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The Amsterdam Airport Schiphol

By Burt Cotton

Highly accessible by air, land or sea, the Amsterdam is basically one of Europe's top destinations.

Affordable flights from within Europe, as well as direct flights from outside of the continent are readily available with the service of Europe's fourth largest airport - the Amsterdam airport Schiphol.

The Amsterdam Airport Schiphol sees itself as far more than an airport. As claimed on its miniguide, which is obtainable from the information desks of the airport, the Amsterdam airport Schiphol is the Netherlands newest city as it caters to an audience wider than the humble trekker.

What sets the Amsterdam airport Schiphol apart from the other European airports is that, it offers a number of great attractions. Included in the list are the casino, the sauna and massage service. There was even a time that one entrepreneur was interested in opening a discreet licensed brothel at this Amsterdam airport, but even the liberal Dutch required time on that.

Driving Directions

The Amsterdam airport Schiphol is actually situated off the A4 motorway, which connects the city of Amsterdam to The Hague, Netherland's seat of government, and Rotterdam. The exit to the airport is clearly signposted.

Car Parking

There are two short-term car parks in the Schiphol: the P1 and P2. These two are both connected to the terminal and the Schiphol Plaza by covered walkways, and is recommended of stays for up to 48 hours. Aside from the short-term car parks, there is also an available long-term parking in the airport, at an open-air P3. This car park area is situated 4 kilometers from the terminal, and a 24-hour shuttle bus is servicing in this area to provide links between P3 and the terminal. A luxury car park is also available, including a valet service.

The Bad Marks and Plus Points of the Schiphol Airport

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There are a number of reasons for choosing the Amsterdam airport Schiphol. One of those is the fact that all the offbeat attractions of the airport are housed under one roof, with none of the terminal hopping that causes minor panic in transfer passengers or sometimes confuses unwary first time users. Aside from that is the fact that every great thing stems from the vast Schiphol Plaza, which is the central hall of this Amsterdam airport. It is actually the plaza which provides easy access to car parks and the conveniently located rail station. In addition, it is the plaza which places pressure on your wallet as it provides a number of shops, with 40 shops currently on record.

The Schiphol airport further scores highly for its catering service that is offered both before and after passport security. It is even noted for its great thoughtful touches like a nursery for people traveling with young children. What's more, the Amsterdam airport Schiphol is just so close to the city of Amsterdam with good transport links. It even has the best viewing terrace designed and built for aircraft enthusiasts at any major European hub airport.

However, just like many other airports in different areas in the world, the Amsterdam airport Schiphol has a reputation for baggage handling problems that greatly affected transfer passengers. And, for many people, its business center which is located airside only serves as bad mark for the airport.

Burt Cotton

<http://www.visit-amsterdam.org>

Amsterdam Hotels

By Jill

Amsterdam—the name inspires thoughts of impressionists and culture. Rembrandt and Vermeer in Rijksmuseum and the disturbing paintings of Van Gogh. The historic downtown, the culture and the canals are one reason to visit this great capital. Of course, for others it's the spirit of "tolerance" for things like soft drugs (pot smoking) and legal red light district which make it an interesting destination. As an observer at least.

While Amsterdam is the capital of Netherlands, the government is based out of the Hague. Fewer paper pushers per square mile, as a rule of thumb is proportional to the joie de vive of a city, and distinguishes Amsterdam from many other European capitals. Amsterdam has been able to maintain it's compactness and old world charm through a conscious effort rather than a stroke of fortune.

There is another side to Amsterdam as well— its history as a mercantile power of the 17th century. The "Golden Age" of Amsterdam shows in its buildings, and the multicultural residents of Amsterdam are to some extent a result of the Dutch colonial history.

Most people are introduced to Amsterdam through the Schiphol airport. If you are unlucky enough to be stuck there due to a flight delay, you will notice that the gates don't have bathrooms and have only eight seats for each planeload of passengers. While this Spartan introduction is unfortunate as well as

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uncomfortable (and not representative of the charm of Amsterdam), it gives an insight into the thought process of the Amsterdammers.

The Schiphol has a shopping area with the casino, and the airport authorities want you to spend most of your time there. Their hope is that you spend the time shopping and gambling, instead of taking up space in a comfortable lounge. Airlines love the arrangement too, given the cut rates offered by Schiphol as opposed to the more "full service" airports in Europe.

This unabashed capitalism goes hand in hand with the tolerant culture, making Amsterdam an enigma and a place to visit. For its beautiful tulips, as well as the memories of its famed Tulipmania, where the Dutch were trading tulip buds like .dotcom stocks!

The transportation system of Amsterdam is excellent, with the frequent tram service probably the best choice for traveling within the city. Renting a car therefore is usually a "very" bad idea, especially when compared to the ease of trams within this compact city. The less said the better about the parking situation in the city. A canal boat tour of the city, may also give you a look at the city from a different angle.

Anne Frank house, one of the most famous landmarks of Amsterdam, encompasses some of the painful history of this country. While the house is not remarkable, it is a monument to some terrible events. It's worth a visit, especially if you have read the book.

Rijksmuseum, with its superb collection of paintings is reminiscent of the Central Station from the outside. That is, because they have the same architect! The main attractions are Rembrandt, Frans Hals and Steen, but there are more than 5000 paintings. The Van Gogh museum is right next door.

The Red Light District of Amsterdam is billed as a tourist attraction in most guide books. It's actually quite safe to go there, if you keep your wits around you. The obvious things to remember is, to ignore the drug pushers or answer with a firm "NAY" and keep the camera in your hotel—taking pictures here is inviting trouble. An occasional pick pocket aside, you get to see fat women in windows and giggly tourists trying to soak in the scene.

Amsterdam does not have much in the way of Pensions or Bed/Breakfast. Therefore, we have a collection of hotels in Amsterdam at

<http://www.amsterdam-hotels-deals.net/>

to give you the

information that you need to make an informed decision.

A native Californian, Jill went to college in Rhode Island. Pining for distant lands and new experiences, she traded her Ivory towers for a backpack and spent a year going around the world. While not working as a graphic designer for Sofizar, she travels the world, and writes about her experiences at

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