

City tour Groningen.

1. Starting point: Academiegebouw, Broerstraat 5, Groningen

The 'Academiegebouw' (main University building), is situated in the location where the University first opened its doors in 1614. At this place two women's monasteries became vacant, the last nun moved to another monastery, so students could start follow classes here. The courses taught were theology, medicine, law and liberal arts. In 1846 the old monastery got so decayed that it had to be demolished and was replaced by a new building. However, in 1906 this building burned down when a fire started in the collection of the Natural History. This collection contained organisms conserved in alcohol, which fueled the fire. Luckily, the portraits of all professors could be saved from the Senate Chamber. Then, in 1909, the current building was constructed in neo-renaissance style.



In the cellar of this building gravestones of well-known professors can be found, one of which is Ubbo Emmius, the founder of the university. It was a custom to bury professors in de academy church on the other side of the square. Nowadays, the university library is located there. This church was used by the university staff and students, however, in 1821, it was transferred back to the catholic community. Then protestant professors who were buried there could not stay. Therefore, they were reburied at the 'Zuiderbegraafplaats' and their gravestones were placed in the attic of the Academiegebouw.

2. Continue in the direction of the Oude Boteringestraat

At nr. 19 (Van Swinderen Huys) you will find a dark building with a striking façade. It is a copy of the Wine and Townhall which was located on the Grote Markt until 1773.



The name Botering derives from the Boteringe family. They lived in this street during the late Middle Ages (16th Century). Many of the streets between the Grote Markt, the Vismarkt and the canal belt are named after families who used to live there. For example: Ebbingestraat, Gelkingestraat, Haddingestraat and Folkingestraat. They were Lord and Master in their street and the surrounding alleys and fought each other to the death. It was a very violent time. Many distinguished citizens lived in the Boteringestraat, to be recognized by many large, beautiful buildings.

3. Cross the Boteringestraat and enter the Roode Weeshuisstraat.

In the middle of this street, on the left, the former orphanage for children whose father had Groningen's citizens' rights can be seen. In later years, it became the youth penitentiary and nowadays people live here.

4. Leave the Rode Weeshuisstraat in the direction of the Oude Ebbingestraat, go right on the Oude Ebbingestraat, enter the first street left, Kwinkenplein, and go left on the Kreupelstraat, (Kattenhage).

At the end of Kattenhage, on the right side just before the Turfsingel, a large wall is constructed. On one part of this wall a part of the 'blue wall' can still be seen (it is not blue, but it is a small part of the wall, which is still heightened). This heightened wall was constructed in the French era (1795-1813)

to stop people from throwing liquor over the wall. At this time, the Prinsenhof was a military hospital.

5. Take a right to the Turfsingel

On your right hand you can find the entrance to the 'Prinsentuin'. This garden was commissioned in 1626 by the stadtholder (=governor) Willem Frederik van Nassau and his wife Albertine Agnes. They are the ancestors of the current royal family of the Netherlands. The garden is part of the residence that faces the Martini cemetery.



The garden consists out of a rose garden, a herb garden and a part with berceaus. In one of the five garden beds (on the photo top right) boxwood hedges are formed in the shape of a letter W and A; the initials of Willem Frederik and Albertine Agnes. The garden is closed from November 1 - April 1.

6. Go into the Turfstraat and continue until you reach the Martini Graveyard (Martini Kerkhof).

People have lived here since the 6th century. Groningen was mentioned for the first time in the year 1040 by the German king Hendrik III. This place was used as a courthouse and until the 19th century it served as a cemetery. There is still one gravestone left from Praedinius, a former rector in the 14th century. Also, this point marks the end of the Hondsrug, a ridge of sand that starts in Emmen in Drenthe. Groningen citizens (Groningers) lived on this type of soil, whereas people from Friesland lived on clay.

On the right you can see the gate to the Prinsenhof. In the 16th century this monastery was home to the first bishop of Groningen, Johannes Knijff. He started living here in 1567, but he died from the black Plague in 1576. It took a few centuries and a reformation before a new bishop came again in 1956. The building served for a long time as residence to the Nassau family, the ancestors of our current king. However, they would not often visit here, they primarily lived in the Prinsenhof in Leeuwarden and The Hague (Den Haag). Then it served as a military hospital, then the police

headquarters, followed by a local broadcaster and nowadays it is a **** boutique hotel and well known restaurant.



7. Cross the Martini cemetery in the direction of the Martinikerk and Martinitoren.

In the year 800 a wooden church stood here. The current church was built in the 15th century. Until the year 1577, it was the highest tower in the Netherlands. However, from 1568 to 1576, the city was occupied by soldiers of the Spanish government. Their leader, Caspar de Robles, was close to the King Philip II (of the Spanish Empire). He and the city council had a hard time getting along. One day the four mayors came to De Robles' door to ask for the keys to the city. The Robles got so angry that he kicked one of the mayors out of the house. The city suffered badly from the occupation. It was mandatory to take in Spanish soldiers and a stronghold was built on the southeast side of the city. In 1576 an armistice was signed between the rebellious province and the Spanish regime. The soldiers had to leave. The people from Groningen were so happy that they lit bonfires... also on the Martini Tower. And it caught fire. It was not rebuilt until 1628. Unfortunately, the tower was no longer the tallest in the country, it was from now on the Dom in Utrecht. The Utrecht Bishop did not allow them once more to build a tower higher than the Utrecht Dom Tower.

8. Cross the Grote Markt in the direction of the Stadhuis, the Town Hall

The current Stadhuis dates from 1810. Before, the Wine and Townhall (the original Van Swinderen Huys) was located at this spot. On the upper floor, meetings of the city council are taking place.



The election of the mayors and council took place every year in a very special way. The city council consisted of 22 people. Every year on February 22, 18 white beans and 4 black beans were put in a hat. Each councilor took a bean from it. Whoever took a black bean became mayor for that year. Since there were four, they divided the year they actually held the office into four. People didn't get paid for it, so they didn't want to spend a lot of time on it. Caspar de Robles did not like this method of choice. He had the hat with beans in his possession for a number of years so that the council and the mayors could not carry out the procedure and the old councilors and mayors remained. After 1576 they went back to the old tradition. The hat and beans are now in the possession of the Groninger Museum.



9. Turn around, take the Oosterstraat and first street on the left the Poelestraat with its many bars, go into the first street on the right: the Peperstraat

At the end of the Peperstraat on the left is a large white wall with a beautiful old door. You can enter this and it gives access to one of the most beautiful courtyards in Groningen. The complex is officially called the St. Geertruids or Pepergasthuis. This former hospital was founded in 1405 to host Catholic pilgrims who came to a special relic in the Martini Church, an arm of John the Baptist.

After 1594 no more pilgrims came because reformation had taken place and Groningen had become protestant. From that moment on, the hospital was set up as a kind of retirement home. People could buy in for this if they were 50 years or older. In exchange for this fee, they received shelter, heating, a hot lunch and a plate of porridge in the evening. They also received some butter, rye bread, cheese and florin 1.25 (guilder) beer money per month!



10. Leave the courtyard, take a left and then a right at the end. Enter the Kleine Peperstraat, cross the Oosterstraat and enter the Carolieweg. Continue until the Herestraat and take a right here.

At this location in the Herestraat, the street is a bit wider than the rest of the street. This was where the army would gather when it came to battle, just behind Herepoort.

The Herestraat runs over the Hondsrug and is called Hereweg outside the city. In the Middle Ages, the bishop of Utrecht, who had many possessions here, came to the city via this road. It was the only stretch of road that was dry all year round. That is why the armies that wanted to occupy the city

always came from the south. This was also the case in 1672. In that year the Netherlands was attacked by four powers that had formed an alliance for this purpose. France, England, the Diocese of Münster and the Diocese of Cologne.



The bishop of Münster, Bernard van Galen, first tried to invade the Netherlands through the Bourtange fortress in the east part of the province of Groningen. This fortress was located on an access road through the swamp. He tried to bribe the fortress commander. He did not accept this, but just in case he sent his wife to the city of Groningen for her own safety. Because he was not allowed through, Bernard van Galen left with his army to the south and from there he started the siege of the city of Groningen with an outflanking movement. He had brought his cannons and they were set up on a hill (the Kempkensberg) south of Groningen. The bombardment began and for days on bullets descended on the city. Groningen had hired a retired army commander, Rabenhaupt, to lead the defense. That succeeded and on August 28, 1672, Bernard van Galen, who had meanwhile been nicknamed "Bommen Berend", retired. Unfortunately, the wife of the commander of Bourtange was killed in this bombing. On 28th of August, the people of Groningen yearly still celebrate the departure of the bishop Bernard van Galen with a fair, music and fireworks.

Now it is time for a break and a detour to get hot chocolate and Groninger cake at Gerda' home, Ubbo Emmiusingel 37

11. Continue in the direction of the Grote Markt. Just before the end of the street on the left side a passageway can be seen (Het Koude gat) to the Vismarkt. Go through this and enter the Vismarkt.



A market is held every Tuesday, Friday and Saturday on this square. The Tuesday market has always been the most crowded market. Then the farmers from the area came to buy and arrange other matters, including the annual payment of rent to the owners of their land. That rent was fixed forever in the 17th century and never increased. So it happened that farmers paid an annual rent for the use of the land of one guilder and two chickens, which still happens. The owner of the land would then sit in one of the cafes around the Vismarkt and drink a drink with his tenants, who came by one by one. You can imagine that someone went home drunk in the evening.

12. Continue, on the left side of the Vismarkt until house Nr. 40 on the corner with the Haddingestraat

This house is a so-called town house of a noble family from Groningen. The noble families all lived in the Groningen countryside on a 'borg' (Groninger small castle), but often had to be in the city for business. In winter, social life mainly took place in the city and the children studied there. The rural surety was the main residence and power base, but without a town hall you wouldn't be part of it as surety. The town houses were supposed to showcase power and wealth. That is clearly visible here. The owner of this building, Du Chesnoy, paid almost eleven thousand guilders for the house in 1721 and also paid a lot for the renovation. No expense was spared: the house became bigger, higher and

got an imposing facade, because Du Chesnoy was rich and wanted to show it. At the top of the disproportionate sandstone facade, he had his own coat of arms attached and that of his wife, Elisabeth Petronella Lewe of Aduard. A huge carved exterior staircase also appeared. Ultimately they had to sell the house in 1739 because they ran out of money. The house was auctioned in the Wine and Town Hall on the Grote Markt.



Example of a Groninger Borch 'Fraeylemaborg' at Slochteren

Although we speak of noble families in Groningen, they actually were not. In the rest of the Netherlands a noble title was obtained in the Middle Ages, for example by the king or duke. A king or duke never permanently resided in Groningen so no noble titles were given. However, what was considered important in Groningen was whether you descended from old well-known families. And so it came to pass that a number of families, although without title, began to behave as if they were nobles. The men addressed themselves as "squire", they wore clothing that was also worn by the real nobility and assumed all kinds of rights, such as hunting rights and the right to appoint the local pastor. A beautiful house in the city was of course part of that. However, in the provincial administration they had just as much voting rights as the first farmer who owned 10 hectares of land.

13. Continue on the leftside of the Vismarkt, in the direction of the A-kerkhof and reach the Munnekeholm.



On the corner of the former post office, now a fitness studio, the first nosocomium (university hospital) for clinical education was located since 1803. It consisted of two rooms, one for women and one for men, with a total of eight beds. The hospital continued to live a minimal existence. There was a constant lack of money and around 1850 it was even in danger of being closed altogether, together with the university. This lasted until a new site was found in 1903 where the current UMCG still stands. Now the UMCG is the largest hospital in the four Northern provinces.



14. Take a right and continue until you are in front of the A-kerk

It is suspected that this 15th-century church was probably located on an inland harbor that the river Drentse A had formed. The then still wooden church was dedicated in 1226 to Our Lady of the Aa. She was seen as the patron saint of the skippers who sailed across the A van Drenthe to the Wadden Sea. The current church dates from the 15th century, the tower from 1712, after the first tower collapsed in 1671 and the second burnt down in 1710.



15. Turn around and enter the Brugstraat, continue in the direction of the bridge.

The name of this street comes from the family who lived there, Ter Brugge. On the left at No. 24 is one of the oldest houses in the city. It was originally built as a warehouse, now the Northern Maritime Museum is located here. Many warehouses and breweries were located in this neighborhood, the A-quarter. The river Drentse A played the leading role here.

In the Middle Ages, there were houses in Brugstraat that were owned by the Duke of Brunswick. The residents had a somewhat strange lease with him. Every year a penny of rent had to be paid on a specific day. If they forgot to pay the rent, the rent doubled every hour. After twenty-four hours, the rent had become impossible to pay and the resident had to leave the house.



16. Take a right in front of the bridge and enter de Hoge der A

A or Aa is another name for water. The Drentse A originates from smaller streams on the Hondsrug. From Groningen the river flows further towards the Waddenzee. Here at Hoge de A was the city's first port. In addition to warehouses, many breweries were also located here. Until the arrival of sewers in the 19th century, it was not safe to drink water. That is why they drank beer. The alcohol percentage was about 2.5%. Groningen had its own type of beer: Kluinbier. The water for brewing the beer was taken from the Drentse A.

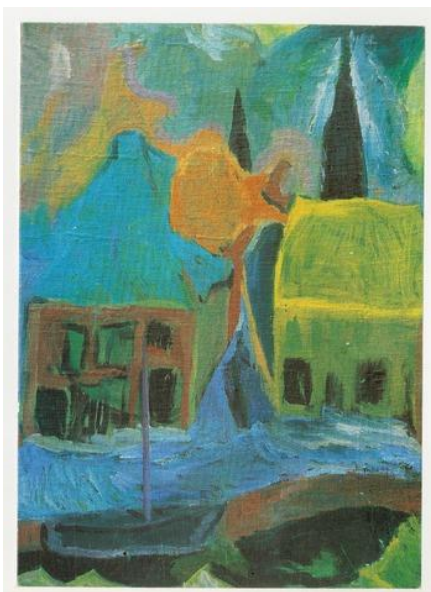


Groningen was a powerful city and had stipulated that all goods from the province must first be offered for sale on the market in the city. Many ships were coming and moored here on Hoge der A.

On the other side of the water, the street is called Lage der A. This is because the city of Groningen had an open connection with the sea. So there was an ebb and flow. At high tide they could unload on the Hoge der A, at low tide on the Lage der A.

17. Continue and take a right to the Turftorenstraat

Turn your face to the water one more time. There is a large warehouse on the other side. Hendrik Werkman, printer and member of the De Ploeg artists' society, lived and worked here. This expressionist group of artists is active in the twenties of the 20th century and is in contact with international colleagues such as Ernst Ludwig Kirchner from Die Brücke. They painted a lot in and around the city of Groningen. For example, Werkman painted the view of Turftorenstraat from his studio.



Werkman resisted the German occupier in World War II with his printing art and was arrested and executed on April 8, 1945 for this purpose. The Groninger Museum has many of these artists' work in its possession.

18. Continue through the Turftorenstraat, where the street curves to the right, turn left into the alley, the Kleine Kromme Elleboog, where the alley bends to the right, walk straight ahead, cross the square diagonally to the left (Uurworkersplein) and pass through the underpass. This comes out in the Uurwerkgang. Cross this to Harmonieplein.

From 1840, the Harmonie society stood on this spot. The music hall was known for its excellent acoustics. In 1973 the building was demolished and the Faculties of Arts and Law were established here with a new building. On the square is a sculpture by the well-known Dutch artist Marte Röling with the title *Non scholae, sed vitae*. It is a statement by Ubbo Emmius who felt that the university had the task of training students not only for a profession but for life itself.



Walk under the arches of the Harmonie Building in the direction of the Oude Kijk in 't Jat street.

In the forecourt is a bust of Aletta Jacobs, the first woman to obtain a university degree. She was the daughter of a general practitioner in Sappemeer, a village in the Groningen peat area.

To be allowed to study, she had asked permission from the Prime Minister of the Netherlands, Thorbecke. She got it, and in 1877/1878 she passed the medical exam, making her the first female doctor.



After her PhD and training in London, she opened a general practice in Amsterdam and focused on the theme of birth control. She was also active in the women's suffrage movement. The university honors her with a biennial Aletta Jacobs Prize. Women who have made themselves useful in the field of emancipation are eligible for this prize.

Turn right and then left to return to the Academieplein.

End of city tour.

