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# Anne Frank House in Amsterdam presents tragic, yet inspiring, story

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Unlike museums that simply display permanent and temporary collections of art and artifacts, **Anne Frank House** (Huis) in central [Amsterdam](#) is a museum with a story – one known and admired around the world.

The story the



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Cris Toala Olivares, photographer.*

museum tells is of **Anne Frank**, a young Jewish girl who, with her parents, Otto and Edith, and her sister, Margot, and four others, went into hiding during **World War II** to avoid the Nazis. Their hiding place was in a secret annex behind the building at 263 Prinsengracht that housed Otto's spice business. For just over two years the eight lived in a space approximately 800 square feet.

Shortly before the Frank family began hiding, Anne received a diary for her birthday. She began writing, addressing her entries to "Dearest Kitty," as if to a friend. She continued writing while in hiding, recounting the activities and tensions of their seclusion as well as her personal feelings, ideals and hopes.

In August 1944, the Nazis discovered their hiding place and deported everyone to concentration camps. Despite years of investigation, no one knows who betrayed them. The Nazis removed the spare contents of the Secret Annex; however, a friend found and saved Anne's diary. Otto Frank was the only one of the eight to survive the war. Knowing of Anne's desire to become a

writer and have her works published, he did just that with her diary.

“[Anne Frank House](#) is one of Amsterdam’s most popular museums, with 1.2 million annual visitors,” said Annemarie Bekker, communications [Anne Frank House](#).

Tours are self-guided and take about an hour. Because of its relatively small size and the desire to maximize the tour experience, Anne Frank House limits the number of visitors able to enter to a few hundred an hour. To many, the tour is an emotional experience. Photos are prohibited so as not to disturb visitors or harm the fragile original artifacts, including Anne’s diary.

Videos, salvaged family photos and documents, and scale models of the living quarters help set the stage. The rooms of the Secret Annex are maintained in their authentic state without furnishings, per Otto’s wishes. Some remnants of lives spent there remain and are protected behind glass, such as Otto’s wall map of Normandy with pins positioned to track the Allied invasion. The walls of Anne’s bedroom still contain some of the photos she posted to bring the outside world in.

When the building with the Secret Annex had been slated for demolition after the war, people rallied to save it and establish a nonprofit foundation, Anne Frank House. The mission is: preserve the hiding place; share Anne’s story; discourage anti-Semitism, racism and discrimination; and encourage freedom, equal rights and democracy. The museum opened in 1960.

“You think you know the story, but there’s a lot more you learn when you visit,” Bekker said.

Anne Frank House safeguards the exemplary legacy of a remarkable teenage girl and her diary, and is a top travel destination in Amsterdam.

### **When you go**

Anne Frank House  
Prinsengracht 263-267  
Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
Recorded information line: +31 (0)20-5567105

[annefrank.org](http://annefrank.org)

Limited numbers of **timed entry tickets** are available online and recommended, as the line to purchase tickets at the museum can be long.

*Click [here](#) for other articles by Mary Gilbert. You also can read her travel stories on her blog, *The Roads Traveled*, at [theroadstraveled.com](http://theroadstraveled.com).*



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