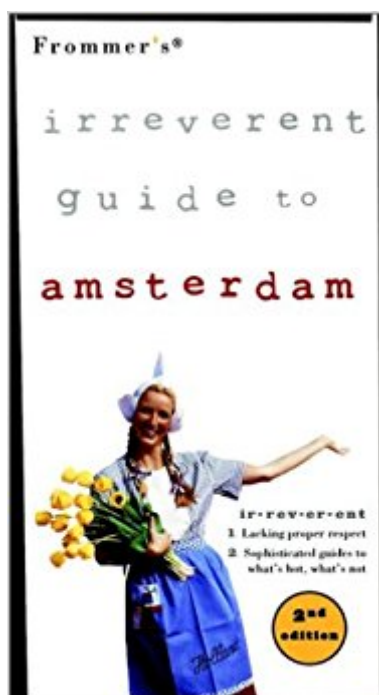


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# Frommer's Irreverent Guide To Amsterdam (Irreverent Guides)



## Synopsis

"Like being taken around by a savvy local." #151;The New York Times "Little fluff and lots of fun." #151;Boston Globe Are you tired of cliché-ridden guidebooks packed with promotional fluff? Then move over to the Irreverent Guides#151;the travel series that no tourist board would dare to recommend. Look inside for the lowdown on:Where to stay if you want canal house cozinessDutch dining worth seeking out#151;and tourist traps to avoidPeople watching, hofje hopping, clog shopping, and canal cruising away from the crowdsCafes, tap houses, and smoke shops that locals loveThe top nightspots for getting arty, lucky, or kinkyAnd much more!Frommer&#39;s. The Name You Can Trust. Find us online at [www.frommers.com](http://www.frommers.com)

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The Irreverent Guide to Amsterdam gives you the lowdown, the inside story. It has nothing to sell but the truth, which includes a balance of good and bad. It praises, it trashes, it weighs, and leaves the final decision up to the reader. Our writers take a special pleasure in leading you where other guides fear to tread. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

about the author David Downie was born in San Francisco and has spent the last 15 years kicking around Italy, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia. He has contributed to several guide books, is a contributing editor at Departures, and writes as irreverently as possible on travel, food, and culture for a variety of American, British, and Italian magazines and newspapers.

My husband and I bought both the Amsterdam and the London versions as we planned our honeymoon. What a great read! Reading the Irreverent Guide further fueled our excitement about Amsterdam and our trip and we found the city to be true to the book's description. The style of the books are very easy to read, with useful information and a slightly sarcastic, biting tone. The information is presented in a funny manner and it definitely differs from the dry-as-a-bone descriptives that classify so many travel books. Because the book is written based on information from locals, and even partially by locals themselves, this travel guide has more of a travelogue feel than a travel guide feel, which definitely appeals to me. It offers good information about how to really \*see\* a city or a place the way it's seen by people who live there, even if you are only there for a few days. We used the Amsterdam guide to find our hotel, look up attractions, learn enough about the culture so that we weren't annoyed with the slow wait service, and many other things. We did not have a single negative experience in Amsterdam from following any of the book's recommendations.

This book is the perfect combination of inside gossip, tourist info, and handy maps. It is pocket-size, though tall; however, anyone with too little time and too little memory will carry it without complaint. The inside gossip prefaces each section and often is more valuable than what follows - item by item critiques. The guide offers non-judgemental insights into what a tourist can expect in Amsterdam, whether it is the incredibly high cost of a hotel room or the casualness of a coffee house. It also tips the traveler off to preferred customs, local attitudes and things one wouldn't expect. The section "you probably didn't know", should be required reading for all potential visitors. Also, at the end of each section is a map which is detailed enough to direct the confused to at least a common point of reference. We traveled to Amsterdam in November '98 for one week, and chose to ignore one of the first pieces of advice the "Accommodations" section offers: "Book as far ahead as possible." We decided to wait until we arrived, and check out a few options. Mistake. Everything was full, and the adventure aspect soon wore thin as we wondered where we were going to sleep. We are in our 40's and wanted something convenient, and with a private bath. The guide saved us as we made our way to the Jordaan area and found the Acacia. The Acacia is listed as "dowdy but lovable" and that it truly was. We spent about \$70 a night and felt safe, comfortable, and "looked after". The room included a breakfast of coffee, croissants, rolls, jam and an egg; however, it is served only from 8am to 9:30 and we only made it down in time once. This is a canal house and the stairs are amazing. The guide warns you, but travelers who are fire escape conscious won't be

thrilled with this set-up. The "Diversions" section is as diverse as its name, and we found almost all of the information there very accurate. The Heineken Brewery information was very detailed and right on the nose. We did miss the Anne Frank House as we waited until our last day and went too late. The guide indicated that it was open until 5 and we arrived at 4 and found it closed. Who knows if that was just a fluke, but whatever the reason it did not color our opinion of "Frommer's irreverent guide to Amsterdam".

It seems that Frommer's just doesn't get it. The reason alternative guides like Lonely Planet, the Rough Guide, etc. have been so popular in the past decade is that some travelers don't want to pay a lot of money to stay in a bland upscale hotel or eat in snobbish restaurants, let alone visit overpriced tourist traps. They want to go native as much as possible so they can really see what's unique about a place. The focus of this guide, on the other hand, seems to be mainly sneering at attractions and accommodations that aren't quite tasteful enough for the discriminating consumer. What's left over (and there isn't much) is the usual old-school guidebook round of outrageously priced hotels, fussy restaurants, and posh boutiques. Contrary to its title, the guide is far too reverent toward all things expensive. Of course anyone can stay anywhere in comfort and style if they spend enough money. If you can afford to follow the suggestions in this book, you already know where to go and you don't need to buy it. The bottom line: if you want catty gossip, buy a glossy magazine. If you want a practical guide with an irreverent attitude, get yourself a nice Rough Guide or Let's Go. But whatever you do, don't buy this book.

Amsterdam pulses and buzzes with life, and a weary traveler can either get caught up in it, get run over by it, or stand and watch it from a safe distance. "Irreverent" features activities for any of these three speeds. This guide book accompanied me on a five month stay near Amsterdam, and it never let me down when I needed entertainment. Its smart suggestions and wry humor gave a good context from which to view the city, its inhabitants and habits. The recommendations for museums, concerts and restaurants were second to none. Also, the author's descriptions of establishments accurately reflected the prevailing costs. The maps made a handy tool for any lost traveler, and it provided the necessary warnings regarding the excesses for which Amsterdam is famous without shying away or judging. "Irreverent" was the guide I used the most in that neighborhood of Europe and I encourage other travelers to do the same.

This guide really doesn't live up to the promise of its title. I can't find anything irreverent about it,

except for an occasional potshot at some local attraction. Its clear biases against coffeeshops, a major feature of Amsterdam life, and its skimpy treatment of both the restaurant and hotel scene made it fairly useless. The maps are inadequate: many important streets are missing, and we often found ourselves lost. (Fortunately, we were able to find a Michelin Guide at a local bookstore that gave us the more complete information we needed. This is not a book to rely on if you need much information about hotels, restaurants, or attractions in and about Amsterdam.

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