

A Luxury Travel Blog

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Cheese tasting at the Reypenaer Tasting Rooms in Amsterdam

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We stepped out of one of the ubiquitous Amsterdam canal boats onto the cobblestone path which ran beside the scenic canal. Many-leveled warehouses with big windows which had been converted to homes and apartments overlooked the canal and hundreds of bikes – the transportation of choice in Amsterdam – lined the streets. But we didn't pay much attention to these uniquely Amsterdam sights because we were on a mission. A cheese-tasting mission. Braving the icy fall rain and clutching a note with directions in my hand which included confusing words like Dam/Raadhuisstraat, we headed to the Reypenaer Cheese Tasting Rooms.

Reypenaer makes some of the most delicious Dutch cheese you have ever tasted. They have a 100-year-old warehouse on the Oude Rijn in Woerden where the cheese matures naturally as it has done for three generations of the family, resulting in a distinctive and complex flavor and aroma. The historic ripening process of the Reypenaer cheeses is unique in the Netherlands and these artisan cheeses are quite unique.

But they also have a lovely little store, tucked away on a side street in the middle of Amsterdam where they sell a variety of cheese and, in a quiet little basement furnished with wooden tables and chairs like a schoolroom, they have cheese tastings with the guidance of an expert cheese taster.

Each cheese tasting session lasts approximately one hour, and is designed for a maximum of 20 people per tasting. Tasting workshops take place every Wednesday to Sunday throughout the day and the basic introductory workshop costs 7.50 euros per person. There is also an advanced tasting with wine and a connoisseur tasting with wine and port. They will also cater to private groups and parties as well as corporate events.

We shook the rain out of our coats and settled down at our little table for two with several others who had braved the rain for the love of cheese. We watched a little video clip about cheese and then we began with the sampling. On our small wooden table we had a cutting board with several large chunks of cheese, all with different colors and consistencies. As the cheese taster explained about how the cheese was aged and what we should expect to taste, we cut slices, sampled them and made notes to compare the different experiences so we could decide which cheeses we preferred. The longer the cheeses had been aged, the more crystals formed, which meant the older cheeses were more salty and strong-tasting. It's all a matter of taste as far as which cheese you prefer. Once we had sampled our fill, we all went upstairs to the little shop and chose the cheeses we wanted to purchase and take home.

If you are in Amsterdam and you like cheese (and who doesn't, really?) you should do this cheese tasting. It was fun and delicious and we totally felt like some sort of expert gourmands while we were participating.

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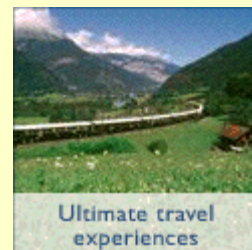
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Jan Ross is Editor of [The Travel Authority Blog](#).

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