

## jefffunnekotter (6) WEB FEED



### Albert Cuyp Market

Posted by [jefffunnekotter](#) 29 October 2011

Albert Cuyp Market began in 1904, along a wide street in the area of Amsterdam called De Pijp, just a five minute bike ride south of the city center.

It has 300 stalls, from cheap chic clothing to fresh fish, from bike accessories to huge amounts of flowers (10 roses for 5 Euros. Guys - it's never been cheaper to buy your way out of trouble).

It's a classic outdoor market, with various vendors barking out their specials all day while locals and tourists amble along and scarf down a fresh stroopwafel (thin syrup waffle) or fries. What it lacks in aesthetics - cheap-looking stalls atop dark grey gum-imprinted asphalt - it makes up for in products and in characters.

I personally get to experience the best and the worst of it. The best being tons of fresh, quality food about 90 seconds walk from my door, one street north of Albert Cuypstraat. This also includes the roasted chicken dripping off the spit, and the butcher who always has a spare bit of smoked turkey for our dog.

Tied for the tops are the people. The characters are real-life, seasoned market-hawkers - mostly very friendly, some gruff, always authentic and fair (this is not one of those markets where you haggle). They'll switch to speaking English in a second too. The old salty dogs selling an awesome variety of fish look like they caught it themselves that morning, and a faulty bike lock is replaced right away. You never feel jobbed (ahem, Istanbul and Barcelona markets - looking at you here).

The worst? The clattering fish and flower trolleys at 5:30 in the morning as they get set up for the day ahead, 6 days a week (the market is closed on Sundays). Ear plugs are a must for this time of day if you sleep anywhere near the market.

And the trash - the street is remarkably clean after 7pm as the city cleaning crews sweep it all up, but between 5 and 7 you can't imagine the heaps of trash and heaps of stink. (Of course, time your trip right at the end of the day and snag deals like 10 kiwis for 1.50Euros, and the stink is less than you think).

The next day, from a blank, flat slate, it rises all over again from the pavement. This is one of those places that you can't experience in many parts of the world.

[www.albertcuypmarkt.nl](http://www.albertcuypmarkt.nl)

Albert Cuypstraat, Amsterdam, Netherlands

+31 20 201 8800

Google map: [bit.ly/u1lhTR](http://bit.ly/u1lhTR)

\* Jeff is our Been there local for Amsterdam. You can read his profile here: [www.ivebeenthere.co.uk/articles/amsterdam-local-jeff-funnekotter.jsp](http://www.ivebeenthere.co.uk/articles/amsterdam-local-jeff-funnekotter.jsp) and follow his tips here: [www.ivebeenthere.co.uk/travellers/jefffunnekotter](http://www.ivebeenthere.co.uk/travellers/jefffunnekotter)

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## Bo Cinq

Posted by [jefffunnekotter](#) 31 August 2011

So you've walked (or stumbled) along the oh-so-touristy Leidseplein and its collection of pubs, clubs and cafes, all about as subtle as a pie in the face. Or maybe you're a return visitor to Amsterdam and you've grown a little wiser. Either way, you are looking for something better, cooler, and devoid of Eurotrash. I'd suggest you turn the corner and head to Bo Cinq.

A bar/lounge/restaurant on Prinsengracht, one of the main canals that make up the city center, Bo Cinq (I have no idea what that means - will have to check with them on my next visit) is a great spot for a drink or a bite to eat. Lined with red bricks on both sides of the long, low-ceilinged interior, this place just makes you 50% cooler and relaxed as soon as you walk in the door. The low-slung couches and chairs invite you to lean in or get close to people. If that's not your thing, the other room has a long bar made for standing and mingling.

The ambiance is great - toeing the line but staying well on the good side of pretentiousness, with good tunes and good-looking people hovering near the 30-year-old mark. The vibe is good for groups and singles, though you won't feel like you're in a meat market. Subtlety is the key to the place, in the food and the mood. Later in the evening, it fills up and the energy follows suit.

They have other things going on each week, including a canal boat tour that leaves from just outside its doors - check out the website: [bo5.nl/index.php](http://bo5.nl/index.php)

It's not cheap, mind you, with pricey cocktails appetizers that are a little too precious for my taste - they quality is great, but one might prefer some heartier fare when having a few drinks. But overall it's well worth a visit.

(Tip: if you want to use your phone here or you're waiting for an SMS that hasn't come, head outside for a moment. Inside, you're surrounded by too much brick and only the heartiest of mobiles will have a signal).

[bo5.nl/](http://bo5.nl/)

Prinsengracht 494, 1017 KH Amsterdam  
+31 20 622 0682

\* Jeff is our Been there local for Amsterdam. You can read his profile here: [www.ivebeenthere.co.uk/articles/amsterdam-local-jeff-funnekotter.jsp](http://www.ivebeenthere.co.uk/articles/amsterdam-local-jeff-funnekotter.jsp) and follow his tips here: [www.ivebeenthere.co.uk/travellers/jefffunnekotter](http://www.ivebeenthere.co.uk/travellers/jefffunnekotter)  
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## Amsterdam Public Library

Posted by [jefffunnekotter](#) 4 August 2011

A bit of a nerd alert here ... the following post deals with a place many of us haven't visited since grade school - so feel free to fast-forward if you are not a fan of the literary arts. The rest of us will geek out at places like Bibliotheek Amsterdam - an architectural and bibliotheq-lical wonder located about five minutes walk from Amstedam's Centraal Station.

It's part of what might be called the "new" Amsterdam. "Old" Amsterdam buildings are the homes, bridges, and cobblestone streets from the past several centuries - beautiful, quaint, happily cramped, and the stuff that most of us see on postcards. What is less often seen is the really cool and modern interior/exterior design that also permeates the city.

Overlooking the water and the entire city to the south, the main central library cost 80 million Euros to build and is easily the coolest library you've ever seen, seemingly intended as much for the tourist as for the student.

The lighting and layout - seven floors in total - evokes an Apple store-ish feel, with several hundred Mac displays and hundreds of quiet corners to read or study.

Occasionally, you'll be able to catch a concert here, with a piano player or singer belting out tunes on a given afternoon, in addition to cultural events like art openings. If you're handy with it, you can simply sit down at the piano on the main floor and tickle the ivories.

Any time of day, you can head to the affordable chicness of Vapiano attached to the front of the building, or head to La Place on the 7th

floor for all meals (tip: get the Thai stir-fry for lunch) or a dessert and a coffee, with sweet views and photo ops of the entire city.

[www.oba.nl](http://www.oba.nl)

Oosterdoksade 143, 1011 DL Amsterdam

+31(0)20 523 0800

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## Tomatillo

Posted by [jefffunnekotter](#) 4 August 2011

When strolling around Amsterdam, one is amazed at the sheer number of sandwich shops. From gourmet to barely OK, the "broodje" is as ubiquitous here as raindrops and smelly cheese. It's fine - for the first few weeks - but you soon begin to dread the bread.

Enter Tomatillo. Their slogan is "Beyond the Broodje", and they couldn't have done a better job of adding something to the Dutch lunch (and dinner) table. Their Tex-Mex menu offers everything from burritos to tacos to tostadas, washed down with a cool Dos Equis or Negro Modelo and followed up with an amazing brownie or rhubarb crumble. All entrees are under 10 Euros, which helps the digestive system too.

It's all made fresh, tastes great, and friends from the UK and the States who know about such things claim it is one of the best places they've been to in town. I'll second that - I've tried everything on the menu.

You can sit down here, order a delivery, or just as easily take it away and turn the corner and park yourself on the grass in Vondelpark, not more than 200m away.

Overtoom 261, 1054 HW Amsterdam

+31(0)206833086

[www.tomatillo.nl](http://www.tomatillo.nl)

Open 12:00-21:00 (closed Mondays)

Google map: [bit.ly/pSwwdC](http://bit.ly/pSwwdC)

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## Beatrix Park

Posted by [jefffunnekotter](#) 11 July 2011

Most travelers to Amsterdam will have heard about Vondelpark, the city's answer to New York's Central Park (on a much smaller scale, of course). We'll revisit the pleasures of Vondelpark in a later post, but for now let's fast forward to a lesser-known urban green space called Beatrix Park.

Located south of the city and nestled behind the RAI Conference Center, it's an easy 15-minute ride from the city center along the Amstel River (or even quicker if you head down the center of the map along Ferdinand Bolstraat), Beatrixpark is an absolute gem. It is in direct contrast to the blanket-to-blanket crowd shoehorned into Vondelpark.

At Beatrixpark – named after the Dutch Queen Beatrix - you can park yourself on the grass along the canal, watching boaters on their sloops putter along, or head to the center of the park with more quiet corners, tree-lined trails and open space than you can imagine in this busy city. The park itself has quite a history, starting off in the 1930s and undergoing a brief identity change with the Nazi occupation before resuming its Beatrixness. It really feels like a neighbourhood playground, complete with the coolest swingset you or your kids have ever seen. It even has a group to ensure its heritage and beauty stay intact, the Friends of Beatrixpark:

[www.vriendenbeatrixpark.nl/html/nieuws/home.html](http://www.vriendenbeatrixpark.nl/html/nieuws/home.html).

Station-Zuid WTC, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Walk/Bike - from the RAI congress centre, facing the main entry to the right and turn left direction the Amstelhal of the RAI. Pass in front of this building and behind the canal you will see the park - it is located at the rear all exhibit halls.

Tram - line 5, exit on the Beethovenstraat - stop Stadionweg; walk left along Stadionweg, turn right into the Diepenbrockstraat. Cross the bridge. There will be two small passages into the park on your right – they are located at the number 15 and the number 9 of the street. It is about 5 minutes walking from the tram stop.

Car: exit the A10 ring on the RAI exit. Drive into the city in front of the RAI congress centre, turn left direction the Diepenbrockstraat; continue for 200m and you will see the park on your left. Metered parking in the street.

Google map: [bit.ly/pmKgVv](http://bit.ly/pmKgVv)

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## Café Loetje

Posted by [jefffunnekotter](#) 6 July 2011

Amsterdam is known for many things, but a good steak is definitely not one of them. But there is a gem to be found just south of the city centre named Café Loetje. Skip the dime-a-dozen "Argentinian steakhouses" that dot the tourist areas - they don't come close to matching Loetje (pronounced "loot-yuh").

Cooked only one way – rare (you could ask for it differently, but you then risk betraying your outsider status) – and served in a light gravy with fries and a side salad, the steak is a favourite among locals and the location in a residential neighbourhood provides a respite from the tourist masses. While everyone else ambles back to the centre or the city, head here after a day at the nearby Van Gogh museum. Price-wise, it is quite reasonable.

The staff are busy but refreshingly friendly, the atmosphere casual, noisy and clean, and they won't take reservations for less than six people, but standing around with a beer or wine while waiting for your table to become available is part of the fun. To add to the casual atmosphere, you may see a dog or two lying around. As for what to order ... other menu items look just as tasty, but you don't want to make a mistake and miss steak.

[www.cafeloetje.nl](http://www.cafeloetje.nl)

Johannes Vermeerstraat 52

+31 (0) 20 6628173

Google map: [bit.ly/nPyyhU](http://bit.ly/nPyyhU)

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