.

### **Tranan**

This is the place to sample very affordable Swedish fare—try *biff Rydberg* (entrecote Swedish style), *kottbullar* (meatballs), fried herring and pea soup. Lovely, old-fashioned interior with red-and-white plaid tablecloths. Very popular place. Open Monday-Thursday 11:30 am-midnight, Friday 11:30 am-1 am, Saturday 5 pm-1 am, Sunday 5-11 pm. \$-\$\$\$. No credit cards. Karlbergsvagen 14, Vasastan (at Odenplan), Stockholm. Phone 5272-8100. <http://www.tranan.se>.

## **Cafes & Tearooms**

### **Classic Tea Room**

A small corner of a foreign field that is forever England. Opened by a couple of Anglophile Swedes, this small establishment serves the quintessential English afternoon tea complete with cake stands loaded with scones and cakes. Open daily 11 am-6 pm. Reservations recommended. Rorstrandsgatan 25, Stockholm. Phone 631-0200. <http://www.classictearoom.se>.

### **Lasse I Parken**

To duck out of Langholmsgatan's traffic and into this flower-filled garden is like going from the city to the countryside in one step. The cafe's serving area is in a 17th-century building, and the tables and chairs are in the garden. There's also an outdoor theater, which has become one of the main venues for Stockholm's fringe drama scene. Terrific homemade buns, cakes and bread. May-September daily for lunch, with performances in July and August. \$. Hogalidsgatan 56, Sodermalm, Stockholm. Phone 658-3395. <http://www.lasseiparken.se>.

### **Rosendals Wardshus**

Perched on Djurgarden's highest point, this cafe is also often the high point of a walk around the island. May-September, the place attracts crowds of Stockholmers. The atmosphere is always relaxed, as people borrow deck chairs and stretch out across the well-tended lawns. Daily for lunch and dinner. \$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Rosendalsterassen 3, Djurgarden, Stockholm. Phone 661-3970. <http://www.rosendalswardshus.se>.

## **SECURITY**

### **Etiquette**

Attractive but cool—these words can describe the physical surroundings in Sweden as well as the character of the country's people. Visitors who are used to enthusiastic greetings and outspoken colleagues will find it quiet in this part of northern Europe. Those who listen carefully to their acquaintances and give business relationships some time to grow are likely to find their visits both enjoyable and productive.

**Appointments**—When doing business in Sweden, you may make contact directly with the person or company you wish to meet; it is not necessary to have a local intermediary. It is wise to confirm meeting dates and times at least two weeks in advance of making travel plans. You are expected to be precisely on time for all events in Sweden, both social and business.

**Personal Introductions**—A handshake is the common form of greeting for both men and women. English is widely understood in Sweden, so it is not necessary to translate business materials or business cards into Swedish. Likewise, no interpretation assistance is required for meetings, and visitors should feel confident relying on English for all purposes. Because Sweden is an egalitarian and socialist country, the use of titles is not encouraged. It is acceptable to make introductions using both the first and last name, and subsequently to refer to an individual by his or her first name.

**Negotiating**—Business negotiations take place in the office rather than at restaurants or other locations. Swedes tend to move to the business at hand in short order and welcome only a brief interlude of small talk. A calm and attentive approach for business meetings will be appreciated. A high value is placed on listening to the ideas being discussed by others and responding to the general mood of the group. Selling strategies should rely on facts and minimize expressions that exaggerate the value of your product. Take time to establish a business relationship. In Swedish companies, decisions are typically made slowly and by consensus, so don't expect instant results.

**Business Entertaining**—In most cases, it is neither expected nor appreciated for discussions to continue during mealtimes. When you do dine with Swedish business contacts, it will most likely be at lunch; your Swedish acquaintances are likely to consider evening a time to be

spent with their families. Lunch typically takes place between 11:30 am and 12:30 pm. When evening meals do take place with business colleagues, they generally begin around 7 pm. Avoid eating with your hands (even hamburgers) unless others are doing so. When taking a break during your meal, lay the utensils on the plate in an inverted "V," and when you are finished eating, lay the utensils parallel.

If you must leave the table during a meal, you should specifically excuse yourself from your table companion (the person on your right if you are female, the person on your left if you are male). It is considered impolite to leave the table too often or during speeches. On some occasions, drinking and singing will accompany a meal. You may decline alcohol altogether or drink low-alcohol "folk" beer if you prefer. To toast properly, you say *skål* (pronounced *skaal*). You should look each person in the eyes while raising your glass to toast. After taking a drink, you should look each person in the eyes once again before setting your glass down. Tipping is not required in Sweden, but if you receive excellent service, a 10% tip would be appropriate and appreciated.

**Body Language**—Swedes are less physically expressive than citizens of many other countries. Visitors should not expect physical contact from Swedish business acquaintances, though close friends do hug and touch one another. Although the Swedish people are generally very reserved, you should feel confident in being yourself in Sweden, as Swedes are receptive to visitors and interested in the lifestyles of others.

**Gift Giving**—Business gifts are neither expected nor common. If you are invited to someone's home for dinner, take along a nice bouquet of flowers or a bottle of wine. The wrapping around the flowers should be removed before presenting them to the host or hostess. If you receive a gift, a thank-you note by any method will be appreciated.

**Conversation**—Swedes tend to speak quietly, so it's a good idea to keep your volume of speech at a low level. Stay away from personal inquiries such as those about marital status and family members unless your acquaintance first broaches such subjects. Most Swedes enjoy talking about nature-related topics (excursions to forests, lakes and the archipelago), as well as current sports topics. Although politics is a much-debated topic in Sweden, overt expression of anything other than middle-ground political opinions is deemed somewhat embarrassing.

### **Personal Safety**

Stockholm is very safe compared with other European cities. Crime rates are low, but we do recommend taking a taxi at night, rather than public transportation. Although pickpockets aren't a huge problem, you should always be on your guard, especially during festivals and outdoor events. Gamla Stan is a high-theft area, as is the area around the central train station. Women should keep firm holds on their purses on the subway and in its stations. Most petty crime occurs outside bars and clubs around closing time.

For the latest information, contact your country's travel-advisory agency.

### **Health**

No vaccinations are required to enter Sweden. General sanitation is excellent, and the food and water are both safe to consume.

If you need medical assistance, you should go to the city's main health center, CityAkuten, where both general and specialist doctors are available. Most doctors speak English. Open Monday-Friday 8 am-6 pm. Apelbergsgatan 48, near Hotorget, Stockholm. Phone 020-150-150 (but it's better just to turn up, take a ticket and wait your turn).  
<http://www.praktikertjanst.se/cityakuten>.

They also provide emergency dental care at their CityAkuten Dental facility, which is at Olof Palmes Gata 13A. Open daily 8 am-8 pm. Phone 412-2900.

In an emergency, dial 112.

Many drugs that are available over the counter in other countries are not available in Sweden without a prescription (for example, decongestants). We strongly recommend that you take sufficient amounts of medicine with you.

Prescription drugs are only available at Apoteket facilities (the government-run pharmacy chain). Apotekets are located at Arlanda Airport, near major bus and subway stations and in the central area of most communities—look for the green signs. They are typically open Monday-Friday 9 am-6 pm.

A 24-hour Apoteket is located in the middle of town, near Central Station. Apoteket CW Scheele, Klarabergsgatan 64, Stockholm. Phone 454-8130.

For the latest information, contact your country's health-advisory agency.

### **Disabled Advisory**

Stockholm has so many old structures that wheelchair access is not always available. Many older buildings and tourist venues—although technically accessible—are not wheelchair friendly.

For information on accessibility, call 4213-4801 or visit <http://www.equality.se>. Also check out the information in English for tourists with handicaps at <http://www.visit-stockholm.com/about-stockholm/disabled.htm>.

### **Dos & Don'ts**

Do rent or borrow a bicycle to get around on the well-designed bike pathways in and around Stockholm.

Don't order bottled mineral water in Swedish restaurants. Tap water is available for free and is of excellent quality.

Do have a photo ID with you in the evening. Many clubs won't let you enter without one, especially if you look younger than 25.

Don't wear shoes indoors when invited to someone's home.

Do go to the movies in Stockholm. Almost all flicks are shown in the original language with Swedish subtitles.

Don't avoid Stockholm in winter. It may be very cold and the days will be very short, but a sunny noon when the city is covered in white snow is a magical experience—and later you might even see the colorful explosions of aurora borealis in the night sky.

Do go to the most expensive restaurants for lunch. They often have at least one astonishingly low-priced set menu, which would cost you three times as much for dinner.

Don't be afraid of Stockholm's prices. A decade ago, the city was considered very expensive, but now it's in line with many other European cities (Oslo is a lot more expensive).

## **FACTS**

### **Geostats**

**Passport/Visa Requirements:** Citizens of Australia, Canada, the European Union and the U.S. need passports but not visas for stays of up to three months. Reconfirm travel document requirements with your carrier before departure.

**Population:** 1,264,000.

**Languages:** Swedish. You'll find that most people have a very good knowledge of English, as well.

**Predominant Religions:** Christian (Evangelical Lutheran).

**Time Zone:** 1 hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (+1 GMT). Daylight Saving Time is observed from the end of March to the end of October.

**Voltage Requirements:** 220 Volts, 50 Hz.

**Telephone Codes:** 46, country code; 8,city code;

### **Money**

#### **Taxes**

Sweden has a value-added tax (VAT) called "MOMS," which is 25% for most items, 12% for noncooked food items and 6% for travel, books, newspapers and other cultural items. The tax is always included in the price.

With a little paperwork, non-European Union residents can obtain a refund of 17.5% of the tax for purchases of more than 200 SEK in a single store during a single visit. You need to present three things to the VAT refund counter at the airport before departure to get a refund: the article you purchased, the receipt and a refund form (which must be picked up at the place of purchase). Also note that only unused goods will be eligible for the refund, so don't open any packages before departure. Assuming everything is in order, the officer will give you a refund in the currency of your choice. For additional information, contact Global Refund Sverige AB, Vastmannagatan 8, Stockholm. Phone 5452-8440.

You can avoid paying the tax by having goods shipped home.

#### **Tipping**

The tip is always included in the price of your meal or service, but the custom is to round up. For great service, feel free to add an extra 5%-10%.

#### **Weather**

Spring and summer are mild, with temperatures ranging 60-77 F/16-25 C. It can be windy and wet at times, so carry an umbrella and jacket. Fall gets cool (40-60 F/5-15 C), and winter is dark and cold though dry, with temperatures from 40 F/5 C to well below freezing.

Stockholm's rainy season is June-November, when an average of 2-3 in/5-8 cm of precipitation falls each month. Some snow falls in the city from November through March. There's never more than a few inches/centimeters on the ground, however, and major streets are kept clear.

The best time to visit is May-August, though some smaller businesses close for vacation in July.



## What to Wear

No matter when you visit, we recommend dressing in layers. It can be cool to cold through June. Evenings, especially, can get cold. Be sure you take along a compact umbrella, as there are frequent showers all summer.

Smart (or business) casual clothing does well in most circumstances. Better restaurants may have dress codes. For important business meetings, dress conservatively: dark suit, white shirt and tie for men and the equivalent for women.

## Transportation

Although Stockholm's geography may seem intimidating (all those islands look like a navigational nightmare on a map), be assured that the city is very walkable. The city center is compact, and an excellent public transportation system is useful for getting to outlying parts of town.

We recommend buying a Stockholm Card, available at tourist-information centers. It's good for rides on city buses and the subway, as well as admission to lots of attractions.

## Public Transportation

Storstockholms Lokaltrafik (SL) provides clean, efficient and reliable public transportation. The subway, or *tunnelbana*, has three lines (green, red and blue) that go throughout the city and to some outlying areas. There are also commuter train lines (*pendeltag*) connecting the northern and southern ends of the city.

The *tunnelbana* and *pendeltag* lines run Monday-Friday 5 am-1 am, Saturday and Sunday 24 hours. Stations are marked with a big blue T or J, and the main station is T-Centralen, in the heart of town. Buses run on all major streets, usually every 5-10 minutes. In summer, however, services operate on a reduced schedule.

Tickets are valid for both the subway and the buses. They start at 20 SEK for a one-way trip. Ten prepaid single tickets can be purchased for the price of nine. We recommend that you buy a travel pass or the Stockholm Card. The card entitles you to unlimited use of the SL subway and buses and free parking, and it's good for entry to dozens of city attractions. A 24-hour card costs 100 SEK for adults. Cards for 72 hours, seven days and 30 days are also available. You can purchase the cards at hotels, tourist-information centers, Central Station rail terminal and SL information centers in many of the subway stations, including T-Centralen. Phone 600-1000. <http://www.sl.se>.

Approximately 90 of 100 subway stations of the Stockholm *tunnelbana* double as art galleries. More than two-thirds of them have been colorfully decorated by Swedish avant-garde artists.

## Taxi

Taxis are unregulated in Stockholm, but many have meters. Genuine taxis have yellow number plates instead of the white ones used for private cars. Most companies operate 24 hours a day, and many drivers speak English. The easiest way to arrange a taxi is to reserve one by phone.

Taxi 020 has drivers who are also registered city guides. You can call and make arrangements with them for either a one- or two-hour tour of the city; the fee is 550 SEK (one hour, one-

four passengers) or 1,100 SEK (two hours, one-four passengers). Phone 242-555.  
<http://www.taxi020.se>.

Don't get in a taxi that is not licensed. Unofficial taxis are often driven by criminals, and there have been numerous reports of passengers being robbed. Other reliable taxi companies include Transfer Taxi (phone toll-free 020-350-000; <http://www.transfer.se>) and Taxi Kurir (phone 0771-860-000; <http://www.taxikurir.se>).

## Helsinki, Finland

### OVERVIEW

#### Introduction

Helsinki, Finland's capital, is one of the most interesting and enjoyable cities to visit in Europe. Many first-time visitors associate Finland with extreme cold, but the summers—especially in the south—can be magically warm and flooded with light. Even in the depths of winter, daylight is short, but present. While sometimes the skies may be overcast, there are clear, sunny days when Helsinki is illuminated by the sparkle of snow and the dazzling, frozen Baltic.



In recent decades, many inhabitants of Finland's rural regions have migrated to the Helsinki metropolitan area, which has been growing at an amazing rate since the mid-1990s. Helsinki's citizens may have close ties to their rural roots, but they also have fallen in step with the urban beat. Their sense of style, innovation and design is evident throughout Helsinki.

Visitors can stroll through any local park or square in Helsinki and will probably stumble upon an impressive piece of contemporary sculpture. Helsinki's sparkling nightlife and lively cafe culture add much to its travel appeal. Its terrace cafes are often packed with Finns and visitors alike.

Although not generally a city that wears its history on its sleeve, Helsinki offers fine examples of neoclassical architecture in the historic center around Senate Square. Although the city was founded in the 16th century, most of Helsinki's architecture dates from the 19th century or later. The Helsinki skyline is still evolving as striking buildings emerge downtown.

Helsinki's bold architecture mirrors a national willingness to adopt new technologies and innovations. The head office of Nokia, the mobile-communications giant, is housed in a gleaming glass palace in Espoo, just west of Helsinki. But Finland's traditional roots are never far away. Finns, including Helsinki residents, regard cell phones and other wireless-based technologies simply as what they are: tools.

For relaxation, Helsinki residents and visitors turn to cross-country skiing, ice fishing, sailing and relaxing in the sun by the lake. Finns love fresh air and, even in winter, can be found stepping briskly through Helsinki's parks, around the islands and across the frozen harbor and lakes.

And after a brisk walk, what could be better than a hot *gloggi* (spiced wine) in one of Helsinki's many bars? (Some even provide blankets for customers who wish to sit outdoors, though it is now more common to find propane heaters—especially as smoking is not allowed indoors.)

Visitors to Helsinki shouldn't miss out on the national pastime—a sauna. It is usually followed by a jump into a nearby (chilly) lake to help keep the blood flowing.

### **Must See or Do**

**Sights**—The old island fortress of Suomenlinna; the view of the city from the tower of the Olympic Stadium; the imposing walls carved out of the bedrock at Temppeliaukion Kirkko; the majestic Helsinki Cathedral and Senate Square area.

**Museums**—Paintings from the romantic movement at the Ateneum; the open-air museum of traditional rural buildings on the island of Seurasaari; the presentations of Finnish history at the National Museum; modern art at the spectacular Kiasma.

**Memorable Meals**—*Muikku* (a regional fish) with reindeer-liver mousse at Elite; crayfish, when in season, at Kappeli; *blini*, or a bear steak, at Saslik; fried herring, beetroot and mashed potatoes at the earthy Sea Horse; sirloin of reindeer at Lappi.

**Late Night**—The cosmopolitan atmosphere at Kosmos restaurant; mingling with hipsters at Botta; Finnish karaoke and the legendary Thursday night throng at Kaarle XII.

**Walks**—Lazy strolls along the islands of Suomenlinna and Seurasaari; a walk around Kaivopuisto Park, with stops at various waterside bars.

**Especially for Kids**—The rides and attractions at Linnanmaki amusement park and the adjacent Sea Life aquarium; Suomenlinna toy museum; the seals at Korkeasaari Zoo; exhibits, concerts and theater at The Cable Factory; in winter, sledding on the slopes of Kaivopuisto.

### **Geography**

Helsinki is a good city for walking: Many of its sites are close together. The city is built on a peninsula, and its coastal promenades trace the shoreline. Forests that extend to Lapland in the north and Siberia in the east also reach close to the heart of the city.

Although Helsinki spreads east and west over several islands, the center of the city stretches north past the railroad station and south to the water, where several fingers of land jut out into the Gulf of Finland. There are a few attractions that will draw you farther north, but most places of interest lie in the city's center. The main north-south axis is Mannerheimintie, and the east-west axes are the shopping streets of Bulevardi and the Esplanade. The intersection of these three routes roughly marks the real city center.

Even though the city has many prominent landmarks, such as the Olympic Tower and the Helsinki Cathedral, these are only sporadically visible, even though few city blocks extend higher than six or seven floors. Of infinite help are the street maps found at most major intersections. For a quick way to get your bearings, hop on a 3T Tram, which passes by most of the major landmarks.

### **History**

Swedish King Gustaf Vasa founded Helsinki in 1550 as a commercial rival to Estonia's Tallinn. The idea was not an immediate success, and King Gustaf had to force people to migrate from the rest of Finland—especially the west coast—to the new town, which was first located where the river Vantaa flows into the sea, several miles/kilometers to the north of the present center. The anniversary of this edict, 12 June, is now celebrated as Helsinki Day.

In 1748, fearing the growing power of Russia, Swedish authorities began to fortify Helsinki's offshore islands, creating the impressive fortress of Sveaborg (now Suomenlinna). Nevertheless, in 1809, Russia took over Finland, ousting the Swedish rulers. The Grand Duchy of Finland was created, and Helsinki was declared its capital in 1812. In keeping with the city's new status, its wooden buildings were gradually replaced with landmarks made of stone. Most of them are standing in downtown Helsinki to this day.

During the turmoil of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, Finland declared independence from Russia, and the Sovereign Republic of Finland was created, with Helsinki as its capital. Unfortunately, this move precipitated a short but vicious civil war between those who wanted a Communist state and those who did not, but Helsinki escaped the conflict unscathed.

The city then grew rapidly, with lots of new construction, such as the Olympic Stadium, which was originally intended for the 1940 Olympic Games. However, World War II broke out—during which Russia attempted, but failed, to regain the country—and the stadium did not host the Olympics until 1952. Helsinki was badly bombed by the Russians during the war, but the damaged areas were quickly rebuilt.

Since the 1950s, Helsinki has grown rapidly and has hosted a number of important intergovernmental conferences, especially between the former Soviet Union and the West. Finland had extensive trading links with Russia and, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, suffered an economic recession. It rapidly recovered, however, and in 1995 the country joined the European Union. Four years later, the country adopted the euro as its standard currency.

Unemployment, once a problem in Helsinki and other parts of the country, has fallen to European levels following Finland's integration with western Europe. Culturally and socially, the city is as alive as it has ever been. In 2000, Helsinki was one of nine European Cultural Capitals, while in August 2005, it played host to the World Championship in Athletics, a major event that brought thousands of visiting athletes and spectators to the city. In May 2007, it hosted the Eurovision Song Contest and in September 2009 the UEFA Women's Championship of Soccer. In 2012 it takes on the role of World Design Capital.

## **Port Information**

### **Location**

Helsinki's two main passenger harbors—the South and West Harbors (Etelasatama and Lansisatama), are some way apart. The South Harbour is close to and can be reached on foot from the downtown area—it's where the enormous and unmissable Stockholm ferries (Viking and Silja Lines), many cruise ships and hydrofoils, and fast boats to Tallinn dock. Larger Tallinn ferries run from the West Harbor; bus 15 from near the railway station runs there. Both terminals are served by taxi ranks which are well supplied when ships arrive. Both terminals have cafes but no tourist-information booths.

Cruise ships dock in and around the South Harbour, as well as at Quay C in the Hernesaari area, with small souvenir shops. Taxis need to be ordered in advance to this arrival point, although most cruise operators organize shuttle buses to the city center. The downtown district is a 20-30 minute walk away. However, the ports are developing rapidly; travelers are advised to consult the Web site for the latest information. <http://www.portohelsinki.fi>.

Reliable information for those arriving on cruise and other ships is also available at <http://www.discoverthebaltic.com/helsinki>.

## Potpourri

The tallest building in Helsinki is a "skyscraper" of only 14 floors.

The ferries from Helsinki and Hanko to Stockholm and to a lesser extent, Helsinki to Tallinn, Estonia, are much more popular as party cruises than transportation. But the cruise from Stockholm also meanders through some of the world's most beautiful archipelago scenery.

Finns reportedly have the world's highest rate of coffee consumption per capita—as much as nine cups a day.

Finland maintains a system of national emergency sirens, which can indicate anything from a major forest fire to a full-scale nuclear attack. The sirens in Helsinki are tested every 15th day of the month at noon. If that day is a Saturday or Sunday, the test is made on the following Monday.

The Finnish language doesn't have a future tense. Speakers can overcome that problem by inventive use of the verbs "to come" and "to intend."

Until the break-up of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, Helsinki was used as a backdrop for movies set in Soviet Russia. Many residents remember the giant portrait of Lenin that adorned one facade during the making of *Gorky Park*, while many others got jobs as extras when Helsinki stood in for revolutionary Leningrad in *Reds*.

In 2007, Finland's "Person of the Year" was Bubi, an eagle owl who frequents the Olympic Stadium tower and who takes a keen interest in sporting events—especially soccer. His fame originates from his interruption of an important game between Finland and Belgium when the bird distracted the Belgian goalie by sitting on his goal. The Finnish national team has been nicknamed the "Eagle Owls" ever since.

## SEE & DO Sightseeing

Sightseeing in Helsinki is more pleasant when the sun is out, making summer the best time for tourists to visit, but Finnish buildings, including all museums, hotels and restaurants, always offer warm relief, no matter how cold it gets outside.

High points include some fine examples of 19th-century art and architecture, which reflect the Swedish, Russian and other international influences on Finnish culture—especially as seen in the government buildings and churches around Senate Square. A pleasant walking route starts there, passes the adjacent Kiseleff Bazaar and surrounding shopping area and concludes at the Russian Orthodox cathedral.

The city also has more than 40 museums, from collections of sports memorabilia at the Sports Museum to the two main art museums, the Ateneum and Kiasma, whose exhibits span nearly three centuries of Finnish art. The ultramodern Kiasma—itsself a stunning work of 20th-century architecture—often displays cutting-edge exhibitions, most of which draw inquisitive crowds. Both museums are also great places to have lunch. Their cafes have very good, reasonably priced food.

Beyond the museums, you will find an assortment of amusement parks, zoos, parks and memorials. No summer visitor should leave Helsinki without taking the ferry to the old fortress island of Suomenlinna. It offers several museums and galleries, as well as pleasant walking trails and a miniscule bathing beach.

We highly recommend purchasing a Helsinki Card, available at the city tourist office, most hotels and various shops, including the Stockmann and Sokos department stores and *kioski* (<http://www.helsinki.fi>). The card provides unlimited public transportation in the Helsinki area, free admittance to most museums, discounts on a variety of guided tours and a free gift. It costs 32 euros for an adult one-day card, 14 euros for a child's card. Two- and three-day versions are also available. A card purchased via the Internet can save you three euros—see <http://www.helsinkiexpert.fi/helsinki-card>.

## Historic Sites

### Helsinki Cathedral

This huge white building is said to be the most-photographed building in the country. Impressive for its graceful, towering simplicity, it is one of several buildings in the area designed by C.L. Engel (between 1822 and 1852). Be sure to see the altar painting by T.K. von Nef, as well as the beautiful view of Senate Square and the harbor from the terrace. In addition to hosting religious services, the church is regularly used for public concerts. Visitor hours vary, but the church is generally open Monday-Saturday 9 am-6 pm, Sunday from noon. Open till midnight during summer. Donations accepted. Unioninkatu 29 (on Senate Square), Helsinki. Phone 09-234-0600. <http://tuomiokirkko.kirkkohelsinki.net>.

### Senate Square

One of Helsinki's main tourist magnets, the square takes its name from czarist times, when Finland was part of Russia. The old Senate, now municipal offices, is the building to the east. The statue in the center is of the Russian Czar Nicholas II. Senate Square is dominated on the north side by Helsinki Cathedral and on the west by the neoclassical facade of the original university buildings. To the east lie the Uspenski Cathedral and the promontory of Katajanokki Peninsula. To the south, between Senate Square and the Esplanade, is an area of boutiques, including the Kiseleff Bazaar, and several small restaurants. The Sederholm House, the oldest original building in Helsinki, stands on the square's southeastern corner. Aleksanterinkatu and Unioninkatu, Helsinki.

### Suomenlinna

One of the largest standing citadels in the world, this historic maritime fortress guards the entrance to Helsinki's South Harbor and consists of several linked islands, principally Iso-Mustasaari and Susisaari. It should be top of the list for any Helsinki visitor. Begun by the Swedes to control sea traffic through the Gulf of Finland, it was attacked by an Anglo-French fleet during the Crimean War and then seized by the Russians. Because of its history and the buildings' excellent state of preservation, the island has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It offers pleasant walks, swimming from a small beach or from a number of rocky shelves, seven museums (including a toy museum), several art galleries, some restaurants and a pub brewery. Be aware that some areas are rather rugged, so wear sensible footwear. Ferries operate throughout the year, several times per hour in summer and at least hourly the rest of the year—all leaving from the jetty in front of the Market Square. (Crossings guaranteed 8 am-11 pm.) The trip takes 15 minutes, passes the huge Stockholm ferries and cruise liners and is worth the ride in itself. The visitors center is open May-August daily 10 am-6 pm; September daily 11 am-4 pm; October-April daily 10:30 am-4:30 pm. During the summer (June-August) there are daily guided tours in English at 11 am and 2 pm. Adults 7 euros, free with the Helsinki Card. Separate entrance fees for the museums and other attractions. Suomenlinna C1, Helsinki. Phone 09-684-1880. <http://www.suomenlinna.fi/index.php?lang=eng>.

### Tempeliaukion Kirkko

The aptly named Church in the Rock—carved out of bedrock granite—is difficult to spot from the residential streets where it's hidden from view, but it is worth discovering nonetheless. Dedicated in 1969 and designed by Timo and Tuomo Suomalainen, the nearly circular building has excellent acoustics and a magnificent modern organ. The church hosts many secular and religious concerts but discourages sightseeing during religious services. Open Monday-Friday 10 am-8 pm (Wednesday till 6:30 pm), Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday 11:45 am-1:45 pm. Donations are expected. Lutherinkatu 3 (behind the Parliament, take Tram 8), Helsinki. Phone

09-494-698.

### **Uspenski Cathedral**

Said to be the largest Russian Orthodox church in western Europe, this fascinating building on the eastern side of the harbor features four unique supporting pillars, each carved from a single block of granite. The golden cupolas and brick facade are testaments to the strong cultural and architectural influence of Russia on Finland, although only a tiny minority of the population adhere to this particular religion these days. The cathedral was built in 1868 and fully restored in 1968. Opening times vary. Visitors should dress modestly, and women should cover their heads. Donations are expected. Kanavakatu 1 (at the harbor end of the Esplanade), Helsinki. Phone 09-234-05920 or 09-234-05940.

### **Museums**

#### **Amos Anderson Museum of Art**

Founded by Amos Anderson (1878-1961), a prominent Finnish publisher, the museum specializes in 20th-century Finnish art. It also houses works from earlier periods that come from Anderson's personal collection as well as others. The museum has an annex in Anderson's former summer residence (now the Soderlangvik Museum), on the island of Kimito, and the main building has been refurbished and expanded. Open Monday, Thursday, Friday 10 am-6 pm; Wednesday 10 am-8 pm; Saturday and Sunday 11 am-5 pm. Closed Tuesday. 8 euros adults. Yrjokatu 27, Helsinki. Phone 09-684-4460. <http://www.amosanderson.fi>.

#### **Ateneum**

This is one wing of the Finnish National Gallery and the main national museum for Finnish art from the 18th to mid-20th century. It houses the oldest art collection in Finland. The paintings from the national romantic movement are especially interesting and offer an opportunity to view the work of such lesser-known (outside Finland) artists as Albert Edelfelt, Akseli Gallen-Kallela, Hugo Simberg and Helene Schjerfbeck. Ateneum also houses a collection of foreign art, mounts many special exhibitions and can be enjoyed in conjunction with a visit to the Kiasma modern-art museum on the other side of the railway station. The building is wheelchair accessible via the Ateneuminkuja entrance. Open Tuesday and Friday 9 am-6 pm, Wednesday and Thursday 9 am-8 pm, Saturday and Sunday 11 am-5 pm. 8 euros adults. Kaivokatu 2 (opposite the train station), Helsinki. Phone 09-1733-6401. <http://www.ateneum.fi>.

#### **Design Museum**

This rather small museum concentrates mostly on Finnish design in furniture, glassware and ceramics. In practice, the museum's primary function is showcasing Finnish design abroad by mounting exhibitions in other countries. There also are small rotating exhibitions highlighting contemporary Finnish and international designers, and a pleasant bookshop and cafe. Open June-August daily 11 am-6 pm, September-May Tuesday 11 am-8 pm, Wednesday-Sunday 11 am-6 pm. 8 euros adults, 3 euros students, free for children younger than 12. Higher admission charges for special exhibitions. Korkeavuorenkatu 23, Helsinki. Phone 09-622-0540. <http://www.designmuseum.fi>.

#### **Heureka Science Center**

This large, modern science museum features the history of Finnish contributions to science and technology and is actually located in the city of Vantaa, to the north of Helsinki. The displays can be a bit flashy, but the content is mainly designed for children. The multimedia presentations in the Vattenfall Planetarium, described as one of the most modern digital planetariums in Europe, go over well with both adults and children. Opens daily at 10 am, but closing times vary. Closed midsummer and at Christmas. 21 euros adults, 14.50 euros children (includes one "superfilm"). Consult the Web site for ticket prices, which vary during special exhibitions. Near Tikkurila Station (take local Train H, I, K, P or R to Tikkurila Station or Bus 73, 73N or 611 to Tikkurila), Vantaa. Phone 09-85799. <http://www.heureka.fi/portal/englanti>.

### **Kiasma**

Kiasma translates as "chasm," an intersection of two points, and this striking, modern building symbolized an intersection—if not a large rift—of local opinion when it was completed in 1998. Designed by American Steven Holl, its shimmering structure is now a popular part of the city's landscape. It houses the Finnish Museum of Contemporary Art, featuring Finnish and foreign artists from the 1960s onward. Kiasma is promoted as a "citizen's living room," and it's worth visiting simply to inspect its startling design, even if you don't care for abstract art. The museum shop is also worth a visit, and the terrace bar is a popular meeting place in summer. Open Tuesday 10 am-5 pm, Wednesday-Friday 10 am-8:30 pm, Saturday and Sunday 10 am-6 pm. 8 euros adults (free admission the first Wednesday of each month 5-8 pm). Mannerheiminaukio 2 (around the corner from the train station), Helsinki. Phone 09-1733-6501. <http://www.kiasma.fi>.

### **National Museum**

Situated close to the city center, the Finnish National Museum gives an overview of the interesting, often tumultuous, history of the Finnish people—from prehistory (including the world's oldest fishing net, carbon-dated at 10,000 years) through Swedish and Russian periods to the 20th century. The building alone, a magnificent legacy of the National Romantic genre—part fairytale fortress, part church—is worth inspecting. The coin, silver and jewelry collections are considered standouts. Finnish folk culture from the 18th and 19th centuries is also especially illuminating. Open Tuesday 11 am-8 pm, Wednesday-Sunday 11 am-6 pm; consult the Web site for other times. Closed the week between Christmas and New Year's Day. 7 euros adults, free for children younger than 18. Mannerheimintie 34, Helsinki. Phone 09-4050-9552. To arrange guided tours in English, phone 09-4050-9544. <http://www.nba.fi/en/nmf>.

### **Seurasaari**

Wooden buildings were taken to this island from different regions of Finland, then reassembled and furnished in complete period detail to create an open-air museum of Finnish rural life. It depicts mainly the 18th century, and the construction of various buildings shows both eastern and western influences on Finnish architecture styles. Folk dancing and handicraft displays take place throughout the summer, and handicrafts are on sale in the shops, along with traditional foods, drinks and candies. On Midsummer's Eve (Juhannus), one of the many traditional bonfires is lit on the island, and a traditional wedding takes place in the Karuna Church. In winter, the buildings are closed, but the island remains a popular spot for walking and cross-country skiing. It's possible to wander around the island free of charge at any time of the year, although a ticket must be bought to enter the buildings. Watch out for the extremely tame red squirrels.

You can combine your visit with a look at the Urho Kekkonen museum, near the mainland end of the bridge: This is the former home of the late Finnish president of the same name, a towering figure of postwar Finnish politics. Open daily 11 am-5 pm during the summer season; consult the Web site for other times. 6 euros adults. Combined tickets for the Seurasaari and the Urho Kekkonen museum cost 8 euros. Seurasaari Island (take Bus 24 from the city center, outside the Swedish Theater, to the last stop, which is the bridge to Seurasaari), Helsinki. Phone 09-4050-9660. [http://www.nba.fi/en/seurasaari\\_openairmuseum](http://www.nba.fi/en/seurasaari_openairmuseum).

### **The Cable Factory**

Converted from industrial premises, this enormous complex houses three museums as well as nine art galleries, numerous arts-and-crafts studios and a book and gift shop, and it hosts a revolving schedule of concerts and theatrical performances. Providing a true multimedia experience, the main building contains the Museum of Theater (<http://www.teatterimuseo.fi>), the Hotel and Restaurant Museum (<http://www.hotellijaravintolamuseo.fi>) and the Finnish Photography Museum (<http://www.fmp.fi>). The latter should be on any serious photographer's itinerary and is generally superior to the photographic exhibitions at the Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art.



There are also two dance theaters, several exhibition halls, restaurants and a library. Hours vary widely (within the 9 am-7 pm time frame). Call ahead or check the Cable Factory's Web site for the most up-to-date times. Entry fees also vary but rarely exceed 6 euros for adults, usually free for children younger than 18. Tallberginkatu 1, Rouholahti (located west of the city on the waterfront, take Tram 8 or Bus 20, 21, 65 or 66), Helsinki. Phone 09-4763-8300. <http://www.kaapelitehdas.fi/en>.

### **The Manege Military Museum**

Located on Suomenlinna in Helsinki Harbor, this museum's exhibits mainly cover World War II, but some equipment dates back several hundred years. Though it is in poor condition, a main draw is the 250-ton submarine *Vesikko*, which was waterborne in the 1930s. For current hours of operation, see the Suomenlinna Web site (<http://www.suomenlinna.fi>), but generally open in summer daily 11 am-6 pm. 4 euros adults. Suomenlinna, Helsinki. Phone 02-9953-0261. <http://www.museot.fi>.

### **The Sports Museum of Finland**

Lots of sporting memorabilia—more than 30,000 objects and 200,000 photographs—is in the sports archives collection at the country's hall of fame for athletics, of which a selection is on display. Test your stamina on a simulator against runner Lasse Viren. Visitors can see an explanation of *pesapallo*, the Finnish version of baseball—not that they, or anyone else, will be much wiser afterward.

The museum is housed in the Olympic Stadium (it also houses a youth hostel), which was built for the 1940 Olympic Games (because of World War II, Helsinki did not actually host the games until 1952). Its conspicuous tower offers a superb view, and it can be reached on foot or by elevator (2 euros). Open Monday-Friday 11 am-5 pm, Saturday and Sunday noon-4 pm. 5 euros adults. Paavo Nurmentie 1 (take Tram 3 to Toivonkatu), Helsinki. Phone 09-434-2250. <http://www.urheilumuseo.fi>.

### **Parks & Gardens**

#### **Botanical Gardens, Kumpula**

These landscaped gardens on the edge of the city are a wonderful refuge in summer and autumn when the Japanese and other exotic shrubs and bushes change color. A cafe and seed shop are also open daily. Open May-September 9 am-7 pm. Closed in winter. 4 euros. Jyrangintie 2 (take the number 6 tram), Helsinki. Phone 09-1915-1545. <http://www.luomus.fi/english/kumpula>.

#### **Kaivopuisto**

South of the city, between the embassy area and the sea, Kaivopuisto is a large, hilly park, with excellent waterside promenades. The area also includes Kaivohuone, a famous restaurant dating back to the 1830s, and the observatory of Ursa, the Finnish astronomy association. The park stood in for Gorky Park in the film of the same name. In winter, children go sledding on the gentle hills. Open all year. Free.

#### **Sibelius Park**

Northwest of the city center, this park is best known for the *Sibelius Monument*, an attractive stainless-steel sculpture by Eila Hiltunen that memorializes Finnish composer Jean Sibelius. Much photographed, the monument is almost considered a symbol of the city. The park, which is more like an arboretum, is even more scenic than the sculpture and is especially pleasant in early summer. Open year-round. Mechelinkatu 38, Helsinki.

#### **Winter Garden**

In winter, visit the indoor Winter Garden with its display of more than 200 different tropical plants. Additional information is available from the Intendent of the Winter Garden. The hothouse is closed for renovations until autumn 2011. The surrounding rose garden is open daily 7 am-9 pm. Free. Hammarskjöldintie 1, Helsinki. Phone 09-310-39985.

## **Zoos & Wildlife**

### **Korkeasaari Zoo**

This extensive zoo on the island of Korkeasaari is open year-round and is particularly strong on arctic species. The seals are fed at noon daily except Monday. Cat Valley is home to rare snow leopards, Amur leopards and tigers. Guided tours in English can be booked. Strollers can be rented, and there are child-care and handicapped-accessible facilities around the site. To get to the zoo, take the metro to Herttoniemi Station and catch the zoo bus links, or catch the zoo ferry from Market Square May-September (16 euros adults, 8 euros children, including zoo admission). Also, bus 11 departs from the main railway station square. Open October-March daily 10 am-4 pm, April daily 10 am-6 pm, May-August daily 10 am-8 pm, September 10 am-6 pm. Admission begins at 10 euros adults, 5 euros children ages 7-16; family tickets (two adults and up to three children) 30 euros. For the full range of ticket prices, including item rentals, see the Web site. Korkeasaari Island, Helsinki. Phone 09-310-1615. <http://www.korkeasaari.fi>.

## **Shopping**

Your shopping will be most rewarding if you buy Finnish products. Glass, hats, jewelry, high-quality cutlery and leather goods are recommended buys. You'll also see a lot of handwoven rugs. Intended for hanging on the wall, they are a feature of most Finnish homes. Fur is no longer fashionable or necessary in Finland, in spite of a fur farming industry in the northwest, but prices are surprisingly reasonable.

Korkeavuorenkatu is a good shopping street, away from the city center, with several high-quality boutiques and jewelers. Start at the top, work your way down and drop in at the Sea Horse for a taste of real Finnish bar-restaurant culture when you get to the bottom. Make sure to hit the north side of the Esplanade (one of the main east-west streets) and the narrower Bulevardi, which runs southwest from the city center.

Art-nouveau or imperial Russian antiques can be found, as can art from the romantic movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries—both can be expensive, though. For those interested in country-style furniture (which tends to be big and heavy), there are several shops off Mannerheimintie, opposite Finlandia Hall. Many of the more interesting antiques shops are in the triangle formed by Bulevardi, Korkeavuorenkatu and Kapteeninkatu.

Finnish clothing designers offer excellent fashions tailored to colder climates: The many small boutiques south of Bulevardi and off Kapteeninkatu are well worth a visit. In addition to clothing, consider shopping for local delicacies. Such food items as smoked salmon, smoked reindeer, bear sausage and berry preserves travel well. So do many cheeses if vacuum-packed.

Some words of caution: Beware when buying such things as Russian icons. Be sure to ask for a certificate of provenance to show it was legally imported into Finland. And do not buy any Russian art or antiques unless you know what you're doing and are dealing with a reputable company: There are a lot of fakes around. Also, if you're tempted to buy a Finnish hunting knife, be sure that it is legal to import it into your home country—and don't try to transport it in your carry-on luggage.

**Shopping Hours:** Generally Monday-Saturday 9 am-6 pm. However, major chain stores stay open until 9 pm. Most stores close early—some as early as noon—on the day preceding a public holiday. Stores are now permitted to open on Sunday year round, although most small shops still close on Sunday. Large department stores in central Helsinki, including Stockmann with its excellent expanded food hall, are open on Sunday. Note that many small stores may close for a week or two during February, when schools have their skiing vacation, and during the later part of July, when many Finns go on vacation.

## **Department Stores**

From late November to Christmas, the department stores Stockmann and Sokos put on exotic, glamorously lit, themed window displays.

#### **Sokos**

This major department store is second only to Stockmann and carries very much the same products. One major difference between the two stores is that Sokos also owns several chains of hotels, most of which have a mini-Sokos in the lobby. Stockmann is a little more upmarket. Open Monday-Friday 9 am-9 pm, Saturday 9 am-6 pm, Sunday noon-6 pm. Mannerheimintie 9, Helsinki. Phone 010-766-5100. <http://www.sokos.fi>.

#### **Stockmann**

The largest department store in Helsinki founded in 1862 by a German merchant from Lubeck and something of a national institution, Stockmann is a good place to buy just about anything Finnish, from the Fiskars range of knives and scissors to Iittala glassware. The staff usually speaks English. It also has a shop for Finnish products and a food shop at Helsinki-Vantaa airport for last-minute purchases. There are additional Stockmann branches in the Jumbo, Tapiola and Itakeskus shopping malls (to the north, west and east respectively). Open Monday-Friday 9 am-9 pm, Saturday 9 am-6 pm, Sunday noon-6 pm. Aleksanterinkatu 52 (across from the main tram stop, between the Swedish Theater and the railway station), Helsinki. Phone 09-1211. <http://www.stockmann.fi>.

#### **Factory Outlets**

##### **Arabia**

Arabia ceramics are world-famous. Although the products can be purchased in the major department and retail stores in town, the factory outlet is worth a visit. A shopping gallery, the Arabia Center, was constructed next to the old factory, selling the top-design brands. It's a little out from the city center but served by Tram 6 and well worth the diversion. Open Monday-Friday 10 am-8 pm, Saturday and Sunday 10 am-4 pm. Hameentie 135, Helsinki. Phone 020-439-3507. <http://www.arabia.fi>.

##### **Marimekko**

Enjoying a resurgence in popularity, Marimekko is probably the best-known name in Finnish fabric and fashion design. Though its designs are available all over the world, visitors to Helsinki can shop at the factory outlet. Open Monday-Friday 10 am-6 pm, Saturday 10 am-4 pm. Kirvesmiehenkatu 7, Helsinki. Phone 09-758-7244. <http://www.marimekko.fi>.

#### **Galleries**

No description of art galleries in Helsinki is complete without mentioning the two major auction houses: Bukowskis (<http://www.bukowskis.com>) and Hagelstam (<http://www.hagelstam.fi>). Check the Web sites and request catalogs well in advance of the events.

##### **Annan Galleria**

A small, well-organized gallery that features mostly Finnish artists and only one artist at a time. Annankatu 13, Helsinki. Phone 09-605-411 or 050-370-1066. <http://www.annangalleria.fi>.

##### **Galerie Anhava**

This gallery carries some of the finest modern art from Nordic and international artists. Very high standard, with high prices as well. Mannerheiminaukio 3, Helsinki. Phone 09-669-989. <http://www.anhava.com>.

##### **Galleria Ama**

Originally from Turku, the gallery has now opened a branch in Helsinki. Features mostly modern Finnish painters and sculptors. Very strong on prints. Rikhardinkatu 1, Helsinki. Phone 09-278-5057. <http://www.ama.fi>.

### **Gallery Juhani Palmu**

This modern Finnish artist has galleries worldwide. The commercial talent is perhaps more highly developed than the artistic, but the pictures are popular with foreign buyers. Daily 11 am-6 pm. Yrjönkatu 16, Helsinki. Phone 09-649-465. <http://www.juhanipalmu.com>.

### **Markets**

#### **Hakaniemi Square and Market Hall**

Considered the most authentic of the bigger Helsinki markets, Hakaniemi is where the locals of the down-to-earth eastern districts of Kallio and Sornainen do their shopping. The hall houses the best outlets for fresh fish and meat, including the very popular Reinin Liha shop, which really comes to life at Christmas and Easter when it stocks the best game and lamb in town. The Hakaniemi outdoor market in the square is bigger than the one at the Market Square. The hall, with 70 shops on two floors, is open 8 am-6 pm Monday-Friday, Saturday 8 am-4 pm. Jump on any eastbound bus or tram from the central railway station or take the metro for two stops, Helsinki.

#### **Hietalahti**

This open-air flea market sells everything from utter rubbish to the finest amber. Russian and Finnish militaria, antiques (of all ages) and collectibles, as well as some good used-clothing finds. If you know your business, this is a good place to go, but buyer beware. Open Monday-Saturday 8 am-2 pm. A Sunday market operates May-October 10 am-4 pm. Right at the end of Lonrotinkatu, Helsinki.

#### **Market Square and the Old Market Hall**

Market Square, in front of the harbor, and the Old Market Hall, to the right of the harbor, form a typical Finnish market. The open-air portion is a good place to pick up a knit sweater, organic food, a hunting knife or, in winter, an inexpensive fur hat, as well as ingredients—fresh fruit, bread and berries—for an island picnic. The covered hall sells an amazing range of foods and has a few snack bars, including the best sushi in Helsinki. Sample the smoked fish, the "home cheese" and the smoked reindeer liver. Open Monday-Saturday 6:30 am-2 pm. An evening market operates in summer Monday-Friday 3:30-8 pm. On the waterfront of the south harbor, Helsinki.

### **Shopping Areas**

#### **Kamp Galleria**

One of the most exclusive places for shopping in the city, this indoor plaza contains 50 different stores from brands such as Marimekko, Zio, Diesel and Bang & Olufsen. Pohjois-Espanadi, Helsinki. Phone 010-304-0321. <http://www.kampgalleria.fi>.

#### **Kamppi Shopping Center**

Not to be confused with the Kamp Galleria, this six-story shopping mall (Kamppi Kauppakeskus) built above the central bus station has more than 100 shops selling top fashion and jewelry brands. It also has several restaurants, cafes and bars, a bowling alley and a dancing school. Monday-Friday 9 am-9 pm, Saturday 9 am-6 pm, Sunday in summer noon-6 pm. Hours at restaurants and some individual stores may be slightly longer. Closed on major holidays; check the Web site for more detail. Urho Kekkosenkatu 1 (access also from Fredrikinkatu, Tennispalatsin aukio and Salomonkatu), Helsinki. Phone 09-742-98552 for information. <http://www.kamppi.fi>.

#### **Kiseleff Bazaar**

This old, two-story building houses about 20 small shops selling everything from junk to fine knitwear and expensive antiques. It's very tourist-oriented, and the prices are high, especially for jewelry and antiques. It has the only shop in Helsinki specializing entirely in sauna equipment—go look and just try to figure out what some of it is for. A description of the building, its history and most of the stores is given at its Web site. Although the site is in Finnish only, the pictures say everything. The building is open daily 9 am-6 pm, but individual shop hours vary—usually Monday-Friday 10 am-6 pm, Saturday 10 am-4 pm. Also open

Sunday 11 am-4 pm in summer and in the run-up to Christmas. Aleksanterinkatu 28 (just off Senate Square), Helsinki. <http://www.kiseleffintalo.fi>.

### **Specialty Stores**

#### **Aarikka**

Very Finnish jewelry and designer objects made from wood, steel and precious metals. Outstanding craftwork and very popular, but perhaps an acquired taste. Aarikka has 11 stores and more than 300 dealers all over Finland. Monday-Friday 9 am-7 pm, Saturday 10 am-5 pm. Pohjoisesplanadi 27, Helsinki. Phone 09-652-277. <http://www.aarikka.fi>.

#### **Annikki Karvinen**

This store has exclusive designer fashions in the unusual—and very Finnish—*poppana* woven material, mostly made of pure wool and silk. Annikki Karvinen's conservative designs are highly regarded but not well-known outside Finland. Nonetheless, they are elegant, comfortable and warm—though intended only for women. Open Monday-Friday 10 am-6 pm, Saturday 10 am-4 pm. Pohjoisesplanadi 23, Helsinki. Phone 09-6811-7513. <http://www.annikkikarvinen.com>.

#### **Artek**

This shop carries dozens of examples of Alvar Aalto's furniture, fabrics and lights, as well as items from other international interior designers. Open Monday-Friday 10 am-6 pm, Saturday 10 am-4 pm. Etelaesplanadi 18, Helsinki. Phone 09-6132-5277. <http://www.artek.fi>.

#### **Art Russian**

The name says it all, but the small print reveals a confusing web of companies from "Art Baron" to "Art Jack." Paintings, sculpture and lots of beautiful Russian icons can be found there. If you are not an expert, insist on a certificate of provenance. Monday-Friday 10 am-5 pm. Frederikinkatu 38, Helsinki. Phone 09-685-2201. <http://www.art-russian.com>.

#### **Designforum**

This store features 100% Finnish design from many rising stars. Rather neat stuff, appealing to free spirits of all ages. Excellent quality and still affordable. Monday-Friday 10 am-7 pm, Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday noon-6 pm. Erottajankatu 7, Helsinki. Phone 09-6220-810. <http://www.designforum.fi>.

#### **Espan Enkelit**

All the off-the-wall, kitschy products you could ever want, from Buddha T-shirts and Marilyn Monroe magnets to pop-art backpacks and Jesus action figures. Kalevankatu 11, Helsinki. Phone 09-644-020. <http://www.espanenkelit.fi>.

#### **Friitala**

This is one of the oldest and most well-established fur and leather manufacturers in Finland. Not the most exciting designs but solid quality. Open Monday-Friday 11 am-6 pm, Saturday 11 am-4 pm. Closed July. Kampa Gallery, Mikonkatu 1 (on the corner with the Esplanade), Helsinki. Phone 02-798-0230. <http://www.friitala.fi>.

#### **Kalevala Koru**

This jewelry store specializes in both historically based and modern Finnish designs from the Kalevala area of eastern Finland. There are beautiful animal and floral designs of highly symbolic character made of bronze, silver and gold. Check out the works of top designers such as Kirsti Doukas and Marja Suna. Also has branches at airports and in some larger department stores. Open Monday-Friday 10 am-6 pm, Saturday 10 am-4 pm. Strombergintie 4, Helsinki. Phone 020-761-1311. <http://www.kalevalakoru.fi>.

#### **Marttiini**

No, it's not the Finnish spelling of a cocktail—it's a shop selling handmade hunting and chef's knives. Open daily except Sunday 10 am-6 pm. Aleksanterinkatu 28 (off Senate Square), Helsinki. Phone 09-633-702. <http://www.marttiini.fi>.

### **Rahikainen/Nemaki**

This exclusive designer boutique specializes in women's fashions in cashmere and fur. For a chic, Nordic look, it's the place to go. Open Monday-Friday 10 am-5 pm, Saturday 11 am-2 pm. Korkeavuorenkatu 6, Helsinki. Phone 09-631-353. <http://www.nemaki.fi>.

### **Ryijypalvelu**

This is the place for handcrafted wall rugs (*ryijy*, in Finnish). Everything from traditional to avant-garde. The staff is helpful and will explain the stories behind the designs. Open daily except Sunday 10 am-5 pm. Abrahaminkatu 7, Helsinki. Phone 09-660-615. <http://www.ryijypalvelu-rp.fi>.

### **Wahlman**

Go there for a huge range of men's hats, everything from a felt beret to a sable *schapka*. The range of sizes, from very small to very large, is also impressive. Open Monday-Friday 10 am-5 pm, Saturday 10 am-2 pm. Sofiankatu 5, Helsinki. Phone 09-634-313. <http://www.wahlman.fi>.

### **Zarro**

This store carries a wide selection of modern and trendy housewares, including furniture, lighting, and kitchen and bathroom accessories. Open Monday-Friday 11 am-6 pm, Saturday 11 am-3 pm. Frederikinkatu 37, Helsinki. Phone 09-603-806. <http://www.zarro.fi>.

### **Zio Boutique**

This boutique carries a very trendy selection of ladies' bags, boots and shoes. Open daily noon-6 pm. Aleksanterinkatu 15 and Mikonkatu 6, Helsinki. Phone 09-694-0100. <http://www.zio.fi>.

## **DINING**

### **Dining Overview**

Helsinki has an ever-expanding variety of restaurants to suit most tastes, and many bars serve good food. Many, but not all, of the better restaurants are concentrated in the area south of the railway station. There's also a group of good restaurants, mostly specializing in Finnish cuisine, northwest of the railway station in the Toolo district. Another place to try is the boutique and gallery area south of Bulevardi.

If the restaurant scene has a weakness, it's the tendency of many places to close on Sunday—the perfect time to eat out in large parts of the civilized world. But the number of eateries that do open on Sunday creeps up each year.

Watch for restaurants participating in the Helsinki Menu promotion, with representative set menus of their best Finnish fare.

In general, eating well in Helsinki means enjoying Finnish or Russian cuisine. Russian cuisine tends to be more gourmet, with an emphasis on meat and greater use of sauces. A really good borscht (beetroot and meat stew) is most welcome on foggy autumn nights.

It is a common misconception that eating Finnish food means eating only fish. Game birds, beef, lamb, reindeer, elk and even bear are all popular and readily available (though bear and some game birds are quite expensive).

Popular Finnish dishes include *poro* (reindeer), usually as a steak, but the traditional reindeer stew is worth trying. Typically served with a lingonberry sauce, smoked reindeer liver is a great delicacy and forms the basis for many starters and main courses. *Kalakukko* (fish pie that is more of a snack than a meal and not always found in restaurants) consists of layers of fish and pork encased in rye pastry. It's highly recommended but is found mainly in the Kuopio area farther north.

In Helsinki's excellent Russian restaurants, *blini* (pancakes), usually served as an appetizer with fish roe, sour cream and chopped onion, are delicious. *Lohi* (salmon) and *siika* (whitefish) are both of very high quality and are served in many different ways. Mushrooms of all varieties abound in Finland and are often used to form the basis of sauces for both meat and fish. *Made* (burbot) is an excellent fish that's not often served in other countries. Burbot-liver stew is a rare delicacy.

Crayfish are very popular when in season (typically late August). Be advised, however, of the Finnish custom: one glass of vodka, one crayfish; one glass of vodka, one crayfish; one glass of vodka, one crayfish.... *Hernekeitto* (pea soup) is popular and tasty, prepared following a traditional Finnish (and nonvegetarian) recipe (although vegetarian versions do exist). It is traditionally served on Thursday and often followed with sweet pancakes.

The city also has a number of ethnic and international restaurants that are often a little more affordable than the Finnish places. Be aware that the food might not taste as you expect, as the ingredients used are not necessarily the same as those found in an original recipe. Burger and pizza restaurants are also extremely popular in malls and shopping areas, in Helsinki and across the whole country. These are good value for budget travelers, if not from a nutritional point of view.

People with food allergies will have little problem finding food in Finland. Most restaurants offer lactose-free and gluten-free versions of their dishes. If these are not specifically indicated on the menu, just ask. Nuts are not often used in Finnish cuisine, but they may be found in Asian meals.

In Finland, the government has a monopoly on selling alcohol, which affects retail as well as restaurant beverage prices. However, alcohol prices have fallen since Finland joined the EU; low- to medium-strength beer is sold freely now. Spirits and stronger alcoholic beverages can only be purchased through state-supervised Alko stores or in restaurants.

Breakfast is usually served 9-11 am and is almost universally included in hotel tariffs (in which case it is, of course, available much earlier in the morning). Restaurants rarely open for lunch before 11 am—later on weekends—and lunch is generally served until 3 pm. Dinner is served 5-10 pm. Note that the majority of Finns dine early, so do not be surprised if you are invited to dine around 5 pm. If inviting someone to join you for dinner after 8 pm, do ask whether or not it is too late.

Expect to pay within these general guidelines, based on dinner for one minus drinks, but including tax and a service charge (tipping is never necessary in Finnish restaurants): \$ = less than 20 euros; \$\$ = 20 euros-60 euros; \$\$\$ = 61 euros-100 euros; \$\$\$\$ = more than 100 euros.

## **Local & Regional**

### **Aino**

Nicely situated on the Esplanade, Aino is a good place for lunch while shopping. Tends to be dominated by students in the evenings. The decor is rather basic, but the food—mostly Finnish—is good value. Open Monday-Thursday 11 am-10:30 pm, Friday 11 am-11 pm, Saturday noon-11 pm, closed Sunday. \$-\$\$\$\$. Pohjoisesplanadi 21, Helsinki. Phone 09-624-327. <http://www.ravintolaaino.fi>.

### **Elite**

If you want to sample a Finnish restaurant at its best, Elite is the place to go. Rather off the beaten path, it is well worth the effort. The classic Scandinavian interior has been popular with artists and writers in Helsinki since 1932, and it still attracts a very bohemian clientele. The fried, marinated *muikku* (a regional fish) with reindeer-liver mousse is highly recommended, as is the rabbit in a mustard and grape sauce. If you are really hungry, try the "artist's set menu" for 42.60 euros. Monday-Thursday 11 am-1 am, Friday 11 am-2 am, Saturday 2 pm-2

am, Sunday 1-11 pm. Saturday and Sunday lunches attract large family gatherings and can be a bit noisy. Reservations recommended for dinner. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Etelainen Hesperiankatu 22, Helsinki. Phone 09-6128-6000. <http://www.royalravintolat.com/elite>.

### **Kappeli**

This restaurant, bar and cafe is located in a charming building of large pillar-framed windows and cozy corners at the eastern end of the Esplanade. The menu ranges from simple snacks in the bar and cafe areas to gourmet meals in the restaurant. The duck in plum sauce is good, as is the reindeer steak. As with any Finnish restaurant, the fish is good, and the crayfish, when in season, is superb (although always expensive). Couples should ask for one of the two-seat tables in the corner cupolas. In summer, the terrace is always full. Unfortunately for the general public, the atmospheric cellar is only available for private bookings. Daily for lunch and dinner (brunch served daily from 9 am). Reservations highly recommended. \$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Etelaesplanadi 1, Helsinki. Phone 010-766-3880. <http://www.kappeli.fi>.

### **Kasakka**

This place is considered by many to be the best Russian restaurant in Helsinki. Good, but expensive. Be traditional and start with the pickled cucumbers, honey and *smetana* (sour cream), washed down with an ice-cold vodka. It also offers a range of kebabs and game (in season). Open Monday-Friday for dinner, Saturday for late lunch and dinner. Reservations required. \$\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Meritullinkatu 13, Helsinki. Phone 09-135-6288. <http://www.delifox.fi/kasakka>.

### **Kynsilaukka**

This restaurant specializes in garlic, which is not as overwhelming as it sounds—the chef is imaginative, and the use of garlic is discreet. One of the best meals is cold, marinated reindeer, followed by lamb stew, then flambéed cloudberry crepes. It's a popular spot with the trendy advertising crowd, and family parties enjoy the restaurant's oversized tables. Kynsilaukka is a rarity among Finnish restaurants—it stays open all year, not closing even for public holidays. Open Monday-Friday 11 am-11 pm, Saturday and Sunday 1-11 pm. Reservations recommended. \$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Fredrikinkatu 22, Helsinki. Phone 09-651-939. <http://www.kynsilaukka.com>.

### **Lappi**

This traditional restaurant features a Sami-themed menu and a rustic interior. The menu has six different reindeer dishes, including reindeer tongue—perhaps not for the faint of heart. If you like a taste of everything, try the Lappish game for two—roasted elk, fried deer sausage, reindeer roast, and oven-baked winter vegetables with creamy game sauce. This place also serves a few specialty arctic cocktails—try the "Reindeer Tears," strong Koskenkorva and cranberry, for a taste of what it's like to drink above the Arctic Circle. Daily for lunch and dinner. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Annankatu 22, Helsinki. Phone 09-645-550. <http://www.lappires.com>.

### **Lasipalatsi**

The cooking is good and the wine list reasonable at this Finnish restaurant and cafe inside the famous Lasipalatsi building. Recommended starters in the restaurant are crayfish tails on toast or the *muikku* roe on blini. For main courses, the *siika* (whitefish) with crayfish mousse is excellent, as is the grilled reindeer steak in Madeira sauce. The cafe serves salads, sandwiches and other small dishes. Monday-Friday 11 am-midnight, Saturday noon-midnight, closed Sunday. Reservations recommended. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Lasipalatsi, Mannerheimintie 22-24, Helsinki. Phone 09-742-4290. <http://www.ravintola.lasipalatsi.fi>.

### **Nokka**

Only the freshest hand-picked Finnish ingredients make it into Matti Lempinen's delicious creations. You could start with steamed Arctic char from Saimaa and follow up with snow reindeer with red onion and lingonberry compote. Finish it off with a Finnish cheese platter or cloudberry tartalet. Very selective wine list. Open Monday-Friday for lunch and dinner, Saturday for dinner only. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.



Kanavanranta 7F, Helsinki. Phone 09-687-7330. <http://www.royalravintolat.com/nokka>.

### **Saslik**

This romantically decorated, Czarist-themed restaurant has an extensive menu. Features traditional *blini* (pancakes with fish roe) and bear, elk, pheasant and goose. The desserts are good, especially the champagne sorbet. Live Russian music every night. Daily for lunch and dinner (in July and August daily for dinner only). Reservations required. Jeans and T-shirts not allowed. \$\$\$\$ . Most major credit cards. Neitsypolku 12, Helsinki. Phone 09-7425-5500. <http://www.asrestaurants.com/saslik>.

### **Sea Horse**

If you want to sample a typical (apart from the smiling doorman) Finnish bar-restaurant, go to this authentic place (open since the 1930s). The decor is basic with the feel of a greasy-spoon diner, but top TV stars share a table with the locals. Excellent sandwiches, if you just want a snack, though the full meals are also good. Try the classic fried herring with mash and beetroot or the grilled salmon in a morel sauce. Now offers several vegetarian dishes. Daily for lunch and dinner. \$. Most major credit cards. Kapteeninkatu 11, Helsinki. Phone 09-628-169. <http://www.seahorse.fi>.

## **SECURITY**

### **Etiquette**

In general, Finnish cultural practices differ little from those of the rest of Europe. It is customary to remove your shoes on entering a private house. This is not for religious reasons but merely a practical consideration to keep dirt out of the house. In wintertime, when the sidewalks are covered in slush and grit, many people carry a second pair of shoes to be worn indoors, changing from their outdoor shoes at the door.

The sauna is a way of life for Finns. Anyone staying with a family may be invited to join in the weekly sauna. These are usually taken in the buff, but bathing suits are permitted. Afterward you will almost certainly find yourself jumping into a cold lake. Business meetings often end with a sauna. These are unlikely to be coed, however.

Finns tend to be fairly formal in business relationships. Formal attire is expected at a first meeting but generally relaxes thereafter. Major meetings often conclude with a formal dinner. Out of respect for your hosts, formal attire on such occasions is polite, but very few restaurants have strict dress codes for diners.

Cellular phones are widespread in Finland. They should always be turned off during meetings and at formal occasions.

Some Finns invite visitors out for a drink with the expectation that the host alone will pay. By all means offer to buy a round in return, but if the host refuses the offer, do not press it.

Do not be surprised—whatever your gender—if you are presented with flowers at a formal function. Accept them gracefully, take them back to the hotel, and ask the concierge to take care of them.

### **Personal Safety**

Helsinki rates as one of the safest cities in the world and is remarkably free of crime. Sadly, with the expansion of the EU, the city has seen an influx of beggars—some of whom can be a bit aggressive—and primitive con artists. If anyone starts up a conversation about having lost all their money on the flight from Bosnia/Romania/Albania, and so on, just ignore them.

Finns are utterly honest: If you forget your wallet in a taxi, for example, chances are the driver will be looking for you the next day to return it. Nights in the summer are relatively safe, partly by virtue of the lingering daylight. The only areas to avoid at night are the underground tunnels around the railway station, where pickpocketing is a rare but occasional occurrence. Violent crime is so rare that the shooting of two police officers in the late 1990s provoked national outrage. Nevertheless, the visitor who takes sensible precautions has little to fear.

In case you do lose something, try the lost-property office located in the police station at Paljanteentie 12A (phone 09-189-3180). Objects lost in public transport or at the airport can be retrieved Monday-Friday 10 am-6 pm at the lost-property office in Makelankatu 56 in the Vallila area. Phone 0600-41006.

Some Finns tend to be heavy drinkers, and you may encounter the occasional drunk in the street and especially in the downtown areas around the railway station on weekends. Sometimes noisy, they are rarely a threat. The best policy is to ignore them.

An unusual personal safety problem is the deep grooves cut in the sidewalks to carry away winter's melt water. Though these are obvious to residents, unwary visitors have been known to break heels in them. Another possible hazard is falling snow and ice from rooftops in winter, although danger spots tend to be cordoned off.

For the latest information, contact your country's travel-advisory agency.

## **Health**

Sanitation in Helsinki is excellent. You shouldn't have any problems with the food or water. It is absolutely safe to drink water from the tap.

Helsinki University Central Hospital, in the Meilahti Hospital (Haartmaninkatu 4), has 24-hour emergency care. It's one of the few hospitals where the reception staff is most likely to speak English. Larger hotels—particularly those in the city center—have a physician on call, but there is no guarantee that he or she will speak English. Contact information for Helsinki hospitals and other health services can be found in English at <http://www.hus.fi>.

More than half of the city's doctors do speak English, so you should be able to find one you can communicate with. An on-call physician is available by calling 10023, but, again, you may find that the other person on the line doesn't speak English.

There are pharmacies all around the city and close to the major medical centers. Some of the smaller chains may have a rotating system, but the largest chain, Yliopiston Apteekki (University Pharmacy, <http://www.yliopistonapteekki.fi>), has convenient hours seven days a week. The one at Mannerheimintie 96 (near the Olympic Stadium) is the only location open 24 hours a day. Note that many drugs are only available by prescription from a Finnish doctor, so it's wise to take what you might need and/or get a certified letter or prescriptions from your physician.

For the latest information, contact your country's health-advisory agency.

## **Disabled Advisory**

Helsinki is generally accessible for disabled visitors, and wheelchair facilities, including public transport, are good. There is no need for wheelchair users to call a special taxi service: Just call the central taxi dispatch and ask for a wheelchair-capable taxi. Wheelchairs can be rented through pharmacies.

Service links for disabled and physically challenged people, including parking and public transport information, are available at <http://www.hel.fi/hki/hkr/en/Helsinki+for+All/Links>.

People with one hand or fewer may find some of the older hotels have security systems that require two hands to operate. These exist, but are becoming more rare. Small people may find some of the older trams difficult to access, and the stairs inside the Opera are particularly difficult.

### **Dos & Don'ts**

Do take flowers for your hosts if you're invited to a private home. Any good florist will advise on what is appropriate.

Do remove your shoes as you enter somebody's home, unless specifically invited not to.

Don't be afraid to try speaking a few words of Finnish. Though most Finns in Helsinki speak excellent English, saying a few words will probably get you more than just a smile back.

Do remember that Finland was dominated for several hundred years by both Russia and Sweden and lost much land after World War II. Even though Finland is fairly well-off today, many Finns are still very sore about this fact. Do not speak flippantly about military history or make open comparisons between Finland and its neighbors.

Don't go overboard with drinking. Although drinking to get drunk may seem to be de rigueur for Finns, doing so as a visitor is not a good way to recommend yourself to your hosts.

Do accept an invitation to the sauna, but don't lose any sleep if you are not keen on the idea—most hosts will not be offended, although they will be very enthusiastic for you to sample this most Finnish of rituals. If you're skittish about nudity, it's fine to wrap a towel around yourself or wear a bathing suit. Most nervous first time visitors usually wonder why they were nervous once they have taken the plunge.

Do remember that Finland has only recently begun to take in non-Finns as residents and citizens.

### **FACTS**

#### **Geostats**

**Passport/Visa Requirements:** Citizens of Canada and the U.S. need passports but not visas. Proof of onward passage and sufficient funds are needed for all, but rarely asked for. Reconfirm travel document requirements with carrier before departure.

**Population:** 1,107,000.

**Languages:** Finnish, Swedish; many urban residents speak English.

**Time Zone:** 2 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (+2 GMT). Daylight Saving Time is observed according to EU standards.

**Voltage Requirements:** 220 volts.

**Telephone Codes:** 358, country code; 09, city code;

## **Money Taxes**

Almost everything is subject to a value-added tax, known as ALV, which is charged at two rates of 9% and 23%. Visitors from outside the European Union may be able to claim a tax refund upon departure. Ask for a tax receipt, save them all and then present them at the Global Blue offices at the airport, ferry terminal or land border crossing. You also need at least one claim form, preferably filled out before you arrive at the airport. Most stores will not issue a tax receipt for a purchase of less than 42 euros, although this sum may vary a little.

You must have your purchases ready for inspection at the Global Blue office. Opened or used items will not be accepted. This can cause problems because of the wide variety of items that cannot be carried on board airplanes because of security restrictions.

## **Tipping**

Although it is not generally expected, tipping is appreciated. The norm is 5%-10%, depending on the quality of service. Many restaurants, bars and theaters have a doorman who takes care of your outdoor coat and shoes (if you brought a change). Be aware that you are not given a choice in many places—you may have to hand in your coat as a condition of entry. Some places, especially theaters, have a posted price; bars and restaurants generally do not. A good guideline is 2 euros per coat, especially if you plan to visit a place regularly.

## **Weather**

Winter is long, dark and cold. It can also be spectacularly beautiful. First snow in Helsinki is unlikely before November. Because of its closeness to the sea, Helsinki tends to be significantly warmer and damper than places inland, where winters tend to be cold, clear and crisp. Hours of daylight in winter are short, typically between 10 am and 4 pm, and decrease rapidly as you go north. Temperatures can fall rapidly as you move out of the urban environment, and a drop of five degrees over a mile/kilometer or two is not unknown.

Spring is short, usually lasting April and May. Change is very rapid, and plants can spring into bloom in a day. However, because of melting snow, spring tends to be damp everywhere. It is probably not the best time to visit Finland.

Summers are long and sometimes surprisingly hot, with temperatures of 85 F/29 C not uncommon. Daylight lasts about 3 am-11 pm. In fact, at midsummer in Helsinki, there may be almost complete daylight. Some people have difficulty sleeping. Fortunately, most hotels and apartments are fitted with lightproof blinds.

Fall is short but beautiful, with wonderful displays of foliage on the trees. When the skies are clear, temperatures can fall rapidly at night, though this is less noticeable in the city itself.

## **What to Wear**

Finland's climate can be extreme—from -20 F/-29 C in winter to 85 F/29 C in summer. It is best to wear layers of clothing in wintertime, including long underwear when it gets really cold. Boots are a good idea in winter, and strap-on studs, available at most shoe shops for about 20 euros, are a wise investment—just remember to take them off before entering anyone's wooden-floored home. Hats are also recommended, but make sure to at least cover your ears: Frostbite is a real possibility. It is also wise to get reflective bands or spangles to fasten to your clothes so you will be more visible at night. Many banks give these free to customers and will be flattered if asked by foreigners.

In summer, light, loose clothing is best. Finns will hardly raise an eyebrow if you walk naked through the forest on your way to swim in the lake but will be quite displeased if you enter a restaurant in a swimsuit. Note that mosquitoes and tiny flies are widespread in the forests, especially in early summer. Clothing should be tight at the wrists and ankles, and mosquito

hoods are a very good idea if you are spending some time lakeside. Casual clothes are acceptable in most places, except in the more upscale restaurants, bars and clubs.

Business dress tends to be more formal—typically suits for both sexes.

## **Transportation**

### **Public Transportation**

The Helsinki transportation system is excellent, thanks to the efficiency of the agency responsible, HSL (Helsinki Region Transport). A single ticket works on buses, trams, the metro, trains within the city limits and the ferry to Suomenlinna. A ticket bought on any vehicle is also transferable from one means of transport to another within an hour of issue. A regional ticket is available for travel to Espoo and the airport at Vantaa.

Tickets can be bought individually. A prepaid single ticket (valid from the start of your journey) costs 2 euros adults (2.50 euros when purchased on board), 1.20 euro children. A one-day tourist ticket costs 7 euros, with a five-day costing 21 euros; children's tickets are half-price. A full list of all the options—there are lots of them—can be found at <http://www.hsl.fi>.

In all cases, tickets must be validated before use. On buses, the ticket should be presented to the driver. On trams and local trains, the ticket must be put into the stamping machine onboard. (Tourists are especially well-served by the 3B and 3T trams, which pass many landmarks and attractions.) In the metro, the ticket must be put into the machine before you descend to the platform. Call the 24-hour service number at 0600-393-600 if you get into trouble or want advice.

Holders of the Helsinki Card issued by Helsinki Expert can travel free on all transport in the Helsinki region as long as the card is valid. The date and time of the first trip must be entered onto the card before you board. <http://www.helsinkicard.fi>.

### **Ship**

A busy working port, Helsinki is a popular stop for cruise ships and offers connections to cities in Sweden, Estonia, Russia and Germany. The two largest cruise operations are Tallink Silja Line (<http://www.tallinksilja.com>) and Viking Line (<http://www.vikingline.fi>). Their huge vessels are technically considered ferries, but they have all of the amenities typical of large cruise ships: discos, restaurants, health-club facilities and more.

### **Taxi**

Taxi stands are all around town. Cabs may also be ordered by phone (phone 100-0700, and the call costs around 1 euro). Confusingly, taxis with their lights on yellow, though vacant, will not normally stop when hailed—they are on their way to taxi ranks to pick up fares. They may still stop if you try to flag them down on quieter streets where it's easy for them to stop.

Most taxis accept major credit cards. There is a minimum charge of 4 euros-6 euros according to the time of day. After that, fares are metered by distance and time. Many drivers speak more than rudimentary English, but if possible, have a Finnish person write down the address you are going to and show this to the driver instead of risking confusion over the destination. GPS navigation systems are almost universal in taxis, and drivers will often ask for the exact street address, especially in rural areas.

**St Petersburg, Russia**

**OVERVIEW**

**Introduction**

St. Petersburg has had three names in less than 100 years, changes that mirror the shifting political winds of Mother Russia. The names of its places and people are a roll call of Russian history of the 19th and 20th centuries: the Winter Palace, the czars, Dostoyevsky, the Catherine Palace, Tchaikovsky, Lenin.



As the former official—some still say cultural—capital, St. Petersburg is the most westernized of Russia's cities. Its grand architecture echoes the great cities of Europe, and there are seemingly endless museums full of staggering quantities of treasure. St. Petersburg sprawls along the banks of the Neva River and was once known as the Venice of the North for the many canals there. For visitors who want to understand what came before, and what is happening now in Russia, St. Petersburg is essential.

**Must See or Do**

**Sights**—Beautiful churches (Kazan Cathedral, Smolny Cathedral, Church of the Savior on the Spilled Blood, St. Isaac's Cathedral and Alexander Nevsky Monastery); the Peter and Paul Fortress; Palace Square (Dvortsovaya Ploshchad); the Summer Garden; a river or channel cruise for a different perspective of the city.

**Museums**—Masterworks of European painting at the Hermitage; centuries of Russian art at the Russian Museum; the amassed deformities of nature at the Kunstkamera.

**Memorable Meals**—Fresh oysters flown in from France at Dvorienskoye Gnezdo; hefty portions of good Russian cuisine at 1913 and Palkin; catching your own dinner at Russkaya Rybalka; a gorgeous view from Okean—a floating fusion restaurant-platform.

**Late Night**—A mug of freshly brewed beer at Tinkoff; Russian rockabilly bands at Money Honey; dancing in Russia's hippest bomb shelter at Griboyedov; listening to the jazz at JFC Jazz Club; a stroll at 2 am to watch the drawbridges open during the White Nights; Dacha bar for a drink outside or dancing inside.

**Walks**—Window-shopping on Nevsky Prospekt; strolling along the picturesque banks of the Neva River and the roofs of the city center; exploring the stunning grounds of the czarist summer palaces and gardens in the suburbs of St. Petersburg; enjoying the parks and 19th-century cottages on the Kamenny and Yelagin islands; a walk through the empire of fountains in Peterhof.

**Especially for Kids**—Military grandeur along the decks of the *Aurora* battleship; paddleboats at the summer palaces; the State Circus; the huge amusement park on Krestovsky Island.

**Geography**

St. Petersburg is as far north as Seward, Alaska, and is more populous than any city at that latitude. It experiences White Nights during the summer when the north pole is tilted closest to the sun, meaning that St. Petersburg only has a few hours of darkness a day in the summer months.

The city sits on the banks of the Gulf of Finland, an inlet of the Baltic Sea. The many fingers of the Neva River run through the city's heart, cutting St. Petersburg into about 60 islands. Nevsky Prospekt, Russia's most famous street, divides the city's main landmass in half from east to west and is lined with hotels, tourist attractions and restaurants. Just across the Neva from mainland St. Petersburg are Vasilievsky Island and another island colloquially called the "Petrograd Side" of the city (where Peter the Great originally founded St. Petersburg). Both islands contain interesting sightseeing attractions and are easily accessible by bridges.

## History

St. Petersburg was founded by progressive-minded Czar Peter the Great in 1703 near the site of a captured Swedish fortress. But the founding of St. Petersburg wasn't easy. More than 300,000 prisoners of war and conscripts died leveling hills, draining marshes and building ornate baroque palaces. Peter made the new city the capital of Russia and insisted that nobles from Moscow relocate there. The city entered a building boom under czarinas Elizabeth and Catherine the Second (the Great) and Czar Alexander I, giving St. Petersburg many of its most famous buildings. It was during this period, 1741-1825, that the city became one of the most grandiose capitals in all of Europe.

Alexander II's emancipation of the serfs and his industrialization policy brought huge numbers of people into St. Petersburg during the late 1800s. However, poor conditions for the lower classes contributed to widespread discontent. When troops fired upon a peaceful demonstration of workers in Palace Square—a day later known as Bloody Sunday—the 1905 Revolution was under way. Czar Nicholas II finally appeased the working class with the signing of the October Manifesto, which gave birth to the first-ever Parliament in Russia—the State Duma.

With the outbreak of World War I in 1914, St. Petersburg changed its name to the more Russian Petrograd. In 1917, the city was again the hub of revolution. A combination of wartime grievances and social unrest led to the Bolsheviks' seizure of power. Petrograd gave up the seat of government to Moscow in its wake. After the death of Russia's first socialist leader, Vladimir Lenin, in 1924, the city was renamed Leningrad.

During World War II, German forces laid siege to Leningrad in September 1941. The city was completely blockaded for nearly three years, and more than a million people died, many of starvation. The city was rebuilt after the war and gradually regained its position as the cultural capital of Russia. The city restored its name to St. Petersburg in the early 1990s and retains that designation to this day.

Vladimir Putin, who was elected president of Russia in 2000 and has lived in St. Petersburg most of his life, has worked to boost the city's profile. As prime minister of Russia (since May 2008 the elected president of Russia is Dimitri Medvedev), Putin continues to meet with major heads of state there and has refurbished an extravagant palace into one of his residences.

A large number of palaces, historic buildings and embankments were reconstructed (most of them only from the outside) in honor of the city's 300th anniversary in 2003. More and more restaurants and services have opened, too, and a few new museums have appeared in the city as St. Petersburg has become more tourist-friendly.

Other change coming to St. Petersburg may be less welcome. Plans for the new Mariinsky Theater (which was to have opened in 2012) have been put on hold. The proposed strange black cube would probably have broken the stylistic harmony of the old city, which has been declared a World Heritage site in its entirety. But nobody knows just how the planned new skyscrapers of "Gazprom City" on the right banks of the Neva will brutalize the city's beautiful skyline. Even Stalin, who hated St. Petersburg, dared not touch it. Maybe the financial crisis and lower energy prices will save Czar Peter's dream; Gazprom may be forced to cut down on its ambitious plans, and the city will be spared this arrogant architectural blight.

## Port Information

### Location

Tourists arriving by ship could end up in a few different locations, including Morskoi Vokzal, or Sea Terminal, or one of a number of private docks located closer to the city center not far from the Lieutenant Schmidt Bridge (Angliiskaya embankment).

Independent travelers arriving by ferry will arrive at the Morskoi Vokzal. The terminal boasts a restaurant, bar, bowling alley, bank, ATMs, two travel agencies, insurance companies and a rental car office. It was built beneath Morskaya, an old Soviet hotel (which, despite renovations, isn't one of the best places to stay in the city). Neva Travel and InFlot are two travel agencies that have offices in the terminal as well as promotional booths on the ferries. Packages vary but usually include city tours and trips to leading museums and palaces in the city's suburbs.

Those arriving by ferry should obtain a migration card before landing. The cards are usually distributed to passengers as they disembark. If you are not given one, ask. If you go to passport control without one you are likely to be sent back or fined upon departure.

### Potpourri

St. Petersburg is a very young city by European standards, as it is just slightly more than 300 years old. It is one of two cities in Europe that has never been captured by an enemy during a war or seceded as part of a treaty. The other is Reykjavik, Iceland.

Though Russian and Soviet history teaches that St. Petersburg was nothing but a swamp before Peter the Great founded the city in 1703, it was actually already inhabited by the Ingrians, a race linked to Finns that traded with Dutch traders sailing the Baltic Sea. There was also a Swedish fortress called Nyenskans, built in 1611, located at the mouth of the Neva River (across the river from where Smolny Cathedral stands today). It was sacked and destroyed by Alexander Nevsky, a knight who came up from Novgorod and led the Russians to victory over the Swedes. This land moved back and forth between Sweden and Russia several times.

The 900-day Siege of Leningrad is perhaps the darkest period of the city's history, and yet it is filled with some of the brightest moments of human courage. Leningraders showed incredible resistance and did everything they could to go on with life, including two particularly bright days: On 31 May 1942, following one of the coldest days of the siege, a football match was held between local teams Dinamo and N-sky. Dinamo won 6-0. On 9 August 1942, the Leningrad Radio Symphony Orchestra debuted Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony (*The Leningrad*) in the Philharmonic's Grand Hall (now called the Shostakovich Grand Hall). The performance was broadcast live across the city.

The Rostral Columns, two orange-red pillars located on the spit, or *strelka*, were originally navigation instruments. These early lighthouses burned oil for light in the 1800s. Today, natural gas is piped through the inside of the columns, which are lit on certain national and city holidays.

St. Petersburg's underground network (metro system) is the deepest in the world. The average depth is 200 ft/60 m, and some escalators are more than 500 ft/150 m—the longest in the world. There are two reasons for these depths: The metro was built not only for public transport purposes but also as a potential shelter in case of a nuclear attack, and it runs underneath the Neva River and all of the area's many other rivers and streams.



## **SEE & DO**

### **Sightseeing**

For visual and decorative arts, it's hard to beat the famous 1,367-sq-ft/127-sq-m Hermitage Museum, which ranks among the world's finest. Allow at least half a day just to look at the room decorations, but days and days if you really want to see the museum's incredible art. The bulk of the collection is housed in the Winter Palace, the former home of the czars and one of the focal points of the 1917 revolution. Afterward, stroll along Nevsky Prospekt, the city's main street for shopping and restaurants, and turn right to visit St. Isaac's Cathedral (there is a wonderful view of the city from its tower).

For another interesting route, turn off Nevsky Prospekt (don't forget to have a look at Kazan Cathedral) down Kanal Griboyedova and visit the ornate Church on the Spilled Blood. If the weather is warm, visit one of the many outdoor cafes nearby or browse through the large souvenir stands around the church. Also in the area are the Russian Museum, Mikhailovsky Castle, Mikhailovsky Park, which is nice for a stroll, and the adjacent Summer Garden, which is known for its white statues of allegorical figures and influential Russians in history.

Across the Neva River from the Hermitage, near the Palace Bridge, is the Peter and Paul Fortress, one of the first buildings constructed in the city. It has been home to many unwilling guests, including Dostoyevsky. Peter the Great imprisoned one of his sons, Czarevich Alexei, in its dungeons, and Catherine the Great "buried her enemies alive" there by exiling them to the fortress for life. All the czars from Peter the Great to the last Romanovs are interred in the St. Peter and Paul Cathedral there.

But the best part of sightseeing in St. Petersburg might well be a trip out of the city. In the so-called "palace suburbs"—most of them within a 45-minute drive of Nevsky Prospekt—visitors get a glimpse of Russia's imperial past. In the former czarist estates at Peterhof, Gatchina, Tsarskoye Tselo (Pushkin) and Pavlovsk, you'll find green, rolling parks with cleverly made lakes and canals, as well as exquisitely decorated palaces. Don't miss an outstanding Pushkin landmark—a re-created Amber Room.

Be aware that the government has decreed that all transactions are to be carried out in rubles. Also, be aware that foreigners must often pay several times more than Russians do for admission to museums and other attractions. We give the prices for foreigners in this report.

Also note that throughout the year, local arts organizations host various cultural events. Tourists should check any of the city's English-language publications, such as *The St. Petersburg Times* (<http://www.sptimes.ru>), *Pulse* (<http://www.pulse.ru>), *St. Petersburg In Your Pocket* (<http://www.inyourpocket.com>) and *St. Petersburg Out* (<http://eng.peterout.ru>) for more information.

### **Historic Sites**

#### **Admiralty**

A monument to naval triumphalism, the neoclassical Admiralty was founded in 1704 by Peter the Great and built in the early 1820s. Its key feature is a central tower rising through tiers and columns ending in a slender spire clad in gold. Its gilded weather vane is shaped like a frigate and has become the emblem of St. Petersburg.

#### **Alexander Nevsky Monastery**

Fans of Dostoyevsky, Tchaikovsky and Mussorgsky can pay their respects graveside at the monastery's two cemeteries. Also on the grounds is the Holy Trinity Cathedral. Some of the former cathedral buildings now house the Museum of City Sculpture. Church: daily 6 am-11 pm. Daily services at the Trinity Cathedral 7 am, 10 am and 5 pm. Cemeteries: daily 9:30 am-6 pm (except Thursday). The ticket office is open until 4:30 pm. Cemeteries 140 rubles; cathedral free. 1 Ploschad Aleksandra Nevskogo (turn right at the end of Nevsky Prospekt), St. Petersburg. Phone 812-274-2635 (cemeteries), 812-274-1702 (church).

<http://www.lavra.spb.ru>.

### **Bronze Horseman**

Between St. Isaac's Cathedral and the Neva River stands the most famous statue in Russia. It is the very symbol of Peter the Great. The monument is set on an entire stone (monolith) and is based only on the horse's tail. The site, protected by UNESCO, opens to a wonderful view overlooking the Neva and St. Isaac's Cathedral. When locals marry, this is often the first stop after exchanging vows. Located on Ploshchad Dekabristov.

### **Cathedral of the Transfiguration**

An astonishingly beautiful Russian Orthodox cathedral. Services daily at 10 am and 6 pm. The church is open daily 8 am-8 pm. Free (contributions encouraged). Preobrazhenskaya Ploshchad 1 (just off Liteiny Prospekt, about a 20-minute walk from Nevsky Prospekt, metro station Chernyshevskaya), St. Petersburg. Phone 812-272-3662.

### **Church of the Savior on the Spilled Blood**

This colorful church, with its distinctive onion dome, was built on the exact spot where a terrorist bomb killed Alexander II in 1881, hence the name. It is also sometimes known as the Church of the Resurrection of Christ. The elaborate edifice is particularly interesting because it's the only work of truly Russian architecture in this city of European palaces. A chapel next door is devoted to the czar, who began many reforms in Russia, notably the emancipation of serfs. Thursday-Tuesday May-October 10 am-8 pm, November-April 10 am-6 pm. Cathedral 320 rubles. Kanal Griboyedova 2a (just off Nevsky Prospekt), St. Petersburg. Phone 812-314-2168 or 812-315-1636 to schedule a tour. <http://www.cathedral.ru>.

### **Cruiser Aurora**

If you're interested in Russia's communist past, tour the cruiser *Aurora*, the ship that fired the warning shot to signal the storming of the Winter Palace in 1917. It contains a museum of the revolution. Tuesday-Thursday, Saturday and Sunday 10:30 am-5 pm. Free admission. Excursion is 200 rubles. Petrogradskaya Naberezhnaya 4, St. Petersburg. Phone 812-230-8440. <http://www.aurora.org.ru>.

### **Kazan Cathedral**

A brooding, horseshoe-shaped Russian Orthodox church built between 1801 and 1811 that was turned into a museum of Soviet atheism and then turned back into a church. Tours are available after noon. Services are held daily at 9 or 10 am and 6 pm (with choir). Daily 9 am-8 pm. Free (tours range 100 rubles-300 rubles depending on the duration and size of the group). Kazanskaya Ploshchad 2 (on Nevsky Prospekt), St. Petersburg. Phone 812-570-4528. <http://www.kazansky.spb.ru>.

### **Nevsky Prospekt 14**

The blue-and-white tablet painted on the wall of Nevsky Prospekt 14 is a sacred reminder of the 1941-44 siege of Leningrad, when more than a million people died of hunger and cold. Often decorated with flowers, it warns readers in Russian that during (German) shelling, this side of the street is more dangerous.

### **Palace Square**

Dvortsovaya Ploshchad has been the site of countless political protests in Russian history, most notably the Bloody Sunday demonstrations that sparked Russia's first revolution in 1905. One of the most beautiful squares in all of Russia, it contains the Winter Palace and the General Staff Building—now a branch of the Hermitage Museum. During summer, tent cafes go up where you can sit back and watch the stream of St. Petersburg society go by. In the middle of the square there's Alexander Column (154 ft/47 m), standing alone without support. The monolith was erected in celebration of the victory over Napoleon.

### **Peter and Paul Fortress**

The city's oldest building and the burial site of every czar since Peter the Great. It was built in 1703 as a fortification fortress, but has never served that function throughout its history. Be sure to visit the small room in its cathedral where Nicholas II and his family are entombed.

Outside the cathedral, you'll see an unusual statue of Peter the Great: It's the object of some derision in Russia, as the great czar is seated unassumingly in an armchair. Past the statue and to the right is the Trubetskoy Bastion, where numerous prisoners awaited their fate. The Fortress is a lovely place to walk around in the evening during the White Nights. A guided tour takes you up to the roof of the bastions to see the Fortress, the Neva River and St. Petersburg's many bridges. The State Museum for the History of St. Petersburg is also located in the Fortress, which is open 6 am-10 pm. The cathedral and the city museum that is also on-site are open Monday and Thursday-Sunday 11 am-6 pm, Tuesday 11 am-5 pm (closed the last Tuesday of the month). Combined ticket: 350 rubles. Entrance to the fortress is free. 3 Petropavlovskaya Krepost, St. Petersburg. Phone 821-232-9454. <http://www.spbmuseum.ru>.

### **Piskaryovskoye Cemetery**

A popular place for contemplative strolls. Its mass graves hold 500,000 victims of the Germans' 900-Day Siege during World War II. A museum at the gate offers a sobering account of that grim event. Daily 10 am-6 pm. Free. Prospekt Nepokoryonnykh 72 (a 45-minute taxi ride north of Nevsky Prospekt), St. Petersburg. Phone 812-297-5716.

### **Smolny Cathedral**

This striking blue-and-white structure is one of St. Petersburg's most beautiful churches. It now houses an art gallery. The yellow building next to the cathedral served as the Bolshevik headquarters between the February and October revolutions. In the evenings, the cathedral is often the place for classic- and religious-music concerts. Daily 10 am-7 pm (closed Wednesday). Gallery admission 200 rubles; tower visits an additional 200 rubles. Ploshchad Rastrelli 3, St. Petersburg. Phone 812-577-1421. <http://www.cathedral.ru>.

### **Statue of Lenin**

This (big) chunk of communist memorabilia—and the butt of many jokes—is the city's largest statue of Lenin. Moskovsky Prospekt (on the right-hand side when driving into town from the airport), St. Petersburg.

### **St. Isaac's Cathedral**

One of the most beautiful Christian structures east of the Vatican. Among the contents of the cathedral, which cost more than five times what it cost to build the Winter Palace, is a cupola covered with pure gold. For a bird's-eye view of the city, climb atop the colonnade, but be sure to go inside the cathedral for a look at the soaring ceiling, stunning mosaics, and pure malachite and lapis columns. Thursday-Tuesday 11 am-7 pm (May-September 10 am-8 pm). Colonnade closes at 5 pm and reopens 6-11 pm. 320 rubles, plus another 160 rubles for the colonnade; 300 rubles after 6 pm. Extra fee for taking photos. Isaakievskaya Ploshchad 4, St. Petersburg. Phone 812-315-9732. <http://www.cathedral.ru>.

### **Victory Square**

Travelers arriving from the airport will be greeted on Victory Square by a brown obelisk surrounded by statues of soldiers and civilians: This is a monument to the defenders of Leningrad during World War II.

## **Museums**

### **Central Naval Museum**

Among the oldest museums in Russia, the Central Naval Museum (established in 1709) traces the history of the Russian fleet. Its more than 800,000 artifacts include a boat built by Peter the Great and memorials to the men who died on the *Kursk* submarine. Wednesday-Sunday 11 am-6 pm. Closed on the last Thursday of the month. 350 rubles adults, 120 rubles for children and students. Tours in English 700 rubles. Birzhevaya Ploshchad 4, St. Petersburg. Phone 812-328-2502 or 812-328-2701. <http://www.navalmuseum.ru>.

### **Dostoyevsky Museum**

Fans of the author of *The Brothers Karamazov* and *Crime and Punishment* can see the surprisingly cheerful decor of the apartment where he spent his final years. The memorial museum also houses frequent experimental exhibitions and art events. Tuesday-Sunday 11 am-6 pm (closed the last Wednesday of the month). 150 rubles (1,100 rubles for guided tour,

group of 20). Kuznechny Pereulok 5/2, St. Petersburg. Phone 812-571-1804 to arrange tours. <http://www.md.spb.ru>.

### **Hermitage Museum**

One of the world's finest collections of Western paintings is housed in this complex of stately buildings strung along the banks of the Neva River. The 1,057-room Winter Palace is at its core. The museum was founded by Catherine the Great, who collected European art for her hermitage—a cozy, private room closed off from the rest of the palace. The museum is famous for its Rembrandts and boasts more than 25 major works by Henri Matisse (two glorious rooms) and more than 30 by Pablo Picasso.

The Hermitage is also the controversial holder of 74 French impressionist and postimpressionist paintings taken from private German collections at the end of World War II and hidden until recently. You can also see imperial furnishings and accoutrements—don't miss the fabulously ornate carriage that belonged to Peter the Great's wife, Catherine I.

Even though only a small part of the 3-million-piece collection is on display at any one time, it's still impossible to see all that is shown. Tuesday-Saturday 10:30 am-6 pm, Sunday 10:30 am-5 pm. Box office closes one hour earlier. 400 rubles adults (first Thursday of the month is free for all visitors, although it's very crowded). Tickets can also be ordered in advance on the museum's Web site. aDvortsovaya Naberezhnaya 34 (metro station Kanal Griboedova), St. Petersburg. Phone 812-710-9625 or 812-710-9079. <http://www.hermitage.ru>.

### **Kunstkamera**

Also called the Chamber of Curiosities (or the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography), the Kunstkamera is the oldest state museum in Russia. This unusual institution boasts a gruesome 18th-century anatomy collection. Translation: shelf upon shelf of bottled heads, hands, deformed fetuses and other oddities. The highlight—if that's the correct word—is the two-headed calf. Less bizarre but equally interesting is the globe located in the tower. It was built in 1754 and can hold 12 people to admire the paintings on the inside. Tuesday-Sunday 11 am-7 pm (closed the last Tuesday of the month). Tickets are sold until 5 pm. 250 rubles. Guided tour in English 1,500 rubles for up to four people, 5,500 rubles for groups of 5-20; book in advance. Universitetskaya Naberezhnaya 3, St. Petersburg. Phone 812-328-1412 or 812-328-0812. <http://www.kunstkamera.ru/en>.

### **Military History Museum**

An informative overview of Russian military history, especially Russian wars of the past 200 years. A special exposition is devoted to Kalashnikov, and arms from 52 other countries are also represented. Wednesday-Sunday 11 am-6 pm (closed the last Thursday of the month). 300 rubles adults, 150 rubles students. Guided tour in English for groups (2-30 people) 1,500-5,700 rubles per group by prior arrangement, discounts for students. Aleksandrovsky Park 7 (across the moat from the Peter and Paul Fortress), St. Petersburg. Phone 812-232-0296 or 812-238-0704. <http://www.artillery-museum.spb.ru>.

### **Museum of the Political History of Russia**

The former mansion of Matilda Kshesinskaya, prima ballerina of the Mariinsky Theater and illicit lover of Nicholas II, is now a wonderful museum of Russian history. The English-speaking guides will lead you on a frank and honest tour of Russian history from Ivan IV (the Terrible) to the present day. Daily except Thursday 10 am-6 pm (the box office closes an hour earlier). 200 rubles adults, 100 rubles children and students. Ulitsa Kuibysheva 2-4, St. Petersburg. Phone 812-233-7052. <http://www.polithistory.ru>.

### **Pushkin Apartment Museum**

This was the writer's opulent, 11-room apartment where he lived for two years prior to his death in the duel with D'Anthes. Visitors can rent English-language recorded commentaries. Daily except Tuesday 10:30 am-6 pm (closed the last Friday of the month). 200 rubles. Free admission on select days. Naberezhnaya Reki Moiki 12 (Moika Embankment 12), St. Petersburg. Phone 812-571-3801. <http://www.museumpushkin.ru>.

### **Russian Ethnographic Museum**

The costumes and crafts of the 159 peoples of the former Soviet Union all under one roof. Tuesday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm (closed the last Friday of the month). 300 rubles adults, 150 rubles children (guided tour in English 1,000 rubles). Inzhenernaya Ulitsa 4/1, St. Petersburg. Phone 812-313-4421 or 812-570-5421. <http://eng.ethnomuseum.ru>.

### **Russian Museum**

This collection spans the history of Russian art, from stunning medieval icons to breathtaking 19th-century realist canvases to socialist realist art and beyond. It also hosts the biggest collection of avant-garde Russian art in the world. The museum comprises Mikhailovsky Palace (the basis of the collection, the central exhibition at Inzhenernaia St. 4) with its Benois Wing (Russian avant-garde art, temporary exhibitions, Naberezhnaya Griboedova), the Stroganov Palace (temporary exhibitions, Nevsky Prospekt 17), the Marble Palace (foreign artists in Russia in the 18th and 19th centuries; and modern and contemporary Russian and Western art, including the famous Ludwig Museum, Millionnaya St. 5/1) and the Mikhailovsky Castle (or the Engineers' Castle, Sadovaya St. 2). Also a portrait gallery and temporary exhibitions.

Open Monday 10 am-4 pm, Wednesday-Sunday 10 am-5 pm (ticket office closes an hour earlier). 350 rubles adults, 150 rubles children and students. A ticket to all of the museums palaces is 600 rubles adults, 300 rubles children and students (guided tour in English 800 rubles; book in advance). Inzhenernaya Ulitsa 4, St. Petersburg. Phone 812-314-3448 and 812-595-4248. <http://www.rusmuseum.ru/eng>.

### **Zoological Museum**

Created from the holdings of the Kunstkamera, this museum contains more than 15 million types of preserved animals. The pride of the museum's collection is a mummified mammoth. Children especially find this museum a fun place to visit. Saturday-Thursday 11 am-6 pm. Ticket office closes one hour earlier. 60 rubles adults, 20 rubles children. Universitetskaya Naberezhnaya 1/3, St. Petersburg. Phone 812-328-0112. [http://www.zin.ru/index\\_e.htm](http://www.zin.ru/index_e.htm).

### **Neighborhoods & Districts**

#### **Kanal Griboyedova**

After visiting the Russian Museum, exit onto Kanal Griboyedova to see the riotous colors of the mosaics on the facade of the Church on the Spilled Blood and the gorgeous wrought-iron gates of Mikhailovsky Garden. Keep on walking around the gates and you'll see the Mars Field, where imperial guards used to drill (the eternal flame is also located there), and Mikhailovsky Zamok (Engineers' Castle), where Paul I was murdered and where Dostoyevsky began school.

#### **Nevsky Prospekt**

The Broadway of St. Petersburg. Travel the entire 3-mi/5-km length of Nevsky Prospekt, crossed by two rivers and a canal, to get a feel for Russia old and new. Baskin Robbins and Reebok shops squeeze in between Italianate palaces, churches of different denominations, a railway station, restaurants, cafes and libraries. Starts by Alexander Nevsky monastery, ends with the Admiralty and the Palace Square.

### **Parks & Gardens**

#### **Summer Garden**

Located between the Troitsky and Liteiny bridges, the Summer Garden was built on the orders of Peter the Great and remains one of the city's most beloved sights. Those who have enjoyed strolling among the tall trees and marble statues include Pushkin and Tchaikovsky. In the gardens you'll find Peter the Great's small Summer Palace, alongside a small cafe and gift shop with crafts from local artists. Gardens open daily during the summer 10 am-10 pm (off-season daily 11 am-7 pm); palace open May-November daily except Tuesday (closed the last Monday of the month). Summer admission is free for the garden, 200 rubles for the palace. Winter admission is free. Phone 812-314-0456. <http://eng.gov.spb.ru/culture/museums/sugarden>.

### **The Islands (Krestovsky, Kamenny, Yelagin)**

Located to the northwest from the Petrograd side, the islands offer marvelous opportunities for a pleasant walk in a park while enjoying the 19th- to early-20th-century countryside architecture. Kamenny is famous for early-20th-century cottages, wild parks and boat docks. Krestovsky also has some nice parks, a sports stadium, a number of tennis courts, an exit to the Gulf of Finland, an amusement park and several restaurants (including Russkaya Rybalka where you can fish for your own dinner). Yelagin is well-known for its beautiful parks and meadows, a system of ponds (with a few opportunities to rent a boat), the Yelagin Palace and an amusement park.

Park open daily 6 am-midnight. Museum in Yelagin Palace open 10 am-6 pm, closed on Monday and the last Tuesday of the month. Admission is free during the week, 50 rubles on weekends and public holidays. The best way to the islands is by taxi (20-minute drive from the city center) or the metro (Chernaya Rechka,, Krestovsky Otrov or Staraya Derevnya stations), St. Petersburg.

### **SECURITY**

#### **Etiquette**

If you're traveling on business, take lots of business cards: Failing to offer your card may be taken as a slight. Fancy business cards are admired. As a courtesy, print information in English on one side and Russian on the other. Russians shake hands upon meeting and generally are willing to discuss business in any venue.

Russians have three names: first, middle (patronymic) and last. The middle name always ends in *-ich*, *-ovich* or *-evich* for men, or *-a*, *-ovna* or *-evna* for women, meaning "son (or daughter) of." So a man named John Smith whose father is named Robert would likely be John Robertovich Smith; John's sister Suzy would be Suzy Robertovna Smith. In formal situations, Russians (especially those older than 35) are often introduced only by their first and middle names—John Robertovich, not John Smith—and it is mildly presumptuous to drop the middle name when addressing them. However, because most foreigners lack a patronymic (as Robertovich doesn't come across as Russian to the Russian ear), many Russians will address you by your first name and allow you to reciprocate. Today, most young Russians are dropping this form of address.

Most Russians smoke and will do so without asking permission during business meetings or meals. They may also drink copious amounts of alcohol, although rarely during business meetings. In personal, nonbusiness situations, you may find yourself staring at a large glass of vodka. If you don't want to drink, don't. They may insist, and may even get slightly offended because, to many, it represents a gesture of friendship. Nevertheless, you should never feel like you are being pushed into something you don't want to do—you have every right to be firm and say no.

If you're going to visit a Russian at home, take your dress shoes along with you in a plastic bag. Upon entering a home, you'll be expected to remove your street shoes and slip on the shoes you have carried with you. (If you forgot, they will usually have slippers for you.) It's also a good idea to take along an odd number of flowers for your hostess. If you stay overnight in a Russian home, don't be surprised if your hosts present you with gifts. You might want to take along some small items (souvenirs from your country) to reciprocate.

#### **Personal Safety**

St. Petersburg is reasonably safe for tourists, having no more or less of a problem with pickpockets and other petty criminals than many large cities. (Stories about people being robbed in broad daylight on Nevsky Prospekt are exaggerated.) However, tourists are obvious targets for pickpockets, so be cautious on the streets and at the entrances or exits of public transport. Avoid gypsies and gangs of street kids, do not flash cash, and be wary of anyone

who tries to strike up an acquaintance. There has been a recent increase in racist and nationalist attacks in St. Petersburg; tourists with dark complexions should be cautious of this fact and avoid abandoned streets or groups of aggressive young people. The notorious Russian mafia usually won't bother with tourists.

St. Petersburg officials have taken some steps to try to improve safety for tourists. In general, the police are of little use to travelers in trouble. (An English-speaking police force for tourist protection allegedly patrols Nevsky Prospekt in summer, but we haven't seen evidence of it.) Police will usually intervene to halt a crime in progress, but don't expect much help from them in solving a crime that has already occurred. They will, however, issue a report—in Russian, of course—for your insurance company.

Major recommendations: Don't walk alone at night, don't get drunk, avoid the police, and keep cell phones and passports in a safe place, but carry copies of documents with you.

Police can stop anyone on the street for random document checks—and frequently do. Carry photocopies of your passport and visa with you at all times—people have been detained for failure to produce their documents. If you are stopped for a document check, make sure the police are wearing badges, and ask them to show you their ID cards. If they take you to the police station, be polite and cooperative at all times. It is likely that the situation will be resolved without further incident. Watch out for thugs in fake (or real) police uniforms.

The number of prostitutes in the city has dramatically increased. Be aware that a few have drugged and robbed their customers. Also note that it's not always easy to tell a prostitute from a girl who's just friendly (or drunk).

Beware of the cars—motorists drive dangerously in Russia and don't pay any attention to pedestrians. Many drivers identify zebra crossings as some extravagant, but utterly meaningless street decoration. Pedestrians should also watch the ground as falling into uncovered manholes is a frequent (and sometimes deadly) accident in St. Petersburg as you can freeze to death before anyone will find your shattered bones.

For the latest information, contact your country's travel-advisory agency.

## **Health**

St. Petersburg's tap water is notoriously unclean. City authorities recommend boiling tap water for at least a couple of minutes before drinking it or using it in food preparation; locals often boil it even longer. The better hotels have their own water filtration systems, but elsewhere it's best to use bottled or boiled water for brushing your teeth. Keep your mouth shut in the shower and avoid ice in your drinks. Fruits and vegetables should be washed thoroughly with bottled or boiled water. Food sold by street vendors or from kiosks is suspect. Another danger is the absence of iodine in water or food products—if staying long in St. Petersburg, make sure you take some extra iodine.

Mosquitoes are an absolute pain during the summer months. Anyone with an allergy to insect bites should take necessary precautions.

Public toilets are not quite as disgusting as some guidebooks would have you believe. Nine times out of 10, they are clean enough to be usable. However, you should avoid, at all cost, the ones at the bus and train stations. Take along some toilet paper if you need to use a public toilet.

Make sure all your immunizations are current. For several summers, Russia has been swept by epidemics, such as cholera and diphtheria (but mostly in the southern regions). Take along all prescription medicines you might need.

A number of hospitals in St. Petersburg provide Western-quality medical care or accept non-Russian insurance plans. There are some privately owned ambulances. The best medical care can be obtained at the American Medical Center at Naberezhnaya Moiki 78, but it is terribly expensive for nonmembers. Expect to pay about US\$200 to see the doctor (credit cards are accepted). It also has a good pharmacy and will arrange evacuation from Russia, if necessary. Phone 812-140-2090.

You can also visit:

**American Medical Clinic:** Offers a wide range of services, including 24-hour emergency care (intensive care unit, X-ray and laboratory all on-site), traditional surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, urology, pediatric care, dentistry, family care and emergency evacuations. Naberezhnaya Moika 78, St. Petersburg. Phone 812-740-2090. <http://www.amclinic.com>.

**Euromed Clinic:** Good-quality health care, family practice, dentistry, emergency care. Suvorovsky Prospekt 60, St. Petersburg. Phone 812-327-0301. <http://www.euromed.ru>.

**MEDEM:** International clinic and hospital—24-hour ambulance service, emergency room and trauma unit, family practice, gynecology, pediatrics, specialists (U.S.-trained and -licensed family physicians), inpatient department, medical evacuations and multilingual staff. Ulitsa Marata 6, St. Petersburg. Phone 812-336-3333. <http://www.medem.ru/en>.

**Coris Assistance:** Private ambulance—emergency medical care for adults and children, traumatology. Chugunnaya Ulitsa 46, St. Petersburg. Phone 812-327-1313 (24 hours). <http://www.coris-spb.ru/index.php?cat=english>.

For the latest information, contact your country's health-advisory agency.

Health Canada—Phone: 613-957-2991. <http://www.travelhealth.gc.ca>.

U.S. CDC International Travel Information—Toll-free: 877-394-8747. <http://www.cdc.gov/travel>.

### **Disabled Advisory**

This is a difficult city for those with impaired mobility. St. Petersburg has facilities only in limited public areas for the handicapped. A few hotels and some large museums (the Hermitage, the Russian Museum) are fully wheelchair accessible and have special entrances. Please call and ask in advance. The streets are full of potholes and even elegant Nevsky Prospekt isn't always easy to handle for wheelchair users.

### **Dos & Don'ts**

Do make copies of your credit cards, passport, visas and other documents and keep them in a safe place.

Don't forget to get a migration card before going to passport control when you arrive.

Do keep photo ID with you if you are planning on using a credit card.

Don't shake hands over a threshold (it's regarded as bad luck).

Do carry a small roll of toilet paper with you just in case you have to use a public toilet that doesn't have any.

Don't drink the water unless it has been boiled or filtered.



Do ask for the British Consulate's small handout on crime in St. Petersburg (it should be available at your hotel). It has a great map and useful information.

Don't be offended if Russian men don't shake hands with women (women who offer their hands might find them kissed rather than shaken).

Do watch your head—ice tends to fall off buildings in the spring.

Don't be irritated that you might be required to pay a "foreigner price" at many theaters and museums. That's just the way it is, and discussions with the *babushka* (matron) guarding the entrance won't get you anywhere, even in perfect Russian.

Do show up at least an hour before museums close. Many ticket offices close an hour or more before the museum.

## **FACTS**

### **Geostats**

**Passport/Visa Requirements:** Passports, visas and proof of onward passage are needed by Canadian and U.S. citizens. Reconfirm travel document requirements with your carrier before departure. A tourist visa is valid for maximum of 30 days. For longer stays, a business (multiple entry) visa is recommended. Since 2007, anyone who travels on a multi-entry business visa can stay in Russia no longer than 90 days in any 180-day period.

If you arrange your trip through a tour agency, the agency will handle visa arrangements for you. If you are traveling independently, you'll need an official letter of invitation from a Russian citizen or company, and you'll have to apply for a visa through a Russian consulate. After entering the country, you must register the visa and migration card within three days. Your hotel will usually take care of this for you (by law they must register you within 24 hours), but you may be charged a small fee.

Expect the process to take at least a day, and be sure to pick up your documents from the hotel (they don't necessarily return them to you until you ask). Many tourist agencies will also handle the registering for you. Note that if you fail to get registered on time, you will be fined when leaving Russia and may miss your flight.

**Population:** 4,553,000.

**Languages:** Russian. English is spoken in hotels and most upscale restaurants, and taxi drivers speak just enough English to charge three times the going rate. A crash course in the Russian alphabet is a must to decipher maps and signs on streets and subways.

**Predominant Religions:** Christian (Russian Orthodox), Islamic.

**Time Zone:** 3 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (+3 GMT). Daylight Saving Time is observed from the last Sunday in March to the last Sunday in October.

**Voltage Requirements:** 220 volts.

**Telephone Codes:** 7, country code; 812,city code;

## **Money**

### **Taxes**

The value-added tax (VAT) is a whopping 18% (or 10% on food products, books and other concessionary categories) and is levied on everything, from services to meals to hotel rooms.

Taxation legislation often changes, so keep an eye out for updates. Prime Minister Vladimir Putin is promoting a decrease in the VAT rate to 12%, but this has not happened yet.

#### **Tipping**

Tipping is not customary. At restaurants, tip 5%-10% for exceptional service. Some places will include a 10% service charge in the bill. Do not tip taxi drivers.

#### **Weather**

Because snow can fall as late as May, the best time to visit St. Petersburg is June-August. Temperatures during these months get up around 68 F/20 C to 77 F/25 C. By far, the most tourists arrive in June for the celebrated White Nights period, when it doesn't become dark until 2 am—and then only slightly. Fall and its cooler temperatures arrive in mid-September, and by October, temperatures drop substantially to around 48 F/10 C. Snow doesn't usually begin falling until November but can come as early as October. By January, temperatures can get as low as -7 F/-25 C, but generally vary from 32 F/0 C to 14 F/-10 C, and the chilly wind from the Gulf of Finland can make it seem a lot colder. Note that temperature may vary wildly in winter, and rainfall may turn the frozen streets into a skating rink. February is often a good month for photography though. When the winter sun makes an appearance, it will clad the historic monuments in golden and orange hues.

#### **What to Wear**

Take along a warm coat, a warm hat and a scarf in winter, and waterproof boots and an umbrella February-April, when the entire city can turn into a slushy swamp. Sidewalks are also slippery and treacherous in winter.

Suits for men and women are the norm for business. Most Russians dress up for an evening at the theater or symphony. Female visitors may want to do as Russian women do in the winter: Carry your fancy shoes in a bag and change from your boots when you check your coat.

When just walking around town, dress down to attract less attention. Our Russian friends tell us that it's impossible to look like anything but a foreigner in their country: Even if you don't say a word, your facial expression, haircut or clean shoes will give you away

## **Tallinn, Estonia**

### **OVERVIEW**

#### **Introduction**

Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, is considered one of the best preserved medieval cities in northern Europe. Its charming Old Town survived the Soviets, as well as the country's earlier occupations by the Danish and Swedish empires (among others). Today, this city 115 mi/185 km northwest of Tartu is an important port on the Gulf of Finland and a popular stop for cruise ships.

An almost essential purchase for visitors to Tallinn is the Tallinn Card. Valid for six to 72 hours, the card allows one person free access to every museum in the city, free sightseeing tours and even free transport to a number of destinations within the city. Card holders also receive special discounts at many shops, bars and restaurants. Tallinn Cards are available through the tourist board.

Begin your visit by taking a guided bus tour or a horse-drawn carriage ride along the narrow cobblestoned streets of Old Town to get an overview of the city. Then revisit areas on foot, starting with the buildings along Pikk Street. You'll go past the well-preserved 15th-century Guild House and its Great Guildhall, which now contains the excellent Estonian History Museum. Continue on to the Olaveiste Church, which once boasted the world's tallest steeple.

At the north end of Pikk Street is Fat Margaret, the widest defense tower in the city walls. Its mate is Tall Hermann, the city's highest defense tower, which stands atop Cathedral Hill (Toompea) at the opposite end of the city.

Other attractions in Tallinn include the Gothic Town Hall (built 1401-04) and the many Gothic churches, including Toomkirik (also atop Cathedral Hill). Next to the church is Toompea Castle, which affords fine views of Tallinn. Although originally built in 1219, the castle's baroque style comes from extensive renovations in the 19th century. The Tallinn Botanical Garden is a well-kept secret that's worth checking out.

The city is brimming with museums: Two we especially recommend are the Gothic Niguliste Museum (located in the Church of St. Nicholas) and the Maarjamae Museum (which covers Estonian history from the 17th century to the present). The Occupation Museum, the first purpose-built museum in Tallinn, houses a unique collection of artifacts and rare newsreel footage, charting the history of the city under occupation. Also don't miss the futuristic seven-story building of the KUMU (Eesti Kunstimuseum), which has the largest art collection of the Baltics. The Estonian National Opera attracts international stars.

A word of warning to the keen museum visitor: Tallinn museums tend to close on odd days of the week, often Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday. To be certain of seeing your museum of choice, it's better to plan your stay for the end of the week, or better yet, to check in advance.

Nearby Pirita Beach has nice views of the Gulf of Finland, but we especially liked the view of Tallinn and environs from atop the ruins of the Pirita Cloister (convent, church and monastery).

Day trips can be made to Kloogaranna, one of the cleanest beaches in Estonia (25 mi/40 km west of Tallinn), or to the Rebala Farming History Reserve (12 mi/20 km east of Tallinn), which is home of the Sliding Rocks (women who slide bare bottomed down the rocks are said to be cured of infertility). Tallinn merits a minimum of two days. <http://www.tourism.tallinn.ee>.

## Copenhagen, Denmark

### OVERVIEW

#### Introduction

Copenhagen, Denmark, seemingly has numerous distinct images, each accurately capturing a facet of the city. Copenhagen is an old merchants' town overlooking the entrance to the Baltic Sea; a progressive city tolerant of a wide range of social behavior; a metropolis that manages to run efficiently yet feel relaxed; and a city with so many architectural treasures that it's known as the "City of Beautiful Spires."



Put together, these images, which enhance Copenhagen tourism, make a truly memorable picture for Copenhagen visitors.

And given the Danes' highly tuned environmental awareness, Copenhagen sightseeing can be enjoyed on foot or on a bicycle.

#### Must See or Do

**Sights**—Amalienborg Palace and its lovely square; Tivoli Gardens; the *Little Mermaid*; panoramic views from Rundetaarn (Round Tower); Nyhavn and its nautical atmosphere; Christiansborg Castle and the medieval ruins in the cellars.

**Museums**—The sculptures and impressionist works at Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek; the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art and its outdoor sculpture park; paintings from the Danish Golden Age

at the Hirschsprung Collection; Viking and ancient Danish artifacts at the National Museum; neoclassical sculpture at Thorvaldsens Museum.

**Memorable Meals**—Danish *smorrebrod* at Ida Davidsen's Vinstue; traditional herring at Krogs Fiskerestaurant; fine dining at The Paul in Tivoli Gardens; Nordic cuisine at noma.

**Walks**—Taking in the small island of Christianshavn; walking through Dyrehaven to see herds of deer; walking from Nyhavn to Amalienborg Palace; strolling along Stroget, where the stores show off the best in Danish design.

**Especially for Kids**—Tivoli Gardens; Copenhagen Zoo; the Experimentarium; the changing of the guard at Amalienborg Palace; an excursion to Roskilde Viking Ship Museum; Legoland in Billund.

## Geography

Copenhagen is a compact city. The old town is bordered on the west by Radhuspladsen (Town Hall Square), Tivoli Gardens and the Central Railroad Station; on the north by Orsted's Park and the Norreport Train Station; on the east by Kongens Have (Rosenborg Garden) and Kongens Nytorv; and on the south by Christianshavn.

Stroget, the lifeline stretching out from Radhuspladsen to Kongens Nytorv, is the main pedestrian shopping street. To the east of Kongens Nytorv is the old harbor area, called Nyhavn, with picturesque taverns, quaint restaurants and restored warehouses that now function as hotels lining an old canal. Beyond Nyhavn is Amalienborg Palace, home of Denmark's royal family. South of Copenhagen is the large island of Amager, once the kitchen garden of the city, where Dutch farmers taught Danes how to grow flowers and vegetables. It's now the site of Copenhagen Airport and the picturesque town of Dragor.

The old town is surrounded by four colorful residential neighborhoods. Vesterbro stretches southwest from Radhuspladsen along Vesterbrogade. Farther north along Gammel Kongevej is the independent municipality Frederiksberg, which is bordered on the north by Nørrebro. Finally, Østerbro stretches north of the old town along Østerbrogade. Beyond these neighborhoods are Copenhagen's suburbs and most of its parks and recreational areas.

## History

Founded in the 11th century as a fishing village in what was then a remote corner of Denmark, Copenhagen gradually became the country's uncontested political, economic and cultural center. Bishop Absalon was the first to recognize the importance of its location on the Baltic Sea. In the 12th century, the Viking warrior-cleric built the first fortress to defend the area against pirates and planned a compact city behind its ramparts. By the time of his death, the city was a vital military post and a thriving trade center.

In the 15th century, the city's position as Denmark's powerhouse was solidified when the royal family made its permanent home there and the University of Copenhagen was founded. During Christian IV's 60-year rule in the 17th century, the city began to acquire its current shape, with the construction of many spectacular buildings—some of which still stand, including the Round Tower built in 1642.

After a series of disasters—both natural (fires and the plague) and man-made (wars with Sweden)—Copenhagen emerged in the middle of the 19th century as a modern city. It also became the capital of Denmark, which ratified its first constitution in 1849. The city's busy harbor and rapid industrialization fueled growth outside the old city walls.

About the same time, Copenhagen's artisans began making a name for themselves with silver and porcelain. A distinctly Danish sense of style that fuses aesthetics and function reached its fullest expression in the 20th century. The clean, elegantly modern lines of Danish design have since captured the world's attention and have spread from home furnishings (Fritz Hansen) to electronics (Bang & Olufsen) to toys (Lego building blocks) to architectural and interior design.

This modern style is evident in projects around the city, such as the harbor-area development, the Oresund Fixed Link Bridge between Copenhagen and Malmo (Sweden), the Opera House and the high-tech metro. Yet Copenhagen retains a distinct old-world charm with its combination of attractive buildings, relaxing canals and busy streets.

## **Port Information**

### **Location**

Cruise ships dock at Langelinie Pier, which is located near the *Little Mermaid* statue just north of the old town, and at the Freeport Cruise Terminal, which is north of Langelinie Pier.

Langelinie Pier is within walking distance of Amalienborg Palace, Kongens Nytorv and Town Hall Square. It has several gift shops, cafes and a Cruise Information Center, where cruise passengers can get free tourist information and buy phone cards, souvenirs and more with the help of English-speaking staff. There is also a Global Refund center, where travelers can present documentation and receive tax refunds on purchases made in Denmark (where applicable) before they board their ships. Cruise passengers can also reach the city center by taxi; on the No. 26 bus, which stops at the pier; or on trains from Osterport station, a 15-minute walk from the pier.

The Freeport Cruise Terminal, which handles fewer ships than Langelinie, has restrooms, a kiosk that sells souvenirs and snacks, and a waiting lounge with Internet access. The Freeport Cruise Terminal is not really within walking distance of the city center. Cruise passengers can reach the city center by taxi; on the No. 26 bus, which stops at the terminal; or on trains from Nordhavn station, a 15-minute walk from the terminal.

In the city center, cruise passengers can show their cabin cards or passenger IDs for access to the Cruise Copenhagen courtesy lounge located in the Magasin department store on Kongens Nytorv, where they can have a complimentary cup of coffee or tea and pick up information about the city. The lounge is open Monday-Thursday 10 am-7 pm, Friday 10 am-8 pm, Saturday 10 am-5 pm and the first Sunday of the month 11 am-5 pm.

### **Potpourri**

Copenhagen was not Denmark's first capital; that was Roskilde, which is about 19 mi/30 km west of Copenhagen and the traditional burial site of Danish kings and queens.

Denmark is the oldest continuous monarchy in Europe. Queen Margrethe II, the current monarch, can trace her lineage directly to Gorm the Old, who ruled the Danes in the 900s.

The Radisson SAS Royal Hotel was designed in the 1950s by Arne Jacobsen, known as the father of Danish Modernism. He designed the original building and all its furnishings—including the iconic Egg chairs in the lobby. The guest rooms have since been redecorated, but one—room 606—has been preserved with all of its original furnishings and may be booked for overnight stays.

Many of the museums in Copenhagen and the greater Copenhagen area offer free admission for children and students up to age 18.

When Hans Christian Andersen came to Copenhagen from his childhood home, Odense, he lived in the Nyhavn district of the city. He originally intended to become a ballet dancer, and so he spent a great deal of time at the Royal Theatre on Kongens Nytorv.

Free City Bikes are located on racks all over the city from spring through fall. Insert a 20 DKK coin in the rack to release the bike. When you take the bike back to any City Bike rack, your coin is returned.

Almost every Danish brewery brews its own special beer, called *julebryg*, for Christmas time. It is available from the first Friday in November and is quite strong.

Every evening, 110,000 light bulbs turn the Tivoli Gardens into an Asian fairy-tale palace.

About 10,000 people commute across the Oresund bridge daily to work in neighboring Sweden or Denmark. Before the bridge was opened, only 1,500 crossed the strait by ferry.

### **SEE & DO Sightseeing**

If it weren't for the unstable weather, Copenhagen would be the perfect European capital. It has beautiful parks, a picturesque harbor area and canals through the old town. We prefer to stroll around town, allowing plenty of time to admire the architecture (both old and ultramodern) and to chat with people in shops and small restaurants.

Start out at the redbrick Radhus, or Town Hall, and its square. The Wonderful Copenhagen tourist office is just a block away, and almost every main sight of the city is within a 20-minute walk. To get oriented, first walk the Stroget (pronounced *STROY-et*), the pedestrian shopping street around which many restaurants and sights are clustered. Stroget ends on Kongens Nytorv (King's New Square), where the ancient harbor of Nyhavn, directly ahead, is a must-see. This is also where the canal tours begin.

Another way to get a view of the city is to climb the Round Tower (Rundetaarn), a 17th-century structure built by King Christian IV. The tower was the first stage of the Trinitatis complex, which was to include three important facilities for scholars of the 17th century: an astronomical observatory, a student church and a university library. Instead of stairs, a huge spiral walkway winds its way to the top of the tower.

Tivoli Gardens, the grande dame of amusement parks, is far too much fun to miss. You have to pay to get in even if you are dining at one of its restaurants, but it is truly fascinating and children will love it. There are amusement rides, splendid gardens with flowers and exceptional lights, a feast of restaurants, and an international concert series, with classical music in the beautifully renovated concert hall and rock music on the outdoor stage.

We highly recommend the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek (a museum with an impressive mix of classical sculptures and impressionist paintings); Thorvaldsen's Museum (sculptures by Europe's leading neoclassicist); and the National Museum, where you can examine Viking artifacts. Each takes at least an hour to visit.

One of our favorite stops in the city is the 17th-century Rosenborg Palace, where the Danish crown jewels are kept. Less interesting is Amalienborg Palace, the royal family's current residence—parts of which are open to the public. There are plenty of other castles to explore in the surrounding area, the two most interesting being Frederiksborg Castle (near Hillerod) and Kronborg, Hamlet's Castle in Helsingor (Elsinore).

### **Historic Sites**

### **Amalienborg Palace**

Home to the royal family since 1794, and still the winter residence, the palace is actually made up of four identical rococo structures. Amalienborg Square, with the equestrian statue of Frederik V, is one of the most beautiful squares in Europe and a major tourist attraction. If you arrive at noon on a day when the royal family is in residence, you can witness 70 guards in high, fur-covered helmets march toward this square from their barracks. Guided tours of Christian VII's Palace are conducted in English July-September Saturday and Sunday at 1 and 2:30 pm. 75 DKK entrance fee. Christian VIII's Palace is a museum that traces the history of the Danish royal family 1863-1972. 60 DKK entrance fee. Open daily 10 am-4 pm 1 May-31 October and 11 am-4 pm 1 November-30 April. Between Bredgade and the harbor, just north of Nyhavn, Copenhagen. Phone 3392-6300.  
<http://www.ses.dk/en/SlotteOgHaver/Slotte/Amalienborg.aspx>.

### **Assistens Cemetery**

As the final resting place of Hans Christian Andersen, Soren Kierkegaard, Niels Bohr and many other famous Danes, Assistens Kirkegaard (Cemetery) provides a step back in time through Danish history. Founded in 1760, it is the largest cemetery in the city. It's sometimes called the Norrebro Cemetery and is a popular place for people to take a stroll, to look at the old graves and monuments and to have a picnic. The cultural center on the site is a venue for art exhibitions. Guided tours are available in Danish for 50 DKK per person. Open daily 8 am-4 pm November-February; 8 am-6 pm March-April and September and October; 8 am-8 pm May-August. A flea market operates along its walls every Saturday May-October. Norrebro (enter Assistens on Kapelvej, Jagtvej or Norrebrogade), Copenhagen. Phone 3537-1917.  
<http://www.assistens.dk> (Danish only).

### **Christiansborg Palace**

This granite and copper structure was built in the early 1900s. Today, it is one of the most important buildings in Denmark—most of the palace accommodates the Danish Parliament. Guided tours (English spoken) take visitors through the ornate reception rooms used by the queen when she receives foreign dignitaries. The reception rooms may be closed to the public when official functions are scheduled. When Parliament is in session, the visitors' gallery is open to the public for free. You can also visit the subterranean ruins of the 12th-century castle that once belonged to Bishop Absalon. Open daily 10 am-4 pm; closed on Monday October-April. Admission to reception rooms: 70 DKK adults; 35 DKK children ages 7-14. Admission to the ruins: 40 DKK adults; 20 DKK children ages 7-14. English-language guided tours of the reception rooms are available daily at 3 pm and are included in the admission price. On Slotsholmen (between Stroget and the waterfront), Copenhagen. Phone 3392-6300.  
<http://www.ses.dk/en/SlotteOgHaver/Slotte/ChristiansborgSlot.aspx>.

### **Little Mermaid**

This statue was inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's famous tale. The pensive maiden sits on rocks just a few feet/meters into the harbor on the north side of the city. She can be reached by a short stroll from Langelinie Pier—a picturesque quay that surrounds the Kastellet (a 17th-century fort)—on a longer but pleasant walk from Nyhavn, or via one of the sightseeing buses that departs from Town Hall Square. Canal tours also make a stop by the statue: They're the only way to see her from the opposite side.

### **Opera House**

Copenhagen's opera house, known simply as *Operaen* (The Opera), occupies a dramatic modern building on the Copenhagen waterfront across the harbor from Amalienborg Palace. Danish architect Henning Larsen designed the building, which was funded by Danish billionaire Maersk McKinney-Moller. Guided tours in Danish are conducted Saturday at 9:30 am, Sunday at 10:30 am, and both days at 4:30 pm and may take you backstage, into the auditorium and through the rehearsal rooms, depending on the performance schedule for the day. Reservations required. 100 DKK. Ekvipagemestervej 10 (Bus 66 from the Central Train Station or harbor ferry from Nyhavn), Holmen, Copenhagen. Phone 3369-6978 for information and guided tours Monday-Friday 10 am-2 pm. <http://kglteater.dk>.

### **Radhus**

The 1905 Town Hall is a beautiful mixture of Nordic and Italian architectural inspiration. Noble statues stand at its entry, on its roof and inside, where the writer Hans Christian Andersen and the Nobel Prize-winning physicist Niels Bohr, among others, are honored. The interior is a wonder to stroll through, with its handsome brass staircase and fancifully painted walls and archways. Jens Olsen's World Clock, one of the most precise mechanical clocks in the world, can be seen in the lower portion of the Town Hall Tower. A panoramic view of the city from the top of the tower—up 300 steps—requires a tour guide. Guided tours in English: Monday-Friday at 3 pm, Saturday at 10 and 11 am. 30 DKK. Tower tours: June-September Monday-Friday at 10 am, noon and 2 pm, Saturday at noon; October-May Monday-Saturday at noon. 20 DKK. Jens Olsen's World Clock Monday-Friday 9:30 am-4:30 pm, Saturday 9:30 am-1 pm. On Radhuspladsen (at the western end of Stroget), Copenhagen. Phone 3366-2582.

### **Rosenborg Palace**

Built by King Christian IV in the 17th century, Rosenborg is a chronicle of the Danish kings and queens who lived there. It's one of our favorite stops, though we do recommend a summer visit because of the poor heating and lighting. Three centuries of royal portraits hang, chronologically, in period rooms. The crown jewels are on display as well. No explanations are offered as part of the displays, so it's a good idea to purchase one of the guidebooks to the castle at the entrance. A museum shop is also on-site. Castle and Treasury open daily year-round, with hours typically 11 am-4 pm. Adults 75 DKK, free for children younger than 18. Oster Voldgade 4A, Copenhagen. Phone 3315-3286. <http://www.rosenborgslot.dk>.

### **Royal Library**

Nicknamed the Black Diamond, this library is an architectural masterpiece of black glass and granite and is a dramatic addition to the city's waterfront. It doubles as a cultural center, with concerts and rotating exhibitions about photography, history, literature and other topics. A book store and cafe are also located on-site. The library's Reading Room West is open Monday-Friday 9 am-9 pm, Saturday 9 am-5 pm. Exhibitions are open year-round Monday-Friday 10 am-7 pm. Soren Kierkegaards Plads 1, Slotsholmen, Copenhagen. Phone 3347-4747. <http://www.kb.dk>.

### **Rundetaarn**

There's an impressive panoramic view from the Round Tower, which was constructed in the 17th century as an observatory. Visitors reach the top by walking up a spiraling ramp that was, as legend has it, constructed so that King Christian IV could be carried to the top in a horse-drawn carriage. It's the oldest European observatory still in use. Concerts and art exhibitions are held at the tower throughout the year. Open daily 10 am-8 pm mid-May to mid-September; 10 am-5 pm mid-September to mid-May. Also open 8-10 pm mid-October to mid-March. 25 DKK adults; 5 DKK children. Kobmagergade 52A, Copenhagen. Phone 3373-0373. <http://www.rundetaarn.dk>.

### **Museums**

#### **ARKEN Museum of Modern Art**

Itself a work of art, this museum by the sea (located 12 mi/20 km south of Copenhagen) is built to look like a ship. The emphasis is on contemporary art, especially Danish and other Nordic works, from the 1990s on. Daily except Monday 10 am-5 pm, Wednesday to 9 pm. 85 DKK adults. Ishoj Strandpark, Skovvej 100 (take the S-train to Ishoj, then Bus 128; it's a 30-minute ride), Ishoj. Phone 4354-0222. <http://www.arken.dk>.

#### **Danish Design Centre**

A showcase for Danish design that spreads out over five floors. The museum, which was built by Danish architect Henning Larsen, has no permanent collection but houses excellent temporary exhibits. Monday-Friday 10 am-5 pm (Wednesday until 9 pm), Saturday, Sunday and holidays 11 am-4 pm. 50 DKK adults, 25 DKK students, senior citizens and children ages 12-18; free for children younger than 12. H.C. Andersens Boulevard 27 (near Tivoli Gardens), Copenhagen. Phone 3369-3369. <http://www.ddc.dk>.

#### **Experimentarium**

A hands-on science museum where you can experience more than 300 exhibitions and



experiments, involving sound, light, water, earth sciences, the human body and human behavior, dinosaurs, physics and electronics, and more. Monday-Friday 9:30 am-5 pm (Tuesday to 9 pm), Saturday and Sunday 11 am-5 pm. 148 DKK adults, 97 DKK children ages 3-11. Tuborg Havnevej 7 (take Bus 1A; about 20 minutes from the Central Railroad Station or 15 minutes from Kongens Nytorv), Hellerup. Phone 3927-3333. <http://www.experimentarium.dk>.

#### **Frihedsmuseet**

This small but fascinating Museum of Danish Resistance 1940-45 traces the chronological progression of resistance by the Danes to the German invasion of Denmark during World War II. Daily 10 am-3 pm (till 5 pm May-September). Free. Churchillparken 1, Copenhagen. Phone 3347-3921. <http://www.nationalmuseet.dk>.

#### **Hirschsprung Collection**

An unusual museum/gallery with a dense display of paintings and sculpture, which makes it feel more like a tasteful salon than a museum. The art was gathered during the Danish Golden Age (1800-50) by Hirschsprung, a tobacco manufacturer. It includes the most extensive collection of works by the Skagen painters. Daily except Tuesday 11 am-4 pm. 50 DKK adults; 60 DKK for special exhibitions. Free admission on Wednesday and for children younger than 18. Stockholmsgade 20, Osterbro, Copenhagen. Phone 3542-0336. <http://www.hirschsprung.dk>.

#### **Kunstindustrimuseet (Danish Museum of Art & Design)**

A museum of decorative and applied arts that gives an excellent introduction to Danish design from the Middle Ages to the contemporary period, including a permanent exhibition of Danish applied arts and industrial design. The museum includes an impressive collection of classic Hirschsprung Danish furniture. Daily except Monday 11 am-5 pm. 60 DKK adults, free for children younger than 18. Free admission on Wednesday. Bredgade 68, Copenhagen. Phone 3318-5656. <http://www.kunstindustrimuseet.dk>.

#### **Louisiana Museum of Modern Art**

This is one of the best modern-art museums in northern Europe and the most-visited museum in Denmark. First distinguished by its idyllic location on the northern coast in Humlebaek (45 minutes by train from Copenhagen's Central Station), Louisiana hosts some of the biggest and best exhibitions in Scandinavia. The outdoor Sculpture Park is lovely, and the permanent collection includes pieces by Giacometti, Henry Moore and Carl-Henning Pedersen. There's also an evening concert series. Tuesday-Friday 11 am-10 pm, Saturday and Sunday 11 am-6 pm. 95 DKK adults, free for children younger than 18. Gammel Strandvej 13, Humlebaek. Phone 4919-0719. <http://www.louisiana.dk>.

#### **Nationalmuseet (National Museum)**

Denmark's main museum of history and human cultures is the largest in Scandinavia. It displays numerous Danish artifacts from the Stone Age to the mid-19th century: Viking helmets, battle implements, artifacts from Greenland and extensive royal coin collections. Daily except Monday 10 am-5 pm. Free admission. Call for information on guided tours in English. Ny Vestergade 10 (near Christiansborg Palace), Copenhagen. Phone 3313-4411. <http://www.nationalmuseet.dk>.

#### **Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek**

This museum, started from the private collection of brewer Carl Jacobsen of Carlsberg beer fame, is interesting as much for its architecture as for the art it displays. Jacobsen had two interests: the artifacts and sculpture of ancient Egypt, Rome and the Middle East, and—somewhat incongruously—Danish and French impressionist and postimpressionist art. The museum contains collections of both in an amazing building, with two completely different facades, an unexpected winter garden under a glass dome, a splendid concert hall surrounded by sculpture, and an inner gallery where several works by Gauguin are displayed. Daily except Monday 11 am-5 pm. 60 DKK adults, free for children younger than 18. Free admission on Sunday. Dantes Plads 7 (next to Tivoli Gardens), Copenhagen. Phone 3341-8141. <http://www.glyptoteket.dk>.

### **Statens Museum for Kunst (National Gallery)**

The National Gallery is a repository of Danish and European painting and sculpture, including a notable Matisse collection. The modern section, in fusion with the old building, is one of the city's great architectural achievements of the late 1990s. Daily except Monday 10 am-5 pm, Wednesday to 8 pm. Free admission to the museum collection and some exhibitions. Admission fee may be charged for special exhibitions. Solvgade 48-50 (near Rosenborg Palace), Copenhagen. Phone 3374-8494. <http://www.smk.dk>.

### **Thorvaldsens Museum**

Denmark's great 19th-century sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770-1844) left his works to the city on the condition that a museum be built to house them. The exterior of the domed, neoclassical building displays some arresting murals; one shows Thorvaldsen returning to Copenhagen from Rome, a primary source of his artistic inspiration. The galleries housing the sculptures are arresting, each with an innovatively patterned tile floor and colorfully embellished walls and ceiling. One highlight is the enormous free-standing group of Christ and the Apostles—the original work was commissioned for Vor Frue Kirke (Church of Our Lady), in Copenhagen, where it still stands. Audioguides are available at the museum shop, free of charge. Daily except Monday 10 am-5 pm. 20 DKK adults, free for children younger than 18. Free admission on Wednesday. Bertel Thorvaldsens Plads 2 (adjacent to Christiansborg Castle), Copenhagen. Phone 3332-1532. <http://www.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk>.

### **Neighborhoods & Districts**

#### **Christiania**

This former military base on Christianshavn was peacefully invaded by hippies in 1971 and has ever since been a small, self-proclaimed "free city" of 1,000 inhabitants who live under their own laws. Christiania's main rule is "say no to hard drugs," implying "yes" to hashish and marijuana—which used to be openly for sale on Pusher Street. Christiania is still a fascinating experiment in self-government. The area past Pusher Street is where it gets really interesting, with amazing hand-built houses, bars, galleries and a colorful spectacle of residents. Before Pusher Street, you'll find a nice market and cultural venues, including Loppen, a leading music venue, and Spiseloppen, a restaurant with international cuisine. The main entrance to the area is on Prinsessegade. The Danish government has begun pushing for laws that will essentially shut down Christiania, which has resulted in some peaceful—and some not-so-peaceful—demonstrations and incidents. Visitors to this area should be aware that police sometimes consider the neighborhood unsafe and recommend that you take precautions. Phone 3257-9670 for guided tours. <http://www.christiania.org>.

#### **Christianshavn**

This charming island at the southern edge of the city was inhabited in the 1700s as a working-class and fishing suburb. Today, it's one of the most sought-after residential areas for its village atmosphere. Christianshavn makes a pleasant stroll with its converted warehouses, canals and cobblestoned streets. The island has a left-wing tradition and is the site of the free city of Christiania. It is within walking distance of the opera house. All canal tours pass the area.

#### **Nyhavn**

East of Kongens Nytorv, this was once a rowdy neighborhood where sailors ate, drank and slept. It's also the neighborhood where Hans Christian Andersen lived when he came to "wonderful" Copenhagen. Its nautical heritage is still reflected in its architecture and atmosphere, but it's now a safe, popular place, especially for a good meal at one of the many outdoor cafes. It's a magnet for photographers and restaurateurs and a popular starting point for the canal tours.

#### **Vesterbro**

Southwest of the city center, this ethnically mixed neighborhood has been going through a process of gentrification since the 1990s and is now one of the city's most attractive residential areas. For a good impression of Vesterbro, walk down Istedgade, whose strange mixture of porn shops, ethnic grocery stores, neighborhood bars and hip cafes captures the

neighborhood's ongoing transformation. Other streets of interest are Vesterbrogade, a busy thoroughfare, and Varnedamsvej, jammed with specialist food vendors and hip boutiques.

## **Amusement Parks**

### **Bakken Amusement Park**

Said to be the world's oldest amusement park, Bakken offers a more rustic experience than Tivoli Gardens, in a beautiful setting among tall, old trees. There are many restaurants and games, and the rides are a little wilder than those in Tivoli. Walk about or ride in the horse-drawn carriages through the nearby park, Dyrehaven (50 DKK per carriage, maximum five people), to see thousands of free-ranging red, fallow and Sika deer. Take the S-train to Klampenborg, located 25 minutes from Copenhagen. Follow the paved road through Dyrehaven. Open late March-31 August. Hours vary, but the schedule is generally Monday-Friday 2 pm-midnight, Saturday 1 pm-midnight, Sunday noon-midnight. Admission is free, but visitors must purchase wristbands or tickets for individual rides. Wristbands are valid for all rides and cost 199 DKK-219 DKK depending on the season. Phone 3963-3544. <http://www.bakken.dk>.

### **Tivoli Gardens**

This is the amusement park and garden said to have inspired Walt Disney—don't miss it. Tivoli is a park of fantasy, filled with flowers and colorful lights. It's a pleasure even for an afternoon stroll. But Tivoli also offers rides, a pantomime theater, bands, a concert hall with a marvelous aquarium tank in the lower level, and fine restaurants serving everything from hot dogs (*polser*) to gourmet foods. Although Tivoli is fun during the day, the atmosphere takes on an especially magical glow at night. Little ones will enjoy the children's theme park, called Petzi's World after the famous Danish cartoon character. There are also outdoor concerts every Friday night with major national and international acts. Tivoli is open from 11 am mid-April to mid-September; mid- to late October; and mid-November to late December with a Christmas market, concerts and shows, and limited rides. Closing hours vary depending on the season. Admission is 95 DKK adults, 50 DKK children ages 2-12, children younger than 2 admitted free. Rides are additional. Aquarium admission is 20 DKK per person. Vesterbrogade 3, Copenhagen. Phone 3315-1001. <http://www.tivoli.dk>.

## **Wineries, Breweries & Distilleries**

### **Carlsberg Brewery**

You can take a guided tour of the visitors center at this world-famous brewery and learn about the history of beer in the process. There's also a microbrewery, called Jacobsen Brewhouse. May-August daily except Monday 10 am-5 pm, Thursday until 7:30 pm. September-April daily except Monday 10 am-4 pm. 50 DKK. Gamle Carlsberg Vej 11 (take Bus 6 from Kongens Nytorv or the Central Railroad Station; it's 20 minutes by bus from the city center), Copenhagen. Phone 3327-1282. <http://www.visitcarlsberg.dk>.

## **Zoos & Wildlife**

### **Danmark's Akvarium**

More than 300 types of fish and aquatic animals from various seas; the North Sea species are an unusual sight for many visitors. February-May daily 10 am-5 pm, June-August 10 am-6 pm, September and October 10 am-5 pm, November-January 10 am-4 pm. Open every Wednesday till 8 pm. 100 DKK adults, 55 DKK children ages 3-11, children younger than 3 admitted free. Kavalergarden 1 (off the scenic coastal highway Strandvejen—take the 20-minute S-train ride to Charlottenlund or the 30-minute ride via Bus 6), Charlottenlund. Phone 3962-3283. <http://www.danmarksakvarium.dk>.

### **Zoologisk Have**

The zoo is especially well-kept and has a whole village with goats and rabbits that are used for children's activities. Several tropical houses have exotic birds and butterflies. Hours range 8 am-6 pm depending on season. Admission varies depending on season: 110 DKK-140 DKK adults, 50 DKK-70 DKK children ages 3-12, free for children younger than 3. Roskildevvej 32 (it's 15 minutes by Bus 6A from the Central Railroad Station), Copenhagen. Phone 7220-0200. <http://www.zoo.dk>.

## Shopping

The main shopping area is along the big pedestrian street Stroget (which means "the stretch"). It begins at Radhuspladsen and changes names several times, starting as Frederiksberggade, then becoming Nygade, Vimmelskaffet, Amagertorv and Ostergade, and ending as Kongens Nytorv.

Many unusual and quaint little shops line the streets branching off from Stroget, such as Kompagnistrade, an antiques-and-crafts-lined street. The more upscale shopping area is between Amagertorv and Ostergade/Kongens Nytorv. Along the streets just north of that section, you'll find the trendy, exclusive fashion shops, mostly in Kronprinsensgade and Gammel Mont.

Denmark is famous for its design, from furniture to jewelry. It's also known for furs, hand-knit sweaters, porcelain, glass, handmade pipes, Bang & Olufsen audio equipment, silver and children's toys, as well as all sorts of practical, everyday items created with humor and an eye for good design.

**Shopping Hours:** Stores are generally open Monday-Friday 9:30 or 10 am-5:30 or 7 pm, Saturday 9 am-noon or 2 pm (although on the first Saturday of each month, many stores extend hours). Along Stroget and the walking streets nearby, some places catering to tourists are open Sunday, especially in summer.

### Department Stores

#### Illum

A shopping institution located at the corner of Stroget and Amagertorv, near the Stork Fountain, in downtown Copenhagen. The interior has maintained its old-fashioned design, and there are a few cafes and restaurants on site. Monday-Thursday 10 am-7 pm, Friday 10 am-8 pm, Saturday 10 am-5 pm. Ostergade 52, Copenhagen. Phone 3314-4002. <http://www.illum.dk>.

#### Illums Bolighus

This citadel of Scandinavian home-furnishings design is fun to browse through, even if you don't buy anything. It has lots of interesting shops, including Holmegaard glass and Georg Jensen silver. Monday-Thursday 10 am-6 pm, Friday 10 am-7 pm, Saturday 10 am-5 pm. Amagertorv 10, Copenhagen. Phone 3314-1941. <http://www.illumsbolighus.dk>.

#### Magasin du Nord

The oldest, largest and most popular department store in Copenhagen. Offers a wide variety of high-quality goods, and there's a food hall downstairs. Monday-Thursday 10 am-7 pm, Friday 10 am-8 pm, Saturday 10 am-5 pm. Kongens Nytorv 13 (across from the Royal Theatre), Copenhagen. Phone 3311-4433. <http://www.magasin.dk>.

### Galleries

Bredgade is the street where the hottest art galleries are found. The most famous is Gallerie Asbaek, but there are many others along the street. Adjacent streets such as Store Kongensgade and Store Strandstrade also have some interesting galleries.

#### Galerie Asbaek

One of the hottest art galleries in Denmark, dealing in modern Scandinavian and international art. Monday-Friday 11 am-6 pm, Saturday 11 am-4 pm. Bredgade 20, Copenhagen. Phone 3315-4004. <http://www.asbaek.dk>.

#### Galerie Mikael Andersen

Represents up-and-coming Danish artists, as well as those more established. Tuesday-Friday noon-6 pm, Saturday 11 am-3 pm. Bredgade 63, Copenhagen. Phone 3333-0512. <http://www.gma.dk>.

### **Galeri Susanne Ottesen**

Leading gallery that represents contemporary Danish artists. Tuesday-Friday 10 am-6 pm (closed 1-2 pm), Saturday 11 am-3 pm. Gothersgade 49, Copenhagen. Phone 3315-5244. <http://www.susanneottesen.dk>.

### **Galleri Nicolai Wallner**

Unique gallery that shares its location with several other galleries. It also has space to showcase three different exhibits concurrently. Tuesday-Friday noon-5 pm, Saturday noon-3 pm. Ny Carlsberg Vej 68, Copenhagen. Phone 3257-0970. <http://www.nicolaiwallner.com>.

### **V1 Gallery**

Considered the best gallery in the city, the V1 Gallery is the meeting place of the avant-garde scene of Vesterbro. Wednesday-Friday noon-6 pm, Saturday noon-4 pm. Flaesketorvet 69-71, Copenhagen. Phone 3331-0321. <http://www.v1gallery.com>.

### **Markets**

#### **Gammel Strand**

At Gammel Strand, near Stroget and just across the canal from the exquisitely painted Thorvaldsens Museum, is a scenic and centrally located flea market. It's a lovely place for having coffee or a cold drink while gazing at white lace shawls and ranks of antique pieces. Held May-October Friday and Saturday 8 am-6 pm. Gammel Strand, Copenhagen. Phone 3526-1921.

#### **Israels Plads**

At Israels Plads, by Norreport train station, there's a year-round, open-air fruit, vegetable and flower market, with vendors calling out their wares and the alleyways teeming with people. On Saturday May-October, a flea market with antique silverware, jewelry and other items is set up at this same location. 9 am-3 pm. Israels Plads, Copenhagen.

### **Shopping Areas**

The American-style mall is a newer concept in Denmark, but one of the largest, Fisketorvet, is located one train stop from the main train station in Copenhagen. Overlooking the city's harbor, it includes a wide variety of shops, restaurants and a cinema. <http://fisketorvet.dk>.

Field's, another mall, is located on Amager at a metro stop. <http://www.fields.dk>.

### **Specialty Stores**

#### **Black No. 1**

Young Danish designer fashions for women who like black Gothic and punk style, but also like it wearable. Monday-Thursday noon-6 pm, Friday noon-7 pm, Saturday 11 am-4 pm. Studiestraede 18, Copenhagen. Phone 3312-2202. <http://www.blackno1.com>.

#### **Bodum Hus**

A delightful store with four floors of housewares, coffeemakers, utensils and more from the famous Danish company Bodum. Monday-Thursday 10 am-6 pm, Friday 10 am-7 pm, Saturday 10 am-5 pm. Ostergade 10, Copenhagen. Phone 3336-4080. <http://www.bodum.com>.

#### **Bruuns Bazaar**

The Danish fashion label created in the mid-1990s by two brothers was the first to take part in the Paris fashion fair, and was a smashing success. If you shop there, you might well run into Crown Princess Mary, who likes the shop (it's "her" street, after all). Not cheap of course, but a lot cheaper than haute couture or *alta moda*, just as good and very wearable. For smaller purses, they have T-shirts as well. Monday-Thursday 10 am-6 pm, Friday till 7 pm, Saturday till 4 pm. Kronprinsengade 8, Copenhagen. Phone 3332-1999. <http://www.bruunsbazaar.com>.

### **DDC Shop**

The museum shop of the Danish Design Center sells lots of beautiful and cool things that you can stuff into your baggage easily. They will ship the rest. Monday-Friday 10 am-5 pm, Wednesday till 9 pm, Saturday-Sunday 11 am-4 pm. H.C. Andersens Boulevard 27, Copenhagen. Phone 3369-3369. <http://www.ddc.dk>.

### **E-Vintage**

Great selection of tasteful, retro fashion for women, with blouses, skirts, dresses, belts, shoes and bags that look as if they figured in *Vogue* magazine decades ago. Monday-Friday noon-6 pm, Saturday 11 am-4 pm. Istedgade 92, Copenhagen. Phone 3322-7321. <http://www.e-vintage.dk>.

### **Georg Jensen**

This shop showcases works in the tradition of the master silversmith and artist whose beautiful designs are both traditional and modern. Monday-Thursday 10 am-6 pm, Friday 10 am-7 pm, Saturday 10 am-5 pm. Mid-June to late September Monday-Friday 10 am-7 pm, Saturday 10 am-5 pm, Sunday noon-5 pm. Amagertorv 4, Copenhagen. Phone 3311-4080. <http://www.georgjensen.com>.

### **Henrik Vibskov**

Young, upstart Danish designer who creates incredibly colorful avant-garde clothes for brave men who pretend to not take themselves too seriously. His cutting edge female line is pretty bold, too. Monday-Friday 11 am-6 pm, Saturday 10 am-5 pm. Krystalgade 6, Copenhagen. Phone 3314-6100. <http://www.henrikvibskov.com>.

### **House of Amber**

Specialists in jewelry and other unique objects made from amber found on the west coast of Jutland. The main store on Kongens Nytorv also has an amber museum (25 DKK admission fee). There are four additional locations, including at Vesterbrogade 1B, at the Langelinie Cruise Pier and on Stroget (Frederiksberggade 34 and Nygade 6). May-September daily 10 am-7 pm, October-April daily 10 am-6 pm. Kongens Nytorv 2, Copenhagen. Phone 3311-6700. <http://www.houseofamber.com>.

### **h.u.g.s. by Vonryba**

Young Danish designer fashion for women. Very hip and sexy designs, made of material perfectly adapted for cold, wet and windy weather. Tuesday-Friday 11 am-2 pm. Studiestraede 9, 1st floor, Copenhagen. Phone 3393-0660. <http://www.hugs.dk>.

### **Kendt Design**

Exclusive, sexy Danish-Swedish fashion for women. The costumes are beautiful, unique and hand-tailored; production runs are very limited, and outfits are matched with shoes from Dior or Gucci. Thursday and Friday noon-6 pm, Saturday 10 am-2 pm. Nansensgade 42, Copenhagen. Phone 2096-2902. <http://www.kendt.nu>.

### **KREA**

The best selection of handmade and educational toys, including Lego blocks (a Danish creation). Monday-Thursday 9:30 am-5:30 pm, Friday 9:30 am-7 pm, Saturday 9:30 am-3 pm. Vestergade 4-6, Copenhagen. Phone 3332-9858. <http://www.krea.dk>.

### **Musling**

Young fashion designers create clothes and accessories for "happy circumstances," which means modern, versatile, city fashion for pregnant mums and their (future) babies. Monday-Friday 10 am-5 pm, Saturday 10 am-2 pm. Vendersgade 5, Copenhagen. Phone 3332-5121. <http://www.musling.net>.

### **Ordning & Reda**

This Swedish store specializes in high-quality calendars, notebooks, paper and more. There's also a boutique location inside the Magasin department store. Monday-Thursday 10 am-6 pm, Friday 10 am-7 pm, Saturday 10 am-4 pm. Grønnegade 1B, Copenhagen. Phone 3332-3018.

<http://www.ordning-reda.dk>.

### **Paris Texas**

Truly avant-garde fashion from many small international labels for hip and brave women and men. Monday-Thursday 10 am-8 pm, Friday 10 am-7 pm, Saturday 10 am-4 pm. Pilestraede 35, Copenhagen. Phone 3336-3303. <http://paristexascopenhagen.blogspot.com>.

### **Royal Copenhagen Porcelain**

Beautiful figurines, Christmas plates and dinner sets—everything in top-quality porcelain. A seconds (minor flaws) shop is upstairs. January-May Monday-Thursday 10 am-6 pm, Friday 10 am-7 pm, Saturday 10 am-5 pm, Sunday noon-5 pm. June-September Monday-Friday 10 am-7 pm, Saturday 10 am-5 pm, Sunday noon-5 pm. Amagertorv 6, Copenhagen. Phone 3313-7181. <http://www.royalcopenhagen.com>.

### **Rutzou**

Contemporary Danish fashion at its finest. Susanne Rutzou prefers wearable clothes for strong urban women in soft fabrics and feminine details—silky, sporty, sexy and somewhat kooky. Monday-Thursday 11 am-5:30 pm, Friday 11 am-6 pm, Saturday 11 am-4 pm. Regnegade 3, Copenhagen. Phone 7023-0616. <http://www.rutzou.com>.

### **Somods Bolcher**

At this candy factory, you can learn about the process of making traditional Danish candy. Afterward, walk down the street to the nearby store to try some of the wares. Factory hours Monday-Friday 9:15 am-4 pm. Store hours Monday-Thursday 9:15 am-5:30 pm, Friday 9:15 am-6 pm, Saturday 10 am-2:30 pm. Norregade 36, Copenhagen. Phone 3312-6046. <http://www.soemods-bolcher.dk>.

### **SUQ**

The road to Damascus leads to Copenhagen, at least in this shop, which sells very beautiful and colorful glassware, textiles, painted tiles and plates bought in the *souqs* of Syria. Tuesday-Friday 11 am-5:30 pm, Saturday till 2 pm. Nansensgade 41, Copenhagen. Phone 3314-6039. <http://www.suq.dk>.

## **DINING**

### **Dining Overview**

One of Denmark's culinary specialties is the "cold table" (*kolde bord*) lunch: hot and cold fish dishes accompanied by ice-cold schnapps or aquavit, and then meat-laden, open-faced sandwiches (*smorrebrod*) accompanied by beer and followed by all manner of cheeses and fruit.

A traditional Copenhagen dinner might feature meatballs (*frikadeller*), hamburger smothered in onions (*hakkebof med log*) or pork roast with red cabbage. Most dinners end with coffee or tea, sometimes complemented with pastries purveyed by *konditori* (a combination bakery, confectioner's shop and tearoom).

Danish cuisine as a whole has changed radically over the past 20 years, blending southern European influences with the richness of Denmark's natural produce, such as its excellent dairy products, its high-quality organic fruit and vegetables and, of course, the raw ingredients from its surrounding waters.

In addition, the restaurant culture has expanded since the second half of the 1990s. Dining out has become a usual treat for the average Dane. Several new and interesting restaurants seem to crop up each year, emphasizing either fine cuisine or a special atmosphere (and sometimes both). The city also boasts more Michelin-starred restaurants than any other city in Scandinavia.

Locals don't often go out for breakfast, except for weekend brunches, usually served 9 am-1 pm. Lunch is usually between noon and 1 pm, and dinner is typically between 6 and 8 pm.

A great idea is a program that arranges dinners in typical local homes with a Danish family. You will learn a lot about Danish culture around the family dinner table. Contact Meet the Danes (<http://www.meetthedanes.dk>) and Dine with the Danes (<http://www.dinewiththedanes.dk>).

Expect to pay within these guidelines, based on the cost of a dinner for one, not including drinks, tax or tip: \$ = less than 100 DKK; \$\$ = 100 DKK-200 DKK; \$\$\$ = 201 DKK-300 DKK; \$\$\$\$ = more than 300 DKK.

### **Local & Regional**

#### **Divan 2**

One of the most highly regarded restaurants in Tivoli Gardens, Divan 2 offers impeccable French and Danish cuisine in a flower-garden setting. The restaurant traces its history back to 1843. Open daily April-September, mid-October, and mid-November to late December for lunch and dinner; closed the rest of the year. Reservations required. \$\$\$\$ . Most major credit cards. Vesterbrogade 3, Copenhagen. Phone 3375-0750. <http://www.divan2.dk>.

#### **Gourmandiet**

This is actually a century-old, nicely decorated butchery now specializing in organic meat. Take your pick at the counter and have it prepared the way you like it. There's always one inexpensive dish of the week and a takeaway brunch on Friday and Saturday. Open Tuesday, Friday and Saturday for lunch and dinner. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. No credit cards. Rosenvaengets Alle 7A, Copenhagen. Phone 3927-1000. <http://www.gourmandiet.dk>.

#### **Husmanns Vinstue**

This restaurant is a favorite among locals who go for traditional cuisine and atmosphere. Husmanns excels in *smorrebrod*, herring and other Danish lunch dishes. Monday-Saturday for lunch. \$-\$\$ . Most major credit cards. Larsbjornsstrade 2, Copenhagen. Phone 3311-5886. <http://www.husmannsvinstue.dk>.

#### **Ida Davidsen's Vinstue**

This fifth-generation cellar-restaurant is famous for its amazing variety of Danish *smorrebrod* (open-faced sandwiches)—more than 170 selections on the menu. Customers include famous politicians, royalty and local businesspeople. Monday-Friday for lunch. Closed for vacation in July. \$-\$\$\$ . Most major credit cards. Store Kongensgade 70, Copenhagen. Phone 3391-3655. <http://www.idadavidsen.dk>.

#### **Noma**

With two Michelin stars and considered one of the world's best restaurants, Noma serves Nordic cuisine made from fresh ingredients, including musk ox, deep-sea fish, wild salmon and cloudberries flown in daily from Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and other points north. Housed in a former warehouse in Christianshavn where the dining room is comfortable, the menu is highly original, and the service is friendly. Tuesday-Saturday for lunch and dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$\$ . Most major credit cards. Strandgade 93, Copenhagen. Phone 3296-3297. <http://www.noma.dk>.

#### **Peder Oxe**

A cozy retreat just off Stroget on Grey Friars Square (Graabroedretorv)—an old house with small rooms and a handsome fireplace in back. Good luncheon choice because there's an excellent salad bar and famous Danish *smorrebrod* on the menu. The dinner menu urges you to choose between grass-fed or grain-fed beef, and the Danish lamb is splendid. Switch on the little green light when you're ready to order. Daily for lunch and dinner (bar open daily to 1 am). Reservations recommended. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards (except American Express). Graabroedretorv 11, Copenhagen. Phone 3311-0077. <http://www.pederaxe.dk>.



### **Restaurant Els**

Hans Christian Andersen used to be a regular at this place, when it was a coffeehouse in the 19th century. Delightful mix of Danish and French cuisine in a setting marked by original frescoes and Royal Copenhagen porcelain. The devoted waitstaff treats everyone as regulars and is passionate about the food and wine. Open daily for dinner. Also open for lunch mid-April to mid-September. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Store Strandstrade 3, Copenhagen. Phone 3314-1341. <http://www.restaurant-els.dk>.

### **Restaurant Godt**

With daily menus designed around available ingredients, Godt is a delightful and notably tiny—capacity is just 20—restaurant near Kongens Nytorv. It's run by English chef Colin Rice and his Danish wife, Marie-Anne. Guests choose the number of courses they want, and whether to drink from the extensive wine list or to allow Marie-Anne to suggest wines that suit each course. Tuesday-Saturday for dinner. Reservations highly recommended. \$\$\$\$. Gothersgade 38, Copenhagen. Phone 3315-2122. <http://www.restaurant-godt.dk>.

### **Restaurant Premisse**

A cellar restaurant serving popular gourmet specialties that combine superb Danish ingredients with the best of French and Italian cuisines. Restaurant Premisse is located in beautiful surroundings with white vaults and marble floors. Monday-Friday for lunch, Monday-Saturday for dinner. Reservations required. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Dronningens Tvaergade 2, Copenhagen. Phone 3311-1145. <http://www.premisse.dk>.

### **SALT**

This popular, centrally located restaurant overlooks the quay with great views of the Opera House and the Royal Danish Playhouse. It serves a variety of a la carte Scandinavian dishes with a French twist. Every third week, a set two- to four- course menu is offered. Open daily for lunch and dinner. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Toldbodgade 24-28, Copenhagen. Phone 3374-1444. <http://www.saltrestaurant.dk>.

### **Slotskaelderens Hos Gitte Kik**

The "castle cellar" may look like a socialist canteen from outside, but it's the place to go for authentic Danish food. The *smorrebrod* delicacies have been enjoyed by illustrious guests since 1910. The restaurant is just across the street from Parliament, so you will probably rub shoulders with Danish politicians, who need no bodyguards in safe and friendly Denmark. Just point at meatballs and pickled herring—three pieces of *smorrebrod* will fill you up nicely. You can wash them all down with some of the 14 varieties of excellent aquavit. Tuesday-Saturday for lunch. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Fortunstraede 4, Copenhagen. Phone 3311-1537.

### **Soren K**

This acclaimed restaurant, which serves traditional Danish and international dishes, is housed in Copenhagen's ultramodern Royal Library. The stunning location on the canal and outdoor summer seating make this restaurant a special treat. Guests often include foreign officials and other government officials from nearby Christiansborg. Minimalist decor. Especially popular for lunch. Monday-Saturday for lunch and dinner. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Soren Kierkegaards Plads 1, Copenhagen. Phone 3347-4949. <http://www.soerenk.dk>.

### **The Paul**

The Paul is the restaurant of English chef Paul Cunningham, whose use of local ingredients and imaginative combinations of Danish and French cuisine have earned him a Michelin star. There is a remarkable chef's table for groups of up to eight, where guests can sit beside the kitchen and watch (and hear) everything that goes on. A private dining room for 10, the former drawing studio of architect Poul Henningsen, is also available. Reservations essential. \$\$\$\$. Vesterbrogade 3, Copenhagen. Phone 3375-0775. <http://www.thepaul.dk>.

### **Thorvaldsens Hus**

Named for the prominent Danish sculptor, whose works are housed in the museum across the canal from this restaurant. In summer, the terrace is an ideal spot from which to view the barges and boats plying the canals of the old city. The restaurant serves Danish cuisine with

French and Italian influences. Open Thursday-Saturday for lunch, dinner and late night. \$\$\$.  
Most major credit cards. Gammel Strand 34, Copenhagen. Phone 3332-0400.  
<http://www.thorvaldsens-hus.dk>.

### **Cafes & Tearooms**

#### **Cafe Victor**

A delightful bar-restaurant favored by celebrities. The more casual cafe serves lunch and dinner, and is open until the wee hours for drinks, coffee and light snacks. Both menus feature mainly Danish cuisine with an emphasis on seafood. It's an excellent place for simply dropping by, for a coffee or a beer. Lovely ambience and friendly service. Open Monday-Saturday for breakfast, lunch and dinner, Sunday for lunch and dinner. \$\$, Ny Ostergade 8, Copenhagen. Phone 3313-3613. <http://www.cafevictor.dk>.

#### **Europa**

A stylish cafe on Amagertorv (part of Stroget), with historic photographs on the walls and an outdoor eating area on Copenhagen's busiest corner. Standard fare of sandwiches, pastries and coffee. There's a large selection of international newspapers available, too. Daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Open late. \$. Most major credit cards. Amagertorv 1, Copenhagen. Phone 3314-2889.

#### **La Glace**

The source—despite its French name—for archetypal Danish pastries (which the Danes call *wienerbrod*) and extraordinary cakes and cookies. This *konditori* has served breakfast and afternoon tea to grateful patrons since 1870. Everything is baked on the premises. Specialties of the house include the Sportskage, filled with nougat and marzipan and covered with whipped cream. La Glace is famous for layer cakes as well. If you don't have time to linger over tea, you can order pastries at the counter and take your treats with you. Daily for breakfast and lunch. \$. No credit cards. Skoubogade 3, Copenhagen. Phone 3314-4646. <http://www.laglace.dk>.

#### **The Royal Cafe**

Enjoy a warm cup of tea or coffee served in exquisite Royal Copenhagen porcelain cups. This old-fashioned tearoom is located inside the 17th-century building that houses Royal Copenhagen porcelain and the Georg Jensen silver store. The selection of cakes and pastries is simply overwhelming. A pianist accompanies this sensual experience every Friday and Saturday afternoon. For an added treat, try the *smushi*—a small, exquisitely designed sandwich created similar to a sushi dish, which has sparked a series of restaurants outside of Copenhagen that serve this type of fusion cuisine. Monday-Friday 10 am-8 pm, Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday 11 am-5 pm. \$-\$\$, Most major credit cards. Amagertorv 6, Copenhagen. Phone 3312-1122. <http://www.theroyalcafe.dk>.

### **SECURITY**

#### **Etiquette**

Some people maintain that Denmark has a national philosophy called *hygge*. There is no direct translation in any other language, but the most accurate synonyms would be *comfortable*, *cheerful* or *friendly*. In daily life, *hygge* refers to an easygoing and down-to-earth attitude. Danes have learned to blend this way of life into their efficient work practices. They are punctual and trusting, and verbal agreements and commitments are taken seriously. These qualities help make Denmark a relatively easy place to conduct business.

**Appointments**—It is seldom necessary to have a local intermediary to schedule meetings and conduct business. Arrange meetings well in advance of your visit—usually several weeks before your arrival. Being on time is crucial in both business and social settings. If you are delayed by even a few minutes, call ahead to notify your host.

**Personal Introductions**—A firm handshake is the standard form of greeting. By tradition, a man should wait for a woman to extend her hand, but few Danish men follow this tradition.

Hugging and kissing on the cheek are common alternate forms of greeting among friends, but visitors should not initiate these forms of greeting with a Dane. Visitors should stand up when they are introduced.

Because English is spoken by almost everyone, it's acceptable to refer to a person with standard English titles (Mr., Ms.), unless they have a professional title. Use the appropriate title and last name until otherwise instructed. At most Danish companies, however, titles and surnames are rarely used in everyday conversation, so most hosts will very quickly instruct visitors to use their first names. Business cards are widely used and are often distributed at the beginning or end of a meeting. Business cards do not need to be translated into Danish.

**Negotiating**—Most business negotiations are conducted in offices, rarely in restaurants or private homes. Negotiations will often start with small talk, but Danes are generally direct and efficient; they tend to move to the topic of business in short order without a great deal of relationship building. Your hosts may tend to be reserved at first, but business meetings are generally informal and friendly—familiarity is likely to develop quickly. Generally, visitors should be careful not to oversell their own competencies and products, as modest Danes could easily interpret this as bragging.

**Business Entertaining**—Business breakfasts are unlikely; business lunches and dinners are more common. Business lunches are most likely to occur around noon and to last an hour or two, and business dinners are most likely to begin around 7 pm and may last as long as four hours. Business-related meals usually take place in a restaurant but can on occasion be held in a private home. In such cases, conversation is seldom strictly related to business. Invitations to a private home are a sign of personal trust.

It is appropriate to eat everything served to you at a meal. If visitors don't like the taste of something, however, they should refrain from eating it. Food is seldom eaten with the hands. The exception to this rule is poultry, which by Danish tradition is eaten without utensils. At the end of a meal, leave your cutlery on your plate. Place the knife and fork next to each other with the fork turned upside down to indicate that you have completed the meal.

Danes often drink wine or beer with their meals and expect their guests or hosts to join them. If visitors cannot drink—for religious or medical reasons, for example—they should explain why. Toasts during meals are common. Danes usually take their time in delivering the remarks that precede the drink, although toasts often tend to be somewhat shorter during business events than during social occasions. Visitors may make toasts of their own but should wait until their hosts have done so. A toast is concluded by the Danish word *skål* (pronounced *skoal*), and it is customary to make eye contact with those at your table before you drink.

If you are invited to a restaurant for a meal, do not offer to pay the bill. It is considered polite, however, to offer to buy a drink or coffee at a subsequent location. If you host the gathering, be aware that a service charge is always included in the bill. An additional tip is not expected by restaurant staff, although it's always appreciated. A gratuity of 5% of the bill is sufficient.

**Body Language**—Danes are often reserved about their private space. When engaged in conversation, you should generally maintain a comfortable distance (about an arm's length or a little more). Avoid touching someone on the arm or shoulder while talking, though visitors may sometimes receive a friendly pat on the back or a similar gesture after a successful meeting. This is a rare occurrence that should be taken as a sign of personal trust. In general, it's best to maintain a relaxed and open stance with hands at your side, and avoid crossing your arms.

**Gift Giving**—The bestowing of gifts is not expected in a business context. If visitors are invited to a private home, however, it is considered polite to take a gift. Appropriate gifts include wine, chocolate and flowers (but not red roses, which are associated with romance and considered inappropriate for other contexts). The value should be approximately 135 DKK-300

DKK. There is no special etiquette regarding thank-you notes, but it is always a good idea either to call a business associate after a meeting or to send a greeting by e-mail.

**Conversation**—Danes often maintain a relatively low volume of speech—visitors should do likewise. Danes generally enjoy the typical small-talk subjects, such as the weather or sports, and will discuss domestic and international politics freely. They are also fond of talking about their country, so visitors may share their general impressions of Danish society and culture or may ask specific questions about national issues. Many Danes have a basic familiarity with English slang, but visitors should avoid using slang unless they are absolutely certain that their hosts will understand.

### **Personal Safety**

Copenhagen is a very safe city. The only concerns for tourists should be theft by pickpockets and car break-ins, especially in the main train stations and the area surrounding Istedgade behind the Central Railroad Station, as well as Norrebro. It is considered safe to walk alone, and the bus, S-train and metro system are safe, although women should take special precautions at night.

For more information, contact your country's travel-advisory agency.

### **Health**

No vaccinations are necessary to enter Denmark. Tap water is safe to drink, and food preparation standards are on par with the rest of western Europe. Copenhagen is one of the cleanest cities you could hope to visit.

The emergency telephone number is 112. Calls to this number from public telephones and cell phones are free. No coins are required to dial emergency from a phone booth.

A tourist may go to the emergency room of any hospital without cost if an injury or serious illness has arisen within the past 24 hours. Most doctors speak English.

City hospitals are:

Amager Hospital, Italiensvej 1, Copenhagen. Phone 3234-3234.  
<http://www.amagerhospital.dk>.

Bispebjerg Hospital, Bispebjerg Bakke 23, Copenhagen. Phone 3531-3531.  
<http://www.bispebjerghospital.dk>

Frederiksberg Hospital, Nordre Fasanvej 57, Frederiksberg. Phone 3816-3816.  
<http://www.frederiksberghospital.dk>.

Hvidovre Hospital, Kettegaards Alle 30, Hvidovre. Phone 3632-3632.  
<http://www.hvidovrehospital.dk>.

For the latest information, contact your country's health-advisory agency.

### **Disabled Advisory**

Denmark's provision for the handicapped is good. Many of the older buildings and museums do not have wheelchair facilities, but newer ones, such as the museum in King Christian VIII's Palace, do. Most city buses have hydraulic systems that facilitate entry for the elderly or

handicapped, and you can specifically request one of these buses. With an assistant, a person using a wheelchair can readily travel by train because most of the outlying areas and all stations in the city have elevators.

The Danske Handicaporganisationer has lots of information in English on its Web site. Kloverprisvej 10 B, Copenhagen. Phone 3675-1777. <http://www.handicap.dk/english>.

### **Dos & Don'ts**

Do watch out for bicycles. On most main thoroughfares, bike lanes are clearly marked and bicyclists expect you to stay out of their way.

Don't expect to smoke in Copenhagen restaurants, as all dining establishments are smoke-free. The exception to this is restaurants in the Christiania neighborhood; patrons may still smoke indoors there.

Do stop to see the newlyweds taking wedding photos on the steps of the Radhus. Civil marriage ceremonies take place there during the week.

Don't be surprised to see same-sex couples out and about in the city. Same-sex unions have been legal in Denmark since 1989, and same-sex couples also may legally adopt children.

Do take the kids. Copenhagen is a family-friendly city and you'll encounter children everywhere.

Don't litter. Denmark was "green" long before it was fashionable. Recycling, organic farming, energy conservation and alternative energy—especially wind power—have long been integral parts of daily life in Denmark.

Do see the Christmas show (*juletid*) at Tivoli if your trip is in the winter—it's a riot of lights with lots of stalls selling Christmas decorations and special glogg.

### **FACTS**

#### **Geostats**

**Passport/Visa Requirements:** Citizens of Canada and the U.S. need a passport and proof of onward passage. Reconfirm travel document requirements with your carrier before departure.

**Population:** 1,085,000.

**Languages:** Danish. English is widely spoken and understood.

**Predominant Religions:** Christian (Protestant).

**Time Zone:** 1 hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (+1 GMT). Daylight Saving Time is observed from the last Sunday of March to the last Sunday of October.

**Voltage Requirements:** 220 volts. 50 Hz.

**Telephone Codes:** 45, country code; no city code needed;

#### **Money**

##### **Taxes**

All goods and services are subject to a 25% value-added tax (VAT), but you may receive a refund of 19% of your purchase price if you purchase more than 300 DKK worth of goods at

the same store in the same day and if you are not a citizen of a country in the European Union. Ask the seller for proper documentation (a receipt is not enough). Many cash registers will print this tax-free shopping documentation automatically. If you choose to carry the item in your luggage, you can obtain a refund at the airport by showing the documentation. You can also have the VAT refunded if you arrange for shipment home and have proper documentation drawn up at the time of purchase. <http://www.globalrefund.com>.

#### **Tipping**

Tipping is not customary in Denmark because service charges are included in restaurant and hotel bills and in taxi fares. Danes rarely tip a taxi driver but often round up the bill at a restaurant.

#### **Weather**

Copenhagen's relatively cool climate is because of its proximity to the Baltic Sea. The sea's presence also makes it a rather windy place. Temperatures in summer range 68-77 F/20-25 C; in winter they range 23 to 32 F/-5 to 0 C. Although the heaviest rain comes in July and August, the best time to visit is from the end of April until the end of September, when the weather is mildest.

#### **What to Wear**

Men and women in executive positions typically wear business suits, but a relaxed attitude toward dressing is more the norm. Danes themselves lean toward subdued color choices and casual dress rather than high fashion. In general, they would prefer to own or wear something of excellent quality and innovative design rather than flaunt a flashy label.

Because the weather in this seaside city is unpredictable and can be cold and damp, dressing in layers is a good idea. Carrying a light wrap, even in summer, is recommended, and an umbrella and raincoat are often useful. Comfortable walking shoes are a must, since visitors will encounter many cobblestoned streets and many steps to climb.

#### **Transportation**

Most visitors arrive in Copenhagen by plane or train, though the city is also a stop on several ferry routes and road networks. Excellent, efficient bus and train networks along with a driverless metro system make getting around the city easy. Bike paths and pedestrian-only streets, coupled with the city's compactness, make bicycling and walking pleasant alternatives to driving (about one-third of the population commutes by bicycle). Travel by car is sometimes difficult on narrow streets. Parking is limited and expensive.

#### **Public Transportation**

##### **Bus, Metro and S-Trains**

Greater Copenhagen is traversed by a system of HT buses (usually yellow), metro (subway) trains, S-trains (or S-tog) and harbor ferries, which share the same ticket system. They offer frequent and punctual service. The main terminal for buses is at Radhuspladsen. S-trains are used mainly by suburban commuters and are of limited use for tourists unless you're visiting outlying areas such as Dyrehaven and Frederiksborg Castle. The 24-hour metro only provides limited service from Norreport Station through Kongens Nytorv to Amager and other suburbs (but an extension now offers service to the airport). Harbor ferries traverse the central part of the harbor with stops at the Royal Library, Nyhavn, the Opera House and others.

Purchase regular bus, metro, S-train and harbor-ferry tickets and clip-cards at counters or vending machines in train stations. Bus drivers handle only single-journey tickets. Exact change is not required (and if there's no change available, you ride for free). At the beginning of your journey, you must stamp clip-cards in the machine at the front of the bus or in the yellow time clocks on the train station platforms. A single adult two-zone ticket costs 23 DKK and allows you to travel through all of central Copenhagen for one hour with unlimited transfers on the bus, metro or S-train. A better alternative is a 10-trip "clip-card" for 135 DKK (you save about 40% compared with buying individual tickets, and it's valid for 10 individual bus, metro, S-train or harbor-ferry trips throughout most of the city center). Note that fares are doubled if you use the metro or night buses 1-5 am. Phone 3613-1415 for bus info; 3311-1700 for metro info; 3314-1701 for S-train. <http://www.m.dk>.

Tourists may also buy the Copenhagen Card (CPHCARD), good for one-three days of unlimited transportation and free admission to 60 sights, including Tivoli Gardens and the zoo. You can buy it in hotels and travel agencies or at the tourist office. It's a handy option, but a wise buy only if you visit four or more sights in a day. 24-hour cards are 229 DKK adults (older than age 16); 72-hour cards are 459 DKK adults.

**Ship**

Cruise ships dock at Langelinie Pier, near Osterport station, five minutes by train from the city center, 15 minutes by foot to Kongens Nytorv. Some ships dock at the Free Port Cruise Terminal, near Nordhavn station, which is five minutes by train to the city center.

**Taxi**

Taking taxis is easy in Copenhagen, but they are expensive. You can hail taxis in the street or at taxi stands; credit cards are welcomed in most taxis; and most cabbies understand English and will give receipts, if needed. Sharing rides can help (up to four passengers may do so). Taxi stands are found throughout the city, and you can almost always find cabs waiting near S-train stations. Available cabs have their TAXI signs illuminated.