

Madurodam. The Netherlands at it's best.

Madurodam inspires the world with the best of the Netherlands. You discover Dutch heroes and highlights through miniatures, activities and indoor attractions. Stories about freedom, the pioneering spirit and pushing boundaries. In this way, Madurodam connects the past with the present and you get a chance to learn something about the Dutch mentality.

A brief history

Madurodam has been a unique national and international icon since 1952. Since day one, it has been more than a theme park that shows the best of the Netherlands. Madurodam was set up as a living monument to the war hero (in the Second World War) George Maduro *and* as a way to raise funds for charities. Every year, Madurodam donates its revenue to projects for children, between € 600.000 and € 700.000 every year. Since the founding Madurodam has donated nearly € 34 million to charities that help children develop self-esteem, empathy and a bit of hero courage.

Mrs Boon-van der Starp, founder of Madurodam

Mrs Boon-van der Starp is the founder of Madurodam. She was a member of the board of the Dutch Students' Sanatorium. In the Sanatorium, students with tuberculosis could recover and study at the same time. Mrs Boon-van der Starp was looking for ways to collect money for the sanatorium and came up with the miniature city. In the years following the Second World War, this was a matter of national importance: The Netherlands was being rebuilt and Madurodam was building with it. The park offered a place for the shared history of the battered Netherlands *and* hope and a source of inspiration for the future. In the first years Madurodam was a symbol for the resiliency of the Netherlands. A country that was building – in large as well as small – new cities, railroads, highways and even a very modern airport.

George Maduro

The parents of the war hero George Maduro donated the start-up capital for the miniature city. They wanted a living memorial to their son, George Maduro, who died in the Second World War. George was born in Curaçao on 15 July 1916 and went to study in Leiden at the age of 18. During the Second World War, he signed up as a reserve officer in the Netherlands cavalry. At the time of the invasion of the Netherlands in May 1940, he heroically led an attack in Rijswijk. In 1943, he was captured and imprisoned in Saarbrücken, Germany. In November 1944, George was brought to the Dachau concentration camp, where he died of typhus on 8 February 1945. On 9 May 1946, George Maduro was posthumously awarded the Military Order of William, Knight 4th Class, due to his heroic actions in Rijswijk.

The construction of the park

Architect S.J. Bouma was Director of the Zuiderzee Museum in Enkhuizen and wanted to collaborate in the construction of a miniature city. He created a plan for a model of a Dutch city, as it would have developed over the centuries, on a scale of 1:25. The theme: a city with a smile. Dutch businesses supported the initiative and KLM, Unilever, Philips, the Bataafsche Petroleummaatschappij (later Shell) and the Nederlandse Spoorwegen railway company were the founding fathers. The park was expanded in 1996. In addition to the iconic entry building with its lighthouse, the park was redesigned and two multi-functional spaces were added.

Innovation

In November 2011, the park closed for five months for a major renovation. In the new Madurodam that opened in April 2012 there is more to see and in particular lots more to do together. You can operate the Oosterschelde barrier yourself, learn to fly at Schiphol and bid at the flower auction. There are also interactive screens with Madurodammers, the inhabitants of the park, who tell dozens of stories in a contemporary way.

Indoor attractions

Madurodam has been building indoor attractions since 2014. Here, you discover the heroes and highlights of the Netherlands. In 2016, Madurodam opened George's Story. In a special theatre, you are guided through the life story of the war hero George Maduro. In 2015, Madurodam opened a new attraction that allows you to relive the story of the beginning of democracy in the Netherlands. In The Court of the Netherlands, you are taken back to the first Assembly of the Free States in 1572 in Dordrecht. In 2014, Madurodam opened Orange Mania, where you can relive the Dutch win at the European Championship of 1988. In this attraction you can admire the actual cup, on loan from the Royal Dutch Football Association. In 2017 Madurodam opened her latest indoor attraction: Nieuw Amsterdam. An interactive family attraction that tells the story about the Dutch roots of New York.

On adventure to New Amsterdam

Mid June 2017 Madurodam opened Nieuw Amsterdam: an interactive family attraction that tells the story about the Dutch roots of New York. It is one of the stories of our native history of which we can be proud as the Netherlands.

In this attraction visitors step on board of the ship De Vergulde Bever and sail to 17th century New York. A world city that still has a lot of Dutch traces today. In the city square of New Amsterdam, visitors roll up their sleeves and fire the cannons to keep the English at a distance. This way the visitors experience which choice Peter Stuyvesant had to make towards the English to maintain this special city.

Figures

Since it was established, Madurodam has welcomed almost 60 million visitors. In 2017 more than 700.000 people visited the theme park. 57% of these come from the Netherlands and 43% from abroad. This makes Madurodam the largest attraction in The Hague. The park is also in the Top 5 of Most Visited Theme Parks of the Netherlands, and holds the 26th place in the Top 50 Day Attractions of the Netherlands. In 2017 27,766 children visit the theme park every year through educational programmes and school trips.

Charity

The Madurodam Children's Fund, the foundation through which Madurodam donates to charity, believes that children are the future. For a happy and successful future, every child must feel that they can contribute to society. Respectful interaction with others is essential here. This requires self-confidence, independence, courage and empathy. Qualities possessed by George Maduro, the war hero Madurodam is named after.

Children develop these qualities by getting to know themselves and others and through discovery and experience. That's why the Madurodam Children's Fund supports projects in which this is central. If children use their self-confidence, independence, courage and empathy, they can shift borders and help others and society. Their small actions can have a big impact. They can turn children into heroes.

Hero Town NL and Young Impact

Hero Town NL and Young Impact are examples of projects that the Madurodam Children's Fund supports. Hero Town NL is a foundation that offers hero training. Since research by the American social psychologist Philip Zimbardo shows that goodness and courage can be learnt. Young Impact is a youth movement that is changing the world *now*. They show that things can be different. In workshops at schools, they help pupils to discover their talents and how they can put these into practice for a better world.

The mayor and council: all children

Madurodam's mayor and council are made up of ten pupils from secondary schools in The Hague and the

surrounding area. The Mayor of Madurodam is the youngest and only elected mayor in the Netherlands. The council contributes to decisions on the charities that Madurodam supports, for example. All members of the council visit applicants and then deliver a report. They then contribute to choosing which charities are supported. The mayor and council are also present at official events in Madurodam and make a working visit to the Mayor of The Hague. Part of their year on the council is a study trip to Dachau. Amélie Mijs is Mayor of Madurodam for 2017-2018.

After it was founded, Princess Beatrix was Mayor of Madurodam for 28 years. Following her coronation in 1980, she became a patron of Madurodam.

Partnerships

Madurodam is pleased to work with, among others, the Dutch Charity Lotteries, the Royal Dutch Touring Club, the NS railway company, Rotterdam Pass and other attractions and museums in The Hague. Madurodam also works with sales partners like Kuoni and Thomas Cook. Madurodam is a member of the Club of Eleven, the association of the Netherlands' largest day attractions.

Further information

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