



AMSTERDAM PIPE MUSEUM

In November last year I had the chance to visit the Pipe Museum in Amsterdam. The museum is located at Prinsengracht 488 in 1017 KH Amsterdam. You enter the museum by walking down some stairs, which is very typical for most canal houses and pace through the pipe and tobacco shop, which is headed in front of the museum. The shop has a large selection of pipes from various worldwide manufacturers and carries a lot of tobacco as well.



From there you get via a staircase to the upper floor of the historic building from the 17th century, where the museum itself is located. Without a doubt one is astounded by the rooms which lie ahead. The main room of the museum is a hall lined with showcases on three walls full with most diverse pipes and curiosities. Light floods from the surrounding rooms and windows past the heavy and broad ceiling beams to the old floor boards on which a long table stands in the middle of the room surrounded by chairs. The museum fascinates with the historic building in which it has been established in, but even more with the upheld impression of living spaces by furniture and paintings according to the historic style.

At the beginning one can find exhibits, which show pipes from ancient South America, these can be dated back to 550 BC. Finally, tobacco which has its origin in America, was imported to Europe and other continents. A large part of the exhibition is dedicated to clay pipes. Clay pipes have a specific tradition in Europe, because they were the first types of pipes which were used here as smoking instruments for Knaster and tobacco.



You get a very polite and educational guided tour in the museum, which leads you through different periods and cultural areas around the globe where pipes are and have been smoked. These are for example, beside clay and porcelain pipes, meerschaum pipes, which originally came from the Osman Empire, partly as a pipe bowl of so called Gesteck or reservists pipes, parts as shorter pipes. A large part of the meerschaum pipes are being displayed next to artful painted porcelain pipes in a big beautiful cabinet in the room next to the main hall with calming green walls under the light of an impressive chandelier from where you have a nice view towards the channel in front of the house. Before the appearance of the nowadays familiar briar pipe the museum shows traditional wooden pipes from Africa. Subsequently there are examples of pipes from the Middle East, which are made out of different materials as well as metal. These pipes have been used in a way as pipes for the colder season, whereby the water pipe standing in immediate relation



with the oriental world has been used as a pipe for summer, because of the cool smoke it provides even in hot climate due to cold water inside them. There is also a large collection of pipes from Asia, for example Kiseru pipes from Japan or opium pipes from China, which have both very small smoking chambers, because they were intended for a short smoke only.

It is absolutely astonishing that this exceptionally large collection of pipes from different eras and countries has been put together by only one man, who made it possible for visitors to get a view on one of the most extraordinary collection in the world and learn about the history of smoking by his decision to turn his private collection into a museum. You can ask questions during the tour at any time and will always receive a very detailed answer. Beside the explanations referring to several tobacco pipes, their function and smoking qualities, one gets an explanation about tobacco its types and cuts as well.



It is very remarkable that, beside the website of the museum (www.pipemuseum.nl), there has been an online database, [Objectcatalogus](#), established, in which every pipe displayed in the museum can be found with pictures and related information.



This article should merely provide an impression on what to expect by visiting the Amsterdam Pipe Museum and give a rough summary on the exhibition and atmosphere of this impressive and very special place. A more precise impression you will only get especially for the unique pieces by a visit of the museum, which I can only highly recommend.

The entry price are 10 Euros for adults and 5 Euros for children between 6 and 18 years. The museum is opened from 12 to 18 o'clock from Monday to Saturday.

Under any circumstances this museum is captivating as well as impressive for every pipe smoker and should be part of one's journey to Amsterdam, nevertheless the museum and its topic is suitable for everybody, smoker or non-smoker, who is interested in art and culture.