

Public transports

Schiphol Airport

If you travel from or to the Netherlands by plane, you will probably enter the country via Schiphol Airport. The fourth largest airport in Europe is located a few kilometers outside the city center of Amsterdam with excellent public transport connections to Utrecht. More information can be found on: <https://www.schiphol.nl/Travellers/ToFromSchiphol.htm>

By train – Schiphol station is situated directly below the airport. You can pick up a free baggage trolley from the platform. Via Schiphol Plaza, you can walk straight to the departure or arrival hall. Trains to Utrecht leave approximately every 15 minutes from platform 1 or 2. Traveling takes around 30 minutes and costs €8.50 one-way.

You can travel on NS (the Dutch Railways) with either a single-use chipcard or an OV-chipkaart (more information see below). Both are available from the yellow ticket machines with the blue overhead sign reading 'traintickets'. OV-chipkaart cardholders can also use the ticket machines with the yellow overhead sign. The ticket machines are located near the platforms at Schiphol Plaza. Tickets (for domestic and international travel) are also available from the Ticket- and Service desks, which are situated close to the red/white-checked cube at Schiphol Plaza. Staff at the desk will also be able to provide you with train departure information and general information on travelling by train in Holland. You travel by checking in and out at the train station before and after your journey. For more information please check the NS website: www.ns.nl/en.

Night train – If you are departing/arriving at night or in the early morning, the NS night network could be the answer. The night trains travel once an hour between Utrecht CS - Amsterdam CS - Schiphol - Leiden CS - Den Haag CS - Delft and Rotterdam CS and vice versa. If it is not possible for you to travel by night train, then why not take a look at the service provided by [Schiphol Travel Taxi](#).

Intercity direct – With Intercity direct, the Amsterdam Airport City Centre Train you can travel between Schiphol, Amsterdam CS, Rotterdam CS and Breda. With Intercity directs' high-speed service you will reach your destination faster than domestic trains. You can find more information and tickets at <http://www.ns.nl/en/travellers/home>.

The OV-chipkaart

You need an OV chip card to pay for your public transport costs in Utrecht and elsewhere in the Netherlands.

Dutch public transport requires a so-called OV-chipkaart, a smart card that can be used for bus, tram, train and metro services. Since there is no specific OV-chipkaart for tourists, we recommend using either a single-use chipcard or an 'anonymous OV-chipkaart'. The single-use chipcard has limited validity and can be used to travel on bus/tram/metro lines in a single city. If you want to travel by train, you can buy a different single-use chipcard that is valid on the train for your specified itinerary only. If you are staying in Holland for more than a few days and plan to travel by public transport more frequently, we recommend the anonymous OV-chipkaart as the best and most economic ticket for your trips since it can be used for all public means of transport in Holland.

Buying a chipcard – You can buy single-use chipcards or an anonymous OV-chipkaart at public transport service desks, from ticket vending machines in stations, at tobacco shops (such as Primera), and in several supermarkets. OV-chipkaart points of sale carry the pink OV-chipkaart logo.

Charging credit to your anonymous OV-chipkaart – An anonymous OV-chipkaart costs €7.50 but comes without travel credit. The kilometer rate is €0.128 eurocents; the check-in fee is €0.88. You can charge credit to the anonymous OV-chipkaart at a service desk or a ticket vending machine at many stations. Please note that methods of payment may vary! Once charged, you can use the anonymous OV-chipkaart directly for your bus, tram and metro trips. It is not, however, suitable for use on the train yet!

Using an anonymous OV-chipkaart on the train – If you want to travel by train, you first have to activate your anonymous OV-chipkaart for railway travel at an NS ticket vending machine. Another important thing is to have at least 20 euros worth of credit on your anonymous OV-chipkaart when you plan to travel by train (not required for bus, tram or metro). If you do not have an anonymous OV-chipkaart, you can also buy single-use chipcards from NS ticket vending machines or service desks, for instance for a one-way, return or day ticket. Please note that a single-use chipcard from an NS service desk costs 1 euro extra.

Credit card payment possible! – You can charge credit to your anonymous OV-chipkaart at a public transport service desk or a ticket vending machine at many stations. Methods of payment vary per machines but you can generally use your credit card or your PIN-pas (debit card), and in some cases cash.

Check in and out – When boarding a bus, tram, metro or train, hold your single-use chipcard or anonymous OV-chipkaart in front of the ticket reader. The green light and beep signal indicate that your card has been read. When you get off, hold your card in front of the ticket reader once again to check out. The display shows the credit used and how much credit is left on the card. Please don't forget to check out since the meter will keep running if you don't! Finally, do also not forget to check in! Coming across the ticket inspectors without a valid ticket it will cost you 47,50€.

Validity and credit – Your anonymous OV-chipkaart remains valid for five years. On virtually every anonymous OV-chipkaart, the expiration date is printed on the card. You can save your anonymous OV-chipkaart until you return to Holland. Any credit on the card will remain valid as well.

If you want to claim the credit remaining on the card (and there is less than 30 euros worth of credit on the card), you can go to a public transport service desk. There is a 2.50 euro administration fee. If you want to terminate the anonymous OV-chipkaart, request a form at one of the public transport service desks. Fill out the form, enclose the anonymous OV-chipkaart in the envelope and send your form and card to the address specified on the form.

Please note that you cannot block the anonymous OV-chipkaart in case of loss or theft, so don't put too much credit on the card!

Getting around in Utrecht

If you want to explore Utrecht, we definitely recommend using the public transport system. Not only is it the most practical way to get from A to B; it is also the cheapest way to get around (apart from walking or cycling, of course). There are regular bus services, so you never have to wait for long.

On Foot - The cheapest and easiest option, Utrecht city centre is small enough so reach everything on foot. From Utrecht central station you can access the city centre by walking through the attached Hoog Catharijne shopping centre. From the exit make your way to the Oude Gracht (old canal) and imposing Dom tower at the heart of the old centre. Just watch out for the cobbled streets and cyclists!

Buses - These can be useful if you need to head to the outer areas of the city. Buses are operated by U-OV (Qbuzz, owned by NS Dutch railways, <http://u-ov.info/plan-mijn-reis/visit-utrecht-area/>), which runs 30 bus lines around the city. There are a number of bus stop areas around Utrecht central station although these are changing regularly due to ongoing station renovations.

Bus drivers only stop if you show your intention to enter, e.g. by waving! Enter a bus always at the front, by the driver. Check in with your OV-chip card or by a ticket directly. You just get in the front of the bus and announce where you're heading. On request, most drivers will give you a signal in case you're not too sure of what your destination looks like.

Some places of interest to visit which may require a bus ride are the Rietveld Schroder House museum (line 4) and Utrecht FC football stadium (line 12). In addition, bus line 2 is a useful circular route which travels around the museum quarter.

Utrecht Bus Tickets: U-OV buses use the OV-chip card public transport smart card system. A one-time single (U-OV reiskaart) costs €2.70 which can be bought from the driver. Alternatively, use the e-purse on a personal or anonymous OV-chip card - this costs €0.88 (boarding fee) + €0.128 per km - you must check-in and -out of your journey. After 18:00 on Thursday and Friday or the whole weekend can the single U-OV reiskaart be used as a return ticket.

If you wish to travel for one day or several days to various places in the municipality of Utrecht, including Leidsche Rijn and Haarzuilens, the U-OV Dagkaart (Day Ticket) Utrecht is the ideal ticket for you. The U-OV Dagkaarten are sold at the U-OV Service point in the hall of Utrecht Centraal.

| Valid for | Price for adults | Price for children aged 4 to 18 |
|-----------|------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 day | € 6.00 | € 4.00 |
| 3 days | € 10.00 | € 8.00 |
| 5 days | € 13.50 | € 11.50 |

Train - Utrecht Central is the main station of the city. The station is integrated with the Hoog Catharijne shopping center at the North. To the South is the exit to the Jaarbeurs exhibition complex. There are a number of smaller stations out in the suburbs which can be reached using various stopping trains - Utrecht Leidsche Rijn, Utrecht Lunetten, Utrecht Maliebaan, Utrecht Overvecht, Utrecht Terwijde and Utrecht Zuilen.

Tram - There is a U-OV sneltram light-rail service from Utrecht Central which runs to the satellite towns of Nieuwegein and IJsselstein, a few kilometres south of the city. It is perhaps not of great use to visitors - however the first stops are close to the Utrecht Geld (Money) Museum and the Jaarbeurs exhibition centre - though both are easily walkable from the station. OV-chip cards must be scanned at readers on the tram platforms rather than on board.

Cycling - As in most Dutch cities, Utrecht has an extensive network of dedicated cycle lanes. Thousands of people visit the centre by bike each day - especially during the morning rush hour. There are a number of bike rental shops in Utrecht centre - for example, Fietspunt at Nobelstraat 293 (T: +31(0)30 230 0849) charges €8 for a 24 hour rental - note it is closed on Sundays. There are also OV-fiets outlets around the station which also rent standard bikes.

Canal cruises – If you want to explore the city from the water but do not feel like paddling or cycling on a pedal boat, simply book a canal cruise. Sail through the canals in the centre on a traditional waterbus, a nostalgic sloop or try an authentic Venetian gondola. See the cruise options here: <http://www.visit-utrecht.com/en/content/canal-cruises>.

Taxis are available at most tourist hubs. Costs are approximately €3 entry fee and €2 per km (e.g. Utrecht Central Station to Hotel Mitland ~€15). Please note: Hotel Mitland offers a taxi service from the hotel to the city centre.