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The curved canals of Amsterdam are a key part of the city's charm and have been attracting plenty of attention recently as the central 17th-century canal belt was awarded UNESCO heritage status. With the annual Canal Festival starting on the 14th August 2010, the announcement couldn't have come at a better time. But regardless of the award or the festival, now is the time of year when Amsterdammers flock to the water's edge to dine, dance and relax in the sunshine. Book [flights to Amsterdam](#) and join them in embracing life by the water.

Canalside Cuisine

Some canal scenes are all about lingering – over a leisurely meal, for example. You can tantalise your taste buds with some outstanding French fare at De Belhamel as you dine on their terrace. But that's only half the allure. From this privileged spot at a T-shaped intersection you'll be able to see boats passing by the three directions. Or for some of the most sought-after seats in town, why not head to Spanjer en van Twist for some coffee and cake. Their tables are roughly a metre from the water. So you'll be in the ideal position to watch the boats bobbing by on the Leliegracht as you sip your coffee and savour a delicious apple cake.

Party on the Sand

If Ibiza is out of your price range this summer, then book a [flight to Amsterdam](#) instead and hit a city beach bar, where you can join Amsterdammers lolling about in the sun then partying the night away - all within view of the local waterways. Dig your toes in the sand and groove to tunes at Blijburg in the city's IJburg suburb. Or sip a cocktail under palm trees at Strand West, a short hop from the central train station.

Travel on the Canal Buses

You probably had one image in your head on your way to Amsterdam: You, relaxed, floating on a boat with the sun on your face. The fleet of glass- and open-topped Canal Buses will happily help you make this memory as you cruise the city's network of canals. As a bonus, you can hop on and off as you please allowing you to get the most from your Amsterdam experience.

Jump on a Canal Bike

For independent-types, exploring the canals at water level in a pedal-powered canal bike is ideal. You can splash around in the four-seater at your own pace and tool around the canal belt poking under bridges. Keep clear of the bigger boats and you'll be just fine! And don't forget, of course, that getting a little wet is all part of the fun.

Whether you're on a relaxing boat ride, drinking in a beach bar or watching a floating concert, you can't help but enjoy the canals on a trip to the Dutch capital. Book [flights to Amsterdam](#) to make the most of the famous - and now award-winning - 17th-century waterways.

You can also find this article published on [Enjoy Award-Winning Waterways When You Book Flights To Amsterdam This Summer](#), and on the tag pages [Book](#), [canals of amsterdam](#), [central train station](#), [time](#), [unesco heritage](#), [water](#).