



Ten good reasons why physical therapists should visit the Netherlands next year

If there ever was a good moment to travel to the Netherlands, next year is your time. Here are ten good reasons to be in the land of tulips, windmills and knee-deep culture in June 2011.

1. The International WCPT Congress

It's the biggest world gathering of physical therapists, it's a unique opportunity to get a new perspective on your work, it only happens every four years and this time it's in Amsterdam. You can read about the exciting programme at www.wcpt.org/congress/prelim-programme, but what the programme doesn't show you is how much physical therapists who attend congresses get out of it. "The congress has remained in my memory since as a remarkable and inspiring experience," said one past delegate.

2. Van Gogh

There are 141 art galleries in Amsterdam alone, and if you want to see Dutch Masters – Van Gogh, Rembrandt and Vermeer – there is no better place. There are 206 paintings by Van Gogh in Amsterdam's Van Gogh Museum and if that's not enough, you can go to the Kröller-Müller Museum, where there are a further 278. And if you've had enough Van Gogh, you can always resort to Amsterdam's 51 museums, 16,000 annual concerts and theatrical performances, 55 theatres or 42 church organs.

3. The house of Anne Frank

The Anne Frank House on Prinsengracht canal is a museum dedicated to Jewish wartime diarist Anne Frank, who hid from Nazi persecution with her family in hidden rooms at the rear of the building. The museum shows the hiding place, an exhibition on the life and times of Anne Frank, and highlights all forms of persecution and discrimination.

4. Alkmaar

This picturesque city, to the north of Amsterdam, is one of the top attractions of the Netherlands. It preserves a 17th-century pattern of canals and narrow streets and has many historic buildings. The city is famous for its nightlife and traditional cheese market, held every Friday.

5. An easy gateway to Europe

Getting to Holland is easy – Amsterdam Schiphol airport is one of the largest in Europe and served by more than 100 airlines. There are other smaller airports in Rotterdam, the Hague and Eindhoven and other cities, which accommodate many low cost carriers. The Netherlands has a famously efficient transport system – helped by the fact that the terrain is so flat. Once you're in Amsterdam, getting around is simple – by foot (it takes 45 minutes to walk from one side of the city to the other), tram, canal bus, or bike. And there's nowhere better to start or end a European tour, with Brussels, Berlin, London, Paris and Copenhagen all within 500 miles.

6. Canals and narrow streets

There's little that can beat the sight of tall Amsterdam houses reflected in a calm canal. If you come to Amsterdam, you'll see the scene quite a lot: there are 165 canals, 1,281 bridges, 8 wooden drawbridges and 2,500 houseboats.

7. Windmills

They may sound a bit of a cliché, but the Netherlands' windmills are worth seeing because they are far more than ornament. They were developed for corn milling, land drainage, saw milling and other industrial purposes, and helped shape the country. There are 1150 of them to see, eight of them in Amsterdam.

8. Cafe culture

After Scandinavians, the Dutch are the world's biggest coffee drinkers, so you'll discover a massive range of cafes with a massive range of coffees.

9. Green destination

Amsterdam markets itself as a "green destination". Voted one of the greenest cities in Europe, it boasts restaurants with sustainable menus, more bicycles than cars, green taxis, low CO² boats and environmentally-conscious hotels.

10. The International WCPT Congress

Did we mention this before? The beauty of combining a holiday with a visit to the WCPT congress is that WCPT has teamed up with RAI Hotel and Travel Service to provide discounted hotel rates for congress delegates. Saving you time, money and hassle their online reservation system (www.wcpt.org/node/35067) allows you to search for hotels by star rating and area. Additionally you can view a map showing the location of the hotel in relation to the congress centre and find detailed information about each hotel. Discounted room rates at the official hotels are limited.

www.wcpt.org/congress/registration