

FEBRUARY 2026 • SEOUL: AN EVER-CHANGING MASTERPIECE • VAN GOGH'S LETTERS REVEAL HIS DISCOVERY OF YELLOW • TALES OF TALLINN • CLASSY CHICAGO • YOUR FREE COPY TO TAKE HOME

HOLLAND HERALD

*From eye-catching buildings
to stunning surroundings:
Seoul needs to be seen to be believed*



Original

Ref. 20052BB-TRh

"For me, the beauty of our watches
is the result of well-balanced design in which no element dominates.
Precise manufacturing techniques are applied in combination
with the use of high-quality materials. Attention is devoted to every single detail.
Driven by perfection without compromise."

Wybe van der Gang

VAN DER GANG
W A T C H E S



Welcome

Marjan Rintel

INSPIRING TRAVEL FOR 60 YEARS



Cover Story

This is the facade of The Imprint, a building near Seoul's Incheon Airport that's part of an amusement and entertainment centre called Paradise City. The name perfectly describes the South Korean capital (p. 38): a paradise for those looking for eye-catching architecture (see more from around the world on p. 52), a creative culture, top-notch food and spectacular natural surroundings.

This edition marks the 60th anniversary of *Holland Herald*, the world's oldest still-published in-flight magazine. For 60 years, it has been a window to the world and a loyal travel companion. Every month, *Holland Herald* introduces millions of passengers to the most spectacular places and to inspiring people and stories as they travel to the 160-plus destinations in our network.

Whether it's promoting our beautiful home country, the Netherlands, or encouraging travel to faraway places, this magazine always aims for a surprising perspective that makes the world more beautiful and understandable. This approach seamlessly aligns with KLM's ambition: to connect people and cultures and to bridge distances – both physical and mental.

These destinations, however different, share one thing: they invite discovery, wonder and the creation of memorable travel experiences. And that's exactly what we at KLM, together with *Holland Herald*, want to continue offering you: the chance to see and experience the world in all its facets. As we do in this edition, where we show you must-see architectural highlights from around the world (p. 52).

“This magazine always aims for a perspective that makes the world more beautiful”

And just as blue is the colour of KLM, yellow proves essential in the works of our world-famous Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh (p. 26). The Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam is dedicating a special exhibition to this theme starting this month. *Yellow. Beyond Van Gogh's Colour* explores for the first time what the colour yellow meant to Van Gogh and the artists of his time.

Holland Herald may have been a constant presence on board our aircraft for all these years, but our range of destinations – and the KLM fleet itself – are constantly evolving. Each time, we take new steps to improve the travel experience and increase comfort for our passengers. With our new Airbus A321neos and the arrival of the Airbus A350s (planned for autumn 2026), we're also making our fleet quieter, cleaner and more fuel-efficient.

I hope your journey – both in the air and through the pages of this magazine – continues to be filled with inspiration and new insights that lead to beautiful stories and wonderful memories.

Welcome on board.

Marjan Rintel
KLM President & CEO



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February 2026

IN THIS ISSUE

8

Through Your Lens

The **Munich Opera House**
by Vicente García Mekis

13

The Selection

The latest & greatest
reasons to go exploring

- 14 - To See
- 16 - To Meet
- 17 - To Taste
- 18 - To Do
- 20 - To Wish For

22

Earth's Ambassador Freek Vonk

Dr Vonk talks about
his encounter with
a humpback whale

23

Bon Appétit

Go to **Restaurant Azurite**
in Delft for this surprising
interpretation of pea soup

24

Local Insider

Venue Manager at The
Joinery Chicago Shay Schultz
on **Chicago**

26

Game Changer

The letters **Vincent van Gogh**
wrote to his brother reveal
his discovery of yellow

36

24 Hours

Your day & evening guide to
the hottest places in **Tallinn**

38

Around The Globe

A romp through the high-tech,
ever-changing city of **Seoul**

48

Coffee Break

We interview innovative Dutch
fashion designer **Iris van Herpen**

52

Happy Places

Some of the world's most
spectacular **architecture**

60

On Your Radar

KLM & airline industry
information, personal
stories and entertainment

- 61 - KLM News
- 64 - Travel Well
- 66 - Fleet
- 68 - Travellers
- 71 - Flying Blue
- 72 - Now on Board
- 75 - SkyTeam
- 76 - House Rules
- 79 - Maps
- 86 - Amsterdam Map
- 88 - Airport Maps
- 89 - Out of The Blue

90

Your Next Destination

Building the case for a
journey to **Aruba**

Contributors

MEET THE TEAM



Malu de Bont

After a decade writing for Dutch business magazine *Quote* and the Dutch edition of *ELLE* magazine, Malu made her debut as an author with *Je verdiende loon* ('You earned your wages'), a non-fiction book critiquing the modern myth of a meritocracy. For this issue, she explored Vincent van Gogh's love of yellow (p. 26).

Malu's travel tip: "I've discovered the joy of using Google Maps before visiting a new city. I pin charming cafés, boutiques, museums and restaurants. Once you're there, you can stumble upon your own pins during unplanned strolls, or add new discoveries as you go."



Alexandra de Jong

Alexandra has been Content Director at *Holland Herald* for 10 years. As this month marks the magazine's 60th anniversary, she wrote an article about *Holland Herald's* history and philosophy (p. 64). "There's nothing more inspiring than discovering new places and getting to know other cultures. And that's why I love compiling *Holland Herald*. I hope it gives you lots of travel inspiration."

Alexandra's travel tip: "I fell in love with Hanoi, Vietnam. Order a chilled, salted coffee in the Old Quarter, and enjoy it just as the friendly locals do – on the little stools dotting the streets."



Gina Miroula

Gina is a journalist specialising in arts and culture. As a child, watching rehearsals from above the stage at a theatre in Amsterdam sparked her fascination with performance and storytelling. Gina writes for publications including Dutch newspaper *Het Parool*. She wrote *Happy Places* (p. 52).

Gina's travel tip: "I've been exploring the quieter corners of Indonesia, guided by my family history. Highlights include the Togian Islands and Banggai – the most serene place I've visited – with Paisu Pok, a sapphire-blue lake surrounded by jungle and limestone cliffs."

Colophon

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THROUGH *your lens*





Munich
Germany



A SEAT AT THE OPERA

ARCHITECT AND PHOTOGRAPHER
VICENTE GARCÍA MEKIS FELL IN LOVE
WITH THE PALACES OF MUNICH.



— Last May, I was able to join my husband on a business trip to Munich. It's

become a regular occurrence that I accompany him when he goes somewhere with his work. As an architect, I obviously have a passion for architecture and often fall in love with the places I visit. Cities are like people – they all have their own character and personality. And Munich is no exception. I loved the general vibe, the palaces, the history. While I was roaming the city, I spotted this lady sitting against one of the columns of the Munich Opera House, also known as the *Bayerische Staatsoper*. She was having a quiet moment to herself, completely in her own world. I'm not exactly sure why she caught my eye, as she wasn't doing anything out of the ordinary. But maybe that's why, as it felt like I was capturing a moment of contemplation. It was almost as if she owned the structure. The opera house wasn't the only building that took my fancy,

as Munich has so many beautiful historical buildings. My favourites were the Munich Residence and the Nymphenburg Palace. In my opinion, Germany has the best palaces in Europe. And I'm not just referring to the exteriors, which are often a thing of beauty; the insides, with their paintings and furnishings, are stunning too.

Your Photo

If you'd like to have your travel photo featured in this section, email an image (300dpi; landscape mode) to: hollandheraldhome@hearst.nl.

Monthly Prize

If we publish your travel photo, we'll send you a copy of Jimmy Nelson's latest book *Between the Sea and the Sky*, which is about traditional Dutch communities.

Some of the images are also available as fine art. jimmynelson.com/fine-art-intro





We co-own five unique holiday homes

WE SPOKE TO LENE ESPERSEN (FORMER MINISTER OF JUSTICE IN DENMARK) AND HER HUSBAND DANNY, WHO'VE BEEN WITH 21-5 SINCE 2013.



Lene & Danny, a 21-5 family

When did you join, and what made you choose 21-5?

We joined the first 21-5 group at the beginning of 2013, so we have been co-owners for over 12 years. At the time, we had been looking for a home of our own in Southern Europe for years, but we couldn't find anything suitable at a reasonable price. When we came across 21-5, we

could instantly see the advantages and eventually decided to join – a decision we have never regretted.

What do you like most about 21-5?

We love the concept of not having to think about all the practicalities and repairs that come with owning a property. When we are on holiday, we are on holiday! For a large family,



it's perfect to be able to choose between a skiing holiday, a city break, or simply relaxing in a warmer location. On top of that, we get to treat our family to great holidays. We often lend our homes to family members - we have enough weeks for everyone.

**What about planning your holidays?
Can you travel when you want to?**

We enjoy planning our holidays well in advance, but we also travel at short notice. If we want to book specific weeks during the school holidays, it's best to plan ahead, but we almost always get the weeks we want.

What has been your experience with the 21-5 team?

Without them, it simply would not work. They are always engaged and quick to respond. They have

a remarkable eye for design and combine this with very practical solutions. Put simply, our homes are great, and even after 12 years, they are still in very good condition. We recently updated our Paris apartment with a new kitchen and an extra bathroom.

Has 21-5 been a good investment for you?

We never joined 21-5 for the money; for us, it was about improving our quality of life. Joining 21-5 has certainly done that. The freedom we feel when we return to our beautiful five homes is a great privilege, and, as mentioned earlier, our homes also allow us to travel with grandparents, siblings and friends. On top of that, 21-5 has also proven to be a very good financial investment - our share has more than doubled since we joined!

FACTS ABOUT 21-5

- Since 2012, over 1,400 families have joined 21-5
- Over 300 homes have been purchased for our families
- Over €540 million has been invested through 21-5
- 21-5 is the world's leading model for families sharing homes in small groups
- The average resale profit is 50%



For more information:

+45 44450388
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www.21-5.com



FEMALE CANCER
FOUNDATION

“
QUALITY CARE FOR WOMEN
ISN'T OPTIONAL, IT IS ESSENTIAL
”

Cervical cancer is the second most occurring cancer for women under the age of 45. Nearly 94% of deaths occur in low- and middle income countries, caused by a lack of healthcare and screening programs. Yet, cervical cancer is easy to prevent with early diagnosis and timely treatment. Female Cancer Foundation provides care and education on the spot in hard to reach corners of the world. **Scan the QR code**, save a woman's life. With just 15 Euro you can save her and give her children a brighter future!



The SELECTION

Holland Herald presents a global selection of things to see, do, taste, meet & wish for.

Antwerp

MUST BE MAGRITTE

Belgian surrealist René Magritte believed that art should challenge reality by revealing the hidden strangeness within the familiar. In a lecture he held in 1938 at the Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp, he explained his fascination for reality versus imagination and his view on surrealism. The exhibition *Magritte. La Ligne de Vie* looks back on the artist's unique artworks and vision.

Until 22 Feb; kmska.be

TO *see*

Mexico City

FROM ASIA TO THE AMERICAS



Between 1565 and 1815, ships sailing between Acapulco and Manila brought Asia and the Americas together. Mexico City's Colegio de San Ildefonso, with the Asian Civilisations Museum and National Gallery Singapore, presents how the two continents influenced each other, via the exhibition *We Are Pacific*.

Until 31 May; sanildefonso.org.mx



Rotterdam

PHOTOGRAPHY'S BEST SIDE

THE NETHERLANDS FOTOMUSEUM IS REOPENING ITS DOORS AT A NEW LOCATION IN ROTTERDAM.

Located in the recently renovated Santos warehouse, a national monument on Rotterdam's Rijnhaven, the Nederlands Fotomuseum (National Museum of Photography) will hold two temporary exhibitions that together present the past, present and future of photography. Until 7 Jun; nederlandsfotomuseum.nl

London

NIGERIAN MODERNISM



Featuring over 250 works by more than 50 artists, the exhibition *Nigerian Modernism* at London's Tate Modern traces the evolution of artistic practice in Nigeria from the 1940s to the early 1990s. It highlights how Nigerian artists blended Western training with local traditions, reshaping global modernism through new forms, materials and identities. Many of the artworks reflect political change, independence and cultural renewal.

Until 10 May; tate.org.uk



Eye-catcher

Multi-functional design

For her OKO ceramics collection, Polish designer and illustrator Malwina Konopacka initially started with a series of vases, later adding tableware and other design objects. This ANIELA Circus Mini Incense Holder can function as an incense holder or a stand for jewellery or snacks. €90; malwinakonopacka.com

Many major museums in London, including Tate Modern and The National Gallery, offer **free admission** for their permanent exhibitions



Maastricht

WELCOME TO THE CIRCUS

Focusing strongly on female agency, using theatrical setups, humour and provocation, German photographer Ellen von Unwerth has worked for the world's biggest magazines and brands. The exhibition *My Circus* at Fotomuseum aan het Vrijthof in the Dutch city of Maastricht presents 160 photographs and two video works spanning her impressive career. Until 13 Sep; fotomuseumaanhetvrijthof.nl

TO meet

Bobsleigh originated in the 1870s in Switzerland, earning its name because racers would **bob back and forth to gain speed**

Q&A Loren Djolo

THE FORMULA 1 OF WINTER SPORTS

IN 2022, DUTCH ATHLETE LOREN DJOLO (22) SWITCHED FROM RUNNING TRACK TO BEING A BOBSLEIGH PILOT. SHE LOVES SHARING HER PASSION FOR THE OLYMPIC WINTER SPORT.

What role did sports play in your youth? A major one. I was a super-energetic child, always running around and dancing. I was also quite strong at a young age; people were often surprised when I would help my dad out by lifting heavy stuff around the house. When I watched the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio on television, I was mesmerised by the competing athletes and decided that I wanted to become one myself. I started running track and was soon scouted to run the 400m and later the 200m and 100m. I enjoyed it, but struggled with injuries a lot. As I was strong, my coach suggested shot put, which I tried for a while but wasn't passionate about. More or less by accident, I switched to bobsleigh in 2022, because my coach mentioned the opportunity of joining the bobsleigh team in Papendal, which is known as the Dutch Valhalla for Olympic sports. It sounded fun, so I was like: let's give it a go. And I fell in love with it.

What makes bobsleigh fun to do and interesting to watch? It's a super-dynamic sport; we reach speeds of up to 140km per hour and every track is different. As a pilot or driver, you steer the sleigh, while other team members (pushers and a brakeman) provide the initial sprint, and help stabilise it. In a monobob, you do everything by yourself, which is obviously even more challenging. It's a high-risk sport and a real adrenaline rush, both for the athletes and the audience. I like to call it the Formula 1 of winter sports.

What do you expect from this month's Winter Olympics in Milan? While, unfortunately, the Dutch

women's team didn't manage to qualify, I'll be rooting for the men's team and our skeleton bobsleigh racer Kimberley Bos. There's some tough competition; the German, British and Jamaican teams are all pretty good, so it'll be exciting to watch for sure.

Who are your sports heroes? I really admire American Elana Meyers Taylor, who'll be competing in this year's

Winter Olympics for the fifth time. She's America's most decorated athlete in the bobsleigh event, winning five Olympic medals and nine World Championship titles. She's 41 years old, and has become a real powerhouse since she started out in her mid-twenties, as well as having managed to maintain her career while starting a family. That's so inspiring to me.

@lorendjolo



TO *taste*



Amsterdam

ASIAN STYLE TEATIME

THE CLASSIC AFTERNOON TEA WITH SAVOURY AND SWEET BITES MIGHT BE A BRITISH INVENTION, BUT MOMO AMSTERDAM IS GIVING IT AN ASIAN TWIST.

If you think an afternoon tea can only consist of finger sandwiches, scones, cream cakes and a blend of Earl Grey tea, think again. At MOMO Amsterdam, a high-end Asian fusion restaurant, the tradition is reimagined with its MOMO Cha, an afternoon tea with an Asian twist. The fixed menu, which is also available in a vegan version, starts with a course of savoury dishes, followed by a course of sweet treats. Think Lemon Grass Chicken Skewer, Raspberry & Yuzu Swiss Roll and many other exciting dishes, all served in traditional bamboo baskets and served with matching Chinese and Japanese tea blends. Note: it's only available at the weekends. momo-amsterdam.com

A highball is a simple cocktail served in a tall glass, containing one spirit and one non-alcoholic, carbonated mixer

Ceramics

SERAX X SHURLEEY

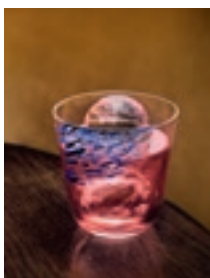
Inspired by the holidays she spent in the Peruvian village of Santiago de Borja, located on a tributary of the Amazon River, Belgian-Peruvian designer Shirley Villavicencio Pizango (aka the artist Shurleey) has created a collection of hand-painted vases and carafes in collaboration with Belgian design brand Serax. serax.com



Cocktail bars

AWARD-WINNING DRINKS

EACH YEAR, THE WORLD'S 50 BEST BARS ARE REVEALED IN A LIST. HERE ARE THREE THAT MADE THE LATEST SELECTION.



Scarfes Bar London

If 007 would have a favourite hang-out, Scarfes Bar might be a serious contender. This sophisticated gentlemen's club-style bar in London's Holborn mixes cocktails with live music. scarfesbar.com



Mirror Bar Bratislava

Slovakian cocktail culture might not be that well known, but Bratislava's Mirror Bar is certainly putting it on the map. The interior of real trees and plants is as impressive as its cocktails. mirrorbarcarlton.com



Bar Benfiddich Tokyo

Number 18 on the list is hidden in Tokyo's Shinjuku district and is a must-visit if you're looking for inventive, farm-driven cocktails. Owner and mixologist Hiroyasu Kayama constantly comes up with new creations. benfiddich.tokyo

TO *do*



Copenhagen

SOFT ROBOTS

Can robots have a soul? What is the future of humans in a world where developments in AI are moving faster than the speed of light? These and other complex questions are addressed in the exhibition *Soft Robots* at Denmark's Copenhagen Contemporary. Through their works, 15 artists and artist duos examine the enmeshment of humans and robots. Until 19 Apr; copenhagencontemporary.org

The sport of **Ski Mountaineering (Skimo)** is making its debut at the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics

Winter experiences

WINTER WONDERLAND

THESE WINTER DESTINATIONS IN EUROPE OFFER UNIQUE EXPERIENCES IN THE COLD.

Horseback riding in Lapland

Explore Lapland's stunning wilderness on the back of an Icelandic horse in Finland's Äkäslompolo, through snowy forest by day and beneath the Northern Lights at night. Lapin Vaellushevost offers sustainable and small-scale treks. laplandhorsetrekking.com

Waterside wanders in Ireland

From the expansive beaches of Connemara to the foaming waves of County Clare and the stunning lakes of Killarney National Park: Ireland's iconic Wild Atlantic Way might well be at its prettiest in winter. wildatlanticway.com

Cross-country skiing in Sweden

With up to 130km of trails, Orsa Grönklitt is Sweden's best cross-country skiing destination. There are trails and classes for all levels of expertise. Fun fact for dog owners: your furry friend can join you on some trails. orsagronklitt.se



Snow goggles

CLEAR MOUNTAIN VIEW

Thanks to their conical design that pulls the lens closer to the face, the latest Flow Scape snow goggles by Oakley deliver a 60% wider field of view than previous designs. Their Vision Rapt Face Foam is engineered with 3D-moulded precision to enhance comfort and fit. Team Oakley athlete Mikaela Shiffrin has her own colourways. €375; oakley.com



Omega x Swatch

Time on the moon

How much the moon phases influence our wellbeing is debatable, but Omega x Swatch's Mission to Earthphase Moonshine does look good on your wrist. €385; swatch.com

Biddinghuizen

ICE COLD ART

Marvel at more than 100 ice and snow sculptures, created by the world's best 'ice artists', at the Dutch Ice Sculpture Festival in Biddinghuizen. Some iceworks are more than six metres in height. Until 8 Mar; ijsbeelden.nl



TO wish for



Tableware

TRIPPY FEAST

What would a dinner table look like if it could represent the effects of an extravagant feast? The Classics on Acid collection, a collaboration between Italian design brands Seletti and Diesel Living, revisits classical porcelain decoration through an 'after party' lens, with twisted cutlery and candleholders, and bent porcelain cups and plates. seletti.it

In the 17th century, the Dutch city of Delft became the world's centre of the **tin-glazed earthenware tile industry**

Sneakers

FROM THE COURT TO THE STREET

Founded in 1966 by Swiss brothers Art and Ernie Brunner, sportswear brand K-Swiss is responsible for creating the world's first all-leather tennis shoe. The brand's Vintage Trainer T became a favourite among long-distance runners in the 1970s, and the model is now available in an updated version as an everyday shoe in a selection of striking colourways. €90; kswiss.com



Bags

SCALE THE STYLE LADDER

With hundreds of possible combinations of straps, colours and designs, Dutch bag and accessories brand Topologie is inspired by rock climbing culture. Taking the aesthetics of functional objects, the brand creates everyday accessories for your city adventures. eu.topologie.com

Gift ideas

MEMORIES ON A TILE



DUTCH BRAND STORY TILES TURNS CLASSIC DUTCH TILES INTO AN ORIGINAL, MODERN-DAY GIFT FOR EVERY OCCASION.

While studying art and often working with collages and ceramics, Marga van Oers came up with the idea of creating a modern version of classic Dutch tiles. With her brand, Story Tiles, she now

sells handmade ceramic tiles in a broad range of designs and themes. Customers can also create personalised tiles with their own text, colours and details. storytiles.com

Column

Freek Vonk

A CALL FROM THE DEEP

FREEK, A DUTCH BIOLOGIST WHO STUDIES AND FILMS UNIQUE ANIMALS WORLDWIDE TO INSPIRE A LOVE FOR NATURE, TALKS ABOUT HIS ENCOUNTER WITH A WHALE.

“His breath smells like a bucket of fish scraps”



We're in a small boat off the coast of Hervey Bay in Australia, searching for a sign of the animal we've come here to find. I dip my head underwater. At first, I hear nothing, just the soft tapping of small ripples against the hull. But then, far away, it begins: a soft hum that slowly turns into music.

At first, a low rumble, round and deep, rolls through the water. It's followed by playful motifs: tiny vibrations, sighing tones. And then the singer takes off. A long, beautiful note seems to turn the ocean into a resonating chamber, each wave an amplifier. The melody rises, bends left, sinks down, like a maestro sweeping through the depths with grand, fluid gestures. And just when I think the song has reached its peak, it suddenly leaps upward. Everything flows seamlessly together like a living ocean symphony. And the virtuoso creating it? A male humpback whale. While all humpbacks can make sounds, it's the males who sing, who add new chapters to their repertoire in a musical competition that has lasted for millions of years.

As my head is still underwater, I suddenly feel a vibration, an ancient power resonating through my chest. I shoot upright. Right beside the boat, the humpback bursts through the surface and sprays a cloud of warm, moist air into the sky. His breath smells like a bucket of fish scraps that's been left in the sun for three days. The whale

looks at us for a moment, then slips back into the deep. He's gone, but his music lingers.

Thanks to recent research, we now know that whale song is far more than romance. Scientists have discovered that whales also sing when they've eaten well. In fact, the more food there is, the more they sing. So they don't just sing to attract mates, but also because life is good. And maybe – and this is my favourite idea – humpbacks sing because they're happy. How beautiful is that? There's so much hidden in the deep.

Our planet is home to more than eight million species, yet we only truly understand the language of just one: our own. Ever since I was a child, I've dreamt of understanding what animals are saying. Organisations such as the Earth Species Project suggest that this may soon be possible. With groundbreaking AI and advanced language models, scientists are building something that comes close to Google Translate for animal communication. By listening more deeply, we can start a conversation with the rest of nature.

But nature has been speaking since well before the human era began. So, perhaps the real question isn't whether we will ever crack their code, but whether we're ready to hear what they've been saying for ages. I suspect that their message might be a call to reverse our course and return to the natural world, where we too might sing with joy.

EAT *out*



Delft
The Netherlands



STEPPING IT UP

Restaurant Azurite is all about Dutch heritage. Not only is it in House of Delft, a modern building that incorporates stepped-gable forms, but its name is a nod to the blue colour of traditional Delft Blue ceramics. In addition, Azurite's dishes are served on specially designed Delft Blue tableware. Founder and chef Mario Ridder takes inspiration from classic Dutch cuisine. A prime example is this modern interpretation of *snert* (pea soup), consisting of slow-cooked pork belly, celeriac cream, peas and lemon zest. restaurantazurite.nl

My

US



CHICAGO

AMERICAN SHAY SCHULTZ IS THE VENUE MANAGER AT THE JOINERY CHICAGO, A LOGAN SQUARE WEDDING AND EVENTS VENUE. SHE LOVES TO EXPLORE THE CITY, FINDING THE COSIEST COCKTAIL BARS OR THE BEST NEW RESTAURANTS. @THEJOINERYCHICAGO



What do you love about Chicago? From its iconic skyline ❶ and vibrant food scene to the diversity of its people and rich history, I take a lot of pride in my city. I also love how walkable Chicago is. Within two blocks of my place, I have lots of coffee shops, a tattoo parlour, supermarkets and a late-night blues lounge, not to mention some multi-award-winning bars and restaurants. And the best part is that most of Chicago's neighbourhoods are like this.

What are the must-sees/dos? I suggest going on an architecture river cruise ❷ to marvel at the city's many majestic buildings and hear the amazing stories about their construction. A lot of the downtown buildings such as The Rookery ❸ (209 S LaSalle St) and The Railway Exchange Building (224 S Michigan Ave), have pretty lobbies, so I also suggest seeing them on foot too. Another must-do is a stroll along the Chicago Riverwalk pedestrian path

for the best downtown views. And you can't visit Chicago without seeing some live music at Kingston Mines (2548 N Halsted St) or the Green Mill (4802 N Broadway Ave).

What are the hottest neighbourhoods? Fulton Market District is where the new restaurants, cocktail bars, late-night clubs and cool shops are centred. Bucktown is more relaxed with lots of cosy dining spots, where you'll have one of the best meals of your life. The adjacent Logan Square and Avondale are some of the coolest neighbourhoods in the country. You'll get a good mix of old and new Chicago there.

Where should we eat? Lula Cafe ❹ (2537 N Kedzie Blvd) in Logan Square is a James Beard Award-winner and has been a neighbourhood staple since 1999. Expect creative, locally inspired dishes in a cosy setting. Quartino (626 N State St) in River North is a lively, spacious place, perfect for

groups. For breakfast, Kasama (1001 N Winchester Ave) is a great spot for speciality coffees and tasty pastries.

Which nature spots do you recommend? Chicago has 45km of lakefront dedicated to public parks. Beaches, greenways and trails all run along Lake Michigan's shoreline ❺. The 4.3km 606 trail, for example, runs through several areas and is built on an old railway line.

Any cultural venues worth visiting? The Art Institute of Chicago (111 S Michigan Ave), where you can see Grant Wood's famous *American Gothic* painting, and the Frederick C. Robie House (5757 S Woodlawn Ave) by legendary architect Frank Lloyd Wright. It's the ultimate expression of his famous Prairie style and guided tours are available.

How do we get around? Take the 'L' train for its ease and some of the best views of the city. We also have city

bikes and scooters, but this is a pedestrian-friendly city, so I suggest walking.

Which hotels do you recommend? The Hoxton ❻ (200 N Green St) has a nice boutique vibe, and its Lazy Bird cocktail bar is popular with locals. The Robey (2018 W North Ave) is a stylish hotel that has a great rooftop with 360-degree views of the city. Palmer House (17 E Monroe St), located inside a historical Art Deco-style building, has painted ceilings, chandeliers and richly decorated rooms that will take you back in time.

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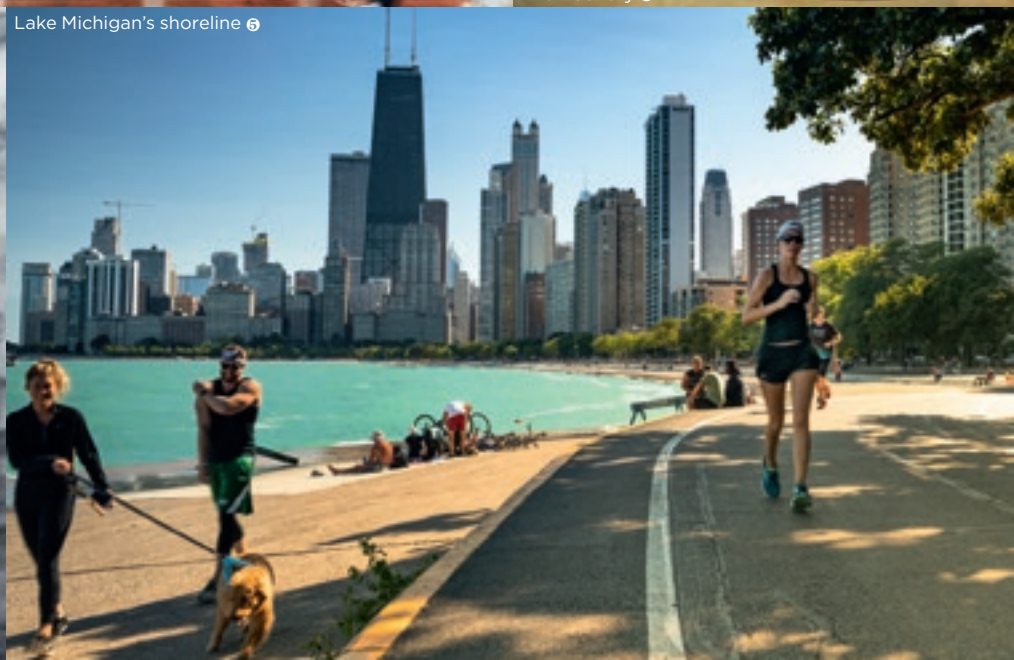
*Go on a river cruise
to marvel at the city's
majestic buildings*

Downtown buildings ❶ Chicago River ❷

The Hoxton ❸

The Rookery ❹

Lula Cafe ❺ Lake Michigan's shoreline ❻



Vincent van Gogh

A STROKE OF YELLOW

Few artists have captured the beauty of light and emotion as vividly as Vincent van Gogh. Among all the shades that fill his canvases, one stands out as his signature: yellow, the colour of hope, warmth and the southern sun he loved.

Text **Malu de Bont**



His skies are yellow. His fields are yellow. In one of his most famous works, *Self-Portrait as a Painter* (1887–1888), even his eyebrows are yellow. To Dutch Post-Impressionist painter Vincent van Gogh, colour wasn't a reflection of the world, but of feeling. "He compared colours to musical tones," explains Edwin Becker, Head of Exhibitions at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. "He saw them as abstract, expressive forces – just like music – that transcend reality." That belief runs like a thread through his lifelong correspondence with his brother Theo, his most important anchor, mentor and mirror. In one 1885 letter, Van Gogh confessed: "A painter does well if he starts from the colours on his palette instead of the colours in nature." Through these letters to his brother Theo (quoted here in translation and sometimes lightly paraphrased for readability), we see not only his artistic struggle, but also how yellow gradually became his colour of warmth, clarity and faith in life.

*"I spent six hours
in a mine"*

April 1879

Van Gogh was a late bloomer. At 25, he had already tried to be an art dealer, a schoolmaster and a bookseller, but none of these paths felt like his calling. During these restless early years, Van Gogh grew increasingly religious, leading to a rare moment of decisiveness: in 1878, he chose to serve God. He moved to Belgium, settling in a coal-mining region as a lay preacher, determined to bring a touch of holiness to the harsh reality of the miners. Van Gogh immersed himself in their world. "I spent six hours in a mine," he wrote. "It's a sombre place ... it has something dismal and deathly about it." Van Gogh already felt the urge to capture what he saw. "Later, I'll try and make a sketch of it to give you an idea of it," he added. The world he inhabited was mostly black and grey, and so were his first drawings. It was a colourless chapter in his life, both literally and figuratively. When, after a year and a half, his contract as a preacher wasn't renewed, it was Theo who offered a crucial suggestion: Why not become a painter? And so began a life in which colour could at last creep in.

*"What a great thing tone
and colour are!"*

23 December 1881

After some detours, Van Gogh ended up in The Hague, where his cousin-in-law, painter Anton Mauve, began teaching him the basics. Just days after arriving, Van Gogh wrote: "Theo, what a great thing tone and colour are! And anyone who doesn't acquire a feeling for it, how far removed from life he will remain!" Yet, for the next few years, he used hardly any colour at all. Van Gogh was patient and disciplined. He focused on sketching figures and landscapes in pencil, determined that, "One day," he would "be able to actually draw what I wish to express." His patience paid off. In 1882, through an uncle who was a gallerist, Van Gogh received his first art commission: a townscape of The Hague.

*"Living right in the midst of
what one is painting"*

4 April 1884

Gradually, colour began to enter Van Gogh's work, but his palette remained dark, subdued and moody. So were his days. In the winter of 1883, he moved back in with his parents in rural Nuenen. The landscape around him was cloudy and cold, and the household equally so as his and his father's views on life often clashed. "In my view, Pa eternally descends into petty-mindedness instead of being more open, more liberal, broader, more humane," he wrote. Still, there was one bright spot: he was fascinated by the local peasants and their honest work. Whenever he could, Van Gogh escaped the house to paint them. In April 1885, in his first letter after their father's sudden death, he told Theo: "I don't see any advantage myself in moving ... I'm definitely convinced that a painter of peasant life can do no better than ... living right in the midst of what one is painting." Unknowingly, all this patient observation led to one of Van Gogh's most famous works: *The Potato Eaters* (1885). "Van Gogh was an autodidact without much formal training," says Becker. "His fellow painter Anthon van Rappard actually heavily criticised his non-academic approach and his off dimensions." »

Previous pages

Sunflowers,
Arles, January
1889

Right page

*The Yellow
House (The
Street)*, Arles,
September 1888
(top); *Self-
Portrait as a
Painter*, Paris,
December
1887–February
1888 (bottom
left); *Irises*,
Saint-Rémy-
de-Provence,
May 1890
(bottom right)





Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation)

Above Wheatfield with Crows, Auvers-sur-Oise, July 1890



“
TO VAN GOGH, COLOUR
WASN'T A REFLECTION OF THE
WORLD, BUT OF FEELING
”



Still, Van Gogh was deeply proud of it. “One would be wrong, to my mind, to give a peasant painting a certain conventional smoothness,” he wrote, defending his decision to portray them with, “the most delicate nuances from weather, wind and sun.” Little did he know that he would soon be swept away by the luminous colours of the Impressionists themselves.

“It seems to me almost impossible to work in Paris”

21 February 1888

At 33, Van Gogh moved to Paris to join Theo in the artistic capital of Europe. “It had an enormous impact on Van Gogh’s use of colour,” says Becker. “Upon arriving, he immediately visited the Louvre to look at a ceiling painting by Eugène Delacroix; its contrasting colours inspired Van Gogh immensely. In Paris, he also discovered the lighter brushstrokes and more colourful tonalities of the Impressionists, and the technique of the Pointillists let him deconstruct and fully understand colour.” Short on money for models, Van Gogh began painting himself with the help of a mirror. He produced more than 20 self-portraits during his Paris years, each revealing his rapid artistic evolution. In the first, his palette was still dark; in the last, he embraced bright hues. That final self-portrait also hinted at his next move. It shows a weary, almost detached painter. “It seems to me almost impossible to work in Paris, unless you have a refuge in which to recover and regain your peace of mind and self-composure,” he wrote, shortly after arriving in Arles: the southern village where his love of colour (especially yellow) would reach its peak.

“I’m always wishing that the day will come when you’ll see and feel the sun of the south”

12 August 1888

“How beautiful yellow is!” he wrote, referring to the summer heat. “I’m always wishing that the day will come when you’ll see and feel the sun of the south.” The dazzling landscapes of Arles inspired him immensely, resulting in his famous

Sunflowers paintings (1888–1889). “In these paintings, he mostly only uses different shades of yellow; a radical and bold move for that time,” says Becker. Yet even amid this radiance, Van Gogh struggled with his mental health. “On my own, I suffer a bit from this isolation,” he admitted. His dream? To start an artist’s enclave. His yellow stucco house, nicknamed the ‘Yellow House’, had enough space for a companion, and soon he invited fellow painter Paul Gauguin to join him. Their months together were charged, inspiring yet volatile. In *Van Gogh’s Chair* (1888) and *Gauguin’s Chair* (1888), he used colour not as fact but as emotion and spirit. Gauguin’s chair is painted in dark, sombre tones; his own glows with light – and, of course, yellow – revealing the men’s contrasting temperaments. The differences soon erupted. That winter, a violent quarrel ended with Van Gogh threatening Gauguin with a razor blade. Gauguin fled. In a state of breakdown, Van Gogh famously cut off his own ear, leaving him hospitalised. Though he wasn’t ashamed to paint *Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear* (1889), showing his injury, he never discussed the fight’s cause in his letters.

“My mind feels absolutely serene and the brushstrokes come to me and follow each other very logically”

13 May 1890

His ear would heal, but his mind would not. In May 1889, Van Gogh voluntarily entered Saint-Paul de Mausole asylum in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, where he would spend a year. Remarkably, he was extraordinarily productive, painting more than 150 works, many among his most famous. His use of colour reached a new intensity, as seen in *The Starry Night* (1889), depicting the view from his room. “I haven’t yet gone outside,” Van Gogh wrote to Theo upon arriving at the asylum. “However, the landscape of Saint-Rémy is very beautiful, and little by little I’m probably going to make trips into it.” So, he did. He painted *Irises* (1890), bursting with vibrant hues and striking contrasts, a reflection of both his charged state of mind and his full command of colour. When Theo named his newborn son after him, Van Gogh painted *Almond Blossom* (1890) as a gift, a symbol of new life and »

Left Page

Wheatfield with a Reaper, Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, September 1889 (top); *Van Gogh’s Chair*, Arles, December 1888 (bottom left); *Gauguin’s Chair*, Arles, November 1888 (bottom right)



hope in one of his most difficult chapters. In one of his last letters from Saint-Rémy, before leaving in May 1890, he wrote: “I feel calm enough, and I don’t think that a mental upset could easily happen to me in the state I’m in.”

*“I’d really like to write to you
about many things, but
I sense the pointlessness of it”*

23 July 1890

It would not be the case. Van Gogh spent his final months in Auvers-sur-Oise, a village near Paris. At first, there was hope. He found companionship in the art-loving doctor Paul Gachet, who encouraged him to keep painting. But the old anxieties soon returned; above all, money. He had hoped, by now, to manage on his own. But when Theo, his lifelong supporter, announced plans to start his own business, Van Gogh feared that financial help would cease. “You see, I usually try to be quite good-humoured, but my life, too, is attacked at the very root,” he wrote after a painful visit to his brother. Still, he painted. About *Wheatfield with Crows* (1890) – one of his last and most haunting works – he wrote that he wanted it to express, “Sadness, extreme loneliness,” showing that yellow could convey both joy and despair, depending on what it was set against. On 27 July 1890, he chose to end his life surrounded by yellow: he walked into a wheatfield and shot himself, dying of his wounds two days later in his room. Four days earlier, he had written: “I’d really like to write to you about many things, but I sense the pointlessness of it.”

While Van Gogh is long gone, his legacy lives on in the form of an influence that began not long after his death, and can be seen in works by others who were touched by his unique style and, of course, use of yellow. *The Yellow Hill* (1903) by Cuno Amiet is one such example. Amiet was a pioneer of Swiss Modernism who, as Van Gogh encouraged, emphasised colour over realism. It was a trailblazing theory that would in turn inspire Piet Mondrian, the pioneer of abstract art and one of the 20th century’s greatest artists. As so, that first stroke of yellow, a colour borne of one man’s palette, a colour once associated with dark themes, became a beacon for the art world. «

In Van Gogh’s footsteps

The Van Gogh Museum

You’ll find the world’s largest collection of Van Gogh’s paintings and letters here, and it’s one of the best places to experience his evolution. The permanent collection shifts with the seasons, so even returning visitors will discover something new. In *Yellow*. *Beyond Van Gogh’s Favourite Colour* (13 February until 17 May), you’ll learn how this hue came to symbolise hope, warmth and light for Van Gogh. vangoghmuseum.nl

The Van Gogh House

Go back to the painter’s roots and visit the Van Gogh House, where he lived as a lay preacher among the coal miners. The poverty he saw there left a deep impression on him. Step inside to see that he lived humbly, with a small window and a simple wooden table. musees-expos.mons.be

Espace Van Gogh

In Arles, Van Gogh found his southern light. From the Café du Forum to the site of the Yellow House, the city still bears

traces of his most productive years, At Espace Van Gogh, the former hospital where he recovered after his crisis, the yellow irises still bloom in the courtyard. It’s a quiet place that makes tangible how fragile and hopeful his time here was. arles-guide.com

Saint-Paul de Mausole

You can visit Van Gogh’s room at this psychiatric hospital (a former monastery) where he admitted himself in 1889. The view remains almost identical to that in *The Starry Night* (1889): cypresses, rolling hills, and the restless sky above. In the garden – with its olive trees, lavender and sunflowers – it’s easy to see how some of his most luminous works came to life. saintpauldemausole.fr

Auvers-sur-Oise

Van Gogh spent his final 70 days here. A short walk through the village reveals his presence everywhere: Dr. Gachet’s house, the undulating wheatfields, the Gothic church he painted. In the cemetery, Van Gogh and Theo lie side by side, covered in ivy. It’s a deeply moving place.

Left page
The Yellow Hill,
Cuno Amiet, 1903

TALLINN *by day*

Estonia



FROM COBBLESTONED MEDIEVAL STREETS AND HISTORIC BUILDINGS TO INDUSTRIAL WAREHOUSES TURNED INTO BUZZING CREATIVE SPACES: THE CAPITAL OF ESTONIA HAS THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS.



PoCo ④



Town Hall Square ①



NOP ③



RØST ②

How to get around

Pack your comfortable shoes as Tallinn is a walkable city, especially the Old Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the best-preserved historic centres in Northern Europe. Tired feet? Tallinn has a great public transport network. With a Tallinn Card, visitors get unlimited use of buses, trams and trolleybuses for their chosen time period, along with benefits including free admission to museums.

Go exploring

Start at Town Hall Square ①, then head to Toompea Hill to see the striking Alexander Nevsky Cathedral (Lossi plats 10) and Toompea Castle (Lossi plats 1a), or wander the narrow medieval Pikk and Katariina Käik streets in the Lower Town. Then visit

Telliskivi Creative City (Telliskivi 60a), a buzzing cultural centre in a former industrial complex. It now houses hip bars, art galleries, independent shops, creative start-ups and restaurants. And every Saturday, it hosts a flea market. Done exploring? Walk to the nearby Balti Jaama Turg (Kopli 1) indoor market, where you can get street food, fresh produce, clothes, antiques and more.

Grab a coffee

Tallinn has a long-standing café culture. One of its oldest cafés is Maiasmokk Café (Pikk 16) – dating back to 1864 – in the Old Town. It sells tasty fresh pastries and chocolates, but is most famous for its marzipan creations. For a modern vibe, try RØST ② (Rotermanni 14), a small Scandinavian-

inspired bakery in the trendy Rotermann Quarter. It's famous for its cinnamon and cardamom buns, freshly made bread and high-quality coffee. And NOP ③ (Kõleri 1), a café and shop, is in an area known for its charming wooden houses. Go there for homemade, mostly organic options, such as smoothie bowls, avocado toast and ricotta pancakes.

Art scene

It's not all about history when visiting Tallinn, as the city has many modern and contemporary museums that offer a great contrast with the medieval Old Town. There's PoCo ④ (Rotermanni 2), a pop and contemporary art museum with a collection of works from the 1950s to present day, from iconic artists such as Andy Warhol,

For a modern vibe, try this trendy bakery

Jeff Koons and Yayoi Kusama. Like Berlin, New York, Stockholm and Shanghai, Tallinn has a branch of the world-famous Fotografiska museum (Telliskivi 60a/8). Its rooftop restaurant ⑤ is also worth checking out. It was awarded a Michelin Green Star thanks to its sustainable practices and veggie-forward menu. And EKKM (Kursi 5) is an artist-run contemporary art museum housed in a former industrial building. It feels like a small gallery and it should give you a good idea of Tallinn's young creative scene. Admission is free.

TALLINN *by night*

WHAT TO DO WHEN NIGHT FALLS IN TALLINN? ENJOY SPECTACULAR VIEWS OVER THE RED ROOFS OF THE OLD TOWN, DINE LIKE A MEDIEVAL CASTLE LORD OR ENJOY A MUSICAL COCKTAIL NIGHT.



City view



Restaurant at Fotografiska Tallinn ⑥



Nordic Hotel Forum ⑦



Kohvik Must Puudel ⑥

Lights on the skyline

Patkuli Viewing Platform (Rahukohtu 3/b) on Toompea Hill is one of the best spots in the city to enjoy a sunset view of the illuminated towers and walls of the Old Town, and the Baltic Sea beyond. The platform is accessible via a steep staircase starting at Toompark by the Snelli Pond. To see the city from a different perspective, walk 150m to Kohtuotsa Viewing Platform (Kohtu 12) and look for St. Olaf's Church (Lai 50) and the spire of Tallinn Town Hall (Raekoja plats 1).

Three restaurants

Lots of restaurants can be found along Rataskaevu in the Old Town. At the popular Rataskaevu 16, you'll find modern Estonian cuisine with dishes such as braised elk roast, served in a warm and

cosy ambience. A few doors down, you'll find Vegan Restoran V (no.12). Expect dishes such as lemon risotto with asparagus, green beans and white wine sauce or spicy red curry with roasted sweet potato and rice noodles. Last but not least, F-hoone (Telliskivi 60a/4), in Telliskivi Creative City, is a hotspot with an eclectic menu featuring Asian dishes such as nasi goreng and Mediterranean-inspired options including pumpkin and chickpea falafel.

After-dinner drinks

DM Baar (Voorimehe 4), a tribute to the British band Depeche Mode, is a lot of fun. It has cocktails named after the band's songs, a merch shop and, of course, Depeche Mode music and music videos on repeat. Kohvik Must Puudel ⑥ (Kuninga 4), with its

retro interior, is also a cool spot. It offers cocktails and beer, and live music is played on some nights. If you want that to be guaranteed, head over to live-music venue Chicago 1933 (Roseni 8), which is inspired by Chicago's nightlife in 1933.

Sweet dreams

With grand marble floors and four-poster beds, and being housed in a converted telegraph exchange station, Hotel Telegraaf (Vene 9), which is within walking distance of most major sites, reflects the historic feel of the surrounding Old Town. It also features the exquisite Restaurant Tchaikovsky and a luxury spa. Also located in Tallinn's Old Town is Schlössle Hotel (Pühavaimu 13/15), a five-star boutique hotel housed in a 13th-century

building with antique furniture, stone walls and classical tapestries. For a more modern vibe, book a room at Nordic Hotel Forum ⑦ (Viru väljak 3), a four-star hotel with spacious rooms and attentive service. The hotel has several beehives on its roof. From time-to-time, honey produced on site can be sampled at breakfast.

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SEOUL SEARCHING

While permeated by history and tradition, Seoul is also a stage for bold artistic experiments and sweeping cultural trends thanks to its citizens' insatiable appetite for change and thirst for innovation.

Text Matt C. Crawford



Seoul South Korea



If you zoom in from above, you'll see the spectacle of multi-lane roads cutting through blocks of multi-coloured skyscrapers interspersed with clumps of foliage. Somewhere in there, you'll find me sitting at an L-shaped bar, seemingly the front-row at a K-pop performance. In the open kitchen, a team coordinates its motions, functioning as a tight unit. My seven courses are arriving like clockwork, with the newest marvel sporting the periwinkle pink of a fig and a chlorophyll-tinted sauce. Even the ceramic plates look good enough to eat. Only in Seoul can this level of creativity be paired with such artistry, all served up with disarming aplomb.

So often does this high-tech city scale up and reinvent itself that I sometimes feel like the fictional character Rip Van Winkle. While he awoke from sleep after 20 years in the Catskill Mountains, I've been mostly awake in Seoul for 20 years, and I'm lucid enough to consider that this restaurant's evocation of K-pop is no accident. Beginning in the mid-2000s, the Korean Wave (*Hallyu*) – cultural South Korean exports such as K-pop (pop music) and films – began having a major impact. Much of the content filmed in Seoul has been created to advertise parts of the city and, in fact, has become intertwined with it (establishments with a K-pop ambience are common). But it wasn't until 2012 that *Hallyu* reached a global audience. That's when music video *Gangnam Style* amassed a billion views on YouTube, a world first. Next came *Parasite* (2019), the first non-English-language film ever to win an Oscar for Best Picture, and the hit Netflix series *Squid Game* (2021–2025). These prominent cultural artefacts are helping to increase traveller curiosity. And Seoul really does need to be seen to be believed.

Surreal style

This brings me to where I'm beginning this story: in the northern part of Gangnam-gu district, now known worldwide thanks to *Gangnam Style*. Covered in rice fields as recently

as the 1980s, it's now a modern grid of glass and steel, often formed into spectacular architecture. And here, South Korea's success story is on full display. One finds the flagship, eye-catching stores of Louis Vuitton (a Frank Gehry gem whose façade features waves of glass and paper trees), Dior (an enormous budding white flower) and many other fashion houses. The area is also the cradle of Korea's dining scene. In this well-heeled milieu of gourmet sushi and aged steaks, I've installed myself at vegan restaurant Légume, where I'm engulfed in an interior of minimalist serenity. Its chef, Sung Si-woo, embraces a philosophy of sustainable dining, presenting French-inspired dishes with local ingredients. He believes that culinary practitioners and those who work the land are partners in a joint pursuit. "Chefs have to collaborate with farmers to create a good food culture," he tells me. Today's main dish is a thick slab of emperor mushroom that's been prepared and presented like a steak. Slicing into it and taking a bite, I encounter a mild, gentle flavour coloured by a savoury dark sauce with fruit peels, and my brain struggles to process the disconnect between the grainy texture of beef and the slightly chewy mouthfeel of tender fungus. Si-woo decided to focus on plant-based cuisine to fill a gap in the local fine-dining scene. "My mother's a vegetarian," he says. "When I became a chef, there weren't enough vegetarian restaurants for my mother to enjoy." Now, his lactose-intolerant mother is able to proudly taste her son's accomplishments in the global dining scene: Légume was Asia's first vegan restaurant to earn a Michelin Star.

My next stop is the northeast neighbourhood of Chang-dong, which used to be off the tourist trail, except as a gateway for local hikers heading up jagged Bukhansan Mountain, on one side, or rocky Buramsan Mountain, on the other. It feels like an urban plateau in this valley between two mountain ranges. From the subway station, I reach a quiet intersection with a looming black-and-white statue of a distortedly narrow man, one of the city's »

Previous pages

A house next to a pond near Gyeongbokgung Palace; Gyeongbokgung Palace

Right page, top (from left to right)

People walking along Cheonggyecheon Stream; plant-based dishes in the limelight at Légume restaurant; one of Gangnam Station's entrances

Bottom The *Gangnam Style* sculpture in Gangnam-gu



**SEOUL REALLY DOES NEED TO BE
SEEN TO BE BELIEVED**





Above Starfield Library in COEX Mall in Gangnam-gu district.
Right page Korean ladies in *hanbok* dress alongside Gyeongbokgung Palace.

LAYERS OF HISTORY COEXIST
BETWEEN FUTURISTIC CURRENTS
AND ANCIENT FOLKWAYS





I'M ON THE CUTTING EDGE OF THE
EVER-EVOLVING CULTURE SCENE



many public sculptures. The giant figure is peering through a telescope at Buramsan, now covered in gauzy clouds. This combination resembles a surrealist painting, and it takes the arrival of a magpie to snap me out of my trance.

About a year ago, the egg-like Seoul Robot and AI Museum was completed right across the street. Just next to it is the dynamic, twisting slat-fronted dark behemoth that is Photography Seoul Museum of Art, which is newer still (entry is free). After entering and passing through the cavernous lobby – it's an experience just walking in – I spend some time looking at an exhibit by Joo Yongseong, a young photographer whose focus here is on traces of history scattered throughout Chang-dong, known for its grain storage facilities in the days of the Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910). Among Yongseong's shots are stone guardians at the nearby Choansan Mountain, which is covered with 1,000 or so graves, mostly of eunuchs from the royal court. I'm reminded that one of the elements that makes Seoul a city unlike any other is its many layers of history and the coexistence between futuristic currents and ancient folkways. The acclaimed Korean furniture designer Jihoon Ha once told me, "Everything in Seoul is condensed together, nature and urbanism, past and future ... As an artist, it offers all the experiences and answers I need, from a manufacturing base through to galleries and museums. It's sort of like a buffet, with everything spread out in front of me, or maybe I could better describe it as the mix of ingredients in a delicious bowl of *bibimbap* [a classic Korean dish of rice, veggies, fermented red-chilli paste and other ingredients]".

From awesome to ancient

This blend of delights is on show in the very centre of Seoul, where I head the next day. Some significant changes have recently been made at Gyeongbokgung, the foremost royal palace of the Joseon Dynasty and now the country's main tourist draw. Approaching its glorious main gate, Gwanghwamun, with its guard tower and

wooden doors befitting a giant's castle, I pass many of Seoul's trademark ginkgo trees, their royal gold leaves fluttering in the autumn breeze. Standing stoically at the gate are men dressed in Joseon-period soldier garb and fake beards: Seoul's own version of the Beefeaters at the Tower of London. Holding halberds and spears, they're confronted by a long queue of photo-seeking visitors. Many of the tourists have rented bright, gauzy *hanbok* (traditional Korean outfits), thanks to the influence of the country's gripping historical K-dramas and helped by the city's policy of allowing free palace entry to anyone dressed in *hanbok*.

Approaching one of the guards to ask how he likes his unique job, I realise I've committed a faux pas, as he's not allowed to break character. Rite and ritual have long been embedded in Korean culture. Yet within the hierarchy and homogeneity were sparks of innovation, such as those seen today. King Sejong the Great, who resided in Gyeongbokgung, introduced scads of ingenious inventions and helped devise the national script of Hangeul, considered the world's most scientific writing system. These days, Korea is flexing its soft-power muscle in everything from computer games to cosmetics, with the president himself doing his utmost to promote K-food and K-content on the world stage.

Supernatural shopping

In search of the city's youth culture, a force driving its industry of music idols and all sorts of fashion trends, I head to Seongsu-dong. To get there, I catch the metro across the Hangang River. Crossing the bridge, I'm struck by the scene ahead: the undulating cityscape seems to blend in with the rolling hills on the horizon, the soaring Lotte World Tower looking like an exclamation mark in a sentence. Known for its shoe craftsmen, factories and warehouses, Seongsu-dong began morphing – about 10 years ago – with the opening of Common Ground, a shopping and cultural complex made of blue shipping containers. Not long ago, the distinctive new structure Haus Nowhere was unveiled. While walking through »

Left page, top
Young Koreans walking in the Bukchon Hanok Village

Bottom (from left to right) A paper bag from Jayeondo Salt Bread, a popular bakery in Seoul; Ihwa-dong Mural Village; Haus Nowhere

**SO OFTEN DOES THIS HIGH-TECH
CITY SCALE UP THAT I SOMETIMES
FEEL LIKE RIP VAN WINKLE**



Left page Seoul
cityscape at night

an alley of car-repair shops, I suddenly catch sight of it, standing like an alien creature made of concrete and glass. Reaching the entrance, I glimpse the head of a gigantic sleeping dachshund inside. Then I notice a queue snaking around the side of the building. Many of the excited visitors are local 18-year-olds, but there are also families and tourists. Once inside, I try to understand Haus Nowhere's future retail approach: a new kind of shopping experience for this age of online malls and next-day delivery. The blend of odd artworks, such as seated cyborgs with lifelike faces, and new product lines from glasses, kitchenware, perfume and hat brands seem designed for selfie-taking and social media posting. Even some of the products are gratuitously bizarre, such as the perfume dog bones – which appear to be canine chew toys but are actually fragrance diffusers – as well as the fork-and-spoon set disguised as candles in a birthday cake. On my way out, weaving around gawkers, I nearly walk into a mirror.

Industrial intrigue

Closer to Seongsu Station, I find a carnival atmosphere, with swarming crowds of Gen Zers and millennials, and a babel of languages. From the nearly endless choice of cafés, I try Daelim Changgo, a former rice mill built in the 1970s. Around the time-flecked brick interior are wood-burning stoves for heating, old filing cabinets, lush tropical plants, and abstract, thickly daubed paintings by up-and-coming abstractionist Fregha Seo. Despite the factory-sized capacity, the long wooden tables are mostly occupied, and I count myself lucky to find a spot in the adjoining hall. Some of the young Koreans here are on their phones and laptops, and many are deep in conversation. Meanwhile, the young couple beside me are holding hands across the table, living out a scene from their very own K-drama. Sipping on my matcha latte, it occurs to me that I'm finally back on the cutting edge of Seoul's ever-evolving culture scene and continual urban churn. That is, at least for a month or two, when I'll do it all over again to discover a city pleasantly reinvented. «



CANADIAN WRITER MATT C. CRAWFORD, WHO WORKS FOR SOUTH KOREA'S CULTURE MINISTRY, HAS LIVED IN SEOUL FOR 20 YEARS. HERE ARE HIS TIPS FOR THE CITY.

To eat

Neurin Maeul

This brewpub chain serves pitchers of creamy *makgeolli*, (a traditional alcohol made from rice). It also offers a wide selection of dishes to pair with the drink, including *jeon* (savoury pancakes). The branch near Hongik University Station is a good place to kick off a night in the party district.

slowbrewpub.com

Korean barbecue

Seoul's small Namyeong-dong neighbourhood became a sensation when its restaurateurs appeared on Netflix' *Culinary Class Wars*. Namyeongdon restaurant is appreciated for its thick cuts of charcoal-grilled pork and fiery kimchi *jjigae* (stew). [instagram.com/namyeong_don](https://www.instagram.com/namyeong_don)

Szipmatikus

In Seoul's dining scene, Italian food is second only to Korean. While authentic eateries abound, others marry marinara or mozzarella with local ingredients. At the top of the fusion category is Szipmatikus, which serves dishes such as

cream-sauce pasta with pollock roe and chilli-infused oil. It has several outlets.

[instagram.com/szipmatikus.seoul](https://www.instagram.com/szipmatikus.seoul)

To stay

Blue Jae

Among the *hanok* (traditional houses) hotels scattered throughout the historic Bukchon area, Blue Jae stands out for its polished touches. Modern fixtures have been blended with sliding door panels and latticed windows.

nostalgia.seoul.com

Cappuccino Hotel

This property has compact rooms for up to four guests, including one designed using upcycled items. The hotel boasts a café, a rooftop bar and special suites for dog owners.

hotelcappuccino.co.kr

To do

Go hiking

Seoul is packed with peaks, most of which are easy to reach by subway or bus. Trails are well-marked, with difficulty levels going from forest strolls on the 157km Seoul Trail to granite rock climbing on Insubong Peak. seoulhiking.or.kr

Bongeunsa Temple

Bongeunsa is nestled among skyscrapers, making for great photo ops. Not far from the Starfield COEX Mall, this tranquil site participates in the Templestay programme, a chance to live monastically for a couple days.

bongeunsa.org

Ihwa-dong Mural Village

With a government-sponsored mural project in 2006, Seoul's Ihwa-dong neighbourhood was transformed into a selfie-taker's paradise. While roaming the steep alleys to see the fabulous wall paintings, always be respectful of the residents.

koreatodo.com/ihwa-mural-village

Book this story



KLM operates five nonstop flights per week to Seoul's Incheon Intl Airport from Amsterdam Airport Schiphol.

Book your flight on klm.com

Iris van Herpen

“
**TO ME, FASHION
 IS THE MOST
 PERSONAL
 FORM OF ART**
 ”

Dutch couture designer Iris van Herpen is known for her otherworldly dresses. The exhibition *Sculpting the Senses*, which celebrates her work and scientific approach to fashion, has arrived in Rotterdam. Text Marloes van Wijnen Photography Ester Gebuis

You realised that you wanted to become a fashion designer at art school. Why fashion? To me, fashion is the most personal form of art because you're creating it for the body. Most art is made to be placed on a pedestal or hung on a wall. Fashion is embodied: it's something you experience physically and emotionally as you wear it. It becomes part of who you are. It tells a story about your identity, your dreams, or who you desire to become.

If fashion is art, then what is couture? Whereas fashion is the most personal form of art, couture is the most personal form of fashion. You're creating a piece for a person directly: there's no shop in between. To me, that's a beautiful and intimate process.

What's so interesting about combining science and fashion? Through science, as a couture designer, I can add a deeper dimension to fashion. If you look at the history of couture, you can see an evolution in materials and techniques. I'm deeply engaged with that because I think it's interesting and important to keep innovating. Even more so, I genuinely feel that I can be part of a sustainable shift within the whole fashion world because we develop these new sustainable materials and techniques. Eventually, these are made available to the entire fashion industry. In this way, we help the industry to move towards a more sustainable future.

One of your latest designs is a dress created from 125 million living,

luminescent algae. How did you even come up with this? The goal was to bring the dress to life and to keep it alive. But that was quite a challenge. We did it in collaboration with London-based 'bio-artist' Chris Bellamy. Together with a group of scientists, we worked around the clock for five months straight. Eventually, we managed to make the garment correspond to the natural environment of the algae. As a result, the organisms can continue to mate and reproduce inside the garment, keeping the dress 'alive'.

You've said that you sometimes feel like you were born too early, because some of your ideas are not possible yet. That's true. An innovation I've been researching for a long time is 4-D printing, »



which is 3-D printing with an extra dimension: you use so-called smart materials that change over time. Once a piece is finished, it doesn't change. With 4-D printing, you can programme how it will look in the near future. A 4-D-printed dress takes on a life of its own and becomes something entirely different years later. That's truly fascinating. However, I won't be able to work with this technology for another decade, and I'm impatient, ha-ha!

The scientific approach versus the fashionable outcome: how do they compare? Science is a key tool for me in the creative process. One can use a sewing machine; I use a 3-D printer. I dedicate a lot of time to researching the possibilities, and I always do so in collaboration with scientists. We never know where it will lead us and I enjoy that adventure. But the fashionable outcome is always important.

Your primary source of inspiration is nature, which was intertwined with your childhood. Describe your upbringing. I come from a village called Wamel, situated between two rivers in a



wild and beautiful floodplain area. As a child, I spent a lot of time outdoors, and I was always creatively engaged. I loved to paint, dance and play the violin. Art has always been a part of my life. Nature and dance, in particular, have shaped the way I look at fashion. I'm always searching for movement and transformation in my work. As a child, I often visited my grandmother. She collected garments and costumes because she loved the theatre. I'd go up to her attic to try on some pieces. Then I'd show her my transformation. That was my first encounter with fashion, and I could already feel the power of clothing. When I put on a wedding dress, I stepped into a different story. Also, the old clothes made me appreciate the beauty of fashion throughout the years.

You only return to the catwalk once a year, not twice or more like other designers. Why? During COVID-19, many brands claimed they would reduce the number of fashion shows, but they haven't. Fewer shows would benefit everyone: designers, journalists, the environment. I'd even go a step further: ideally, I'd show irregularly. I admire how couturier Azzedine Alaïa approached this in the past. He said: "I'll show when my work is ready." That's how artists in other disciplines work as well. Singer-songwriter Beyoncé releases an album when it's finished. So why shouldn't fashion designers do the same?

That would mean letting go of the fashion seasons, which introduce new trends. Indeed. Consumers need to change their mindset. You don't need a new dress for every holiday. Ask yourself what kind of clothes you truly want to have in your life. Then, from time to time, invest in something meaningful: a piece to cherish for the rest of your life.

What's hanging in your wardrobe? My wardrobe consists of pieces by designers

“ THE ALGAE CAN MATE AND REPRODUCE INSIDE THE GARMENT ”

I admire, such as Alexander McQueen, where I once interned. I also have a large collection of Japanese kimonos.

Your *Sculpting the Senses* exhibition has arrived at Kunsthall Rotterdam in your home country. How does that feel? It's truly a dream. I can't invite everyone to my shows in Paris. Those events are too exclusive. Now, it feels like I can bring my shows home.

You've created pieces for Beyoncé, Sarah Jessica Parker and Queen Máxima of the Netherlands. Who would you still like to dress? Emma Stone. I think she's a great actress and she's so fearless. She has a lot of feminine strength, which I deeply admire. «



Painting what's beneath the surface

AT MUSEUM VOORLINDEN



Director at Museum Voorlinden Suzanne Swarts on the new solo exhibition by Claire Tabouret.

"The human face is like the surface of water – always shifting, always elusive, never still," says Claire Tabouret. The French artist, who designed the new stained-glass windows for Notre-Dame

Cathedral in Paris, explores the complexity of human emotions and relationships. Working with a colourful, often almost fluorescent palette and sometimes painting on unconventional materials, she creates portraits of herself, others and groups. "The way we stand together shapes the space our bodies occupy," she explains, "but it also mirrors the interplay of power, posture and group

dynamics." At Voorlinden, you can trace Tabouret's artistic evolution and see how she continually reinvents herself while expanding the possibilities of painting.

Where and when?

Exhibition: until 25 May 2026

Address: Buurtweg 90, 2244AG Wassenaar

Opening times: museum (11am-5pm);

restaurant (10.30am-6pm)

From Wassenaar by car: The Hague (20 mins); Schiphol (25 mins); Amsterdam (45 mins)

Buy your ticket at the museum or online: tickets.voorlinden.nl

BUILDING EXCITEMENT

From Granada's Alhambra to Miami's Art Deco District, here's some of the world's most amazing architecture.

Text **Gina Miroula**





Miami, US

ART DECO DISTRICT

Step into a pastel paradise glowing with retro charm along Ocean Drive, one of the main streets of South Beach's Art Deco District, where hundreds of preserved buildings showcase styles such as 'Tropical Deco': bright colours, porthole windows and sleek lines. In the 1970s, the area was nearly lost to redevelopment, but activist Barbara Baer Capitman saved it, earning a place on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. Join an Art Deco walking tour to spot hidden motifs and restoration tales. **Top tip:** End at the Puerto Sagua diner for espresso and *ropa vieja* (shredded stewed beef in tomato sauce) while neon reflections shimmer; pure Miami nostalgia.



Brussels, Belgium

HOTEL TASSEL

Nestled in Ixelles, Hotel Tassel – a UNESCO World Heritage Site – is one of the pioneering masterpieces of Art Nouveau architecture. Victor Horta's revolutionary 1892-1893 design weaves curved iron staircases, stained glass, mosaic floors and open, flowing spaces into a seamless whole. Inspired by nature, Horta's intricate details and graceful forms create a harmonious, light-filled interior. During WWII, some Art Nouveau structures were sadly destroyed, but Brussels still boasts more than 500 surviving buildings in this sinuous style. **Good to know:** In the municipality of Saint-Gilles, restored townhouses now host art cafés and wine bars. Sip natural wine at Le Dillens while watching golden light fade on curling iron balconies.

Granada, Spain

ALHAMBRA

Perched high above Granada, the Alhambra dazzles as a jewel of 13th-century Nasrid Islamic art. Delicate stucco, serene courtyards and vibrant tiles create an enchanting atmosphere. The Court of the Lions, a main courtyard, flows with water, light and perfect symmetry in poetic harmony. The palace's water system relies on gravity, cooling interiors naturally; a masterpiece that was centuries ahead of its time. Intricate patterns reveal mathematical genius inspired by geometry and proportion. **Top tip:** Not far from the Alhambra, you can explore Sacromonte's cave houses carved into the hillside, where Granada's Roma heritage comes alive with intimate flamenco performances at night.



Budapest, Hungary

HUNGARIAN PARLIAMENT BUILDING

Standing proudly on the banks of the Danube River, the Hungarian Parliament Building in Budapest is a neogothic marvel inspired by London's Palace of Westminster. Finished in 1904, it pairs Gothic Revival facades with a Renaissance Revival dome. Inside this stately structure, golden arches, frescoes and stained glass celebrate Hungarian heritage. Look out for the Crown of Saint Stephen, guarded day and night, symbolising national unity. With 691 rooms, the Hungarian Parliament Building is among the world's largest parliaments by floor area.

Top tip: After your visit, stroll to Fisherman's Bastion near Buda Castle for stunning views, or unwind at Széchenyi Thermal Bath, Europe's largest medicinal spa.







Amsterdam, the Netherlands

CANAL RING

Amsterdam's main canals, which form concentric belts around the historic city centre, are lined with many 17th-century canal houses. These elegant buildings often feature stepped gables, tall windows and balanced proportions reflecting Golden Age wealth. Stroll along Herengracht – once home to the richest merchants – to see some of the most impressive canal houses, and Singel – the innermost canal – where you can spot one of Amsterdam's narrowest houses at Singel 7. Its famously slim facade is often said to be due to a former tax based on frontage width, helping make Amsterdam renowned for its narrow houses. **Top tip:** Enjoy a *borrel* (drinks) paired with *bitterballen* (deep-fried ragu balls), beneath centuries-old wooden beams, around 5pm at Café Chris in Bloemstraat.



Dubai, UAE

THE OPUS

In Dubai's Business Bay, The Opus – a cube carved by a flowing void – glows prominently in the cityscape at night. It was designed by the late Dame Zaha Hadid, the visionary Iraqi-British 'Queen of the Curve'. The structure flows with sculptural, futuristic elegance, housing the ME Dubai hotel, luxury residences, offices and restaurants. Hadid believed that architecture should evoke motion – blending art, technology and emotion into living, dynamic forms – a hallmark of Neo-futurism. **Good to know:** After admiring The Opus at night, visit the Opera Gallery Dubai in the Dubai International Financial Centre, where contemporary art exhibitions offer a vibrant cultural contrast to Hadid's architectural masterpiece.

on your radar

Welcome
on board



KLM NEWS

KLM House

NO. 60: HERENGRACHT 314



This monument building can be found on Amsterdam's iconic Herengracht canal, at no. 314. What makes this structure so unique

from an artistic and historical perspective, is its facade, which features a gable from 1725 that is a hybrid of a neck and cornice gable. On either side of the neck are sandstone scrolls, both in the form of dolphins. Nicolaas Romswinkel, who was a *vroedsman* – a member of the city council – commissioned the construction of the house (which is the second building to be built on this particular site), and it remained in his family for more than a century. Since the mid-1980s, it has housed a restaurant, cooking school and catering business.

Matthijs van Dusseldorp (left)



Online flights

FREE WI-FI FOR FLYING BLUE MEMBERS

In addition to the free messaging already available on board to Flying Blue members, KLM is now offering all members complimentary wi-fi on almost half of their European fleet. This includes the 18 newest B737-800 aircraft, A321neo and nearly all the KLM Cityhopper E2s, with more to come as new aircraft arrive. Non-members can sign up to the Flying Blue programme prior to departure or via the onboard portal and activate the free wi-fi after having joined successfully. flyingblue.com

Ask the expert



CABIN CREW MEMBER RIANNE
KOOPMAN ANSWERS YOUR
BURNING QUESTION.

How can I identify the different roles of the KLM crew



KLM crew usually have stripes on the sleeve of their uniform. Cabin crew have silver-coloured stripes and pilots have gold-coloured ones, as do the ground crew who work at the gate and help passengers board the plane, but their stripes are thinner. And then there's the number of stripes: if a cabin crew member has more than one silver stripe, two for example, that means that they work in World Business Class. If they have four silver stripes, they are a purser. And if the silver stripes are accompanied by an orange one, that means you have a senior purser before you.

Do you have a burning question for the experts at KLM? Email us at hollandheraldhome@hearst.nl and your question might be featured in the next issue of *Holland Herald*.

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Travel Well

KLM NEWS

Memorable flight

“It was probably the best-smelling souvenir on board”

AFTER PASSING HER DUTCH CIVIC INTEGRATION EXAM, WENDY TORRES HAD AN UNFORGETTABLE FLIGHT.



For the past four years, KLM was more than just an airline to me, it was a bridge that enabled my long-distance relationship. I'm Colombian and was living in my native country, while my German boyfriend was living in the Netherlands. One of my most memorable flights was on 7 March 2025, from Bogotá to Amsterdam. I had just passed my Dutch civic integration exam, a huge milestone in building a future in the Netherlands. The moment

I boarded the plane, I immediately felt welcomed by the crew. When I shared why this flight was so special to me, one of the flight attendants told me her own story about moving abroad. The crew's kindness, attention to detail, and even small gestures such as offering me tea when they noticed I was nervous, turned an ordinary flight into something unforgettable. I also remember one of the crew members joking that the bag of Colombian coffee

I had in my hand luggage was probably the best-smelling souvenir on board the plane. When we landed in Amsterdam, it didn't feel like just arriving at a destination, it felt like a new chapter of my life was beginning. It was a moment full of joy and gratitude that I'll never forget, and KLM played a big part in it.

Have you had a special flight? Share it at hollandheraldhome@hearst.nl and your story might be featured in the next issue of *Holland Herald*!

Sleep cabins

NAP BEFORE YOU FLY

Travellers who need some personal space can enjoy one of the sleep cabins in the



Non-Schengen KLM Crown Lounge at Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, for a fee. Every cabin comes equipped with a comfortable bed, a 33-inch TV, multiple outlets and a wash basin with an array of toiletries and skincare products. Passengers who already have access to the KLM Crown Lounge can ask one of the Personal Lounge Assistants for a cabin while there,

or reserve one online. Other KLM passengers can purchase access to the lounge for €75 when booking their ticket, during check-in or at the lounge entrance. Prices for the cabins are:

- 2 hours: €39
 - 3 hours: €49.50 (or 12,400 Miles)
 - 4 hours: €65
 - 5 hours: €75 (or 18,800 Miles)
- lounge.klm.com



#Flyhack

PATCH IT UP

We all know that skin becomes drier at higher altitudes. To combat dehydration, drinking lots of water is a must, and bringing a TSA-friendly skincare kit can't hurt. This kit from Patchology includes restoring night gels, hydrating masks and more in handy packaging, making it perfect for travelling. patchology.com

TRAVEL WELL



1991



1996



1998



2000



2002



1986



1983



1969



1966

HAPPY 60TH BIRTHDAY HOLLAND HERALD

FOR SIX DECADES, *HOLLAND HERALD* HAS CAPTURED THE SPIRIT OF TRAVEL, CONNECTING GENERATIONS THROUGH STORIES THAT INSPIRE AND UNITE.

It's early 1966. Europe is dancing to the Beatles and embracing Mary Quant's revolutionary miniskirt. Flying is no longer the privilege of the elite as air travel opens up to the wider public. On board, there's always that same, cheerful buzz: business travellers, families off to see loved ones on another continent, scientists heading to a conference – they all share that same anticipation. When the cabin doors open, they'll step into another world, ready to connect. As KLM founder Albert Plesman put it: "The ocean of the air unites all people."

On a cold January morning, a DC-8 stands ready for take-off. Its four jet engines roar, the aircraft races down the runway, and lifts gracefully into the sky. As it climbs through the clouds, calm descends. Inside, a smiling steward serves coffee, then reappears with a stack of magazines that he hands out to all 182 passengers: *Holland Herald: Newsmagazine of the Netherlands*. They flip through the mostly black-and-white pages, pausing at a story about oyster farmers in Zeeland, smiling at a piece about stamps designed by children. None of them could have guessed that this modest publication would go on to become a legend.

A vision takes flight

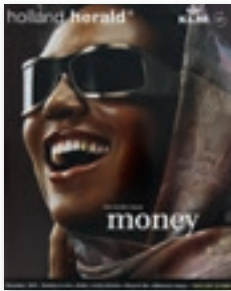
The magazine's founding father was entrepreneur Jean-Jacques van Belle, who

convinced KLM that a journalistic magazine would represent the Netherlands far better than brochures filled with tulips. It was a visionary idea – *Holland Herald* filled a niche in publishing. It offered international travellers a window into the Netherlands: small, innovative, open-minded. For advertisers, it became an opportunity to reach a global audience all at once.

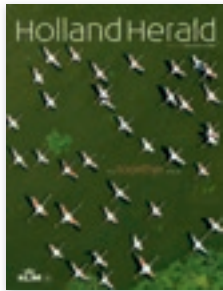
In 1977, British editor Ken Wilkie took the reins and transformed *Holland Herald* from a Dutch-focused news publication into an international lifestyle magazine. "We stopped thinking every story needed a direct link to the Netherlands," he later said. "We wanted to showcase Dutch quality of life through stories on culture, innovation and lifestyle – but also look outward to KLM's global destinations." It was an editorial shift that readers embraced. Wilkie remained editor until 2003, guiding the magazine stylishly into each new era.

Stories that matter

Fast forward to 2026, and *Holland Herald* is celebrating 60 years in the air, making it the world's oldest inflight magazine. For more than a decade, it's been published by the company I now proudly work for. When *Holland Herald* first launched, our editorial team hadn't even been born – but we carry its heritage forward, translating its spirit for today's traveller.



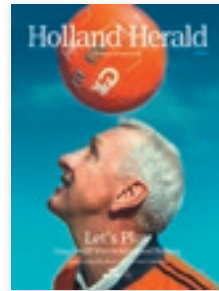
2005



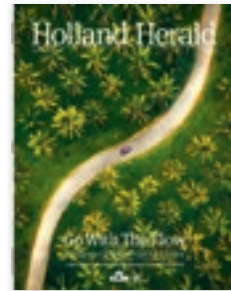
2010



2011



2014



2017

Our team consists entirely of seasoned journalists who've worked for leading newspapers and magazines. The freelance writers and photographers we collaborate with are lifestyle specialists contributing to titles such as *Condé Nast Traveller*, *National Geographic* and *Vogue*. We're not a content marketing agency turning out glossy sponsored pieces – we're storytellers, passionate about creating authentic, relevant narratives worth sharing.

Editorially, our focus is on travelling well – journeys that not only enrich the traveller but that also leave something positive behind. One story followed a journalist on a trek along

We're passionate about creating authentic, relevant narratives

Peru's Salkantay Trail – the alternative route to Machu Picchu. Guided by locals, he saw sacred rituals, stayed in community-run lodges and contributed to preserving traditional livelihoods. And even in our travel tips, we encourage readers to make conscious choices – from vegetarian restaurants and small local shops to tours led by community guides.

We also evolved the design of *Holland Herald* into a warmer, more personal magazine and gave it a tactile, textured cover – a small but intentional detail that makes holding the magazine feel special and crafted with care.

Themed issues

What's more, we dedicate entire issues to themes that matter. For International Women's

Day, we spotlight inclusivity and equality through the voices of inspiring female role models – from football coach Sarina Wiegman, who grew up in a time when there were no girls' teams, to street artist Judith de Leeuw, whose murals bring social awareness to city walls. Our annual Pride issue celebrates LGBTQI+-friendly destinations and showcases how KLM supports inclusiveness internally through its Over the Rainbow Network.

Science, too, finds a place in our pages. Recently, we interviewed Dutch professor Meta Roestenberg, who is leading groundbreaking research into a promising malaria vaccine. With malaria still one of the world's deadliest diseases, it's a story of hope we're proud to share with our international readers.

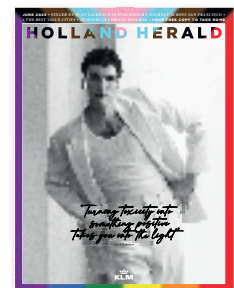
Navigating turbulence

During the pandemic, we were forced to adapt our product, and the experience was inevitably compromised by the many COVID-19 rules and regulations. Even then, we wanted to continue offering our passengers something extra: a moment of inspiration, relaxation and recognition. We chose to keep the magazine on board, so that our loyal customers could still enjoy a bit of the travel experience despite all the restrictions.

So much has changed since that first flight in 1966. Yet the heart of *Holland Herald* remains the same. Here you are, above the clouds, perhaps having just switched off your iPad. Craving a slower, more reflective moment, you reached for the magazine and are now flipping through its pages – possibly with a coffee in hand, just like back then. And you're losing yourself in stories that connect, inspire, and remind us how beautiful the world can be.



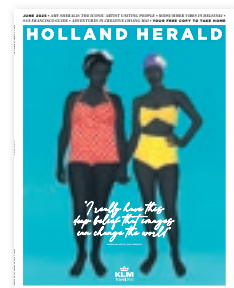
2018



2023



2024



2025

KLM FLEET

Specifications

SITTING PRETTY



If you have trouble choosing between a window seat and an aisle seat, this might help. Used by the KLM Cityhopper service, the Embraer 175 may be the smallest plane in KLM's fleet, but its windows (0.119m²) are bigger than a Boeing 787's (0.113m²). That's 60cm² more view for you to enjoy!



Boeing 777-300ER/200ER

Number of aircraft: 16/15
Cruising speed (km/h): 920/900
Range (km): 12,000/11,800
Max. take-off weight (kg): 351,543/297,500
Maximum passengers: 381/288
Total length (m): 73.86/63.80
Wingspan (m): 64.80/60.90
Personal inflight entertainment
Wi-Fi on board

Embraer 190/175

Number of aircraft: 19/17
Cruising speed (km/h): 850/850
Range (km): 3,300/3,180
Max. take-off weight (kg): 45,000/36,500
Maximum passengers: 100/88
Total length (m): 36.25/31.68
Wingspan (m): 28.72/28.65



Boeing 787-10/9 Dreamliner

Number of aircraft: 15/13
Cruising speed (km/h): 920/920
Range (km): 9,900/11,500
Max. take-off weight (kg): 254,000/252,650
Maximum passengers: 318/275
Total length (m): 68.30/62.80
Wingspan (m): 60.10/60.10
Personal inflight entertainment
Wi-Fi on board



Boeing 747-400ER Freighter

Number of aircraft: 3
Cruising speed (km/h): 920
Range (km): 11,500
Max. take-off weight (kg): 412,800
Max. freight (kg): 112,000
Total length (m): 70.67
Wingspan (m): 64.44



Boeing 737-800/700

Number of aircraft: 29/6
Cruising speed (km/h): 850/850
Range (km): 4,200/3,500
Max. take-off weight (kg): 73,700/65,317
Maximum passengers: 186/142
Total length (m): 39.47/33.62
Wingspan (m): 35.80/35.80
Wi-Fi on board



Boeing 737-900

Number of aircraft: 5
Cruising speed (km/h): 850
Range (km): 4,300
Max. take-off weight (kg): 76,900
Maximum passengers: 188
Total length (m): 42.12
Wingspan (m): 35.80



Airbus A330-300/200

Number of aircraft: 5/6
Cruising speed (km/h): 880/880
Range (km): 8,200/8,800
Max. take-off weight (kg): 233,000/233,000
Maximum passengers: 292/264
Total length (m): 63.69/58.37
Wingspan (m): 60.30/60.30
Personal inflight entertainment
Wi-Fi on board




Airbus A321neo

Number of aircraft: 13
Cruising speed (km/h): 876
Range (km): 7,400
Max. take-off weight (kg): 89,000
Maximum passengers: 227
Total length (m): 44.51
Wingspan (m): 35.80
Personal inflight entertainment
Wi-Fi on board



Embraer 195-E2

Number of aircraft: 25
Cruising speed (km/h): 876
Range (km): 4,815
Max. take-off weight (kg): 56,700
Maximum passengers: 136
Total length (m): 41.5
Wingspan (m): 35.12

A large, white and blue KLM Boeing 787 flight simulator is positioned in a spacious hangar. The simulator is mounted on a complex mechanical base with hydraulic arms. The KLM logo and '787' are prominently displayed on the side. The hangar has a high ceiling with a grid of steel beams and yellow overhead cranes. Another simulator is visible in the background.

Flight simulator

BEST PRACTICE

Becoming an airline pilot isn't an easy thing to do. It requires two years of initial training, about three weeks in this sophisticated machine and two months in an aircraft. "This is a flight simulator for a Boeing 787," explains Director of Flight Crew Training Arnoud Wellhüner. "Using the simulator, trainees experience the feeling of flying an aircraft without being in one, which is, with special manoeuvres and malfunctions that must be learnt, safer than practising in an actual aircraft, not to mention better for the environment. This simulator moves to simulate actual flights as closely as possible and has an actual cockpit with a realistic projection of the sky and terrain on the windows. We practise everything from storms to turbulence, and even passengers falling ill, so that our future pilots are fully prepared for KLM flights."

TRAVELLERS



Vienne

“I find the culture there so fascinating”

Vienne van der Star
travelling to Curaçao
on flight KL735

Reason for travel? “I’ve been living in Curaçao for the past eight years. I met my partner there while I was interning, and basically never left. I’ve been in the Netherlands because a friend of mine got married recently. The past week was mostly spent catching up with relatives and doing some shopping.”

Still on your travel bucket list?

“Japan. I find the culture there so fascinating, especially compared to the culture that I live in now. The food, the fashion, the cities – I’d love to see it all.”

Who’s your dream passenger to sit next to?

“My sister. She’s my best friend, and now that I live in Curaçao, we get to see each other a lot less – that was probably the hardest part about moving there. I was lucky to see her this week, but I can’t wait to be with her again. Could I have the comedian Irene Moors on the other side of me? She seems so nice and very chatty. I’m sure time would fly by with her.”

Sumanlata & Sima

Sumanlata and Sima
travelling to Washington
on flight KL651

Reason for travel? Sima: “We’re going to Washington. Our niece just graduated, so our brother, who lives there, is throwing a large party in her honour. We’ll be staying with them for three weeks. Our mother also passed away recently, and we’re looking forward to being able to work through that loss all together, as a family.”

Still on your travel bucket list?

Sumanlata: “My son lives in Canada, so I’d love to go there to see him and stay with him for a while. I hope to get the chance once I retire.”

Sima: “Switzerland. It looks so beautiful. The nature, the mountains – I’d love to experience it all myself.”

Who’s your dream passenger to sit next to? Sima: “My son. He knows me so well, I think it would make for a pleasant flight.”

Sumanlata: “I’d also choose my son. Any opportunity to spend more time with him. We’d probably just talk about life, in general. But that’s fine.”



Michelle, Joanne & Ryan

Michelle & Joanne Laman
and Ryan Goodbrand
travelling to Toronto
on flight KL695

Reason for travel? Michelle: “We’re heading back home to Toronto after travelling through Europe for a month. We have some family who live in the Netherlands and we used to transport horses here for business, so it was fun to be able to show our daughter the country.”

Still on your travel bucket list?

Michelle: “Australia. But only if I could fly there First Class, as the flight is something I wouldn’t look forward to. If that was an option, then I’d travel around the country for two months and see as much as I could.”

Ryan: “Alaska, for the wilderness, the roughness of it. It’s been on my list for a while.”

Who’s your dream passenger to sit next to? Michelle: “Ryan and Joanne.

And maybe The Bucket List Family, who I follow on Instagram. They look like fun.”

Ryan: “All my buddies, if I was flying somewhere to watch motocross.”

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For more information, visit flyingblue.com

*subject to availability

My Miles



“My favourite run was the London Marathon”

CATE GACHANJA SAVES AND USES HER MILES FOR A VERY SPECIAL PURPOSE.



I signed up for the Flying Blue programme about 20 years ago. It was before my daughter's birth and I was travelling a lot for work at the time. I was flying to the US from Nairobi, Kenya, at least three times a year, which meant I collected quite a few Miles. I started noticing other ways to save up Miles, such as booking accommodation and rental cars via the programme. By doing so, I was able to accumulate enough Miles to buy plane

tickets to several big cities, to run marathons. When I first told my parents about my plan to run the London Marathon, their initial response was to ask who my sponsor was. They couldn't believe I'd been able to get a ticket with Miles alone, as they're usually quite expensive. I've now been able to use my Miles to travel for a few marathons in 2024 and 2025, such as the London Marathon, the New York Marathon, Berlin Marathon and

Chicago Marathon. My favourite run was the London Marathon, as I ran it for the charity Children with Cancer UK. These kids have gone through so much, and I have the utmost respect for the battle they fight on a daily basis. Running a marathon seems like a small feat in comparison.

Do you have a Miles-related story to tell? Send it to hollandheraldhome@hearst.nl and your story might be featured in the next issue of *Holland Herald*.



Sign up now! Earning Miles with Avis means there's never been a better time to sign up with Flying Blue for free. Flying Blue is, in fact, your ideal travel companion: earn Miles and spend them on flights, hotel stays, car rentals and more. For more info, please check flyingblue.com.

ONBOARD ENTERTAINMENT

***Giselle* was first
performed
in Paris in 1841**

Watch, listen or play

LET US ENTERTAIN YOU

Dive into a world of cinematic wonder with more than 300 films from around the globe. Enjoy 400 TV programmes spanning various genres to suit every taste, and immerse yourself in our vast audio library, featuring more than 1,000 albums, playlists, podcasts and audiobooks. Challenge yourself with our selection of games and set **Parental Controls for the Kids Only** section. Stay ahead of the curve with our constantly updated catalogue. Each month, we refresh almost 20% of our video content. Check entertainment.klm.com for the full listing before your next trip. For now, sit back, relax and enjoy your journey.

Our pick



GISELLE

This classical ballet – written by Adolphe Adam and first performed in Paris in 1841 – has stood the test of time and is considered one of the most romantic ballets. Over the years, *Giselle* has been performed countless times around the world. This version was performed in 2023 by the Dutch National Ballet with principal dancer Olga Smirnova in the lead role of Giselle, a young peasant girl who falls in love with Count Albrecht (Jacopo Tissi), a young nobleman who hides the fact that he's already engaged from Giselle. How will the young girl handle the truth?

Music, 1h56min

Films

WATCH IT NOW



The Conjuring: Last Rites

Horror, 2h15min

It's 1986, and paranormal investigators Ed (Patrick Wilson) and Lorraine Warren (Vera Farmiga) are now increasingly lecturing on their past cases. Until, that is, the Smurl family – who seem to be haunted by a demon – enter the scene.



Against Gravity

Documentary, 1h18min

Against Gravity: A Surfer's Journey of Resilience follows German professional surfer Leon Glatzer, who describes himself as having been born in the water and shaped by the ocean. Glatzer shares his ups and downs as he searches for freedom.



The Old Way

Action, 1h43min

Widow Zhuang Yue (Cheng Yi) hires small-time gangster Peng Yinan (Yin Zhang) and his partners Lei Wu (Yiqian Guo) and Ma Ming (Huan Yu Ning) to kidnap a bride from a bandit stronghold. The plot thickens when Yinan discovers a long-sought enemy among the bandits.

Games

CHOOSE YOUR PLAYER

Angry Birds World Tour

The birds are back! Much of the new gameplay is based on the Angry Birds Classic game. There are 30 available levels, which are split into five episodes of six.

Trivia Tournament

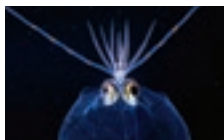
Test your general knowledge by answering questions from a wide range of topics. You can play alone or compete against other players. Challenge yourself and learn something new.

Golf Open

Live all the excitement of a professional golf game. With its accurate physics and stunning 3-D graphics, this golf version will give you all the thrills of the game in the comfort of your own seat.

TV

IN CASE YOU MISSED THEM...



Planet Earth III

Documentary, 58min

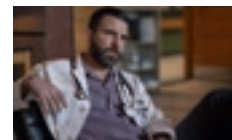
In the third instalment of this nature series, Sir David Attenborough once again takes viewers on a journey through the ever-changing habitats of our world. Fun fact: to develop the series, the team filmed in no less than 43 countries and on 6 continents.



Puppy Dog Pals

Adventure, 22min

This animated series focuses on Rolly (voice: Sam Lavagnino) and Bingo (voice: Issac Ryan Brown), two pug puppies who are brothers and always looking for adventure around the neighbourhood, when their owner Bob (voice: Harland Williams) leaves home.



Brilliant Minds

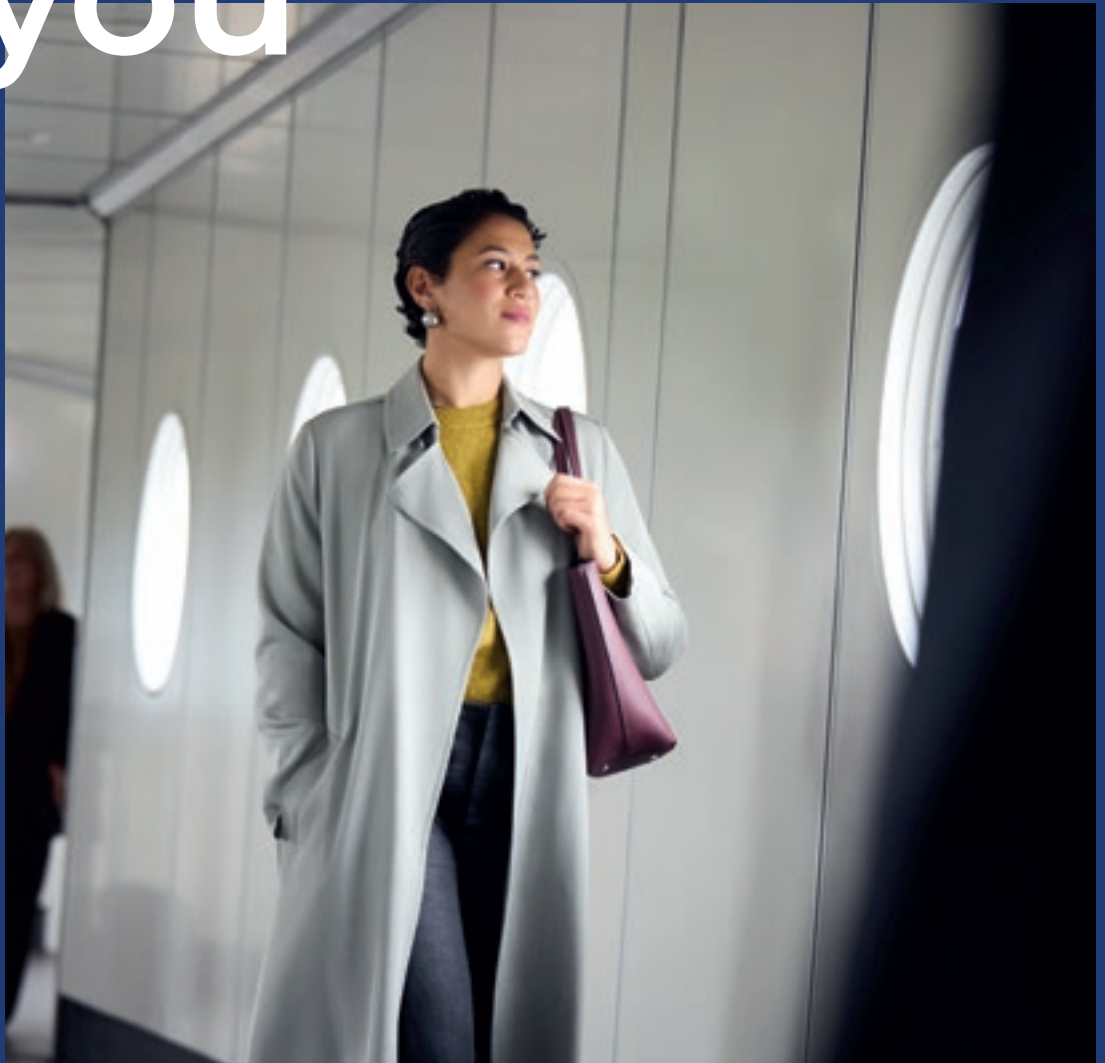
Drama, 1h

Season 1 follows the successful, larger-than-life neurologist Dr. Oliver Wolf (Zachary Quinto) and his team of interns as they explore the last great frontier: the human mind. The doctor and his team grapple with their own minds and health as well. Enjoy episodes 9 and 10.

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SKYTEAM

SkyTeam members

EXPLORE THE WORLD

NOW THAT THE YEAR IS UNDERWAY, IT'S THE PERFECT TIME TO START TICKING THOSE TRAVEL GOALS OFF YOUR LIST. DISCOVER WHERE SKYTEAM'S GLOBAL NETWORK CAN TAKE YOU IN 2026 AND GET INSPIRED FOR YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE.



Global network

Our 18 member airlines reach more than 945 destinations in 145+ countries. With over 13,800 daily departures, SkyTeam is the only airline alliance serving both the southernmost and northernmost commercial airports in the world – Ushuaia in Argentina (served by Aerolíneas Argentinas), and Svalbard in Norway (served by Scandinavian Airlines, SAS).

Whether you're chasing adventure or relaxation, our members can connect you to a wide range of

destinations. Soak up the vibrant history and tropical warmth of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, or discover the dynamic mix of city life and safari landscapes in Nairobi, Kenya. For a winter escape, visit Brussels in Belgium, for cosy cafés and world-class museums, or Denmark's Copenhagen for winter swimming and urban skiing. Craving outdoor adventure? In Perth, Australia, golden beaches are paired with green city parks for the perfect balance of sunshine and nature. Or fly to Bali, Indonesia, for exciting jungle treks and surf shores.

Seamless travels

Wherever you're travelling, SkyTeam can make your journey smoother and more comfortable. With seamless check-in, you can check in for multi-airline itineraries through your preferred app or website. Once you arrive at the airport, First Class, Business Class and SkyTeam Elite Plus customers can enjoy our award-winning SkyPriority fast-track services and lounges available in more than 750 locations across our network.

To make the most of your travels, don't forget to add your loyalty programme number to your flight reservation before departure. You can join any SkyTeam member airline's loyalty programme to start earning and redeeming Miles across all 18 members. Miles can be redeemed for flights and other rewards, so every trip gets you closer to your next one.

Ready to start planning your 2026 travels? Visit our member airlines' websites to discover new and exciting destinations in our network around the world.

SkyTeam is the 18-member airline alliance. Find out more about news, services and upcoming events at skyteam.com.

HOUSE RULES

Electronics on board

On board the aircraft, electronic devices, such as smartphones, tablets and e-readers, may be used at all times. If they include wireless functionality, they must be set to **airplane mode** before the aircraft doors are closed and remain so throughout the flight. You may use an electronic device's Bluetooth mode (e.g. a Bluetooth headset) at all times as long as you enable **airplane mode** before you switch on Bluetooth. If the aircraft offers Internet onboard, wi-fi mode may be used at all times as long as **airplane mode** is enabled first. Before connecting to the onboard wi-fi, switch off any VPN services on your device. Larger electronic devices (e.g. laptops) must be stowed during taxiing, take-off and landing. If in doubt, check with the cabin crew.

Cabin crew may request that all electronic devices are switched off completely if it is deemed necessary.

Drinks and smoking

Alcoholic drinks are served **one** at a time to passengers seated in their assigned seats. For safety reasons, the purser may close the bar. Passengers are not permitted to drink alcoholic beverages brought

on board with them. **Smoking**, including artificial cigarettes such as 'SuperSmokers', **is strictly forbidden** at all times on KLM flights.

Privacy

KLM respects the privacy of its customers and staff. Taking a **photo** or making a **film recording** of any person on board without their explicit consent is not allowed.

Lithium batteries

Mobile phones, laptops and other **electronic devices** contain lithium batteries, which can catch fire if they are damaged or if they short-circuit. Please make sure that you keep an eye on your device while it is charging, and do not charge it while sleeping. Please check 'restricted articles' on klm.com for more information.

Hand luggage at EU airports

To increase passenger safety, security rules for hand luggage are in place for all flights in accordance with European Union regulations. When passing through security control, you are required to present liquids, gels, pastes, lotions and aerosols separately, and in individual containers of no more than 100ml

and packaged in a resealable, transparent plastic bag (maximum volume 1 litre, 1 bag per person).

Animal products

To prevent the spread of animal diseases, you are prohibited from entering the EU with meat, meat products, milk and milk products. Small quantities for personal use are permitted on arrival from Andorra, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, San Marino and Switzerland. For further information, visit europa.eu.

Airport shopping

In the EU: Within Europe, you can travel with your tax-free liquid purchases. They will be packed and sealed for you. The seal is valid for 24 hours. You may not break the seal until you have reached your final destination, even if your journey includes a transfer.

Outside the EU: Transfer at an EU airport? You may bring liquids and gels from non-EU airports. They will be checked at Schiphol. Travelling to the US? Only bring liquids on board bought and sealed at Schiphol. Transfer in the US or Canada? Pack your liquids in your check-in luggage.

Wi-fi & free messaging

STAY IN TOUCH ON BOARD

Our entire ICA fleet has wi-fi, and more and more of our European aircraft are being equipped with it. If there's a wi-fi logo on your aircraft, you can use wi-fi. Just follow the instructions to the right and select a package of your choice. As a Flying Blue member, you can send basic texts with our free message package. Non-members can enrol for free during the flight via the Onboard Portal and make use of the Free Messaging pass. If you'd like to surf the Internet, send & receive emails, listen to music, use social media or stream a film, you can buy a wi-fi pass for the full flight or 1-hour (ICA-only).



1

Switch off any VPN services and then set your device to airplane mode



2

Go to wi-fi settings and choose **KLM_WiFi** from the network list



3

Follow the steps on your device Or go to **connect.klm.com** Or scan the QR code



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Heineken

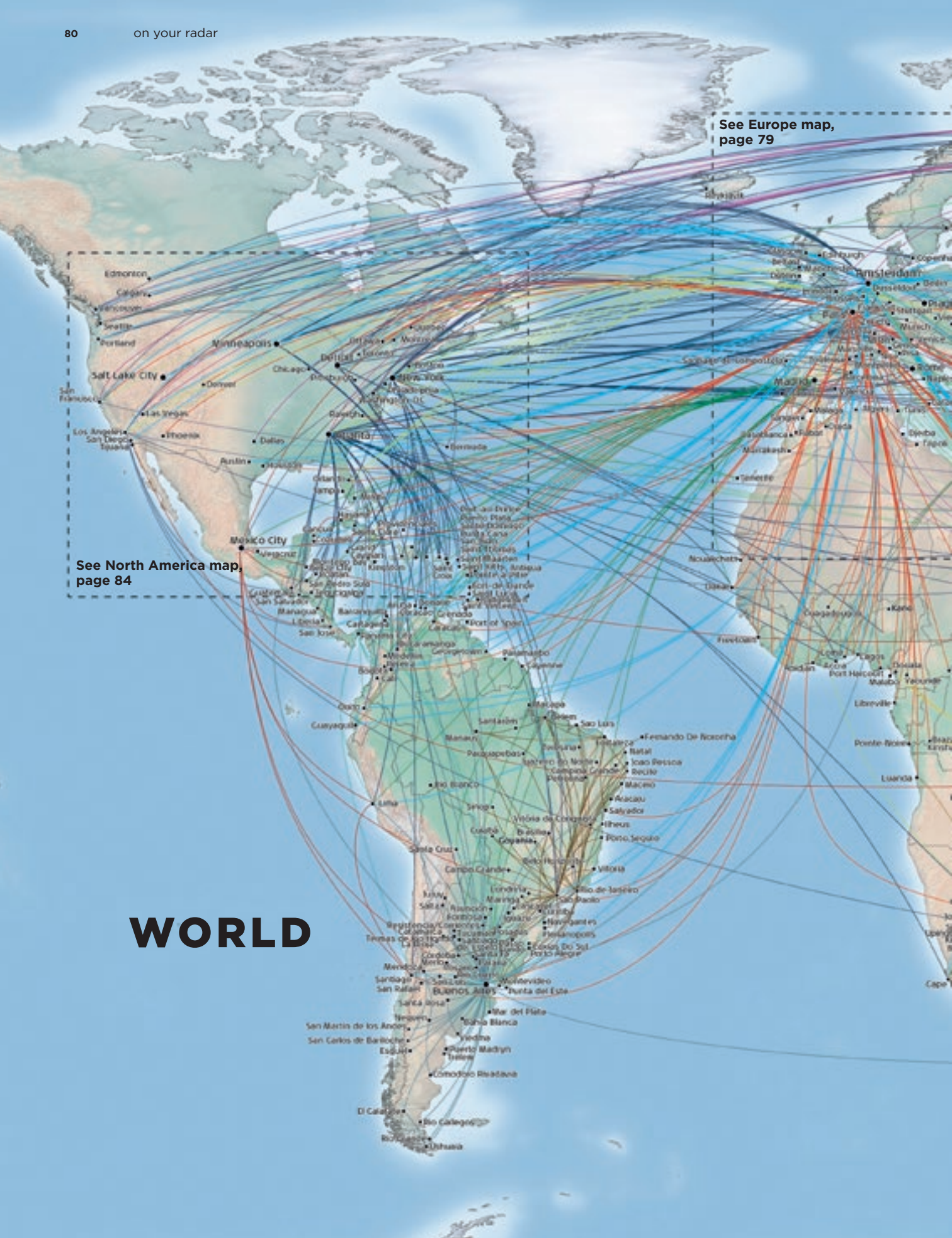
EUROPE

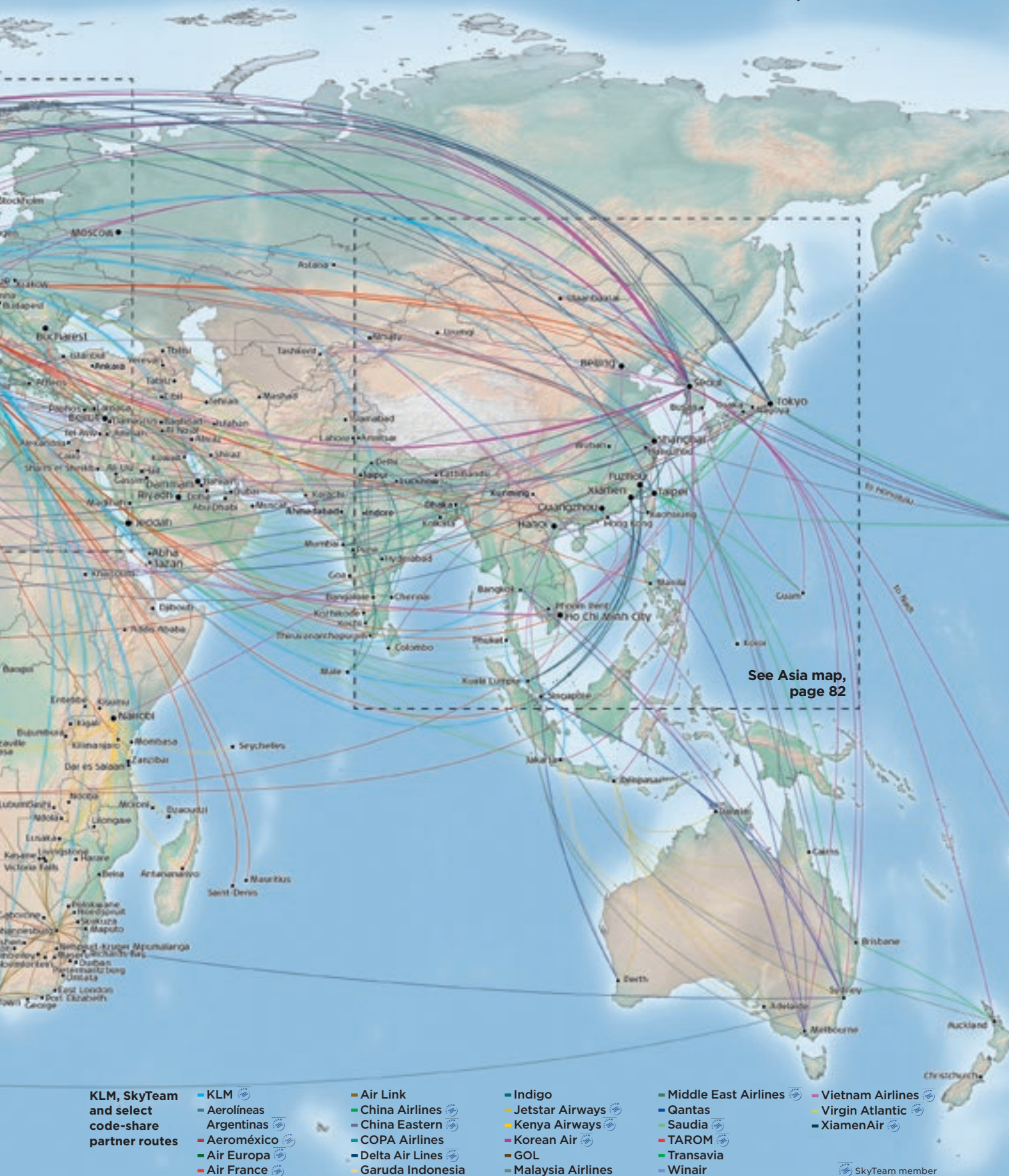


See Europe map,
page 79

See North America map,
page 84

WORLD





The lines are illustrative and do not represent the actual routes taken by the aircraft.

We do not currently fly over Russia or Ukraine.

We continuously adapt our network to changing circumstances, such as geopolitical developments.

Please check klm.com for the current schedule and routes.


ASIA







KLM routes, KLM
code-share routes
and other SkyTeam
destinations in
North America.

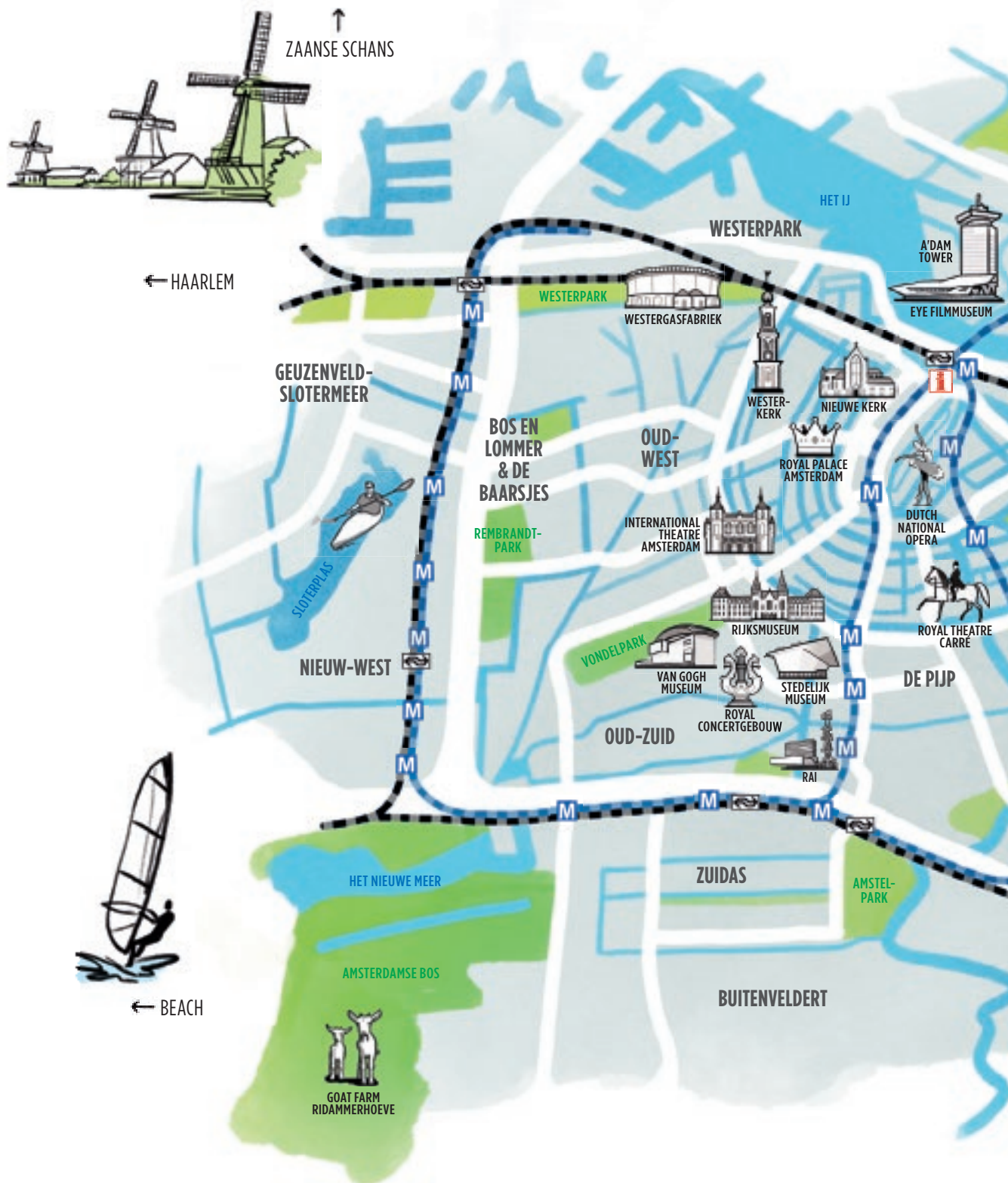
 SkyTeam member

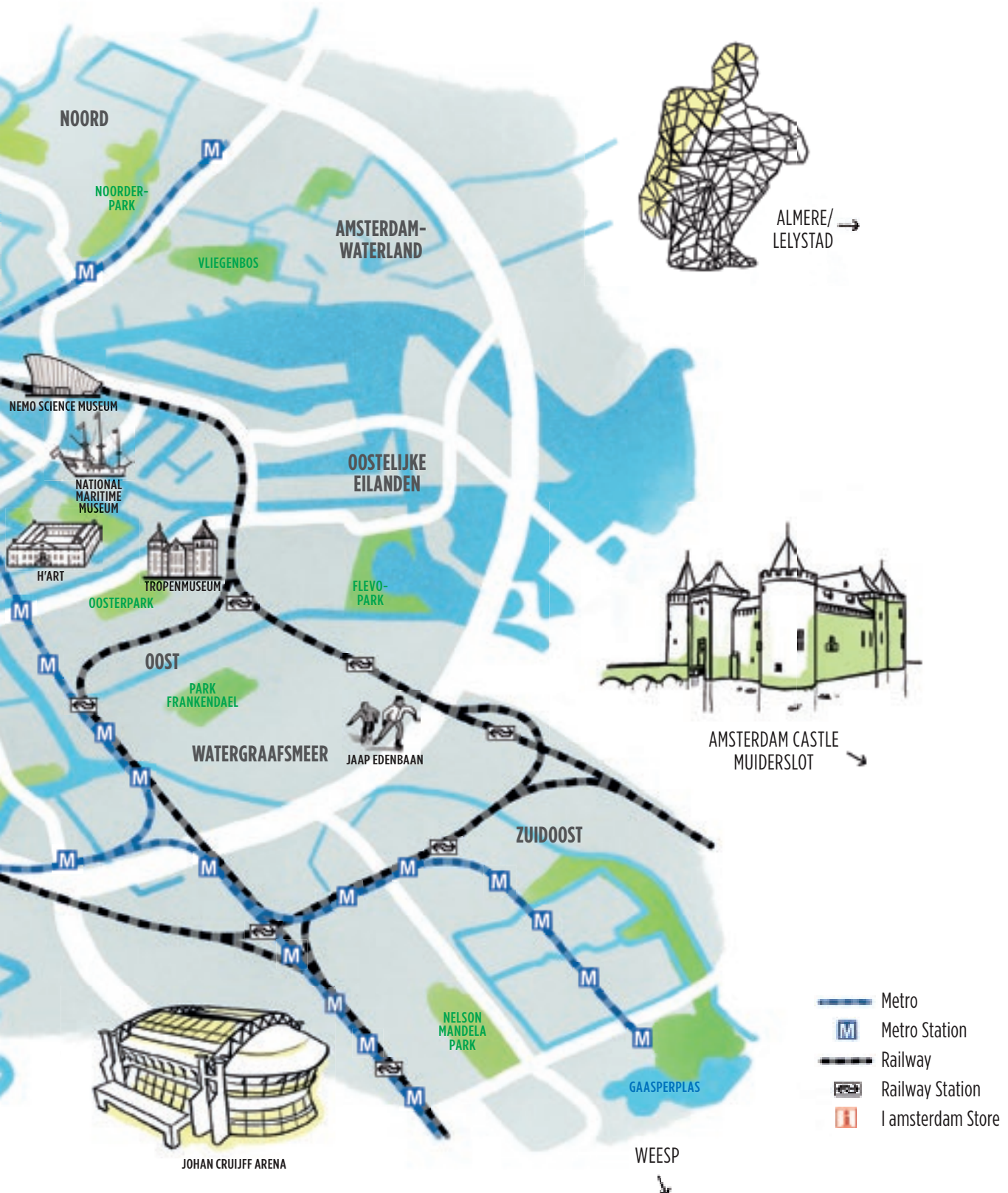
— KLM 
— Aeroméxico 
— Delta Air Lines 
— WestJet 

The lines are illustrative and do not represent the actual routes taken by the aircraft.



AMSTERDAM

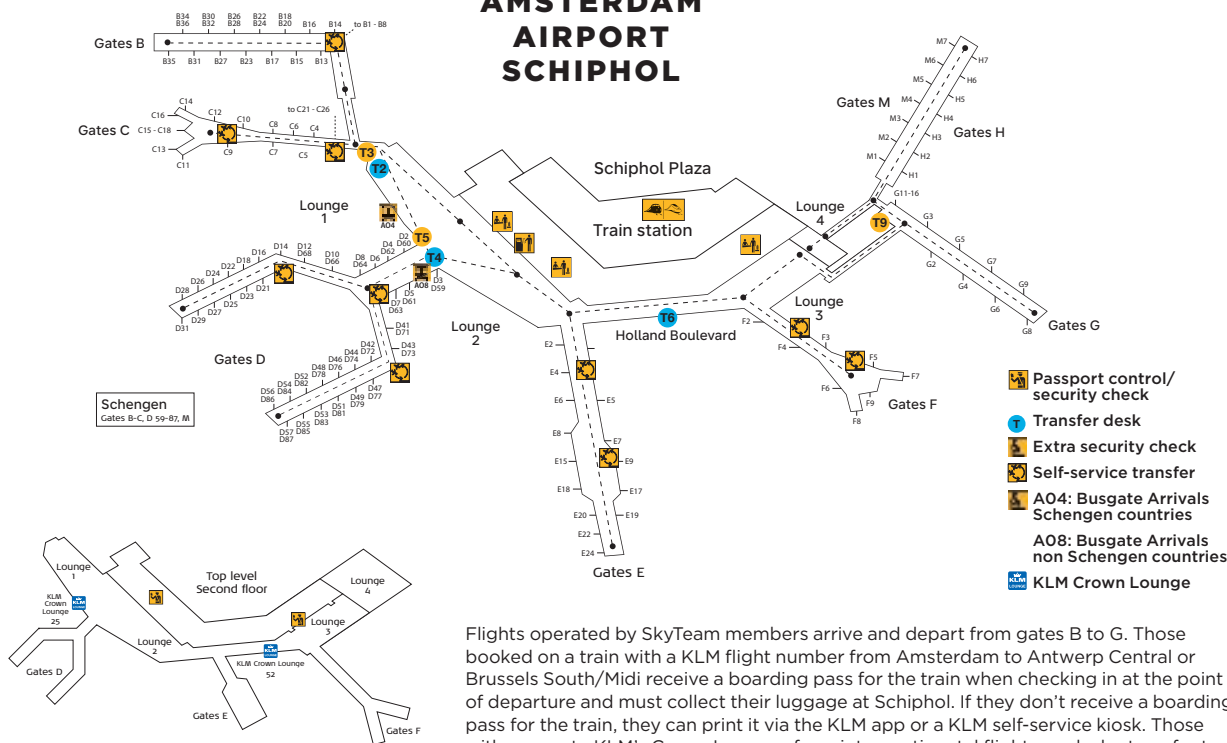




AIRPORT MAPS

The Netherlands

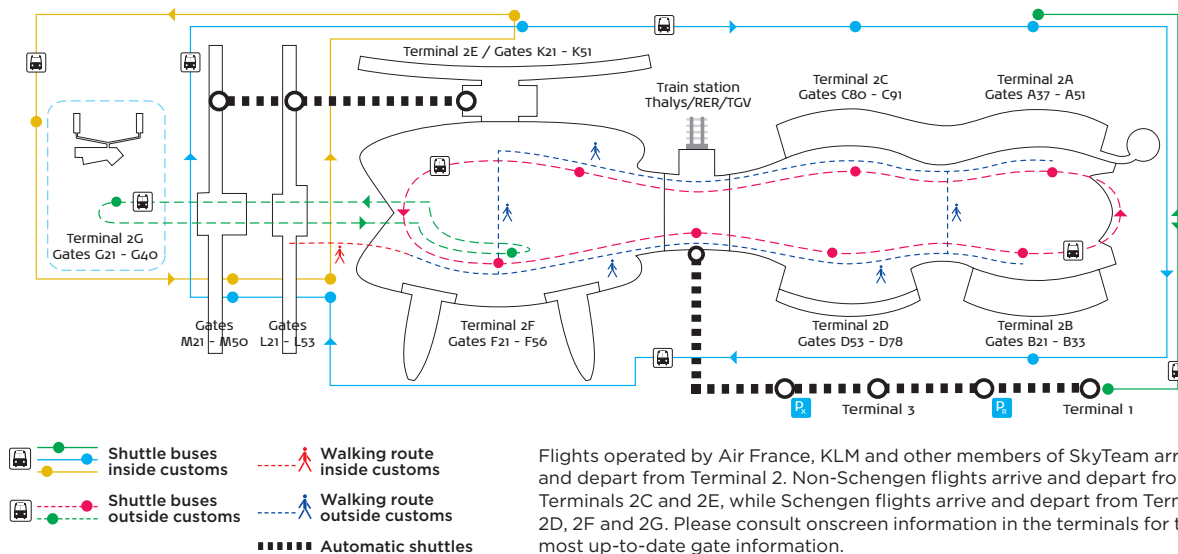
AMSTERDAM AIRPORT SCHIPHOL



Flights operated by SkyTeam members arrive and depart from gates B to G. Those booked on a train with a KLM flight number from Amsterdam to Antwerp Central or Brussels South/Midi receive a boarding pass for the train when checking in at the point of departure and must collect their luggage at Schiphol. If they don't receive a boarding pass for the train, they can print it via the KLM app or a KLM self-service kiosk. Those with access to KLM's Crown Lounges from intercontinental flights, and who transfer to European (Schengen) flights, can use Crown Lounge 25, beyond passport control.

France

PARIS CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT, TERMINAL 2



Flights operated by Air France, KLM and other members of SkyTeam arrive and depart from Terminal 2. Non-Schengen flights arrive and depart from Terminals 2C and 2E, while Schengen flights arrive and depart from Terminals 2D, 2F and 2G. Please consult onscreen information in the terminals for the most up-to-date gate information.

OUT OF THE BLUE



“Not only do they learn, they maintain their skills too”

Sanga Balaji

BUSINESS PRODUCT ANALYST SANGA BALAJI OVERSEES ALL DIGITAL LEARNING MATERIALS FOR KLM EMPLOYEES.

What does your job entail? KLM employees need to learn specific things or maintain a certain skill level. Together with a team of business product analysts, software engineers, a product owner and scrum master, we provide employees with digital tools so that they can complete certain types of training, such as online courses or learning-on-the-job methods. I ensure all the training materials can be accessed easily through digital platforms, and I'm always looking for additional resources that can help make the learning experience more personalised and effective.

Could you give an example? Take the Ground Services employees who work at the baggage belt. You have many types of luggage: bags that need a quick transfer, suitcases that are extremely heavy, luggage with 'handle with care' stickers. Every few months, employees log on to the system and complete a series of courses and scenarios to recognise and handle bags quickly. Not only do they learn, but they maintain their skills too.

Did you always want to work in the aviation industry? Not exactly. I grew up in Chennai, a city in the south

of India, and after I graduated from university, I wanted to do a master's abroad. So I came to the Netherlands and studied Management of Technology at the Delft University of Technology. After attending a talk given by a former KLM employee, I became interested in the company. As a child, I'd always tried to get a peek of the cockpit whenever flying, but apart from that, I'd never thought of the aviation industry. I applied for my job in 2023 and have been a part of KLM ever since. I like it in the Netherlands; it's cooler, which is a refreshing change from India.

ARUBA

Aruba



Pastechi

Due to its rich cultural heritage, Aruba has an array of signature dishes. One is *pastechi*, crescent-shaped deep-fried pastries with fillings such as cheese, beef, chicken or tuna; another is *stoba*, a Caribbean stew with a tomato-based gravy.

25°C

Aruba is warm in February, with temperatures peaking between 25°C and 30°C. The days boast plenty of sunshine, and the gentle breezes make it comfortable enough to go exploring outdoors.

Museums

Aruba's dynamic heritage has been primarily shaped by migrants who brought their cultures with them. This can be explored in places such as the Fort Zoutman Historical Museum and San Nicolas Community Museum. Art lovers should check out the vibrant street art in San Nicolas.

40

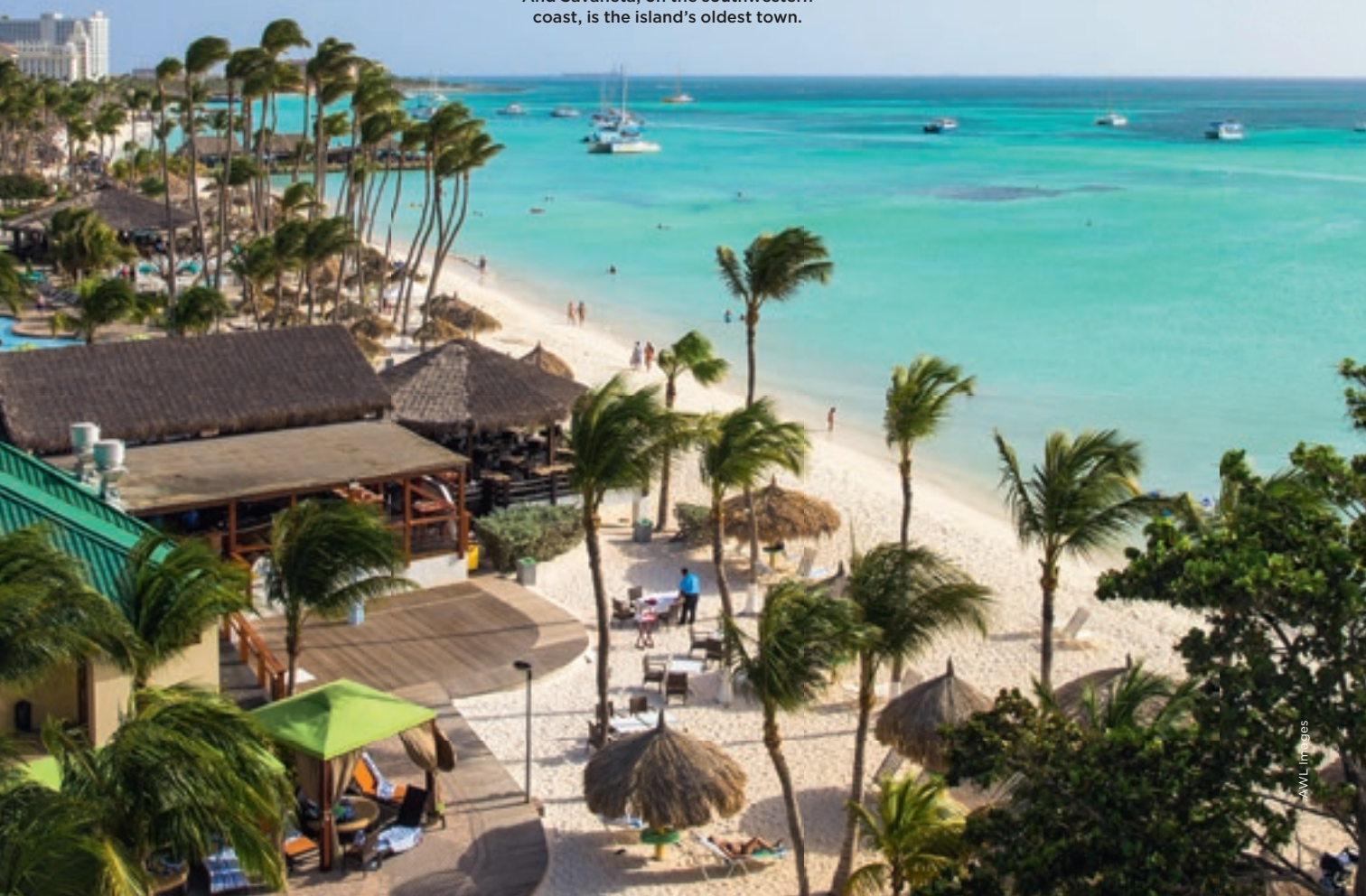
With around 40 beaches, there are plenty of places to lounge by, or swim in, Aruba's bright blue waters. Popular spots include Baby Beach, which is located in a calm cove, or Tres Trapi Steps and Mangel Halto beach, which are ideal for snorkelling.

Regions

Beyond the popular spots of Palm Beach and Oranjestad, Aruba has plenty to offer in other regions. Santa Cruz is home to rural areas as well as the protected Arikok National Park. And Savaneta, on the southwestern coast, is the island's oldest town.

4

Aruba's official dialects are Dutch and Papiamentu (which is unique to the ABC islands, and is a mix of Afro-Portuguese Creole, Dutch, English and Spanish). But most inhabitants speak at least four languages, such as Dutch, Papiamentu, English and Spanish.



Helping children in need at KLM destinations

Wings of Support is a non-profit initiative founded by KLM staff. Since 1998, we have supported over 1,000 local projects at KLM destinations worldwide, giving children in need access to education, shelter, and medical care. With overheads kept to a minimum, your support truly reaches the children who need it most.



Learn more, explore our projects, and support us at:
www.wingsofsupport.org



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