



Chantal Arnts/De Durgerdam

DESTINATIONS

A Guide to Landelijk Noord, the Amsterdam Fishing Village Locals Love

This is where Amsterdammers go to escape the tourist traffic of high tulip season.

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Amsterdam in springtime is a magical, flower-filled place. But tulip season also brings major crowds, lines, and traffic—especially when you head south to Lisse and the Bollenstreek, where the famous Keukenhof gardens and tulip fields are located. And this year, with the sold-out [Rijksmuseum Vermeer exhibition](#) on view through June 4, 2023 (this is the first time that this many of the 15th-century Dutch artist's works have been on display in one place), the city is [approaching pre-pandemic tourist levels](#).

So where do Amsterdammers go to escape? Why just across the bay north of the Amsterdam-Centrum called the IJsselmeer—or as the locals call it, the IJ. Here lies the small rural region of Landelijk Noord, on the eastern side of the borough Amsterdam-Noord.

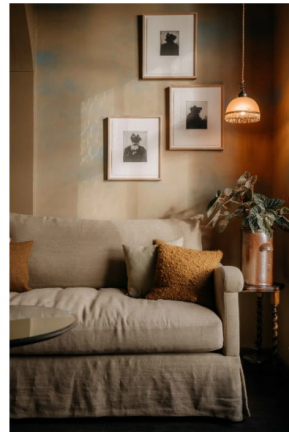
Landelijk Noord is a collection of former fishing villages—Durgerdam, Holysloot, 't Nopeind, Ransdorp, Schellingwoude, and Zunderdorp—all of which used to rely on fishing the inland sea, the Zuiderzee. But that sea disappeared when dams and dikes were put up to stop flooding in the region in the early 20th century, thus creating the IJ as a reservoir. But the IJ is a freshwater lake, and the local fish, who needed the salty Zuiderzee to survive, moved out. As a result, the local fishermen lost their livelihoods, and the area went into an economic depression.

Recently, however, Amsterdammers have been heading to the area for a day trip or weekend getaway in nature—it's just a 15-minute car ride or 30-minute bike ride from the center of Amsterdam, making it perhaps the closest country escape from one of Europe's most bustling capital cities. Here is our guide for what to do in Landelijk Noord.

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There is only one hotel in this tiny town: the newly-opened De Durgerdam. [Chantal Arnts/De Durgerdam](#)



De Durgerdam is the first hotel directly managed by Aedes, a Dutch hospitality company who also played a part in opening the likes of Soho House Amsterdam and the forthcoming Rosewood Amsterdam. [Chantal Arnts/De Durgerdam](#)

Getting to and around Landelijk Noord

Of all the villages in Landelijk Noord, the closest village to Amsterdam-Centrum is Durgerdam, built atop a dike facing the IJ and the skyline of the city. It's a short cab, ferry, or bike ride from Amsterdam-Centrum and Schipol Airport. Once there, a bike is your best bet to explore the surrounding villages.

Where to stay in Landelijk Noord

Once in Durgerdam, head to the only hotel in the tiny town: the newly-opened [De Durgerdam](#). It is an exceptionally beautiful and charming base from which to explore the region, and the first hotel directly managed by the Dutch hospitality company [Aedes](#), who also had a hand in Soho House Amsterdam, the Hoxton Amsterdam, and the forthcoming Rosewood Amsterdam.

This lakeside hideaway has 14 guest rooms spread across two buildings: the first, a carefully restored 17th-century heritage building which was once a humble inn for fishermen; and the second, a newer building behind it. In designing De Durgerdam, the Amsterdam-based design studio Buro Belén was inspired by the region's fishing history and industry to create details like a net-like chandelier by artist Ingo Maurer in the lobby restaurant and the tiny little fish on a wall that catch the light just so.

If you're comfortable with climbing old crooked stairs and going through small trapezoid-shaped doors, request a room in the original building. There, you'll find original wooden beams, cozy window seats, shimmering velvet throws, curvy wooden headboards, and oddly-shaped bathrooms clad in bespoke tiles from the oldest ceramics company in the Netherlands, Royal Tichelaar Makkum. In each suite (there are three), you'll find two custom raincoats by Dutch fashion house KASSL Editions, which very well may come in handy in a place where it rains about 180 days a year.

Sit in the plush reading chair and pour yourself a nip of the homemade liqueur from the faceted crystal decanter as you nibble on the homemade butter cookies in a tin by the mini bar. Later, have a drink and a snack of house-smoked beef sausage at the bar of the restaurant De Mark, or go one more level down to the cave-like wine cellar and cozy reading room with a glowing fireplace. This is true *gezelligheid*—the Dutch word for a sense of liveliness and enjoyment.



The sold-out Rijksmuseum Vermeer exhibition this summer will contribute to Amsterdam's return to pre-pandemic levels of tourism. [Rijksmuseum](#)

What to do

To situate yourself and explore the surrounding villages, grab one of the e-bikes parked outside De Durgerdam. It's easy enough to ride around on your own, but if you want to learn something about the area's history and uncover a few hidden gems, ask the hotel for a guided tour with [Roos Stallinga](#), author of the book *Ride With Me Amsterdam*.

She'll likely take you along the cobblestone streets of Durgerdam overlooking the water, before heading inland to cycle through the village of Ransdorp, where you can see its famous spireless "stumpy" church, which dates back to the Middle Ages. Ask to stop at the local farmstand, [Melktap en Boerderij Winkel](#), and pick up some fresh produce, eggs, and freshly produced milk from the cows you'll spot grazing. Then cycle alongside canals to the village of Holysloot, which is home to a charming café inside an old school house. When you get back to Durgerdam, go for a dip in the cool IJ (yes, it's clean); De Durgerdam has its own dock, right next to the [Durgerdam Harbor](#), where you might spot some fancy boats.

To learn more about the region, hire a car and go 30-or-so minutes north to the [Zuiderzee Museum](#), a fascinating look at what life was like for the fishermen and their families of earlier times. You'll take a ferry to get to the museum, which is a fully recreated fishing village, complete with original homes that were moved to the museum. Some were deconstructed and rebuilt on site, and others were transported whole, on boats and trucks. In the homes, you may even come upon a museum worker cooking some of the food they ate (sauerkraut and boiled potatoes) for you to taste. Try your hand at twisting your own rope before stopping by the windmill and fish smokehouse to sample some smoked herring. Then make your way to an original 17th-century apothecary and a recreated school house.



Vuurtoeneiland sits on a tiny island just off Durgerdam—enjoy pre-dinner snacks on the boat ride out, and then dine inside a greenhouse. *Courtesy Vuurtoeneiland*

Best restaurants in Landelijk Noord

There aren't too many dining options in this sleepy area, but with the arrival of De Durgerdam came the hotel's restaurant [De Mark](#), which was conceived in collaboration with Richard van Oostenbrugge and Thomas Groot of Amsterdam's two-Michelin-star Restaurant 212, instantly making De Mark a destination for city dwellers. The dinner menu serves modern comfort dishes made with locally-sourced ingredients. In spring, there's a delicate tomato tartare made with slowly dried tomatoes that recalls a beef tartare, white asparagus with tiny Dutch shrimps, and a dover sole stuffed with morels. Cocktails include a rhubarb mule and the bar's North Sea Spritz; all-day bar snacks satiate the appetite with a ricotta mushroom dip served with chicory and cheese from local farms.

In Holysloot, the adorable [Schoolhuis Café](#) is a popular refueling stop for cyclists from the city and elsewhere. It serves tea and coffee and excellent homemade cakes and pies—be sure to ask for the towering apple pie (Dutch people take their apple cakes and pies extremely seriously!). They also offer a lunch menu with sandwiches, salads, and toasts, plus cheese and charcuterie boards.

For a real adventure, book a table at [Vuurtoeneiland](#), a restaurant on a tiny island just off Durgerdam, with a lighthouse from 1893 (the only one in Amsterdam), a greenhouse, and a handful of storage sheds. Make your way out to the island via boat from the city center, where you'll be served pre-dinner drinks and snacks. By the time you arrive on the island, you'll be ready for the full meal, which is served inside the greenhouse, perched next to the water. If you're staying at De Durgerdam, you can likely arrange a private boat transfer to the hotel instead of taking the main boat back to the city center with the other dinner guests.