The name "Amsterdam" comes from the city's origins: it grew around a dam in the River Amstel during the twelfth century CE.

In the seventeenth century, tulips became a luxury item and status symbol. People even sold their houses in order to invest in them. Dutch tulip-growers still dominate the world tulip-bulb industry: they produce 4.32 billion tulip bulbs each year.

MANY OF THE BUILDINGS IN AMSTERDAM LEAN TO ONE SIDE, WHERE THE STRUCTURES HAVE SUNK INTO THE CITY'S MUDDY FOUNDATIONS.

In the cramped quarters of the canal ring, most of the seventeenth-century houses measure no more than 9 m wide.

AMSTERDAM IS THE CITY OF HOUSEBOATS, WITH OVER 2,500 ALONG ITS CANALS.

THERE IS ONE HOUSEBOAT, CALLED "DE POEZENBOOT", WHICH IS JUST FOR STRAY CATS.

UP TO 15,000 BICYCLE WRECKS ARE FISHED OUT OF THE CANALS PER YEAR.

* Amsterdam has a nickname – "Mokum", which means "place" or "safe haven" in Hebrew.

AMSTERDAM IS SOMETIMES CALLED THE "VENICE OF THE NORTH" AS IT HAS ALMOST AS MANY CANALS AS VENICE, AND MORE BRIDGES.

Diamond factories: 10+

Bicycles: 880,000+

Bridges: 1,281

Canals: 165

MOKUM*

AMSTERDAM

FROM 1585–1672, IN A TIME KNOWN AS THE "GOLDEN AGE", AMSTERDAM WAS AT THE CENTRE OF THE WORLD'S ECONOMY.

Amsterdam is the Netherlands' largest and most visited city, with over 8 million visitors per year.

POPULATION: 822,000

Amsterdam has more museums per square metre than any other city in the world.

The Rijksmuseum houses some of the greatest Dutch artworks, including Vermeer's "The Milkmaid" and Rembrandt's "The Night Watch".

Anne Frank was a teenage diarist who went into hiding from the Nazis. The Anne Frank House draws over a million visitors a year.

Amsterdam is known for its heavy-hitters of art history: Rembrandt, Vermeer and Van Gogh.

Perched on top of the steep hill of Montmartre, Basilique du Sacré-Coeur is the highest point in Paris at 130 m above sea level.

ONE OF THE MOST VISITED CITIES IN THE WORLD!

THE CITY OF LIGHT

PARIS

THE CAPITAL OF FRANCE

"FLUCTUAT NEC MERGITUR" (TOSSED BUT NOT SUNK)

PARIS'S OLDEST CAFÉ, CAFÉ PROCOPE, OPENED IN 1686.

THERE ARE 26 COUTURE HOUSES IN PARIS.

PARIS'S ONLY STOP SIGN DISAPPEARED IN 2016.

THERE IS A GRAND PRIX FOR PARIS'S BEST BAGUETTE.

THE EIFFEL TOWER

DOUBLE DECKER LIFTS CARRY VISITORS TO THE VIEWING PLATFORMS, 276 M ABOVE THE GROUND.

BUILT FOR THE EXPOSITION UNIVERSELLE OF 1889, THE EIFFEL TOWER WAS ONLY EVER MEANT TO BE TEMPORARY.

PARIS HAS MORE THAN 400 PARKS AND GARDENS ...

OVER 9,000 RESTAURANTS ...

37 BRIDGES ACROSS THE SEINE ...

AND AROUND 200,000 DOGS.

PARIS'S LOUVRE IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST MUSEUMS, WITH 8.8 MILLION VISITORS A YEAR.

OVER 800 YEARS OLD, THE WINDOWS OF NOTRE DAME CATHEDRAL CONTAIN 50,000 GLASS PIECES.

"THERE IS NO LIMIT TO PARIS" – VICTOR HUGO

Paris has been home to many famous artists, including Renoir, Rodin, Picasso, Monet and Manet.

The River Seine flows through Paris from the southeast to the southwest.

Paris was founded in the third century BCE by a Celtic people called the Parisii, who gave the city its name.

Paris is referred to as the "City of Light" after its famous Enlightenment thinkers, such as Voltaire and Rousseau.

Paris is home to world-famous fashion houses, including Chanel and Dior.

HOME OF HAUTE COUTURE

POPULATION: 2.2 MILLION