

## Holland for Tulips April 9-10

For several years, I had been saying that I would visit Holland when the tulips were in bloom and this year, I finally did. This was a quick trip, just one night from Paris. We didn't have time to do everything, but it was a great weekend and it did not feel too rushed. We were two people splitting the costs. It ran us about €300 each, including train, rental car, gas, Amsterdam parking, hotel and Keukenhof admission and parking, but excluding food.

Date	To	Flight/Hotel/Car Details	Cost	Comments
Sat, April 9	Delft, the Hague, Leiden  Night in Amsterdam	<p><i>Train</i> # 9313 Paris (Gare du Nord)-Brussels Midi 8h01-9h23</p> <p><i>Car</i>: Europcar, Rue Saint-Denis 281</p> <p><i>Hotel</i>: Vivaldi Hotel Stadhouderskade 76</p> <p>Dinner &amp; Drinks with A. in Amsterdam</p> <p>We were a bit ambitious thinking we would see Delft, the Hague and Leiden all before arriving in Amsterdam. We decided to just visit Leiden, a beautiful small city with canals and plenty of outdoor dining options.</p> <p>For lunch in Leiden, we found a restaurant with a terrace—a nice location; the food was fine but nothing special. Next time, I'd try Cafe Olivier, a large old school pub with a nice outdoor terrace in the courtyard (Hooigracht 23, Tel. 071 – 51 22 444, <a href="http://www.cafe-olivier.be/">www.cafe-olivier.be/</a> / <a href="http://www.etenbij.nl">www.etenbij.nl</a>).</p> <p>We met up with a friend who's living in Amsterdam and he took us to a fabulous Eritrean/Ethiopian restaurant on the Western edge of the Jordaan neighborhood. It's called Semhar and it's located at Marnixstraat 259-261, 1015 WH Amsterdam, Tel. 020 -0638 16 34, <a href="http://www.semhar.nl">www.semhar.nl</a>. Order one of the platters to share! We also ate at a couple of great restaurants the last time I was in Amsterdam—see the list below.</p>	<p><i>Train</i>: €141 round trip per person (paid)</p> <p><i>Car</i>: €93.75 total (not yet paid)</p> <p><i>Hotel</i>: €135.45/night total incl. 5% city tax (not yet paid)</p>	<p><b>Car</b> Brussels Centre - Forest (BRUS04) Serviced By Europcar Rue Saint-Denis 281 Bruxelles , 1190 Pick-up 9am/Drop-off 9:30pm This rental car agency was much cheaper than the Europcar in the train station, but it was about a 30 minute walk (or we could have taken the bus #50). We asked if we could drop the car off at the train station and surprisingly they said yes, with no extra fee. Note that we considered taking the train to Amsterdam, but it's much cheaper to take the train to Brussels, and unless you can get a direct train (you need to book way in advance), train to Brussels + car to Amsterdam is about the same amount of time. It's about a 2.5 hour drive from Brussels to Amsterdam.</p> <p><b>Vivaldi Hotel</b> Stadhouderskade 76 Amsterdam, 1072 AD Netherlands Phone +3120-5776300 Fax +31205776304 Email <a href="mailto:info@melodyhotels.nl">info@melodyhotels.nl</a> Booking number 828.787.733 PIN code 7432 GPS Latitude 52.3580, Longitude 4.8902 (N 052° 21.479, E 04° 53.414)</p> <p><b>Check-in between 2pm-6pm</b> (checkout 11am), breakfast included</p> <p>The Vivaldi hotel was very basic, more of a hostel than a hotel. But the location was good and it did save us some money. Whether the €60 savings over my last Amsterdam hotel (see below) were really worth it, probably not. Though we did not spend much time in the hotel so all in all, the Vivaldi worked for us.</p>
Sun, April 10	Visit Keukenhof, (Rotterdam & Antwerp if time allows)	<p><i>Train</i> Brussels Midi-Paris (Gare du Nord) 21h37-22h59</p> <p>Dinner &amp; Drinks in Brussels</p> <p>We were also a bit ambitious thinking we'd visit Rotterdam and Antwerp on the way back—staying out until 5:30am in Amsterdam may have had something to do with that! A relaxed morning in Amsterdam and afternoon in Keukenhof, then to Brussels in time for a quick dinner was enough for this Sunday!</p> <p>Note that there are no gas stations right near the train station, at least that are open on a Sunday evening, so leave a bit of extra time to refill the tank!</p>	<p><i>Keukenhof</i>: €35 total (paid)</p>	<p>Keukenhof: <a href="http://www.keukenhof.nl/">http://www.keukenhof.nl/</a></p> <p>Keukenhof could be a bit of a tourist trap—it's a bit pricey (€35 for 2 people + car) and quite crowded. But it is a beautiful park and the flowers were quite spectacular. I wouldn't go back, but I was glad to visit once. If I were back again during tulip season, I'd rent a bike and explore some more of the surrounding flower &amp; bulb fields.</p>

*More Amsterdam Restaurants*

- Tempo Doeloe (Indonesian) Utrechtsstraat 75: <http://www.tempodoeloerestaurant.nl/en1.htm>. Order the “rijsttafels”. See [Bruges & Amsterdam Itinerary](#).
- Lieve Belgian Restaurant (Belgian, smaller dishes) Herengracht 88: <http://www.restaurantlieve.nl/>. See [Bruges & Amsterdam Itinerary](#).

*More Amsterdam Hotels*

Ambassade Hotel—this is the hotel where I stayed the last time. It was pricey (€195), but central and friendly service and an excellent room. See [Bruges & Amsterdam Itinerary](#).

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't Hotel—I have not stayed at this hotel (it was already full when I tried to book), but I wanted to mention it because they were extremely helpful and friendly in responding with ideas for alternative accommodations.

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Pension De Laurier—Again, I have not stayed at this hotel (it was already full when I tried to book), but I wanted to mention it because they were extremely helpful and friendly in responding with ideas for alternative accommodations.

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<http://www.pensiondelaurier.nl>

Hotel Brouwer— <http://www.hotelbrouwer.nl/>. Singel 83, 011-31-20-624-6358. My mother stayed at this hotel a couple of years ago and highly recommended it as central, right on the canal, friendly, nice rooms and not too expensive (but it fills up fast!)