

LuxuryTravelGuide

AN INSIGHT FOR THE AFFLUENT TRAVELLER

European Edition 2016

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A Q&A with Elisabeth Vermeiden

Elisabeth Vermeiden expertly crafts unique tailor made individual and group tours, both in Amsterdam and across many other interesting cities and towns of the Netherlands. Her tours enthusiastically reveal the high cultural magnificence and wonder of her homeland. Exceptionally educated in the fields of literature, history and history of art, Elisabeth is a true connoisseur of culture and an excellent communicator. The *Luxury Travel Guide* spoke with Elisabeth in order to discover what her homeland has to offer and how guests can utilise her knowledge and experience to get the very best out of their visit.





When did you decide to become a tour guide and what led to that decision?

During a previous economic crisis 24 years ago I decided to become a guide. In that period, I could not find enough work as a French and History teacher. Further studies to become a National Guide and event planner brought the solution and my language & history studies were very useful again. I began working as a guide for inbound travelling agencies, museums, hotels and event planners. In 1999 I launched my own company, because I noticed that a lot of agencies were lacking in imagination and were always proposing the same items to their clients. I wanted to change this.

How has Amsterdam changed over the years since you first started conducting tours in 1999?

Amsterdam has changed in a very positive and international way. It has become a more cultural and international city that seems to increasingly attract people from all over the world. It's one of the top destinations people like visiting, and that's noticeable. All year long we have visitors from different backgrounds and countries because Amsterdam has a lot to offer to all kinds of people, like amazing old and modern architecture, museums, interesting history, tourist attractions, international events like music, film and dance festivals, and congresses. You do not feel lost and overwhelmed in this city. It's more relaxed than most other big cities and remains a compact, cosy size. Also the creative industry in Amsterdam has been, and is still stimulated a lot by the government, therefore top talent from all over contributed significantly to what Amsterdam became today. Creativity makes a city interesting and beautiful.





Where do you acquire the information you share with your guests?

I get my information from all kinds of sources: papers, flyers, internet and people. In fact I always keep my eyes and ears open wherever I am. By nature I am a collector of information. It comes easily to me without too much effort.

How do you tailor your tours to individuals who have a limited knowledge on what is available to explore?

Tailor made tours can be interesting for all kind of people, groups and individuals wherever they come from with or without extensive knowledge regarding what they want. Often we get people with a special interest, a certain budget or who want something completely different, original, exclusive, and/or off the beaten track. They ask me for ideas and let me know their interests and budget. Suggestions and ideas are given and after exchanging all of this, I propose a personalised tour in Amsterdam and/ or the Netherlands.

What are the best kept secrets of Amsterdam that tourists either overlook or simply do not know about?

The best kept secrets are hidden until it's time to reveal them to the right people who will appreciate and are interested in them.

Do you have a particular favourite destination you enjoy sharing with your guests?

Yes: some hidden spots in nature, private gardens, interiors and relatively unknown museums.



Can you tell us about the other cities you visit across the Netherlands?

Yes, a lot, because every city and town is different. I will present a little summary: **Rotterdam** is an incredibly modern city with amazing contemporary architecture, the biggest harbour in Europe and the most famous food halls. **Leiden**, the birthplace of Rembrandt, is home to an interesting historical centre dotted with many museums and a picturesque countryside setting with botanical gardens close to the tulip fields and the dunes. **The Hague**, situated on top of the dunes, is the political centre and residence of the Royal family. This elegant city is famous for its art nouveau architectural designs and is within close reach to the sea. **Haarlem** is a small town close to Amsterdam with a lovely historical centre. It is the home town of painter Frans Hals who is remembered by the Frans Hals Museum which showcases many of his famous works from the Dutch Golden Age. **Delft** is an important cultural town. It is the home of the Dutch potteries industry with its iconic Delft blue ceramic. Famous figures from Delft include the painter Vermeer and Prince of Orange, who played a heroic role during the Spanish occupation. **Utrecht**, the fourth city of the Netherlands, was a trade city in the Middle Ages. The city still bares many characteristics of its former glories with highlights including the pretty ware houses along the canals, the Dom cathedral, house of the Dutch Pope and many hidden gardens. **Hoorn** and **Enkhuizen** are towns of the old East India Company (VOC). During their heyday they were important harbours situated along the former South Sea. Visitors will enjoy exploring their quaint historical centres. There is much more to each of these beautiful destinations. You can discover more by visiting www.tailormadetours.nl blog, gallery and Facebook: [amsterdamtailormadetours](https://www.facebook.com/amsterdamtailormadetours).

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What would you say is the difference between a good tour guide and a great tour guide?

A good tour guide is a guide who has knowledge and knows her way around. A great tour guide possesses these skills but can also surprise, interact, exchange, improvise and offer a good sense of humour too.

Do you have any exciting new plans for 2016?

I always have new plans in the sense that in 2016 I would like to offer more and varied evening entertainment like concerts, opera and dance and culinary items. And for the day programs: sailing trips with traditional Dutch sailing ships combined with visits to small former fishing villages and other beautiful towns.

Is there anything else you would like to highlight to our readers?

I would like to recommend visiting Amsterdam and the Netherlands; and emphasise that both Amsterdam and the Netherlands is great to visit all year long.



