



An Expat's Guide

Moving to Amsterdam for Tech

Introduction

Orange Quarter are an eclectic bunch. We've come from different corners of the world before choosing to settle in Berlin or Amsterdam. Between the 30 odd consultants that work in our Amsterdam office, we've learnt a few things about packing our lives up and moving to the Netherlands. We've made mistakes, discovered useful tips, found work and began building our new communities. And so we compile our collective knowledge here in this guide to do just that – guide you on the smoothest route to starting your new life in Amsterdam.

We break this comprehensive tech-expat guide up into three sections – Working, The Practicalities and Community & Lifestyle. We cover all of the important things from choosing the right recruiter to setting up your bank accounts and choosing the best bar for your Friday drinks. Scroll through or download the digital pdf to read later but beware, this guide has convincing powers, you may find yourself falling in love with Amsterdam.



5 reasons we love living and working in Amsterdam...

#1 country for work-life balance

ranked by The OECD Better life index

Bike friendly city

navigate the city with ease, avoid traffic and public transport costs

Over 180 nationalities

one of the most multicultural cities in the world

Rated best European city to work in tech

by Hubspot

30% tax ruling

a tax advantage attracting highly skilled expats



Working

Before choosing to move to Amsterdam, you'll want to know what it means for your career. Amsterdam has attracted a lot of attention for a number of not-so-humble reasons, and they all mean great things for people working across tech, digital and marketing.

Amsterdam has cemented itself as one of the biggest tech meccas in the world, with over 600 international IT companies choosing to set-up shop in the city. This is set to grow even more as Tech giants transition their HQs to the city in the wake of Brexit.

Below we go into detail about setting yourself up for success during your pre-arrival job hunt and explore the reasons our candidates love living and working in the Netherlands.

If you have already found a job and want to start planning your move - skip to 'The Practicalities' section of this guide.

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Finding Work

Good news, there is no shortage of tech and digital jobs in the Netherlands. Of course, some tech disciplines are in more demand than others. Most of our candidates start with scrolling through job listing sites like Glassdoor and LinkedIn to gain an idea of the market and find that the challenge lies in scoping out the few jobs that perfectly fit their experience level, career goals and ideal culture.

Here are our tips for setting yourself up for job search success.

Setting yourself up for success

- Start chatting with your network. Make sure they know you're open to opportunities in the Netherlands. Branch out to online forums – try LinkedIn and Facebook Groups as well as Reddit and Slack Communities.
- Update your resume. Your recruiter will be able to give you specific advice on how to best appeal to your ideal employer.
- 40% of the entire Netherlands population have a LinkedIn account, the highest percentage of all European countries. Your profile will become vital for your application's success. Make sure it is up-to-date and matches the experiences listed on your resume.
- Shop around for specialist recruiters that operate in your local market and either submit your CV to them or connect via LinkedIn.
- It is best practice to gain a job offer before arriving in the Netherlands. This is one eligibility factor for the 30% ruling. For more information on this, see below.

Choosing the right recruiter

Choose a Market Specialist

Tech and Digital environments each have their own set of challenges and niche skill-sets required for a specific role. It is important to choose a recruiter that speaks your language and has a solid understanding of the area you work in.

Service Matters

You should connect with a specialist recruiter that maintains positive client and candidate relationships as standard. A good recruiter will be high-touch. Meeting you in person and maintaining regular contact allows them to understand more about the specifics of what you're looking for in your next role and ensures transparency in the process. Check your recruiters track record by reviewing testimonials on their company page or LinkedIn page.

Ask the right questions

A good recruiter is bound to ask a lot of questions, so it's only fair that you do the same. Start with asking about their experience placing candidates in your area, ask specific questions about the companies that they are working with and don't be afraid to throw some industry terminology around to test their knowledge.

Amsterdam Tech Salaries

Hubspot crowned Amsterdam the best European tech city to work in for three reasons; high salaries, high standard of living and high chances of professional success. Salaries vary depending on years of experience, area of work and of course the size of the company that you're looking to work in. When first meeting with your recruiter,



they will gauge your salary expectations and during offer stages will negotiate on your behalf to achieve the best financial outcome.

Residence Permits in the Netherlands

If you're an EU/EEA citizen...

You can freely work in the Netherlands. Assuming you intend to stay for more than 4 months, you are required to register with your local municipality within 5 days of arriving at your destination. Following your registration, you will be supplied with a BSN number. Citizens of the EU, EEA & Switzerland do not require a residence permit.

If you're a UK citizen...

At the time of writing this article, you must register with the local municipality within 5 days of arriving at your destination if you intend to stay longer than 4 months. UK citizens are currently not required to apply for a working permit (e.g. highly skilled migrant visa or working holiday visa). Note - conditions may change in line with Brexit.

If you're coming from outside the EU...

In most cases you are required to apply for both a residence permit and a working permit/visa. This process can be complicated so we find working with a recruitment firm or company that is prepared and experienced in processing these applications is important. For more information on migrating from outside the EU, visit ind.nl/en/work/working_in_the_Netherlands.

Spousal & Family Visas

If your partner and/or family will be migrating with you to the Netherlands and they are also a non-EU citizen, certain conditions are required to be met. View the websites below for more information.

Spouse

Children under 18

To register at your local municipality you'll need

- Valid identification (passport or identity card)
- An original birth certificate in Dutch, English, French or German (or a translation by a sworn translator) and authenticated if required (these certificates can be submitted within three months of the appointment)
- If applicable, an original marriage certificate, divorce decree, adoption certificate, family book (Daftar or Livret d'État Civil) or former residence permit (translated and authenticated where required). Some documents are required to be apostilled to ensure authenticity.
- One of the following documents:
 - a rental/tenancy agreement (huurovereenkomst)
 - a recent house deed or home purchase agreement
 - written permission from the main tenant of the house, along with a copy of the main tenant's valid passport or identity card





30% Tax Ruling

The Dutch government introduced the 30% ruling to attract foreigners who are skilled and specialised in industries where there is a scarcity on talent – this includes tech and digital. It is a tax advantage for ‘Highly Skilled Migrants’ working in the Netherlands. As an overview, the taxable amount of a gross Dutch salary is reduced from 100% to 70%, meaning 30% of the wage is tax free.

Expats are required to meet certain conditions to be eligible for the 30% ruling. This [Expatica article](#) explains the requirements and working of the 30% ruling in detail.

Netherlands rated best in work-life-balance

The Netherlands has the highest rating for work-life balance reported by the [OECD Better Life Index](#). The OECD survey found that only 0.4% of workers say they work long hours, the lowest recorded where the average is 11% in countries like the United Kingdom and the United States of America. In Dutch culture, there is a large focus on family life, personal care, team building and leisure. With this in mind, Dutch companies are very strict on ensuring you don't work past your usual contracted hours.



Practicalities

You've decided that the Netherlands is where you want to be, you've begun your job search and now you're ready to think about the practicalities of shipping your life abroad. Here we compile the valuable advice we wish we had before transitioning from country to country.

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Language

The vast majority of Amsterdammers speak English. Because of this, most Expats can seamlessly integrate into the community without knowing a word of Dutch. We've found that learning a basic level of the Dutch language, or even committing to a few words or phrases can get you a long way with the locals.

We loved working with local tutor [Roos Naeff](#) for Orange Quarter's Dutch lessons.

Weather

For those of you coming from warmer climates like Australia, South Africa or Spain – listen up. Invest in a warm and importantly waterproof jacket. Regardless of the season, get ready for more overcast days than sunny ones in the Netherlands. A handy tip: In winter, stock up on Vitamin D tablets and visit saunas or hot yoga regularly to combat the shorter, colder and often windier days.

The bright side is that average temperatures throughout the summer are high. 2019 gave us the third warmest summer on record and over 16 hours of daylight hours.

[Buienradar.nl](#) – The most reliable weather app best to check rainfall

BSN & Registration

One of the first things you should have on your list of to-do's upon arriving is organising a BSN, also known as a Citizen Service Number (or Burger Service Number). In most cases, you will need a BSN to open a local bank account, arrange

a local phone account, deduct taxes and sign a rental contract. Every citizen in the Netherlands is required to have a BSN.

To get your BSN, you'll first need to register with your local municipality. For non-EU Expats, this meeting will give you a provisional registration until your working/residence permit has been approved with the IND.

The BSN does not automatically mean Expats are allowed to work in the Netherlands. For non-EU Expats, you'll need to have a valid residence permit/working permit. You can apply for these through the IND yourself however often your employer or recruiter can arrange these for you. We recommend booking your appointment with the IND before moving as the department is busy and you could be waiting up to a month for a free space.

[www.amsterdam.nl](#) – Registering and BSN
[ind.nl](#) – Working permits

Moving to the Netherlands

So you're ready to start thinking about moving? You have two options, manage the move yourself or hire a specialist to help you do it. Below we give you some tips to help work out which is the best option for you.

Option A – Relocation Services

Some companies will often scope relocation costs into your contract. This could include the appointment of an Expat Relocation Service. Relocaters could help with finding a rental property, shipping your belongings over and some even help



with arranging your appointments with the IND. The obvious catch is that relocators charge a fee, so if you're on a budget or are confident in managing the move yourself please proceed to option B.

We've tried and tested working with [we-relocate.nl](https://www.we-relocate.nl).

Option B – DIY Relocation

Most of the Expats we work with choose to manage the move themselves which includes arranging your own accommodation. We go into detail about where to stay in Amsterdam below.

Finding a Rental

Between the 20-odd expats in our Amsterdam office, we've learnt a few things about Amsterdam's competitive rental market. We recommend beginning your rental search before you arrive and ideally locking in a rental. This can be difficult without a viewing in person however most agents are happy to video conference for a virtual tour.

Depending on your situation, you should start your search with the online listing sites below.

[Pararius.com](https://www.pararius.com) – Free and easy self-search for renting and buying.

[Funda.nl](https://www.funda.nl) – Free and easy self-search for renting and buying.

[Rooftrack.nl](https://www.rooftrack.nl) – Free and easy self-search for renting and information on neighbours.

[Tenanthub.nl](https://www.tenanthub.nl) – Flat Sharing with other working professionals.

[Huurwoningen.nl](https://www.huurwoningen.nl) – Search from private owners and agents.

[Amsterdamwoont.nl](https://www.amsterdamwoont.nl) – Information on new builds in Amsterdam and beyond.

[Facebook.com/groups/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/) – Great to find roommates however beware of scammers advertising rentals.

During your search, keep in mind...

- The housing market is competitive, anything to speed up the process gives you the advantage when working with agencies. We suggest bringing your valid working permit and work contract to viewings.
- Expats are often targeted by scammers. Ensure you are aware of your rights by reading up on your rights at [iamamsterdam.com/en](https://www.iamamsterdam.com/en) and find free legal advice at [wooninfo.nl](https://www.wooninfo.nl).
- A rental deposit is normally calculated at two months rent.
- If you do experience problems with your landlord, you may need to get in contact with The Rent Tribunal (Huurcommissie) – an independent organisation that handles problems between landlords and tenants.
- To be eligible for a rental, agents will often require evidence that your combined monthly salary is 3 x the rental price. Keep this in mind as a rough budget guide during your search.



Where to live in Amsterdam

Below is a list of our favourite neighbourhoods for Expats in the Amsterdam area. All of the areas are easily navigable by bike however you may also choose to live outside of the city centre.



a Centre

The busy historical centre comprised of all the areas within the famous 'canal ring'.

b Oost

A diverse, up-and-coming area with hip pockets and green spaces.

c De Jordaan

Fashionable area packed with local bars and trendy boutiques.

d IJburg

New islands transforming into modern business and living spaces.

e Noord

Spacious, industrial and eclectic area just a ferry ride away from Centraal.

f Oostelijke Eilanden

Modern living in the former docklands.

g De Plantage

Luxurious and spacious, a green haven within Amsterdam city.

h De Pijp

Bustling mix of cultures paired with a variety of cafes and cuisine.

i Oud-Zuid

Romantic surrounds and historical buildings bordering Vondelpark.

j Oud-West

Dynamic neighbourhood growing with creativity and culture.

k Bos en Lommer + De Baarsjes

Multicultural districts with spacious parks.

l Zuidoost

A cultural melting pot with lots to offer.

m Nieuw-West

Spacious district with green surrounds.

n Zuidas

Amsterdam's business district is fast becoming an urban hub.

o Houthavens

Modern portside living on the IJ.

p Amstelveen

A suburban municipality on the outskirts of metropolitan Amsterdam.



Buying a Property

The Netherlands welcomes investment from Expats and assists with the legal aspects to purchase a home or additional investment properties. If you cannot afford to buy with cash, the local term for a mortgage is a Hypotheek. A Hypotheek can be obtained from most banks through an application process during which the applicant's affordability will be assessed based on your living means.

In the Netherlands, some banks will lend 100% of the bank valued house price. As an Expat, you will need to meet certain conditions to be eligible for a bank loan. Buying a house does of course come with some upfront costs including Makelaar fees, taxes, bank fees and more. Visit iamexpat.nl/housing/buy-house-netherlands for more information.

Getting Around

One of Amsterdam's biggest selling points, is the ease at which you can get from suburb to suburb. We can confirm the stereotype is correct, the preferred mode of transport is bicycle and it is a huge part of the local culture. There is also a sophisticated public transport system connecting the localities throughout Amsterdam and beyond. Commuters can choose between using the tram, metro, bus and ferry.

Biking

If you live in Amsterdam, owning or renting a bike is a rite of passage. It makes getting around the city simple and fast. To avoid expensive service fees, it is very common for residents to rent a bike long-term through companies like swapfiets.nl and vanmoof.com. The alternative is buying a new bike or second hand bike.

Bikes are very often stolen in Amsterdam. Make sure that your bike is chained to a bike rack or stored in a facility overnight. If your bike isn't where you left it, always check with the Fiets Depot (aka bike jail) first. They may be holding your bike for wrongly parking it. To have your bike released, you'll need to pay it's bail, typically 22.50 euros.

Public Transport

Amsterdam's public transport systems are sophisticated, regular and efficient. When using public transport, you'll need the below information to navigate the system with ease.

OV-chipkaart: The OV-Chipkaart allows you to use most public transport throughout the city. You can choose between an anonymous Chipkaart (blue) or a personalised Chipkaart (Yellow). You can purchase an anonymous Chipkaart from particular service machines throughout your city and you can order a personalised card from ov-chipkaart.nl.

Topping up a card can be done through allocated service machines located at all major public transport points and local supermarket Albert Heijn. If you have a personalised card you can top up online manually or set-up automatic top-ups.

Remember to check-in and check-out: Make sure to use your OV-Chipkaart to check-in and check-out each time you use local trains, metro, buses and trams.

Metro: Amsterdam's shiny metro system branches from Central Station to the city's outlying districts. Its four routes are often the fastest way to reach districts like Amstelveen and Diemen and suburbs like DePijp and Rokin in between.





Tram: Trams are one of the most popular ways to navigate the city. Simply use your OV-Chipkaart to check-on as you enter and check-out as you exit. If you don't have an OV-Chipkaart, you should purchase a single ticket from the attendant in the centre of the tram.

Bus: Connecting all neighbourhoods in Amsterdam and extending outwards into the wider Metropolitan Area, the city's bus network is extensive. Visitors heading to the beaches of Zandvoort, Schiphol Airport or to the main historic towns and villages north of Amsterdam can often get around easiest by bus. Simply use your OV-Chipkaart to check-in and check-out as you enter and exit the bus.

Ferry: Ferries depart from behind Amsterdam Central Station and are used to shuttle pedestrians, cyclists and mopeds to destinations across the water to Amsterdam Noord. Ferry services across the IJ are free – you don't need to buy a ticket or use your OV-Chipkaart to board.

Driving: If you're travelling from within the EU, you can normally continue to use your licence from your home country until it expires. For most non-European expats planning on staying in the Netherlands for longer than six months, you will need to exchange your licence within 6 months of arriving. The rdw.nl (Rijksdienst voor het Wegverkeer) is the government agency responsible for issuing driving licences and registering motor vehicles.



Navigating the City

Navigate the city, plan your trips and view timetables using the following apps and websites.

gvb.nl – Official public transport provider.

google.com/maps – Collates all public transport timetables and suggests easiest routes.

9292.nl – The trip planning app endorsed by I Am Amsterdam.

ns.nl – View above ground train timetable and plan trips.

Healthcare System

The Dutch health care system is of one of the highest quality in the world. Most residents use the services of General Practitioners (huisarts), you'll find practices located in all residential areas throughout the city. If a health issue requires, your practitioner will refer you to a specialist at a hospital. Residents are required to register their details with a doctor and a local chemist which gives them permission to hold your details and makes it easier for you to book appointments and process prescriptions.

Local Health Insurance

If you are a resident of the Netherlands, you are legally obligated to take out insurance with a local Dutch supplier. Insurance will cover the costs of going to your local GP and prescription medication.

All health care providers have the same standard health cover package decided by the government. Regulations held over healthcare providers ensure everyone pays the same premium, protecting residents

against the financial risks of illness.

You can also opt to take out additional coverage on your health insurance to cover for example, dental care or naturopathy. Additional insurance is a personal choice and residents are not legally required to add extra coverage to the standard package.

More information & choosing a provider

[Zorgverzekeringslijn.nl](https://zorgverzekeringslijn.nl) – Advice on mandatory health insurance. Free calling available.

[Zorgwijzer.nl](https://zorgwijzer.nl) – Compare health care providers and their prices.

[Government.nl](https://government.nl) – Government specific information on health insurance.

[Zilverenkruis.nl](https://zilverenkruis.nl) – The healthcare provider our team uses.

Tuberculosis Screening

Depending on your country of origin, a tuberculosis screen may be required in order to complete immigration procedures. The IND exempt certain countries from having to undergo the test, you can find the full list here.



Bank Account

To receive your salary and pay expenses, all residents require a local bank account. In the Netherlands, the most common payment methods are debit card or cash. The acceptance of credit cards is less common (notably Mastercard and Visa) in supermarkets and in local stores however hotels, restaurants and bars will normally accept these.

To open a bank account you'll need...

- Proof of ID (passport or local identity card)
- Official proof of address, such as a tenancy agreement
- Citizen service number (burgerservicenummer, BSN)
- If you are from a country outside the EU, your residence permit or registration with the Foreign Police (Vreemdelingenpolitie)

Our favourite banks...

[abnamro.nl](https://www.abnamro.nl) - Online banking app in English.

[ING.nl](https://www.ing.nl) - Online banking app in English and integrated with Tikkie.

[bunq.com](https://www.bunq.com) - You can set up a BUNQ bank account without having to visit a physical branch.

[transferwise.com/nl](https://www.transferwise.com/nl) - Great for transferring money from your home bank accounts at exchange rates that beat the big banks. You can also set up a borderless bank account with TransferWise, great for travelling as it can convert to all currencies.

Getting Connected

Mobile Phone

While you're waiting on an approved BSN and residence permit (which will allow you to apply for a Dutch Bank account), your best option is a sim-only number. This requires no documentation for purchase and is a great short-term solution to getting connected.

If your residence permit has been approved and you have a local address (for the sim card to be sent to), we recommend signing up to a prepaid plan as you'll generally get more bang for your buck. To sign up, you'll need a valid Dutch residence permit and a local bank account.

Note: First check with your new employer if they provide you with a connected phone which will save you having to complete the steps above yourself.

mobile.lebara.com/global/en -

Recommended as a short-term, sim-only solution. Not recommended for use outside of the Netherlands.

[kpn.com](https://www.kpn.com) - One of the big four networks and our team's preference.

[belsimpel.nl](https://www.belsimpel.nl) - Compare phone & internet packages.

Internet & TV

Amsterdam's internet is among the fastest in Europe and is easy to connect in your home. When you negotiate your rental agreement, ensure to check if internet (normally bundled with home phone and TV) are included in your monthly rental price. If not, you can simply take over the existing tenants contract by changing it



into your name. Alternatively, you can do some research and choose an internet provider that better suits you by using a comparison tool like prijzvergelijken.nl.

Gas, Water and Electricity

Like internet & TV costs, make sure to check if GWE are included in your rental contract during negotiations. If not, you can simply take over the existing tenants contract by changing it into your name. Alternatively, you can do some research and choose a utility provider that better suits you by visiting easyswitch.nl. When moving into a new home, don't forget to note the meter reading and notify the energy supplier.

Tip: You can contact [EasyNuts](https://easynuts.nl) to connect all utilities online (energy, internet, water and mobile)

To connect your utilities you'll need...

- A valid local ID (Residence permit)
- A local bank account

Water Taxes

An additional cost that normally slips under the radar is the tenant's yearly water taxes. Depending on the details in your rental contract, the tenant or landlord could be required to pay these taxes.

Make sure to check your contract during negotiations and visit waternet.nl for more information.



Community & Lifestyle

Your new city won't feel like a home until you start building your social circle. Many find that the best way to start building theirs is within the office. When you're ready to branch out and start exploring the city, read below for our tips on building your community and beginning to enjoying the local lifestyle.

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Meetups, groups and clubs

Amsterdam is a city full of Expats so you'll find local meetups that come in all shapes and sizes where you can begin building your community of friends.

[Meetup.com](#) – Tech relevant meetups and events where you can learn new skills while getting social.

[facebook.com/groups](#) – Local groups on facebook often host monthly meetups.

[Sporting Clubs](#) – Fast way to become social in Amsterdam.

[bumble.com/bff](#) – Meet like minded friends in your area.

Amsterdam Tech Events

There is an overwhelming amount of quality tech events scheduled throughout the year from AI conferences to coding camps. You can use the below websites to search tech Networking events near you.

[Meetup.com](#) – Tech relevant meetups and events where you can learn new skills while getting social.

[iamsterdam.com/en/business/](#)

[startupamsterdam](#) – Amsterdam's most exciting tech events, all in one place.

[Eventbrite.com](#) – Tech and social events near you.



Our favourite places to drink and dine

Breakfast

Staring at Jacob
Teds
Little Collins
Mook Pancakes

Lunch

Metropolitain
Ramona cafe
Foodhallen
George's Cafe (lots of these around)

Dinner (Meat)

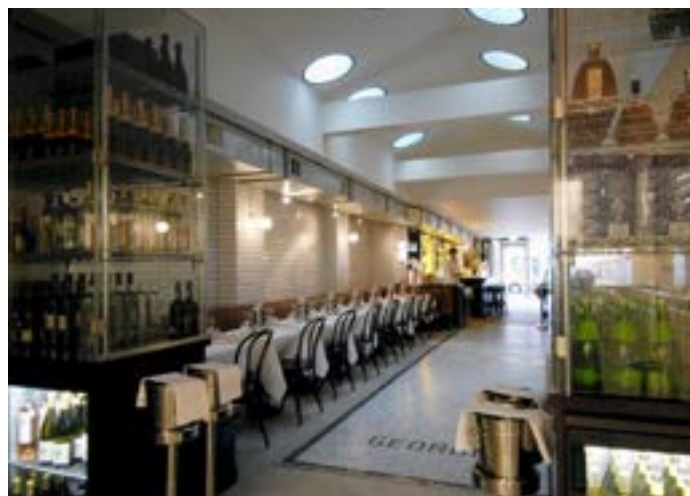
Salmera
Venus and Adonis
Loetje (Loads of these too)
Mr Porter

Dinner (Meat & Veg)

La Perla Pizza
The Plantage
De Kas
Stan & Co

Drinks

W Bar
Sky Lounge
Pulitzer Bar
Five Brothers Fat



[Cafe George](#)



[De Plantage](#)

Checklist

Before you leave

- Ensure you have multiple forms of ID (legalised) and required documents for visa applications.
- Book an appointment with IND or local municipalities for registration.
- Connect with a specialist recruiter and submit job applications.

Mandatory on arrival

- Register with the local municipality
- Collect and/or arrange residents permit and/or work permit (only if you're coming from outside the EU).
- Arrange local health insurance.
- Get a tuberculosis screening (on obligated for people from specific countries).

Optional on arrival

- Arrange a local bank account.
- Arrange your preferred mode of transport.
- Get a good rain jacket.
- Register with your local embassy or consulate.
- Obtain a driving licence or exchange your current licence.
- Get connected: mobile, internet, utilities.
- Register with a local doctor, dentist and chemist.
- Arrange your accommodation and register your address with the municipality.
- Investigate school/childcare possibilities.
- Apply for the 30% ruling.

Get Social

- Join a Facebook Group, Meetup or Sports Club.
- Learn the local language.
- Check the city calendar for lifestyle events.

