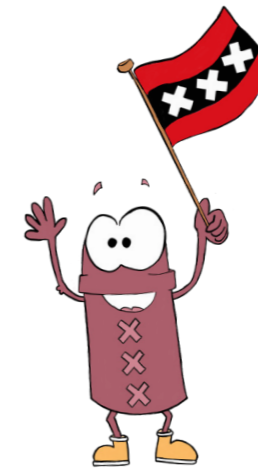


# THE AMSTERDAM BOOK



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# Amsterdam, largest city of the Netherlands

with over

## 900,000

inhabitants. A city where each year almost

## 10,000

**kids are being born.**

**That's roughly 25 new little Amsterdammers each day!**

Maybe you were born there.

Maybe you have lived there, or maybe you still do?

Maybe you have just visited Amsterdam (or your parents have)?

Maybe you are a fan (or your parents are)? That could very well be,

because Amsterdam has **A LOT OF FANS!**

Hence this book!



# THE AMSTERDAM BOOK

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## So, what's the plan?

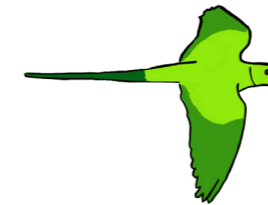
We're going to **discover Amsterdam**, that's the plan!

Discover Amsterdam **with a bird's eye view**.

Speaking of birds: do you know the **rose-ringed parakeet**?

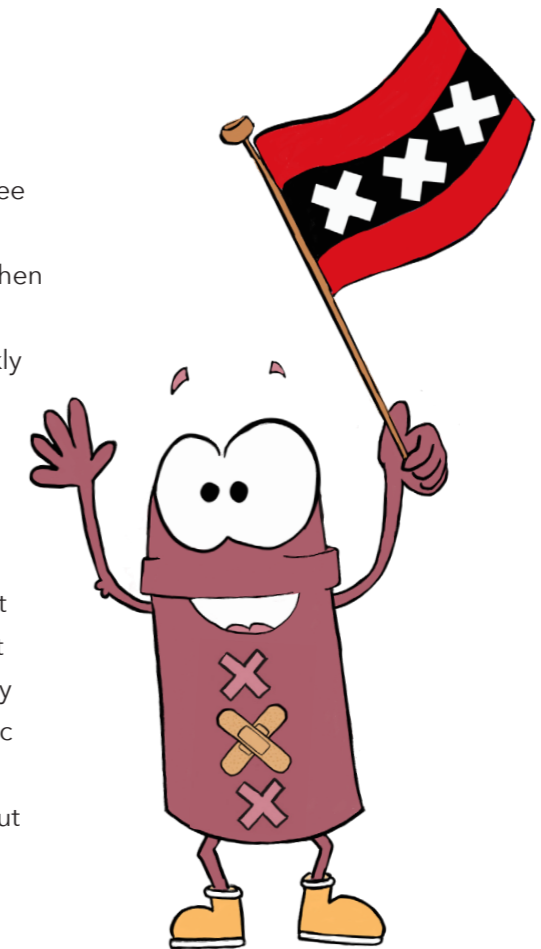
There are thousands of these green parrots in Amsterdam.

No one seems to know how exactly they ended up here, all the way from India or Africa. Not everyone appreciates their deafening screeching. But the parakeets – they are quite happy in Amsterdam. They are everywhere. Even in this book, you will come across them. So keep an eye out!



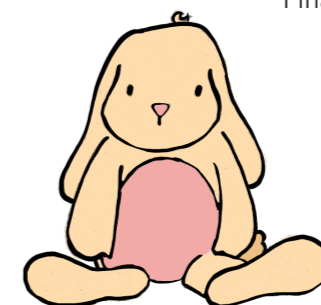
Because Amsterdam is so old (and you can certainly see that!), **we'll start with some time travelling**. We'll go back to the year 1275, through the Middle Ages and then to the important 17th and 19th centuries. We'll get to read about Amsterdam in World War II and then quickly move to our own time!

And of course, we won't do all of this on our own. We'll have our very own guide: this cheerful little **Amsterdammertje**. This post with the three crosses can be found all over Amsterdam. They make sure that pavements and some streets are off-limits to cars. That doesn't make them loved by everyone, but luckily, they can take a hit! Our Amsterdammertje is not just a traffic regulator but also a true expert of the city. He's the professor among the posts, packed with fun facts about Amsterdam.



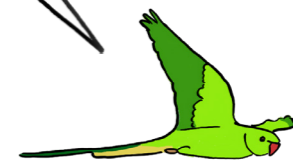
Finally, on almost every double page, you can spot this **cuddly little bunny**. Amsterdam is full of babies and toddlers, and as they travel around the city, they often lose their favourite stuffed animal. Sometimes much to the despair of their parents: these cuddly toys are important!

**Will you help find them?**



## Back in time

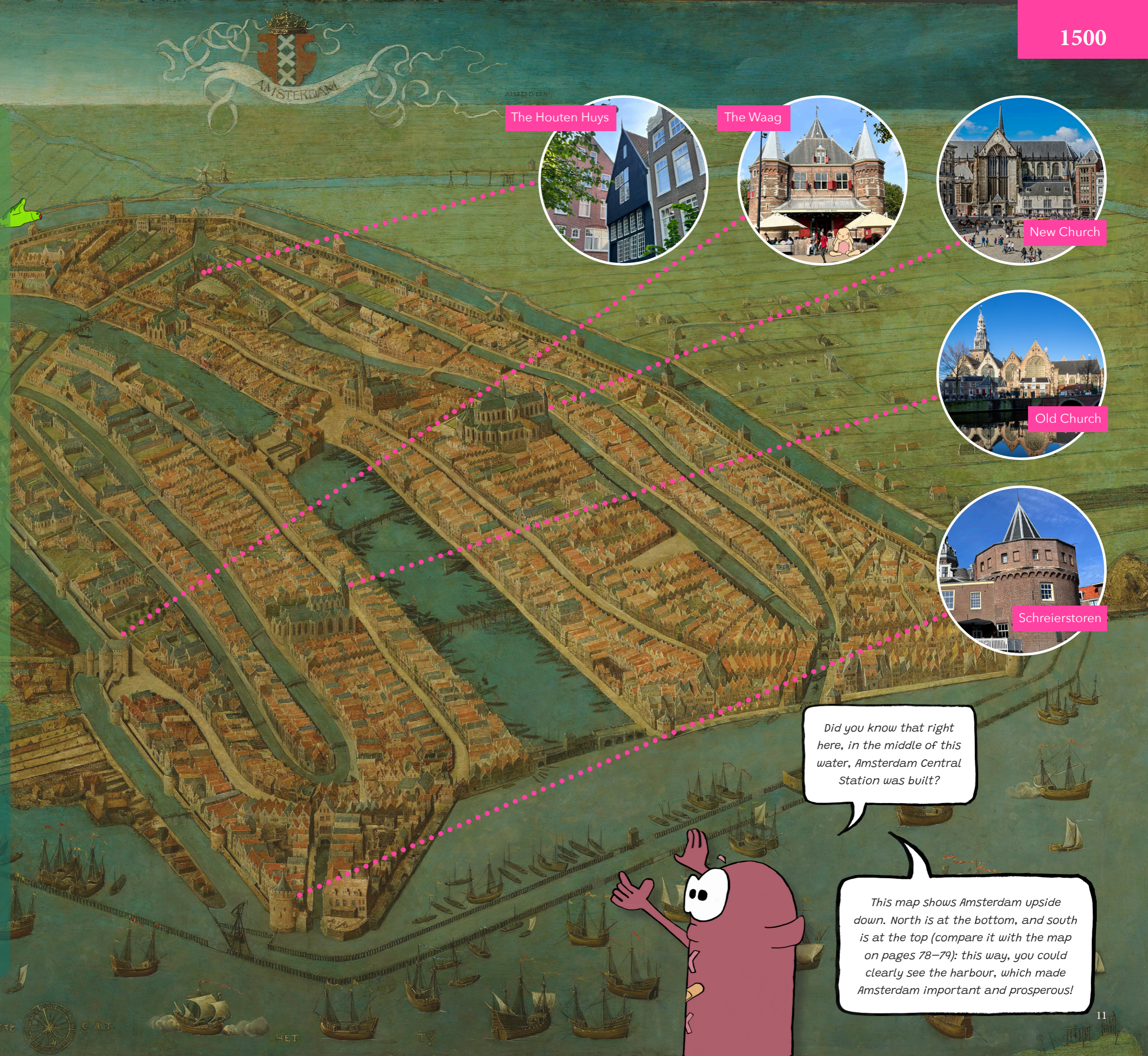
*Uh.. how far is the flight?  
Don't we have something  
like a time machine?*



Back to the year **1275**. Amsterdam originated as a small settlement near a **dam in the Amstel River**, which is how the city got its name. The fishing village had a very strategic location – next to another river, the IJ, and right in between the North Sea and the Zuiderzee (now: the IJsselmeer). Ideal for trade and easy to defend. Here, you can see the oldest map of Amsterdam, created by Cornelis Anthonisz in **1538**, roughly 500 years ago! Back then, airplanes didn't exist... so how could the painter imagine or know what Amsterdam looked like from above? What do you think? You can see this map in real life at the **Amsterdam Museum**. If you're interested in history, it's definitely worth a visit!

By the time this painting was made, Amsterdam was already over 250 years old and had grown into a real city surrounded by a large **city wall**. Can you spot the city wall in the painting? Construction of the wall began in 1481. Everyone had to contribute – either pay money or supply stones, help dig or help drive wooden poles into the ground. With all the surrounding water, the soil was marshy, so **Amsterdam had to be built on sturdy wooden poles** – concrete foundation didn't exist yet. The city wall was six meters tall and included several strong defence towers. One of them still exists today: it's called the **Schreierstoren**. The city wall had five gates. They were the only places to enter and exit the city. In the evenings, the gates were locked! Can you imagine? One of the gates still exists, now known as **the Waag**.

Most of the houses and buildings in this drawing no longer exist, almost 500 years later. **Two major fires**, in 1421 and 1452, destroyed most of Amsterdam, which was primarily built with wood at the time. After the second major fire, houses had to be made of stone. Only a few of the original wooden houses have survived – the most famous of them **the Houten Huys** at the Begijnhof. The oldest preserved building in Amsterdam is the **Oude Kerk (Old Church)**, dating back to 1306! When it became too small for the size of the congregation, a new church was built in 1408. That church also still exists today and – even after more than 600 years – we still call it the **Nieuwe Kerk (New Church)**!



The Houten Huys

The Waag

New Church

Old Church

Schreierstoren

Did you know that right here, in the middle of this water, Amsterdam Central Station was built?

This map shows Amsterdam upside down. North is at the bottom, and south is at the top (compare it with the map on pages 78–79): this way, you could clearly see the harbour, which made Amsterdam important and prosperous!

Welcome to Amsterdam! There's a good chance that a day in Amsterdam starts here: at **Central Station**. It's the largest of **ten train stations in Amsterdam**: every day, about **200,000 people** get on and off the trains here. From here, the high-speed trains to London and Paris depart, as well as trains to the rest of Europe. But you can also transfer to a bike, metro, tram or bus here, or take the free ferry across the IJ River. The station has no less than 15 platforms. Or does it? The table of three is missing... Where are platforms 3, 6, 9, and 12? Can you figure it out? The station was **built in 1881 on a specially created island** in the IJ River. It was meant to be the **new gateway to the city**, right where the important harbour had always been. The massive building was designed by famous architect Pierre Cuyper, who also designed the **Rijksmuseum** (page 40). Do you see any similarities?



*On both sides of the station, two gigantic bicycle parking facilities have been built underwater: they can hold up to 11,000 bicycles!*



*Did you know that the station has a Royal Waiting Room? There's even a parking spot for the Royal Golden Coach!*

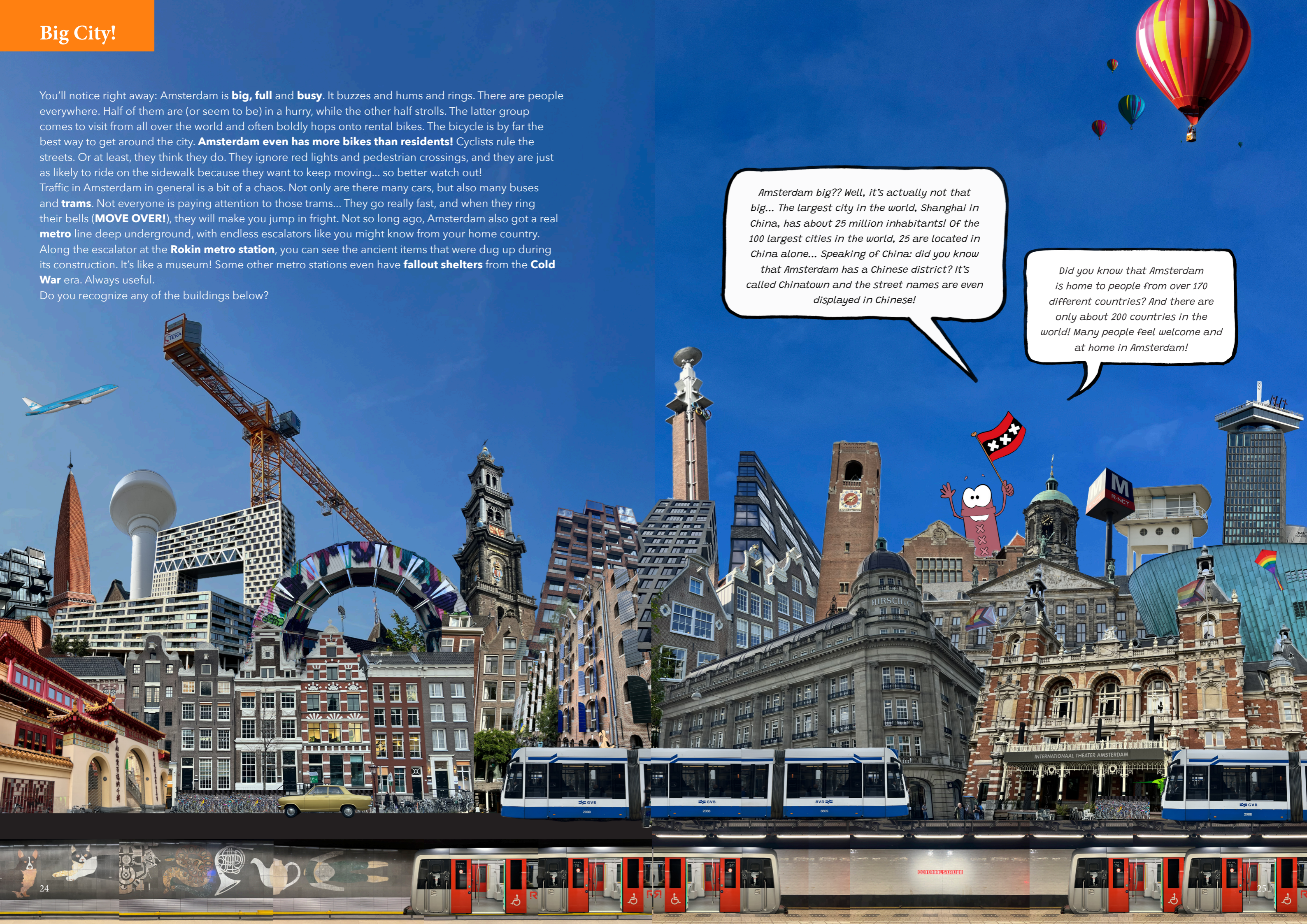


# Big City!

You'll notice right away: Amsterdam is **big, full** and **busy**. It buzzes and hums and rings. There are people everywhere. Half of them are (or seem to be) in a hurry, while the other half strolls. The latter group comes to visit from all over the world and often boldly hops onto rental bikes. The bicycle is by far the best way to get around the city. **Amsterdam even has more bikes than residents!** Cyclists rule the streets. Or at least, they think they do. They ignore red lights and pedestrian crossings, and they are just as likely to ride on the sidewalk because they want to keep moving... so better watch out! Traffic in Amsterdam in general is a bit of a chaos. Not only are there many cars, but also many buses and **trams**. Not everyone is paying attention to those trams... They go really fast, and when they ring their bells (**MOVE OVER!**), they will make you jump in fright. Not so long ago, Amsterdam also got a real **metro** line deep underground, with endless escalators like you might know from your home country. Along the escalator at the **Rokin metro station**, you can see the ancient items that were dug up during its construction. It's like a museum! Some other metro stations even have **fallout shelters** from the **Cold War** era. Always useful. Do you recognize any of the buildings below?

*Amsterdam big?? Well, it's actually not that big... The largest city in the world, Shanghai in China, has about 25 million inhabitants! Of the 100 largest cities in the world, 25 are located in China alone... Speaking of China: did you know that Amsterdam has a Chinese district? It's called Chinatown and the street names are even displayed in Chinese!*

*Did you know that Amsterdam is home to people from over 170 different countries? And there are only about 200 countries in the world! Many people feel welcome and at home in Amsterdam!*



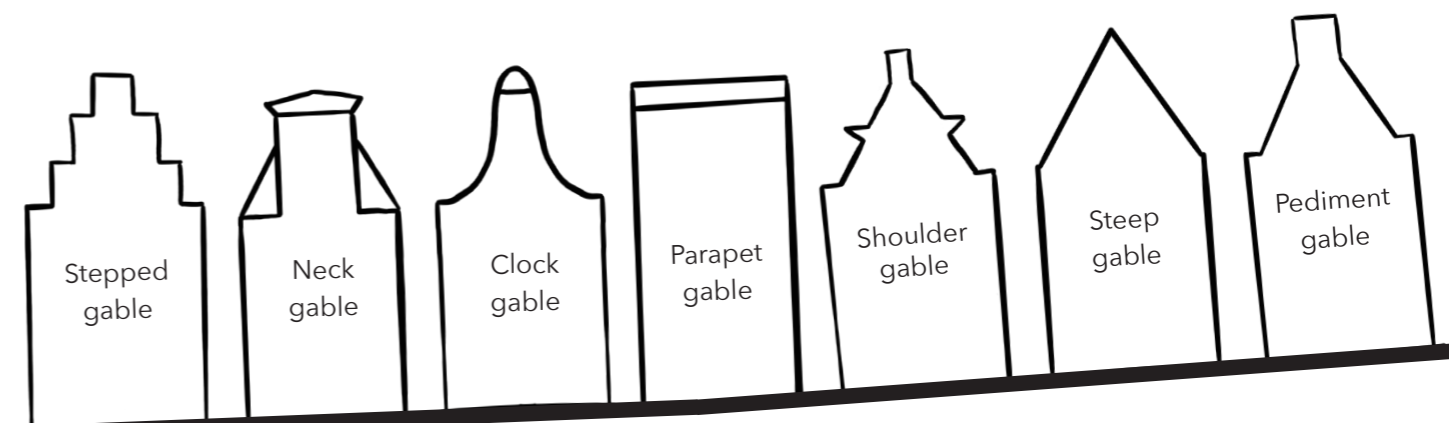


# World-famous water

The most famous water in Amsterdam: the **canal ring**. It's a **UNESCO World Heritage** site, just like the pyramids in Egypt, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, and the Statue of Liberty in New York. These are structures so special or unique that they must be **preserved and protected forever**. The canals were created in the 17th century, when the city needed to expand into marshy land. By building canals, the water could be drained away. The location by the water was very convenient, too, as **boats** were the **ideal mode of transport** - cars and trains didn't exist yet! The houses on the **Herengracht** were for the wealthiest people of that time. **Each house was unique**, to show off how rich the owner was! On the **Prinsengracht**, work was the main focus: it has many **warehouses**. The houses here are the narrowest. The **Keizersgracht** is in between. Can you recognize the different canals in the photos?



No house is the same, but you can see some similarities. Most of the old houses have a facade featuring one of these gables. Can you spot them in this book?



Did you know that about 20 bicycles are pulled up from the canals every day?

*YUCK...! In the past, poop and urine were simply thrown out the window into the canal! Toilets connected to a sewer system didn't exist yet. During hot summers, the water would smell so badly that the rich had houses built outside the city to escape the stench!*

