

OFFICIAL VISIT GUIDE 2026

the Van Gogh Museum

Amsterdam · From 27€

https://vangoghmuseum.visit-tickets.com/en/ · Skip-the-Line Tickets & Official Prices



History & Experience

ORIGIN & HISTORY

From Private Archive to Global Icon

GOOGLE 4.6 ★★★★★ 106 132 reviews

TIQETS 4.8 ★★★★★ 10 392 reviews

The story of the Van Gogh Museum begins not with a grand opening, but with a profound act of preservation by **Johanna van Gogh-Bonger**. After the tragic deaths of both Vincent and his brother Theo, Johanna dedicated her life to protecting their legacy. She carefully curated a representative collection from the hundreds of works Theo had kept, ensuring that Vincent's artistic evolution would be understood in its entirety rather than as isolated masterpieces. This personal archive formed the nucleus of what would become the world's most significant repository of Post-Impressionist art.

For decades, this collection remained largely private, slowly gaining recognition among art historians who began to appreciate the radical nature of Vincent's work. It was only after World War II, under the stewardship of Johanna's son, **Vincent Willem van Gogh**, that the idea of a public museum took shape. The family recognized that such an intimate and comprehensive body of work belonged to the world, not just to a private lineage. In 1962, a historic agreement was signed between the Dutch state and the Van Gogh Foundation, transferring the collection to national care for a symbolic sum.

The museum itself opened its doors on **June 2, 1973**, housed initially in a building designed by Gerrit Rietveld. However, the true architectural marvel arrived later. In 1999, a stunning new extension designed by Kisho Kurokawa was inaugurated, seamlessly blending modern glass structures with the original brickwork. This expansion allowed for a more logical chronological presentation of the artist's life, creating a physical journey that mirrors his emotional and geographic travels from the Netherlands to France.

Today, the museum stands as a testament to the power of correspondence and visual narrative. It houses over **800 letters**, primarily those written to Theo, which provide an unparalleled window into Vincent's mind. These texts are not mere footnotes; they are integral to the experience, revealing the man behind the myth. The museum has evolved from a simple gallery into a global cultural icon, attracting millions who come not just to see paintings, but to witness the raw, unfiltered expression of a tortured genius.

THE EXPERIENCE

Stepping into the Van Gogh Museum feels less like entering a traditional institution and more like walking into Vincent's own diary. The atmosphere is charged with an intense, almost palpable energy. As you move through the chronological layout, the lighting shifts subtly to match the mood of each period—from the somber, earthy tones of his early Dutch years to the explosive, sun-drenched vibrancy of Arles. The architecture guides you gently, using light and space to create moments of reflection before overwhelming you with color.

Visitors often describe a sense of intimacy despite the crowds. The proximity of the **letters to Theo** displayed alongside the canvases creates a unique dialogue between text and image. You are not just observing art; you are witnessing a conversation across time. The air hums with the quiet reverence of people who have come to connect with one of history's most beloved figures. It is a place where silence speaks volumes, and every brushstroke feels like a heartbeat captured in oil paint.



PREPARING FOR YOUR VISIT

Practical Information

ADDRESS

Oud-Zuid · Metro: Museumplein (L52) or Tram: 1, 2, 5, 13 (Museumplein stop).

OPENING HOURS

Open daily from 10 am to 5 pm. Hours vary during school holidays and Dutch public holidays.

PRICES

Children under 18 free. {promo}.

VISIT DURATION

Allow approximately 2 hours for a complete and relaxed visit of the permanent collection and temporary exhibitions at the Vincent van Gogh Museum.

PHOTOS

Photography is generally allowed without flash for personal use, but prohibited in certain specific rooms or temporary exhibitions at the Van Gogh Museum.

AUDIENCE

Ideal for art lovers and families in Amsterdam. Note: The pace may be brisk for very young children without prior preparation about the artist.

HOW TO GET THERE

Access & Transportation

Metro / Tram

: Lijnbaansgracht — 8 min à pied

Central Station (12 min) · Gare du Nord (20 min)

Bus

: Leidseplein — 5 min à pied

Centraal Station (18 min) · Gare du Nord (32 min)

Car

Centraal Station (12 min) · Gare du Nord (23 min)

OV-fiets / Bike

Centraal Station (14 min) · Gare du Nord (29 min)

LOCALISATION

Où se trouve the Van Gogh Museum ?



📍 Van Gogh Museum, Museumplein 6 — 1071 DJ Amsterdam

🌐 52°21.485′ N, 4°52.872′ E



ORGANIZATION

A Chronological Journey Through Time

Level 1 (Ground Floor)

This level introduces the early years of Vincent van Gogh. You will encounter his dark, somber works from the Netherlands, including 'The Potato Eaters'. The rooms are dimly lit to reflect the mood of these pieces. Temporary exhibitions are also often hosted here, providing context or contrasting styles.

Level 2

Here, the palette brightens significantly as you enter the Parisian period. The walls explode with color as Vincent experiments with Impressionism and Pointillism. Key works include his portraits of parents and friends, showcasing his rapid technical evolution and engagement with contemporary art movements.

Level 3 & 4 (Upper Floors)

These levels cover the peak of his creativity: Arles, Saint-Rémy, and Auvers-sur-Oise. The famous 'Sunflowers' and 'Bedroom' are found here. The final room is dedicated to his last days, featuring turbulent landscapes like 'Wheatfield with Crows', offering a poignant conclusion to his artistic journey.

ACCESSIBILITY

♿ **Accessibility for people with reduced mobility**

Wheelchair accessible building, elevators available.

👪 **Families**

Suitable for accompanied children, but may be overstimulating for toddlers.

🎧 **Audio guide**

French, English, Spanish



Must-sees

SELECTION

Masterpieces That Define Modern Art

01 VINCENT VAN GOGH Early Years Room

The Potato Eaters

This dark, powerful painting marks Vincent's ambition to depict peasant life authentically. The rough textures and muted browns reflect his desire to show the harsh reality of rural labor. It stands in stark contrast to his later vibrant works.

> 💡 Vincent considered this his **first major success**, yet critics at the time found it repulsive due to its lack of conventional beauty.

02 VINCENT VAN GOGH Arles Period Room

Sunflowers

One of the most recognizable images in art history, these still lifes were intended to decorate Gauguin's room in the Yellow House. The varying shades of yellow demonstrate Vincent's mastery of color theory and his obsession with light.

> 💡 He painted multiple versions because he wanted to fill the house with **sunlight**, believing color could convey emotion more effectively than form.

03 VINCENT VAN GOGH Arles Period Room

The Bedroom

This intimate scene depicts Vincent's room in Arles with deliberate distortions in perspective to express restfulness. The bold reds and blues create a sense of calm yet underlying tension, reflecting his mental state during this period.

> 💡 Vincent claimed he wanted to express **absolute rest**, but the skewed lines suggest a mind that could never truly settle.

04 VINCENT VAN GOGH Saint-Rémy Period Room

Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear

Painted shortly after the infamous incident in Arles, this portrait shows Vincent looking pale but determined. The background features Japanese prints, highlighting his admiration for Eastern art and his attempt to maintain composure amidst crisis.

> 💡 He sent this image to his friend Émile Bernard, showing that even in pain, he remained focused on **artistic exchange**.

05 VINCENT VAN GOGH Auvers-sur-Oise Room

Wheatfield with Crows

Often cited as one of his last works, this painting exudes turmoil and isolation. The dark sky and ominous crows flying towards the viewer create a sense of impending doom, though recent scholarship suggests it may not be the absolute final piece.

> 💡 The open paths leading nowhere symbolize Vincent's feeling of being **trapped** with no way forward.

06 VINCENT VAN GOGH Saint-Rémy Period Room

Irises

Created during his stay at the asylum in Saint-Rémy, this vibrant floral study showcases his ability to find beauty in confinement. The swirling blue background contrasts with the sharp purple flowers, demonstrating his dynamic use of line and color.

> 💡 Vincent painted this from memory after seeing the irises in the garden, proving his incredible **visual recall**.

07 VINCENT VAN GOGH Throughout the Museum

Letters to Theo

These handwritten letters are displayed alongside the corresponding paintings, providing essential context. They reveal Vincent's thoughts on technique, philosophy, and his deep reliance on his brother. Reading them transforms the visit from visual to emotional.

> 💡 Theo was not just a financier but Vincent's **confidant**, receiving updates on every brushstroke and mood swing.

08 VINCENT VAN GOGH Arles Period Room

The Yellow House

This exterior view of Vincent's residence in Arles captures the optimism of his arrival in the south. The bright yellow facade reflects his hope for a community of artists, a dream that ultimately fractured but produced some of his greatest works.

> 💡 He referred to this house as his **'Atelier du Midi'**, envisioning it as a beacon for creative collaboration.

TIPS

Essential Tips for a Perfect Visit

TIMING

Arrive exactly at opening time (10:00 AM) or after 4:00 PM to avoid the massive tourist crowds that peak between noon and 2:00 PM. Weekdays are significantly quieter than weekends.

BILLET

Book your tickets online several weeks in advance. Slots sell out quickly, especially for morning visits. Do not rely on buying tickets at the door; they are rarely available.

PARCOURS

Follow the chronological order strictly. Skipping sections disrupts the narrative of Vincent's artistic evolution and makes it harder to understand the emotional context of later works.

PHOTO

Photography is allowed without flash in most areas, but check signs carefully. Some temporary exhibitions prohibit photos entirely. Respect these rules to avoid being asked to leave.

PAUSE

Take a break on the Museumplein terrace after your visit. Enjoy a coffee while admiring the architecture of the neighboring Rijksmuseum and Stedelijk, giving your eyes a rest from the intense colors.

ENFANTS

Children under 18 enter free, but prepare them beforehand. The pace can be brisk and the content emotionally heavy. Focus on the 'Sunflowers' and colorful periods to keep their interest.

AUDIOGUIDE

Consider renting the audio guide if you want deeper insights. It provides expert commentary that enriches the experience, particularly for understanding the technical aspects of his brushwork.

CONFORT

Wear comfortable shoes. The museum is large and requires considerable walking between thematic rooms. A relaxed pace is essential to fully absorb the details without fatigue.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQ

Is it possible to buy tickets on site?

No, tickets are only available online via our secure platform. You must book in advance as time slots are limited and sell out quickly, especially during peak tourist season between June and August.

What is the best time to avoid the crowds?

Avoid weekends and peak hours between noon and 2 PM when the rooms are packed. Opt for weekday mornings right at opening at 9:30 AM for a calmer, contemplative, and stress-free experience facing the masterpieces.

Are there reduced rates?

Yes, special rates exist for valid students and holders of the Dutch Museumkaart. Children under 18 years old get free entry, making this visit accessible to the whole family.

Do I need to book well in advance?

Absolutely. Tickets sell out quickly, particularly for the highly sought-after morning slots. Book several weeks before your visit if possible, especially in summer or during school holidays to guarantee your access to t

How long does it take to visit the museum?

Allow at least 2 hours for a complete visit of the permanent collection and temporary exhibitions. Take your time to read Vincent's moving letters to his brother Theo, preserved in the correspondence section.

DID YOU KNOW?

Anecdotes & curiosities

The Only Sold Painting

During his lifetime, Vincent sold only one painting: **'The Red Vineyard'**. It was purchased by Anna Boch, a Belgian artist and collector, for 400 francs. This single sale did little to alleviate his financial struggles, which were entirely supported by his brother Theo.

Johanna's Legacy

Without **Johanna van Gogh-Bonger**, the museum might not exist. After Theo's death, she tirelessly promoted Vincent's work, publishing his letters and organizing exhibitions. Her vision ensured that his art was seen as a cohesive whole rather than scattered curiosities.

Library of Knowledge

The museum houses a specialized library with over **24,000 books** on Van Gogh and 19th-century art. This resource is invaluable for researchers and enthusiasts wishing to delve deeper into the historical context of his work.

Influence on Modern Art

Van Gogh's expressive use of color directly influenced **Fauvism and Expressionism**. Artists like Matisse and Kandinsky drew inspiration from his bold strokes and emotional intensity, cementing his role as a precursor to modern abstract art.

AROUND THE MUSEUM

Located on the prestigious **Museumplein**, the Van Gogh Museum sits in the cultural heart of Amsterdam, flanked by two other giants: the Rijksmuseum and the Stedelijk Museum. This square offers a perfect setting for a post-visit coffee, allowing you to admire the Neo-Renaissance architecture while digesting your artistic immersion. Just steps away lies the **Vondelpark**, Amsterdam's largest green lung, ideal for a relaxing stroll amidst ancient trees and ponds. For dining, **Restaurant De Ploeg** offers a cozy spot directly opposite the museum, serving hearty Dutch cuisine with a view of the iconic building. Don't miss the nearby Concertgebouw, renowned for its acoustics, if you wish to extend your cultural day with classical music.



Leaving the Van Gogh Museum is never easy; it feels like stepping out of a dream back into reality. The colors seem duller, the world slower. Yet, you carry with you a renewed appreciation for the beauty in struggle and the power of human connection. Whether you are a seasoned art lover or a first-time visitor, this experience leaves an indelible mark. Remember to look closely at the **letters**; they hold the key to understanding not just the art, but the soul of the artist himself.