

Photo 1

This is me, 6 years old during Queensday. My town hosted a contest for the best decorated bike and I took this at young age extremely serious. The Dutch and their bicycle are one and so as many Dutch people I grew up riding my bike towards school, friends, shops and sports. Riding my bicycle everyday was something as common as sunrise.

Photo 2

However how more I became older I started to realize that using your bicycle daily was not that common. Especially when I started to study mobility in an international university I came to the conclusion that the Dutch cycling infrastructure was far more developed. After some research about why the Netherlands is so developed I came across the 'Cycling capital of Europe'. I clicked on it and saw pictures of Copenhagen on my screen. I was surprised and googled 'Cycling capital of Europe'. Now I saw pictures of Amsterdam. Why are two cities calling themselves 'Cycling capital of Europe'? And who is right? I was lucky to visit both cities and solve this debate once and for all.

Photo 3

Amsterdam; The city of canals, Anne Frank and as seen on the photo *Bicycles*. Yearly two million tourist are experiencing the daily traffic of Amsterdam on their bike while visiting the city. The first impression of these tourist are seeing hundreds of bicycles cruising around cars, pedestrians and trams. However who looks more closely can actually see a organized structure. Amsterdam has 515 kilometers of designated cycling lanes that handle the 424000 daily cyclist. Together with 19 secured cycling storages Amsterdam truly embraces the bicycle.

Photo 4

700 kilometers northeast Copenhagen appears on the horizon. And what do Dutch people first do when arriving in Copenhagen? Yes, taking selfies with bike parking's while the rain is pouring down! Copenhagen cycling projects are known for their innovation and aesthetically pleasing designs. The Cykelstegen, an elevated cycling bridge and path that runs along tall office buildings, felt like I was floating through air while I was riding my bicycle. My highlight of my visiting Copenhagen was riding the Green Wave of the Norrebrogade. This cycling path was equipped with smart traffic lights and created a 2.5 green wave for cyclist. Something I have never experienced before on a bike before.

Photo 5

After experiences in both cities I questioned myself what the true bicycle capital was in in Europe. Copenhagen is covered with cycling projects that wouldn't look out of place in the Louvre museum for their architectural beauty and genius. However I had multiple experiences that I rode my bicycle of the bridge and ended up in on a busy street that was not suitable for bikes. Amsterdam is the opposite. Good general infrastructure but misses true cycling infrastructure icons. In conclusion there is not a true cycling capital of Europe. However by spreading and learning from each other's knowledge we turn Europe in a cycling continent. Because cycling is the most sustainable, healthy and efficient way of transport. So Europe; Let's Ride our bicycles!