



WHY YOU'LL WANT TO GET STUCK AT AMSTERDAM'S SCHIPHOL AIRPORT

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Killing time in an airport is rarely the best part of a trip.

But with art, unique amenities and a dedication to doing things the “Dutch way,” Amsterdam’s Schiphol Airport makes time before or between flights desirable — especially for the 40% of passengers who transfer here and never get a chance to go into town.

Here’s a taste of what makes Schiphol so darn special.

Art and culture

Schiphol’s collection of work by Dutch and international artists stretches back to the 1960s and numbers more than 80 major pieces, including Kees Franse’s large wooden “Apple” and the 157-foot-long “Metamorphosis” by M.C. Escher.

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Kees Franse's "Apple" is one of the iconic pieces in Amsterdam Schiphol Airport's extensive art collection.

IMAGE: HARRIET BASKAS

Special exhibitions and a permanent selection of pieces by famous Dutch masters are part of the airport's Rijksmuseum annex, which is due to reopen in September 2016 after a renovation. A refreshed Airport Library housing a collection of Dutch literature translated into over 20 languages reopens in March.

A park

Benches and lounge chairs, lush greenery, projected butterflies, a real tree and the piped-in

sounds of birds, bicyclists and people enjoying a summer's day create a blissful mixed reality setting for Schiphol's indoor park.



Schiphol's mixed-reality Airport Park is an oasis inside the airport with lush greenery and piped-in park sounds.

There's also a kid's corner, plus a terrace for those craving the real outdoors.

Unique shopping

A major renovation project designed to keep Schiphol competitive among international airports is making way for luxury and brand shops from the likes of Rolex, Johnny Walker, Gucci, Hermès and Gucci, but plenty of stores offering a taste of Dutch culture remain.

Toy shops carry all manner of items related to Miffie, the white rabbit character that stars in a popular series of Dutch children’s books, while “Say Cheese” sells dozens of Dutch-sourced cheeses — and offers oodles of free samples — along with mustards, spreads and charming cheese-themed souvenirs, including a cheese grater dressed up as a windmill.



IMAGE: HARRIET BASKAS

And the main branch of the “House of Tulips” is both shop and entertainment: The glass structure is a cross between a traditional Dutch town-house and a greenhouse that raises up when the shop

opens so a flower market can spill.

At closing time, the glasshouse is lowered and the flowers are tucked inside.

Extras

Restaurants serve Dutch specialties such as raw herring, stroopwaffles (filled waffle-shaped wafers), poffertjes (miniature pancakes) and bitterballen (deep-fried meat croquettes).

There's a branch of Holland Casino at the airport offering roulette, Blackjack and slot machines daily from 6:30 a.m. to 7:45 p.m.

And on the observation deck, a Fokker 100 airplane has been converted into a walk-through aviation museum, complete with traffic control reports, photo panels and a view into the baggage hold.

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A Fokker 100 airplane doubles as an aviation museum on Schiphol's observation deck.

IMAGE: HARRIET BASKAS

And sleepovers are welcome

In addition to lounge chairs scattered throughout the terminals, there are welcome options for travelers in need of a shower, a nap or a place to check-in for the night.

Airside — or post-security — choices include a Yotel offering stays in efficient “cabins” for a minimum of four hours and the Mercure Hotel Schiphol Terminal, with day and night rooms for rent. Hip Citizen M and a full-service Sheraton are accessible via the covered walkway attached to the airport, as is a brand new Dutch-themed Hilton Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, with its surprisingly quiet living-room style glass-topped atrium and the airport’s first full-service spa.



The new Hilton Amsterdam Airport Schiphol has lozenge-shaped windows and Dutch-influenced design features throughout.

IMAGE: COURTESY MECANOO

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