

Literary Tourism: Why Is Amsterdam a Must-Visit Destination?

Amsterdam is without doubt a city with a unique personality and it continually draws in thousands of visitors each year thanks to its scenic canals, architecture, cafe culture and history.

A large part of this cultural identity is the connection between Amsterdam and the literary world. In fact, literary tourism is sure to thrive in the Dutch capital thanks to the diversity of authors and titles, a range of events and facilities and a seemingly unquenchable thirst for books. Here are the reasons why Amsterdam should be on the must-see list of any literary tourist.



Thousands of Books around the City

First and foremost, there are a lot of book shops in Amsterdam and there is little doubt that this is a city that likes to read. Books are not confined to public libraries and high-street retailers. Instead, there are many second hand stores, stalls and other opportunities around most corners. The Oudemanhuis Book Market is a clear highlight for many tourists, but it is just as much fun to explore the back streets and public spaces, such as Spui Book Square.

Smart Libraries for Anyone

The Dutch have adopted an interesting approach to their public libraries in the way they charge users for 50 or 100 book passes. Also, a number of exhibitions, readings and cafés can be found in the library buildings, which are thus quite profitable. Local authorities managed to make the libraries inviting and accessible to students, seniors as well as the unemployed, and yet still the institutions provide a great selection of reading material.



Diverse Literary Festivals

Book festivals represent a big part of the literary tourism industry. All book lovers appreciate a good book festival when it provides a breadth of talent and entertainment options. Amsterdam offers a range of fascinating book shows. While some options will lean on the white male bias a little, others make a point of inviting men and women of different nationalities and backgrounds for frank, honest discussions about their work. The best example of this has to be Read My World, a festival dedicated to international literature, taking place in Amsterdam in October.

Immigrant Female Writers

One of the most famous books to come out of Amsterdam has to be Anne Frank's diary – so much so that the house where it was written is still a major tourist attraction there – but this is not the only example of a literary classic that highlights the issue of immigration in The Netherlands. Ayaan Hirsi Ali's autobiographies and the work of Dubravka Ugresic also highlight race tensions and other problems immigrant women have to face in the Netherlands.



The Setting of Bestselling Books

Amsterdam is not just famous for its writers and festivals; it has some familiar locations for the readers too. It is easy to spend your days in Amsterdam browsing through the book stores and reading a piece of classic Dutch literature by the water, but it also pays to research your reading locations. A number of modern classics, such as *The Miniaturist*, *Filth*, and *The Fault in Our Stars*, were set here and it is easy to retrace the steps of the protagonists and seek out key locations.

Date: 2016-07-11

Article link:

<http://www.tourism-review.com/travel-tourism-magazine-literary-tourism-booming-in-amsterdam-article2699>