

# Accessible Cities – Friendly Travel Destinations for Disabled Tourists

A few years back not many travel destinations were accessible to the disabled. However, in recent times most tourist destination cities have made efforts to ensure that their towns, hotels and their tourist attraction sites are accessible to all people including the physically disabled.

The following are five accessible cities that the disabled can travel to.

## Italy– Venice



There are several hotels that offer accessible facilities in Venice. These facilities usually include, large bathroom doors for wheelchairs, roll in showers and bathtubs, rooms on the ground floor or accessible by a large elevator and step free building entrances.

### Transport

Most people use trains to get to the city. If you choose to use train as your means of transport to get to Venice, you need to make arrangements with the train staff members to organize a wheelchair lift to get on and off the train.

The most common means of travel within the city is by vaperettos or water taxis. The vaperettos are highly accessible and can be used by those using wheel chairs. When you first arrive and you have a lot of bags, it is best that you use the water taxis to get to your hotel because it will be less cumbersome and the water taxi driver can assist you with the bags. Later on in the visit if you want to save on costs, you can use the vaperetto boats instead of taxis. The boats are generally cheaper and they also offer discounts for the disabled.

### Activities

Watch the sunset: The sunset in Venice is usually very beautiful with the sun's rays dancing off the water. The disabled can be able to view sunsets at the Fondamenta Zattere al Spirito Santa promenade.

Go down the Grand Canal: Using the vaperettos, the disabled can cruise down the Grand Canal which will give them a chance to get a better view of the city as well as pass under four bridges including the

rialto bridge.

Dine on a piazza: Enjoying a meal as you admire the beautiful architecture of Venice is something that all tourists must do. The san Marco square is very accessible and is very good for dinner or drinks especially after a long day of sight seeing.

## **Spain- Valencia**



### Transport

The international Manises Valencia airport provides accessible air transfer for the disabled. The airport is also connected to the city by wheelchair accessible metro lines making it easy for disabled visitors to get to their hotels.

Inside the city, the town is served by buses which are all wheelchair accessible. Therefore all tourists can be able to use the public transport system to move around the city.

### Activities

The beach: The city beaches in Valencia are simply beautiful and a must see when you are in Valencia. They are easily accessible by using the metro and bus lines. The Arena and Malvarossa beaches offer sea-wheelchairs for hire at affordable prices.

City of arts and sciences: The museum is a beautiful cultural center that has five different areas. The futuristic architectural design makes it a must see for all tourists. All the building in the center are accessible and visitors with physical disabilities can maneuver their way around the center.

## **France- Paris**



Paris is one of the best tourist destinations and lots of effort has been made to try and make the city

accessible to the disabled. Most of the older hotels in Paris may not be accessible but the modern hotels have all been built to be accessible.

## Transport

The two airports in Paris are all accessible and they also offer accessible airport transfers to the city. Most of the bus lines as well as the train stations have recently been made wheelchair accessible and are suitable for those in wheelchairs.

For the visually impaired the train stations have acoustic signs that indicate the edge of platforms to avoid any accidents of them falling off the edge.

## Activities

Visit museums: Most of the museums within the city are very accessible including the Centre Pompidou and the Parc de La Villette.

Take a boat ride: The Bateaux Mouches boat rides on the river Seine are wheelchair accessible and should be a top priority for all tourists in France.

## **Netherlands- Amsterdam**



## Transport

There are various accessible options from the airport or from the train station in Amsterdam. The schipol train station offers mobile ramps, lifts as well as journey assistants for the disabled. Although the assistants are readily available, it is always advised that you arrange for that beforehand.

The airport offers services of staff members who are able to help travelers especially those with disabilities.

## Activities

Visit museums: The Rijksmuseum has accessible rooms that can be accessible by those with wheelchairs. The Van Gogh Museum is also accessible for those in wheelchairs. They also offer free wheelchairs for the visitors. The Amsterdam Historical Museum is also a popular museum attraction that has made efforts to be accessible. For those in wheelchairs they can easily navigate their way through

the building as they view the displayed artifacts.

Visit Keukenhof: This is one of the biggest tourist attractions in Amsterdam. It has been designed with large accessible sidewalks to allow tourists on wheelchairs to

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