

# AMSTERDAM ADOPTS NEW MEASURES TO LIMIT THE IMPACT OF MASS TOURISM



The city of Amsterdam is resolute in its mission to curb the adverse effects of mass tourism on its landscape. It has initiated several strategies to achieve this, notably by restricting hotel nights. In a significant move, the city council has symbolically prohibited the construction of new hotels, emphasizing its unwavering commitment to preserving Amsterdam's livability for residents and visitors. The council aims to curtail tourism and enforce an annual cap of 20 million tourist hotel nights.

The city has imposed stricter regulations for the construction of new hotels. According to the new rule, a new hotel can only be built if an existing hotel closes down. **Additionally, the number of beds cannot be increased, and the new establishment must be better than the old one.** This means the new hotel must be more modern and sustainable. The city has also encouraged hoteliers to consider building their hotels outside the city center. However, this rule will not apply to new establishments already obtaining a building permit.

## Amsterdam Wants to Ban Half of Its River Cruise Ships

Amsterdam has recently unveiled its plan to halve the number of docking river cruise ships within the next five years. This strategic move is a key part of the Dutch capital's campaign against mass tourism. The city anticipates this measure will lead to approximately 270,000 fewer tourists visiting annually. From 2028 onwards, a maximum of 1,150 ships will be permitted to dock, as these ships has increased in recent years. In 2023, around 2,125 ships docked in the city, carrying approximately 500,000 passengers. The city also envisions that this decision will reduce air pollution, fostering a more sustainable tourism environment.

## Limiting the Number of Tourists and Regulating Hard Drugs

In 2017, Amsterdam attempted to implement a restrictive policy on hotel real estate. However, the municipal council found the measures needed to be revised to achieve their goals. According to them, hotels are still being constructed, new ones are being added, and 26 initiatives are underway. The local government is actively working to limit the number of tourists visiting the city, which amounts to millions a year. In 2019, more than 20 million people visited Amsterdam, the Venice of the North, before the Covid pandemic.

Amsterdam is taking measures to discourage certain types of behavior, particularly those related to drugs. Mayor Femke Halsema supports the regulation of hard drugs, such as cocaine and MDMA, stating that they could be obtained from pharmacists or through a medical model. Halsema, an environmentalist who has been in office since 2018, aims to improve the quality of life for residents. **One of her campaigns has been directed towards reducing the number of drunken British tourists visiting the city,** which has shown positive results. In November 2023, a study indicated that the number of UK visitors had dropped by over 20%. In addition, Amsterdam has implemented various dissuasive measures since the COVID-19 crisis, such as increasing the tourist tax, imposing strict regulations on seasonal rentals, prohibiting smoking cannabis in the Red Light District, banning cruise ships from the city center, and cracking down on coffee shops. All these new rules

aim to improve the quality of life for residents.

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