



## SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

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## Europe: Amsterdam »



# Food *heaven*

It may not garner the attention of London, Barcelona or Paris, but over the past decade Amsterdam has quietly become one of the most exciting dining destinations in Europe, writes **Joel Porter**

**I**n recent years, Amsterdam has experienced a wealth of exceptional new restaurants bursting on to the scene. From Michelin-starred masterpieces to casual neighbourhood bistros, here's where to find the city's best restaurants.

### Cafe Binnenvisser

Cafe Binnenvisser is emblematic of Amsterdam's vibrant, modern restaurant scene. Situated in a beautiful corner building with stained-glass windows, the restaurant is permanently packed with a cool crowd sipping on natural wines and tucking into a veg-centric menu of small plates. It's worth visiting for the vibe alone, but the kitchen is more than a match, with dishes like white gazpacho, grape, almond and fig leaves;

yellow beets with pistachio, buttermilk and smoked trout and artichoke hearts with creme fraiche and chive oil. It's walk-in only so you can expect to wait for a table at peak times, but it's absolutely worth it. It's open seven days a week too, so it makes a great choice for a tricky Monday or Tuesday night when many of Amsterdam's restaurants are closed. The restaurant also has a daytime bakery and cafe next door called loof, which serves the best bread and pastries in town. [binnenvisser.nl](http://binnenvisser.nl)

### De Mark

It's well worth the trip just outside the city to eat at De Mark, a new restaurant from the chefs behind the two Michelin-starred 212, Richard van

Oostenbrugge and Thomas Groot. Opening as part of a cute new boutique hotel, De Durgerdam, located in the pretty village of Durgerdam, De Mark has a spectacular setting right on the water's edge, with outdoor terrace seating on a pier extending out among the reeds. Visit on a summer's day or evening and there's surely no better dining spot in Amsterdam. But even in winter the indoor restaurant is a beautiful space, a well-designed cosy living room set in a 17th-century house.

On the menu you'll find locally sourced, seasonal meat, fish and vegetables cooked over a wood-fired grill, such as roasted leek with puffed grains and a hay gravy; Dutch haring (herring) with barbecue kohlrabi, horseradish, apple and dill oil; and roasted beef bavette with green pepper and a salad of summer beans and herbs. [dedurgerdam.com](http://dedurgerdam.com)

### Wils

From the team behind Rijks (which is also superb, though currently closed for refurbishment) at the Rijksmuseum is Wils, a relaxed Michelin-starred spot which opened in 2019. Located on the city's edge, the restaurant takes its name from the architect Jan Wils who designed the Art Deco 1928 Olympic Stadium which sits adjacent to the dining room and is visible through its floor-to-ceiling windows. The best seats in the house, however, are at the long kitchen counter where you can watch the chefs at work, preparing the intricate yet unfussy dishes. There's a short a la carte menu but it's best to go all in for the six-course tasting menu, with showstopping dishes such as hamachi (locally farmed in the Netherlands) with tomato and fig leaf; grilled romaine with lobster and strawberries; and roe deer with long pepper and a rich, deeply flavourful sauce. For something more casual, there's also the Wils Bakery and Cafe on the ground floor. [restaurantwils.nl](http://restaurantwils.nl)

### Breman Brasserie

The newly opened Hoxton, Lloyd hotel is home to a brilliant all-day restaurant called Breman Brasserie. The grand hotel building, designed by architect Evert Bremen in 1921, has been given a new lease of life with a stylish refurbishment that makes the most of original features, such as colourful wall tiles and dramatic stone columns. On the ground floor is the beautiful Breman Brasserie, a glamorous yet relaxed spot that takes inspiration from turn-of-the-century European and South American cuisine. For breakfast, there's the likes of potato and onion latkes with fried eggs and a green goddess sauce, and croque madame with pastrami and reuben sauce, while for lunch and dinner there's fish pie topped with fries, creme fraiche and Dutch caviar, plus fresh local seafood from the seven-seater raw bar. Before or after dinner, stop for a drink at the hotel's Barbee, which has a menu of superb South American-inspired cocktails created by Tato Giovannoni, the founder of the world-renowned Floreria Atlantico in Buenos Aires. [thehoxt.com/amsterdam/lloyd](http://thehoxt.com/amsterdam/lloyd)

### Cornerstore

Many of Amsterdam's most exciting, ambitious and coolest restaurants are to be found over the water in the north part of the city. Here, creative young chefs have repurposed old disused warehouse spaces and turned them into clubs, restaurants and even wineries (Chateau Amsterdam, since you ask). The cream of the crop is Cornerstore, a bar and restaurant from the Cafe Binnenvisser team with a heavy focus on music — the building used to be a studio, among other things. The best seats are the high stools up at the counter in front of the DJ booth, with its vintage speakers and wall of records. From the kitchen come dazzling Asian-inspired small plates like green Sichuan mussels; aubergine, soy



Top and above, from Michelin stars to cosy bistros, Amsterdam's food scene is heating up. Photos / Vinkles, Unsplash

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## Europe: Amsterdam »

In a converted greenhouse in Frankendael Park, De Kas is one of Amsterdam's standout dining experiences; below left, it's well worth the trip to eat at De Mark; below right, many of Amsterdam's most exciting, ambitious and coolest restaurants are to be found over the water in the north part of the city. Photos / Getty Images, De Mark

# Food heaven



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and macadamia; cold sesame noodles with kohlrabi; and lotus root pickles. And to drink there's a list of sakes and excellent natural wines. Great food, drinks, and a great vibe have made Cornerstore one of Amsterdam's best. [csnoord.com](http://csnoord.com)

### Bar Brasserie Occo

In The Dylan hotel (see "Where to stay"), the Occo brasserie has one of the prettiest settings in Amsterdam. The courtyard garden restaurant is surrounded by the tall grand brick townhouses that make up the hotel, creating a hidden, peaceful space that's perfect for a long leisurely lunch or dinner. All produce is sourced from the absolute best local suppliers, to create sophisticated yet relaxed brasserie dishes. The menu ranges from pitch-perfect bar snacks like shrimp croquettes and steak tartare to larger dishes such as wild mushroom ravioli and farmhouse chicken with spring onion and mustard. In winter, the action moves inside to the sleek bar and dining room adjacent to the courtyard, making for a cosy escape away from the cold. [occo.nl/en](http://occo.nl/en)

### Bambino

Bambino is another restaurant and wine bar at the cutting edge of Amsterdam's dining scene. From the same team behind Bak (itself a modern classic), Bambino is bright and energetic, with boldly coloured pink and electric blue tables, and a pumping soundtrack. Highlights from the menu include deep fried green olives, 'nduja, lemon mayonnaise; marinated zucchini, fennel, coriander seeds; eggplant, parmesan, green beans; and buttermilk panna cotta with kumquat. To drink, there are fresh and fruity natural wines from Europe's best small independent winemakers and classic cocktails. In the summer months, tables spill out on to the street for casual al fresco dining, but if you're after something a bit calmer there's also a more formal dining room inside. [bambinobar.nl](http://bambinobar.nl)

### Buurtscafe de Tros

This neighbourhood gem in the east of Amsterdam is the kind of restaurant anyone would want to have at the end of the street. It's a beautiful space with a bright, relaxed dining room and a large outdoor terrace, drawing a local crowd throughout the week (it's only closed on Tuesdays). The menu is perfect, satisfying bistro fare — think thinly sliced rib-eye with balsamic mayonnaise, truffle pecorino and apple capers; yellowtail kingfish, snow peas, gochujang, green pepper; and the quintessential Dutch snack,



Photo / Getty Images

"bitterballen" — golden, deep-fried beef croquettes. There's also a mean smash burger that pairs perfectly with the crisp new potatoes and a glass of chilled red from the list of natural wines.

[detrosamsterdam.nl](http://detrosamsterdam.nl)

### De Kas

Situated in a converted greenhouse in Frankendael Park, De Kas is one of Amsterdam's standout dining experiences. A pioneer of Amsterdam's sustainable restaurant scene since opening in 2001, De Kas cemented its stellar reputation when chefs Wim De Beer and Jos Timmer arrived in 2018, winning both a regular Michelin star and a Green Star, in recognition of its sustainable approach. The kitchen gardens produce more than 300 varieties of vegetables, herbs and fruits, which are harvested each morning and served in the restaurant just hours later. The set menus are therefore largely vegetable-based and change regularly depending on what's in season, but typical dishes might include beetroot, with cherry, sumac, goat butter and sorrel;

## Where to stay

The Dylan is one of Amsterdam's best five-star boutique hotels, with a prime location on Keizersgracht, within the canal belt. Rooms and suites are located across interconnected townhouses and have bags of charm and style, not to mention luxurious finishes and furniture. All rooms have Aesop amenities and king-size beds, while the larger suites have living areas with comfy sofas and freestanding tubs in the bathrooms. In addition to Occo, there's also a two Michelin-starred restaurant, Vinkeles, and a six-seater chefs table restaurant called até. Luxurious and relaxing, it's the perfect base from which to explore the best of Amsterdam.

[dylanamsterdam.com](http://dylanamsterdam.com)

## Checklist AMSTERDAM

### GETTING THERE

Several airlines including Emirates, Qatar Airways, Singapore Airlines and Cathay Pacific fly from Auckland to Schiphol Amsterdam Airport with one stopover.

### DETAILS

[holland.com/global/tourism](http://holland.com/global/tourism)

or courgette with chimichurri, coriander and nasturtium. There's usually a meat or fish course too such as cockles with Dutch shrimp, bisque and sea lavender. An absolute must-visit. [restaurantdekas.com/eng/garden](http://restaurantdekas.com/eng/garden)

### Marie

The centre of Amsterdam can get crowded and hectic at times, so having a couple of peaceful places to escape to up your sleeve is essential. Marie, a French brasserie at the five-star De l'Europe hotel is one such spot, a relaxing oasis that'll transport you away from the crowds to the south of France in an instant. In the summer, grab a table on the waterside outdoor terrace that wraps around the building, or cosy up on the plush banquettes in the dining room in winter. On the Michelin Bib Gourmand-awarded menu there are fresh oysters, grilled langoustines with bagna cauda, cote de boeuf and an excellent tarte tatin. A long list of Champagnes and classic French wines complete the picture. [marieamsterdam.com/en](http://marieamsterdam.com/en)