



An Expat's Guide

Moving to Amsterdam for tech

Pleased to meet you

We're Orange Quarter. We help companies hire the builders who create the future of tech and AI. Our consultants, and the candidates we work with, come from all corners of the world. Today, Orange Quarter operates across New York, London, Amsterdam and Berlin, embedded in some of the most active early-stage tech ecosystems globally.

Over the years, we've helped Product, Engineering and AI leaders relocate to join Pre-Seed-Series C companies building from zero. Creating new products, new teams, and generation-defining technology. Along the way, we've packed up our own lives, navigated visas, found housing in competitive markets, made mistakes, learned fast, and embedded ourselves in local tech communities. This guide is built on that lived experience.

If you're considering a role in Amsterdam, or planning a move to join an early-stage company where ownership, pace and impact matter, you're in the right place.

This guide is split into three sections:

- Working – what it means to build your career in Amsterdam's tech ecosystem, from finding the right role to understanding how hiring works in the Dutch market
- The Practicalities – everything you need to relocate smoothly, including visas, tax considerations, housing, banking and healthcare
- Community & Lifestyle – how to settle in, connect with the local tech community, and make the most of life in Amsterdam

We cover the essentials — from choosing the right recruiter to setting up your bank accounts and finding the places locals actually spend time. Whether you read it end-to-end or dip in as needed, this guide is designed to help you transition into life and work in Amsterdam with confidence.

5 reasons we love living and working in Amsterdam

A strong early-stage tech ecosystem

Amsterdam is a key European hub for Seed-Series C companies, with growing depth across AI, product-led software and platform businesses.

Excellent work-life balance

The Netherlands consistently ranks highly for work-life balance, with high performance expectations but sustainable working norms.

Truly international city

With over 180 nationalities and English as the default working language in tech, Amsterdam is easy to relocate to and integrate into.

The 30% tax ruling

For eligible international hires, the Dutch 30% ruling can significantly reduce tax during the first years of relocation.

Designed for everyday living

A compact, bike-friendly city with short commutes, strong infrastructure and high quality of life.

Working

Before choosing to move to Amsterdam, it's important to understand what this means for your career.

Amsterdam has established itself as one of Europe's most active tech hubs, particularly for early-stage and scaling companies. Across Product, Engineering and AI, the city attracts founders and operators building new platforms, products and teams — often with international ambition from day one.

For candidates relocating internationally, Amsterdam offers a combination of opportunity and stability: a deep early-stage ecosystem, strong demand for experienced operators, and a hiring market that values impact and ownership over tenure alone.

In this section, we outline how to approach your job search, how hiring typically works in the Dutch market, and what to expect when entering Amsterdam's tech ecosystem from abroad. If you've already secured a role and are ready to focus on relocation logistics, you can skip ahead to The Practicalities.

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Finding Work

There is no shortage of Product, Engineering and AI roles in Amsterdam — particularly within Seed–Series C companies. The challenge is not volume, but relevance: identifying the opportunities that genuinely match your experience level, risk appetite and the stage of company you want to join.

Most candidates begin by reviewing platforms such as LinkedIn to understand the market. However, for senior or highly specialised roles, many positions are never publicly advertised. Instead, companies rely on targeted outreach and headhunting to secure critical hires.

Setting yourself up for success

- Be clear on what you're targeting. Amsterdam's market spans everything from early product teams to later-stage scale-ups. Knowing whether you want to join a company building from zero, or one entering its next phase of growth, will significantly narrow the field.
- Get your LinkedIn profile in order. The Netherlands has one of the highest LinkedIn usage rates in Europe. Your profile often acts as your first interview — especially for international roles. Ensure it clearly reflects scope, ownership and impact, not just responsibilities.
- Activate your network early. Let recruiters, former colleagues and founders know you're open to relocating. Many successful moves happen through second- and third-degree connections rather than formal applications.

- Work with specialist recruiters. Recruiters embedded in the Amsterdam market understand which companies are open to international hires, how relocation and visa sponsorship works, and where your profile will resonate. This is particularly important for roles that are filled through direct outreach rather than inbound applications.
- Secure a role before relocating. While it's possible to job hunt locally, most international candidates secure a role before moving. This also simplifies visa processes and, in many cases, eligibility for tax incentives such as the 30% ruling.

Choosing the right recruiter

Choose a market specialist

Tech and product environments differ significantly by company stage and domain. Working with a recruiter who specialises in Product, Engineering or AI — and who is active in Amsterdam's early-stage ecosystem — gives you access to companies that are hiring internationally and building new teams from the ground up.

Service and local knowledge matter

A good recruiter will be direct and transparent. They should understand:

- Which companies are open to international hires
- How relocation, visas and the 30% ruling typically work
- What salary ranges and expectations look like in the local market

High-quality recruiters maintain close relationships with both candidates and founders, allowing them to give informed advice throughout the process.

Ask the right questions

Relocation is a two-way commitment. Don't hesitate to ask recruiters about their experience placing international candidates, the types of companies they work with, and how they typically support candidates through offer and relocation stages. Reviews, testimonials and recommendations are often a good indicator of how they operate. Choosing the right recruiter can make a meaningful difference — not just in securing the right role, but in how smoothly you transition into life and work in Amsterdam.

See what our candidates say about us on [Google Reviews](#)

Or better yet, [contact us!](#)

Amsterdam Salaries

Salaries in Amsterdam's tech market vary depending on experience, role and company stage. Early-stage companies often combine competitive base salaries with equity, while more established scale-ups may offer higher fixed compensation.

While salaries are generally lower than US benchmarks, Amsterdam remains attractive due to strong work-life balance, comprehensive benefits and, for eligible international hires, the 30% tax ruling.

When you first speak with a recruiter, they will align on salary expectations and advise on what is realistic in the local market. During offer stages, they typically support negotiations to achieve the best overall outcome.

Permits needed

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

You can live and work in the Netherlands without a visa. If you plan to stay longer than four months, you must register with your local municipality shortly after arrival. Once registered, you'll receive a BSN (Citizen Service Number), which is required for employment, banking and healthcare.

If you're a UK citizen...

UK nationals are now treated as non-EU citizens. To live and work in the Netherlands for more than 90 days, you will need a residence permit. In most cases, this is arranged through employer sponsorship under a recognised visa route, such as the highly skilled migrant scheme.

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

Non-EU nationals typically require both a residence permit and a work permit. These applications are usually handled by the hiring company via the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND). Because the process can be complex and time-sensitive, it's strongly recommended to secure a role with a company experienced in sponsoring international hires before relocating.

Spouses and family members...

Partners and dependants may be eligible to join you in the Netherlands under family reunification rules. Requirements vary depending on nationality and visa type, so timelines and documentation should be confirmed early in the process.

To apply for a Dutch working residence permit, you'll need:

For most non-EU candidates, the application is initiated and submitted by your employer via the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND). While requirements can vary slightly by visa type, you will typically need:

- A valid passport
- A signed employment contract or binding job offer from a Dutch employer
- Proof that your employer is a recognised sponsor with the IND
- Proof you meet the salary threshold for the relevant visa category
- Copies of education certificates or qualifications (if required for the role)
- A clean criminal record declaration (depending on nationality and visa type)
- Passport photographs that meet Dutch requirements

Depending on your country of origin, you may also be required to:

- Undergo a tuberculosis (TB) test after arrival
- Submit officially translated or apostilled documents
- Your employer or recruiter will usually guide you through the process and confirm which documents are required in your specific case.

Annual leave

In the Netherlands, work-life balance is taken seriously and is embedded in both employment law and company culture. The legal minimum annual leave entitlement is 20 days per year based on a full-time contract, though most tech companies offer more. Public holidays are granted in addition to this and vary slightly by employer.

Dutch working culture places a strong emphasis on productivity during working hours rather than long days. Overtime is not generally expected, and employees are encouraged to disconnect outside of contracted hours. Flexible working arrangements and hybrid setups are common, particularly within tech and early-stage companies.

The Netherlands consistently ranks highly for work-life balance according to the OECD, reflecting a culture that values sustainability and long-term performance over presenteeism.



Practicalities

You've decided that the Netherlands is where you want to be. You've begun your job search, or secured a role, and now it's time to think about the practical side of relocating.

Moving country involves a lot of admin, and the process can feel overwhelming without the right information. In this section, we cover the key things you'll need to organise when relocating to Amsterdam, from registration and housing to healthcare, banking and getting connected, to help make the transition as smooth as possible.



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Language

The vast majority of people in Amsterdam speak excellent English, and most expats are able to work and live comfortably without speaking Dutch. That said, learning some basic Dutch can go a long way. Even a small effort is appreciated locally and can make everyday interactions — such as dealing with municipalities, healthcare providers or neighbours — much easier. Many expats choose to take language classes or learn through apps once they've settled in.

Weather

Amsterdam has a temperate maritime climate, which means mild summers, cool winters and frequent rainfall throughout the year.

Winters tend to be grey and damp rather than extreme, while summers are generally pleasant with long daylight hours. Weather conditions can change quickly, so a waterproof jacket and good layers are essential, especially if you plan to get around by bike.

Locals rely heavily on weather apps to plan their day-to-day travel, particularly when cycling or commuting.

Moving

Moving to a new country can be one of the most stressful parts of relocation, but a bit of planning can make the process far more manageable. When relocating to the Netherlands, you generally have three main options depending on how much you're bringing with you and where you're moving from.

International removals company

Hiring an international removals company is the most hands-off option. These companies can manage packing, shipping and delivery of your belongings door to door, which can be cost-effective if you're moving large items such as furniture.

This option is typically more expensive if you're only shipping a small number of items, so it's worth comparing costs carefully based on volume.

Shipping container or air freight

Shipping your belongings via container or air freight is a popular option for international relocations. Air freight is faster but significantly more expensive, while sea freight is slower but more cost-effective for larger shipments.

If you choose this option, check whether the shipping company includes transport to and from ports, as this is sometimes billed separately.

Drive your items yourself

If you're relocating from within Europe and travelling light, driving your belongings yourself can be a practical and economical option. This works best if you're moving a small number of items and are comfortable with a longer road trip.

For many expats, especially those moving into furnished rentals, it's also common to bring only essentials and purchase additional items locally once settled.

Finding a rental

Amsterdam has one of the most competitive rental markets in Europe, driven by strong international demand and limited housing supply. Compared with cities like Barcelona or Berlin, rents are significantly higher, and competition for well-priced properties is intense.

As a general guide, renting a one-bedroom apartment in Amsterdam typically costs considerably more than most Southern European cities, and demand is especially high in central and well-connected neighbourhoods. Many expats choose to reduce costs by renting a room in a shared apartment, particularly during their first year. This can make it easier to live in a more desirable area while getting to know the city.

When apartment hunting, it's important to factor in that most rental contracts are issued for a minimum term of 12 months. Because of this, you'll want to choose an area you'd be happy living in for at least a year, rather than treating your first rental as a short-term stopgap.

Tips when searching for a place to live

- Choose a neighbourhood based on the lifestyle you want to live
- Ensure you are actively looking for places and regularly checking websites
- Landlords typically expect you to move in as soon as possible, usually the next month at the latest, so looking months in advance is not recommended
- Be prepared with documents (ID, contract, proof of income)
- Ask friends, colleagues or recruiters for advice
- Be cautious of deals that seem too good to be true
- Amsterdam is a couples-dominated housing market, and overbidding is quite common, especially if you are not in a couple

- Most landlords or agents will require a deposit of one to two months' rent, and it's common for agencies to ask for proof that your gross monthly income is around three times the rent.

Property rental websites to check out

[Pararius](#) — One of the most widely used platforms for rentals across the Netherlands, popular with expats.

[Funda](#) — Covers both rentals and property sales; particularly useful for understanding neighbourhood pricing.

[Huurwoningen.nl](#) — Aggregates listings from agents and private landlords.

Facebook Groups — Useful for flat shares, but extra caution is advised due to scams.

If you're searching from abroad, many agents now offer virtual viewings, making it possible to secure accommodation before arriving. If that's not possible, short-term accommodation can be a good bridge while you view properties in person.

Where to live in the city?

Amsterdam is made up of distinct neighbourhoods, each offering a different lifestyle. All areas are well connected by bike and public transport, so living slightly outside the centre doesn't necessarily mean a longer commute.

Some popular areas to consider when house hunting include De Pijp, Oost, Oud-West and Noord. Read a bit about each below.



a. De Pijp

One of Amsterdam's most popular neighbourhoods for expats. De Pijp is lively and multicultural, known for its cafés, restaurants and the Albert Cuyp market. Central, energetic and well connected.

b. Jordaan

A picturesque area with narrow streets, canals and historic buildings. The Jordaan is home to independent boutiques, cafés and local bars, and remains one of the city's most sought-after neighbourhoods.

c. Oost

A diverse and fast-developing area with plenty of green space, including Oosterpark. Oost offers a mix of modern housing, cultural venues and an increasingly strong food scene.

d. Oud-West

Creative and residential, Oud-West sits close to Vondelpark and the city centre. Popular with professionals who want a neighbourhood feel without being far from the action.

e. Oud-Zuid

An elegant and quieter area bordering Vondelpark. Known for wider streets, larger apartments and proximity to museums, Oud-Zuid is popular with families and senior professionals.

f. Noord

Located just across the IJ, Noord is accessible via a free ferry from Central Station. It offers more space, a creative edge and a growing number of modern developments and cultural venues.

g. Centrum

The historic heart of Amsterdam, made up of the canal ring and surrounding streets. Central and vibrant, but typically more expensive and busier than other areas.

h. Plantage

A greener, more relaxed area close to Artis Zoo and the Botanical Gardens. Known for its spacious streets and calmer pace while still being close to the city centre.

i. Nieuw-West

A more residential district offering comparatively better value for money. Well connected by public transport, with plenty of green space and newer housing developments.

j. Zuidoost

A culturally diverse area with large modern developments and strong transport links. Popular with those looking for more space and newer apartments.

k. Zuidas

Amsterdam's main business district. Modern, well planned and close to transport hubs, with a growing residential offering alongside corporate offices.

l. Amstelveen

A suburb just south of Amsterdam, popular with expats and families. Offers more space and greenery while remaining well connected to the city.



Buying property

The Netherlands is open to property purchases by international buyers, and many expats choose to buy once they've settled into life in Amsterdam.

If you're not purchasing outright, you'll need to apply for a mortgage (known locally as a hypotheek). Dutch banks may lend up to 100% of the property's appraised value, though buyers should be prepared for additional upfront costs such as notary fees, taxes and mortgage advice costs.

Buying can be a good long-term investment, but if you're new to the city, many expats prefer to rent first to get a feel for neighbourhoods and lifestyle before committing.

Getting around

Amsterdam is one of Europe's easiest cities to navigate. The preferred mode of transport is cycling, and the city's infrastructure is built around it.

Many residents either buy a bike or use long-term rental services. Bike theft is common, so always use a good lock and secure your bike properly. If your bike disappears, it may have been removed for incorrect parking and can be collected from the municipal bike depot for a fee.

Public transport is reliable and well connected, covering trams, buses, metro and ferries. Payment is handled via contactless bank cards or transport cards, and ferries across the IJ (to Amsterdam Noord) are free.

Driving is rarely necessary within the city. Rules around using or exchanging foreign driving licences vary depending on nationality and length of stay.

Healthcare

The Dutch healthcare system is consistently ranked among the best in Europe. All residents are required by law to take out basic Dutch health insurance once they are registered and working in the Netherlands.

Healthcare is organised around local General Practitioners (huisarts), who act as the first point of contact and provide referrals to specialists when needed. Once settled, you should register with a local GP and pharmacy.

All insurers offer the same government-defined basic package, with optional add-ons for services such as dental care or physiotherapy.

Bank account

To receive your salary and manage everyday expenses, you'll need a Dutch bank account. Debit cards are the most common form of payment in the Netherlands, and credit cards are not universally accepted in shops and supermarkets.

To open an account, you'll typically need:

- A valid passport or ID
- Proof of address
- Your BSN (Citizen Service Number)
- A residence permit (for non-EU nationals)

Many banks offer English-language apps and online onboarding, making it relatively straightforward for expats to get set up.

Mobile phone

If you need to get connected quickly, a prepaid or SIM-only mobile plan is the easiest short-term solution and requires minimal documentation.

Once you have a BSN, bank account and residence permit, you can sign up for a contract plan, which generally offers better value. Mobile coverage in the Netherlands is excellent, with fast 4G and widespread 5G availability.

Before signing up, check whether your employer provides a company phone or mobile allowance.

Internet & TV

Internet infrastructure in the Netherlands is fast and reliable. In many rental properties, internet and TV may already be installed — either included in the rent or easy to transfer into your name.

If you need to arrange a new connection, you'll typically require:

- Proof of ID
- Proof of address
- A Dutch bank account

Streaming services are widely used, and most households rely on these alongside or instead of traditional TV packages.

Utilities

When renting, utilities such as gas, water and electricity may be included in your rent. If not, you can either take over the existing contracts or choose your own providers.

When moving in, remember to record meter readings and update the supplier. Water taxes are charged annually and may be payable by either the tenant or landlord, depending on your contract — this is worth checking before signing.

Community & Lifestyle

Your new city won't start to feel like home until you begin building your social circle. For many people, that starts at work, but Amsterdam offers plenty of ways to meet like-minded people beyond the office. Whether you're looking to expand your professional network, get involved in the local tech scene or simply meet new people, there are plenty of communities, events and spaces to explore.



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Meetup's, groups and clubs

Amsterdam has a large and active international population, making it relatively easy to connect with others who are new to the city.

Some popular ways to get involved include:

- Meetup platforms – A wide range of professional, social and interest-based groups, including tech, product and founder communities
- Facebook groups – Local and expat-focused groups often organise casual meetups and events
- Sporting clubs – Joining a team or class is a fast way to build a social network
- Social networking apps – Increasingly used by expats to meet people outside of work

These groups are a great way to build friendships, share advice and settle into life in Amsterdam more quickly.

Amsterdam tech events

Amsterdam hosts a steady stream of tech-focused events throughout the year, ranging from informal meetups to large international conferences.

You'll find events covering topics such as:

- Software engineering and product development
- AI and data
- Startups, scale-ups and founder communities

Most events are advertised via event platforms and community newsletters, with many offering free or low-cost entry. Attending regularly is one of the easiest ways to stay connected to the local ecosystem.

Bar, Restaurants and cafes to check out

Amsterdam has a strong food and drink scene, with plenty of neighbourhood spots alongside more well-known venues. Here are a few popular choices across the city.

Breakfast & brunch

- Staring at Jacob
- Little Collins
- Bakers and Roasters

Lunch

- Foodhallen
- George's Café
- Metropolitan

Dinner

- De Kas
- The Plantage
- Nnea (39th best pizza in the world)

Drinks

- Pulitzer Bar (Jordaan)
- Café De Nieuwe Lelie (Jordaan)
- Pilsvogel (De Pijp)

Exploring local cafés, bars and restaurants is one of the easiest ways to get a feel for the city and its neighbourhoods.



Your Relocation Checklist

Before you leave

- Ensure you have a valid passport and any required documents for visa or residence permit applications
- Secure a job offer with a Dutch employer (required for most non-EU visas)
- Book appointments with the IND and/or local municipality if required
- Arrange temporary or permanent accommodation
- Gather important documents such as employment contract, birth or marriage certificates (translated or apostilled if necessary)
- Organise shipment of belongings or plan your move
- Check whether your employer offers relocation support or a mobile phone

Mandatory on arrival

- Register with the local municipality
- Collect or finalise your residence and/or work permit (non-EU nationals)
- Obtain your BSN (Citizen Service Number)
- Arrange Dutch health insurance
- Register with a local GP (huisarts)
- Complete a tuberculosis screening if required based on nationality

Optional on arrival

- Open a Dutch bank account
- Arrange your preferred mobile phone plan
- Set up internet, TV and utilities if not included in your rent
- Purchase or rent a bike
- Exchange or apply for a Dutch driving licence if applicable
- Register with your embassy or consulate
- Explore schools or childcare options if relocating with family
- Apply for the 30% tax ruling (if eligible)

Get social

- Join local Facebook groups, Meetups or professional communities
- Attend tech and startup events
- Explore neighbourhood cafés, bars and restaurants
- Start learning basic Dutch
- Make time to enjoy the city and settle into your new routine
-