



Gemeente
Amsterdam

Regulation, Policy, Challenges

Managing tourism in Amsterdam 2021-2025

May 2025





Tourism in Balance Amsterdam Regulation

20 million

REGULATION

- The "Tourism in Balance Amsterdam Regulation" is a policy adopted by the Amsterdam City Council in July 2021, following the citizen initiative "Amsterdam has a choice." Its primary aim is to maintain a sustainable balance between residents, businesses, and visitors by managing the impact of tourism on the city's livability.

10 million

PROMOTION



Tourism in Balance Amsterdam Regulation

20 million

REGULATION

- **Visitor Limits:** The regulation sets a target range of 10 to 20 million tourist overnight stays per year. If the number approaches 18 million (a predefined threshold), the municipal executive is required to propose measures within six months to prevent surpassing the 20 million cap.
- **Hotel Policy:** To control accommodation capacity, the city has implemented a policy that restricts the development of new hotels. New hotel projects are only permitted if an existing hotel closes, ensuring that the total number of hotel rooms does not increase.

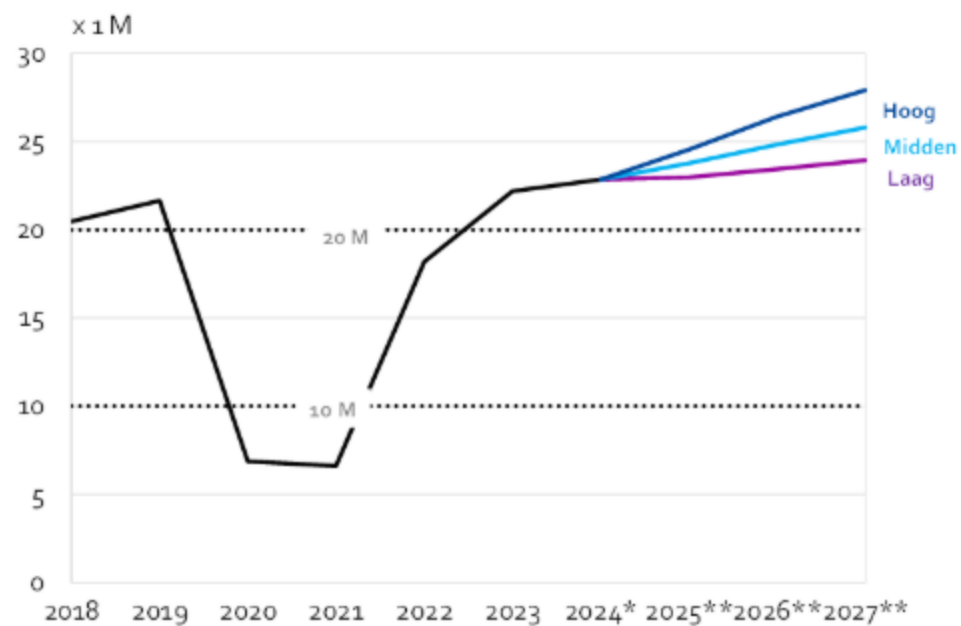
10 million

PROMOTION



20 million?

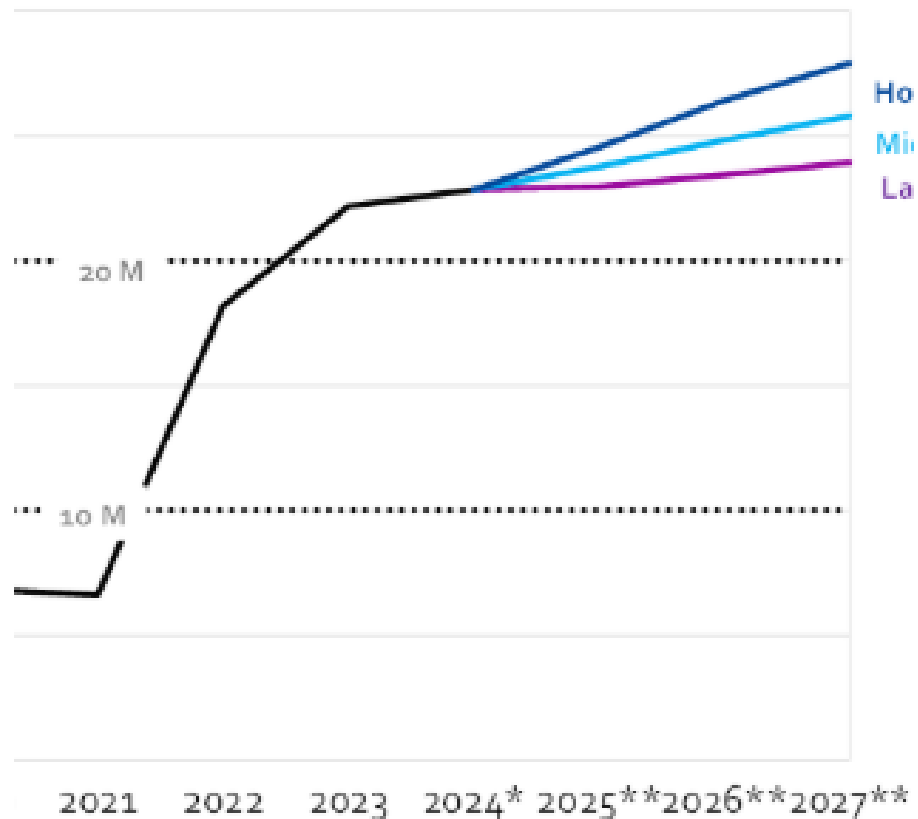
Figuur 1 Toeristenovernachtingen in Amsterdam 2018-2027, in miljoenen, in drie scenario's



* voorlopige cijfers. ** bezoekersprognose mei 2025.



Visitor numbers in Amsterdam exceeding the 20 million limit



* voorlopige cijfers. ** bezoeker



2024

- 22,9 million overnight stays
- 9,7 million overnight visitors
- 25,6 million day visitors



Forecast 2027

- Between 23,9-27,9 overnight stays



Challenges

"In 2021, the city council almost unanimously adopted a proposal that originated from a citizen initiative which had gathered over thirty thousand signatures. The agreement: if the number of tourist overnight stays exceeds twenty million, the city administration must take action. If you don't adhere to that agreement, you must either amend it or still comply with it. Currently, neither is happening."

May 26nd 2025





Tourism policy development in 2021-2025: what have we been doing?



- **Regulating Tourist Accomodations**

Amsterdam has implemented a **hotel- and bed cap** to prevent further growth in overnight stays. **Quotas for B&Bs** have been set per district, and rules for **short term rentals** have been tightened. The **tourist tax** has been increased to **12,5% per night**, making it one of the highest in Europe.

- **Managing Mobility and Cruise Tourism**

The number of **river cruises** allowed into the city has been halved (from 2,300 to 1,150), and a **maximum of 100 sea cruises** per year is now in place, with just one berth in the city. In the longer term, the **Passenger Terminal Amsterdam** will move away from it's current location behind central station. The **day tourist taks for cruise passangers** has increased from **€8 to €14**. **Tour buses** are now banned from the city centre.

- **Tackling Nuisance and Guiding Tourist Behaviour**

In high-pressure areas like the Red Light District, **cannabis smoking bans** and **earlier closing times for bars and nightlife venues** have been introduced. Campaigns such as "**Stay Away**", now "**Amsterdam Rules**" aim to discourage unwanted tourist behaviour and promote respectful visits.



Tourism policy development in 2021-2025: what have we been doing?



- **Spatial Diversification and Combating Monoculture**

To counteract the **tourism-driven monoculture** in the city centre, Amsterdam introduced a **zoning plan for retail diversity**: new shops aimed solely at tourists are no longer allowed. Simultaneously, we want to **spreading leisure attractions** and invest in attractive new neighborhoods across the city to encourage visitors to explore beyond the centre.

- **Long-Term Vision and Urban Transformation**

Since 2020, Amsterdam has been working on the **City Centre Approach**, purchasing properties, expanding housing and strengthening cultural and social institutions and the local economy. Our **Vision on Tourism 2035** (adopted in 2022), as well as the **Regulation for Tourism in Balance**, provide the framework for a more sustainable, inclusive and livable city – for residents and visitors alike.



Tourism Policy Amsterdam

Local instruments



- **Tourism Policy** works with a large set of local **regulations and instruments**. All measures and interventions. Traditionally, tourism policy focused mainly on the economic domain or on **marketing strategies**. That's no longer the case. Tourism policy is evolving and becoming more "mature," now encompassing areas such as housing, spatial planning, urban development, retail and real estate strategies, and taxation. **It's truly a holistic approach.**





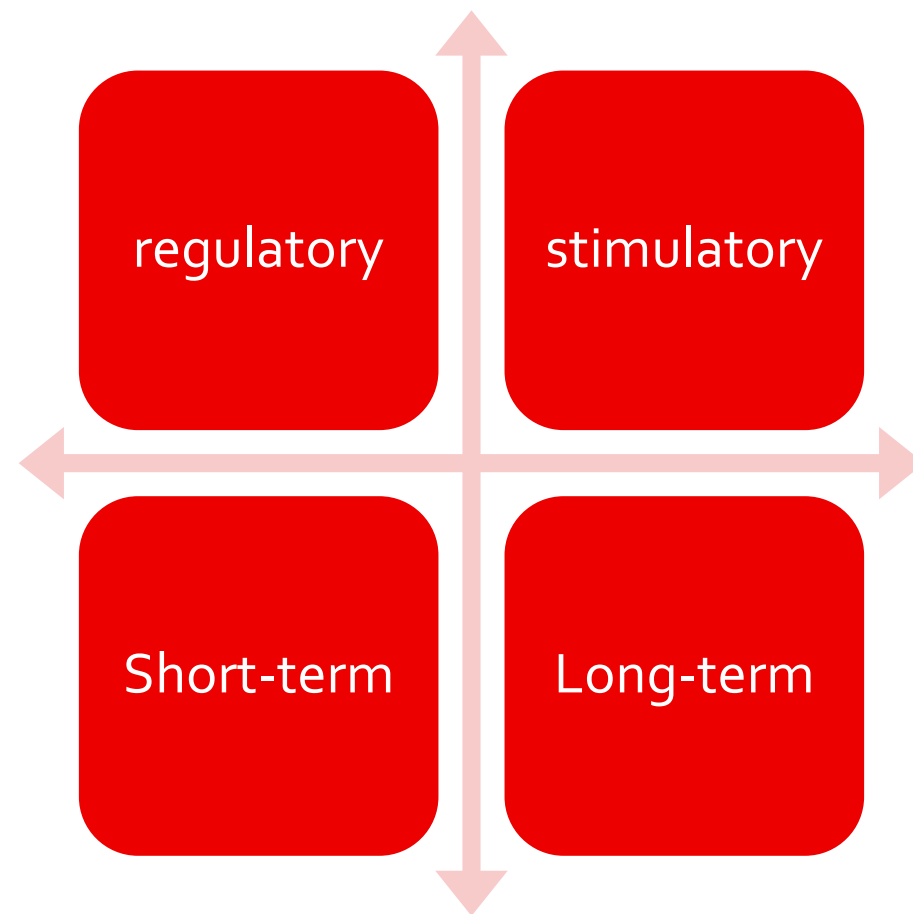
Tourism Policy Amsterdam

What does a 'balanced approach' look like?



- To achieve a more **balanced approach** to tourism, we need policies that are both **regulatory** and **stimulatory**. This means making deliberate choices about the kind of visitor economy we want to foster — and recognizing which forms of tourism are harmful to our cities. While some measures are designed to provide **short-term** relief from nuisance and overcrowding, many others aim to drive **long-term** transformation towards a more sustainable and balanced tourism model.

Balanced Tourism





Back to reality

Main challenges for managing tourism as a city



- Rapidly increasing visitor numbers
- Limited tools and authority at the local level
- Insufficient resources to implement comprehensive measures
- Growing resident discontent and protest
- Legal constraints that restrict local policymaking
- Strained relations with the tourism industry due to strict regulations
- Slow and complex transition toward sustainable tourism
- External factors and global dynamics beyond municipal control
- Increasing pressure on housing markets in many cities
- Rapid decline in retail diversity and loss of local shops
- Deterioration and overuse of cultural heritage sites
- And so on...





European Alliance on
Balanced Urban Tourism