

LEARN TO CYCLE IN AMSTERDAM



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XING CHEN

XPAT Scriptum Publishers



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INTRODUCTION



Amsterdam, the 'bicycle capital' of the world

Amsterdam is one of the most bicycle-friendly cities in the world.^{1,2} There are approximately 847,000 bicycles for a population of 800,000 people³ – in other words, the city has more bicycles than people. Visitors quickly realise that it is cyclists, not car drivers, who rule the road, and pedestrians are cautioned to check for bicycles when crossing the street, or risk getting run over. Indeed, travelling by car can be onerous, particularly in the busy centre. Speed limits, narrow one-way streets, and the limited availability of parking spaces conspire to discourage people from driving, and short trips are often quicker by bicycle than by car.⁴

Much of the local population gets around by bicycle on a regular basis. 78% of Amsterdammers own a bike (many people own more than one)³; 57% of them use their bike everyday; and 43% ride their bike to work.⁵ An estimated 223 million journeys are made by bicycle in Amsterdam per year, which works out to an average of 613,000 journeys (or the equivalent of a distance of 2 million km) per day.⁵

The cycling infrastructure in the city is extensive, to say the least. Cyclists have access to dedicated cycle paths, and they are also allowed on roads



A typical, bustling intersection in the heart of Amsterdam