

of the
BEST

AMSTERDAM FAMILY ATTRACTIONS

The Dutch capital makes for a fun, family-friendly city break, finds **Rhodri Andrews**



1

ARTIS ZOO

Opened in 1838, Artis is one of the world's oldest zoos. It's surprisingly large and leafy for a central Amsterdam location, with well-manicured gardens that are a delight to wander. Its huge layout means there's plenty of room for both animals and children to roam. Our five-year-old son Dylan loved seeing the variety of fauna – from giraffes and elephants to sea lions and visiting a butterfly house – as well as burning off energy in the various play parks dotted around the zoo. The ticket price includes entry to the on-site aquarium and planetarium.

PICTURES: Shutterstock/KievVictor, Yasunya, Massimo Pizzotti, Andrei Tomasi, Rhodri Andrews

MUIDERSLOT

This 13th-century castle lies 45 minutes from Amsterdam by train and bus, but it's worth the effort to get there. With turrets, a moat and huge forbidding walls, the well-preserved fortress could have been taken straight from a storybook. Both adults and children will enjoy exploring its round towers and period rooms; my son was especially amused by the number of long-drop toilets inside the castle. An adventure park and cafe help to extend the day, while the surrounding town of Muiden is well worth exploring before returning to the city.



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CANAL CRUISE

You don't get more classic than a canal cruise in Amsterdam. There are several departure locations; we went from Centraal Station and spied Amsterdam's historic merchant houses, as well as famous landmarks such as the Skinny Bridge and Bridge of 15 Bridges. Families with older children could start and end at Prinsengracht to see Anne Frank House, while departures from Leidseplein (near the Rijksmuseum) offer the chance to navigate narrow waterways in smaller boats.

NEMO SCIENCE MUSEUM

The green-copper exterior of the Nemo Science Museum makes for a striking sight. Its five floors are filled with hands-on experiments, interactive workshops and science demonstrations that will spark children's curiosity and problem-solving skills. There's so much here to keep kids captivated and my son got stuck in to everything – four hours had passed before we knew it. Don't leave without visiting the museum's rooftop for the sweeping views it delivers – at a height of 22m, it's Amsterdam's highest city square.



4

TRAM TRANSPORT

Amsterdam's compact nature means getting around via public transport is easy, and our son became hooked on travelling by tram – a mode of transport he hadn't encountered before. The iAmsterdam City Card covers unlimited use of the city's public transport network, along with bike hire, all of the activities listed here and more than 70 other attractions, all available either free or at a discount when using the card. Agents can earn 10% commission for purchases via the city card's agent portal (reseller.iamsterdam.com) or buy via Tui Musement. Prices range from £58 for a 24-hour card to £121 for five days.



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