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Walking tour through Blokzijl



Starting point: Harbor basin center Blokzijl

For: Children and adults

Length: About 2 km



WELCOME

Welcome to **Blokzijl!** Whether you're into history, just fancy a nice walk, or are looking for a good excuse to get an ice cream: this scavenger hunt is for you!

You will walk past the nicest, most beautiful and oldest places in Blokzijl, while answering questions and discovering surprising facts along the way.

The tour is approximately 2 kilometers long and suitable for children, but secretly adults also like it a lot.

Blokzijl has more than 100 national monuments in a relatively small area. Every street is full of history, perfect for a relaxing city walk.

This treasure hunt is lovingly brought to you by **www.blocksyl.com** – your guide to Blokzijl and the Weerribben-Wieden.

Don't forget to take photos along the way – and tag us on Instagram and Facebook with @blocksyl.com

Disclaimer: Despite our historical efforts, an error may have crept in. Do you have a comment, or do you know something nice that we forgot? Let us know via **www.blocksyl.com**, we would love to hear your thoughts!

Starting point: Havenkolk (Zeedijk)



In these green areas you will receive instructions on where to go.

START: Walk into Kerkstraat and walk to the back of the Grote Kerk.

In These blue areas provide you with additional information.

The origin of Blokzijl:

We don't know exactly when Blokzijl was founded - it's a bit of a mystery! But people think it was somewhere around the 16th century, so a very long time ago.

The name "Blokzijl" first appeared in an important paper in 1521. But it may be older! There was already something in 1438 about a man named **Blocke**, who had a house near a lock. And some people think that the name comes from a "blokzijl": a kind of sturdy lock made of thick wooden beams through which ships could pass

to sail.

At that time Blokzijl was still located on the **Zuiderzee** (now the IJsselmeer), and was such a beautiful place that people called it the **Pearl on the** came to be called **the Zuiderzee**.

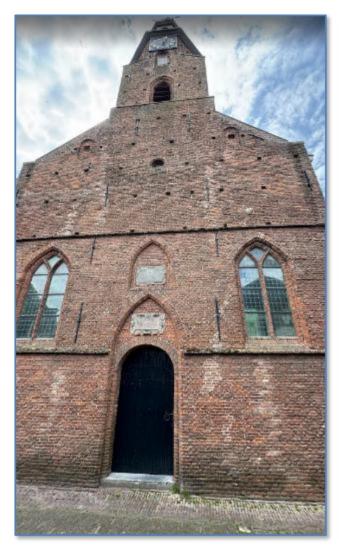




In These blue boxes represent the questions for along the way.

Question 1: The Great Church

Can you see in which year the foundation stone of this church was laid?





In these orange boxes, you see the answers to questions.

Answer: The church was built between 1609 and 1613. The tower was built later in 1630.





The Great Church – a church that continued to grow

The Grote Kerk in Blokzijl is **very special**. It was the **first church in the Netherlands** that was built especially for people who were not

Catholic, but **Protestant**.

In the year **1608** they started building, and in **1613** the church was finished. Well... a small church. It was a **simple hall,** without a tower or decorations. But Blokzijl grew quickly, and the church soon became too small.

So what did they do? Just expand!

- In **1643** a piece was added to the south side,
- In **1650** on the west side,
- And in 1662 the east side was also added.



m Question 2: Old Town Hall

Next to the big church is a beautiful house (no. 16) with 2 dates on the facade. Can you find the 2 dates?



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Answer: 1615 (construction) and 1810 (new facade).

In the middle of the facade is the year 1615, the year this house was built. At the very top you can see 1810, the year a new facade was built.

From Old to Beautiful(er)

This building was the administrative heart of Blokzijl for a long time, it was the most first town hall of Blokzijl. The facade hides the older foundations of a proud town house.

Continue along Kerkstraat to number 26. A little further on you will see beautiful old houses with lovely facades.





A Question 3: Facades in Kerkstraat

What kind of facade does the house at number 26 have?



Answer: Number 26 has a stepped gable. The neighbours at numbers 24 and 28 have neck gables.

Facades and Monuments

Blokzijl is full of national monuments from the Golden Age. The neck and stepped gables are typical examples of Dutch Renaissance architecture. The prosperity from the 17th century is still tangible here.

Wist je dat je in Blokzijl nog steeds originele koopmanshuizen uit de 17e eeuw kunt bewonderen? Kijk eens omhoog naar de gevels met jaartallen, ornamenten en bijzondere trap- of halsgevels!

Turn left into Breestraat. After about 75 m after the bend On the left you see a house with a large barn.

Question 4: The City Farm

What was this building with a large barn used to be?



Answer: This was a city farm. In the past, farms were located within the city walls.

Peat, Draft Horses and Rides

Farmers used to have to travel to their fields outside the city gates by horse and cart. Blokzijl was a real attraction – literally and figuratively – thanks to the flourishing peat trade!

► Continue along the Breestraat, which turns into Oude Verlaat. You will pass a small church on the left.





Question 5: The Mennonite Church

What is the name of this church?



Answer: The church is called "'t Lam".

The Lamb – No Sheep Church. In the 17th century there were no less than four Mennonite groups in Blokzijl – each with their own church!

This church was built around 1820, and it is still as beautiful inside as it was then. Inside is a special organ from 1858. 't Lam is a very special building, a national monument, that has been used faithfully for years. Now there are monthly fun gatherings, such as music and stories, especially for the neighborhood.

You will now arrive at the small square called "Oude Verlaat".



Question 6: The Old Verlaat – Where Blokzijl began

What does 'Old Leave' mean?





The Beginning of Blokzijl

Verlaat is an old word for lock. And exactly on the square that is now called 'Oude Verlaat', more than 500 years ago (in 1438) stood the first lock of Blokzijl!

That lock was built to ensure that the water was properly regulated. Without that lock, the land would always flood! Around the lock, houses, people, boats... were built and that is how the beginning of the town of Blokzijl was born.

So yes, if you stand on that square? Then you are standing on the spot where all of Blokzijl began – pretty special, right?





Turn right towards Lage Wal.

💭 Question 7: High water mark

On the corner you see a house with a stepped gable, this was once a church. What does the number on the frame of the downstairs window indicate?



9

Answer: It shows the water level during the flood of 1825.

The Disaster of 1825

In 1825, the dikes in Overijssel broke in 22 places. People fled to attics, cows drowned in the fields. This house still shows how high the water was then!





Map showing flooded areas in blue

Photo: © ijksmuseum





Continue along the Lage Wal.

Question 8: The High Water Cannons

You will see a barn with 'Molenberg' on the right-hand side of the bend. In the past this place was called Molenbelt and there were 2 cannons here.

What were the cannons here used for in the past?



Answer: They warned of high water or a dike breach.

Boom! High Water Alert

The guns were last used in 1928 and were aimed inland. Because the Afsluitdijk was completed in 1932, there was no longer a risk of high water.

One shot meant: 'High tide, the water is coming!' Two shots meant the water level was dangerous, three shots meant the situation was critical, and four shots meant: 'Dike broken!' Then everyone ran to the shore – or to higher ground.

Cross Kuinderstraat and walk onto the embankment.



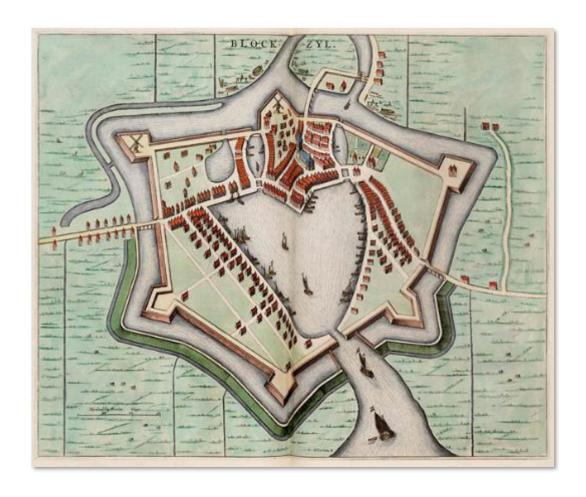


Question 9: The City

Wall Why was this wall constructed?

Fort Blokzijl

In 1621 Blokzijl was reinforced with a hexagonal fortress. Prince Maurits gave the order. You are walking over an old bastion here!





Answer: To defend against enemies

A Question 10: The Bulwark

At the beginning and end the rampart is extended, this is called a bulwark or bastion. What is on top of this?



👔 Answer: A cannon



Bastions with Balls

Five strongholds together formed the Blokzijl redoubt. They protected the harbour and the town during the Eighty Years' War.

▶ Walk down the rampart, past the 2nd cannon, towards the Sas (a kind of lock).



Question 11: The Sas, a super door

When will this lock gate be closed?





Answer: At extremely high tide or certain wind directions, which cause the water to be pushed up.

Sas, the Lock Keeper

Imagine: a mega door that protects Blokzijl from water. That is exactly what the Sas does! But... when the water gets too high, the Sas closes. Then it holds back the water like some kind of water superhero.

The Sas is essential for water management. Normally the doors open and boats can sail freely. The doors close when pumping stations inland can no longer cope.

Without this lock, Blokzijl would have had wet feet more often.

Turn left onto Noorderkade (so walk along the water).





Question 12: Houses with High Sidewalks

Why do some houses here have high stoops?



Wist je dat Blokzijl ooit een zeehaven was aan de Zuiderzee? Door de Afsluitdijk is de Zuiderzee nu het IJsselmeer, maar vroeger kwamen hier handelsschepen van heinde en verre.

De haven van Blokzijl vroeger lag vol met turfschepen. Turf – een soort brandstof uit veen – werd hier verhandeld naar steden als Amsterdam en Leiden.





Answer: To protect residents from high water.

Sidewalk with a View

The houses were built before the Sas existed and there was no dam yet and the Zuiderzee was still a wild sea. Regularly the water flowed into the streets. Those who lived higher up kept their socks dry!

Water from the Air

Some houses have rainwater cellars. It wasn't until 1935 that Blokzijl got a water supply. Until then, people collected rainwater in large stone cellars - free and healthy! People had to be very economical with water, so they washed their laundry in the pit, hence the steps in the quay walls.



Parsonage

The house at number 16 used to be a rectory, built in 1867.



Green Street

To the left of this building you look at the street behind the Noorderkade. This is the Groenestraat, where the whalers used to live

Greenland sailors

Blokzijl was once a base for whalers who sailed to Greenland for whaling. Not exactly a tropical cruise, but lucrative!



Question 13: Cannon at the Town Hall

The house at Noorderkade 13 is the former Town Hall.

It was established in the mid-19th century in two originally 18th century buildings, which were probably provided with 1 cornice at that time. Due to the declining prosperity, they chose to use existing buildings instead of new construction.

There is a cannon in front of the old town hall (no. 13). What was this cannon used for?



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Answer: It was used in times of war for defense.

Cannon

Not all the cannons in Blokzijl were for high water. This one is a real defensive cannon – meant to scare off enemies, or at least impress them!

At the end of the Noorderkade, turn right to the Beer quay.





Question 14: The Bierkade

Why is this street called the Bierkade?







Answer: In the 17th century there were five breweries in this street.

Beer capital of Overijssel

The beer that was brewed here was not only for the local population, but was also exported to other parts of the country. The breweries of Blokzijl even had their own guild.

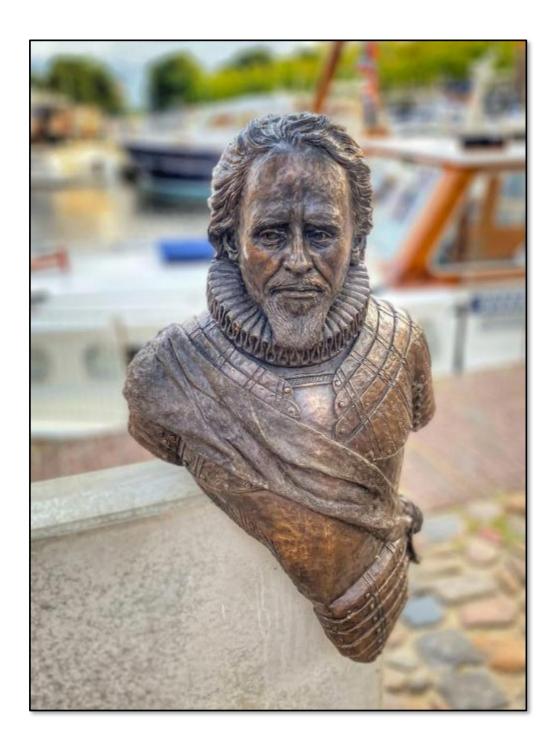
At the moment there is only 1 brewery in Blokzijl, the Klinkert brewery in the Brouwerstraat in a building dating from 1614.



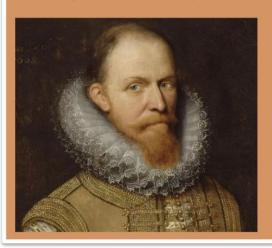
M Question 15: The Prince

At the harbour there is a bust of a man with a serious look and an impressive collar.

Who is this and why is he in Blokzijl?



Answer: This is Prince Maurits of Orange. He gave Blokzijl important privileges in the early 1600s and had the town fortified as a fortress.



Prince Maurits of Orange – The Man with the Plan

Prince Maurits, son of William of Orange, was not only a soldier leader during the Eighty Years' War, but also a clever strategist. Thanks to his support, Blokzijl was granted city rights in 1672 and was transformed into a real fortified city. His bust in the harbour is a reminder of his influence – and his iconic beard.

Wist je dat Blokzijl ooit stadsrechten kreeg én weer kwijtraakte?
In 1672 kreeg Blokzijl stadsrechten , maar die werden drie jaar later alweer ingetrokken door de Staten van Overijssel. De Lokale bevolking zegt nog steeds: Eens een stad, altijd een stad.

Blokzijl is een stad in zakformaat – met historie op elke straathoek.



📂 From this bust you walk towards Grand Cafe Prins Mauritshuis.



A Question 16: The Mauritshuis

The Grand Cafe Prins Mauritshuis used to have a different purpose?

What was located here until 1928?





Answer: Blozkijl's orphanage

From Orphanage to Wine List

The Mauritshuis was built with money from the church. Children who had lost their parents lived here. Now you can eat delicious food there. It has been a restaurant since 1998.

Prince Maurits himself probably never slept there.

⊘ Continue your route along the water, to the right of Prins Mauritshuis towards the lock.



🧸 Question 17: The Bultenbank

Further on is a bench with a nameplate of a mayor. Who was this mayor?



A Bench for the Mayor

Mayor Bulten served Blokzijl for twenty years. The bench is a small tribute to this local administrator.

Mayor Bulten was important for Blokzijl because he worked hard to preserve the historical character of the town.

At a time when many old buildings were being demolished, he ensured that Blokzijl retained its unique atmosphere and monuments.

Thanks to his efforts, Blokzijl still looks as charming and authentic as it used to.



You have now also arrived at the large lock of Blokzijl.

Feel free to stay and watch the ships sail in and out.



Question 18: The Big Lock

What is the function of this lock?







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Answer: To regulate water levels and allow ships to pass.

The water level is different on both sides of the lock.

Let's just shoot

The lock is the beating heart of Blokzijl. It regulates the water level and allows boats in and out of the harbour. In 1709 the wooden locks were

replaced by the stone lock you see here.

Cafe Restaurant Sluiszicht

There used to be a toll house at this lock. In this former toll house you can now find **café restaurant Sluiszicht** with a view of the lock.



Walk along the lock towards the bridge.



Question 19: Statue of Kaatje

There is a statue of a girl near the bridge over the lock. Who is this girl?





Answer: Kaatje, the legendary cook from Blokzijl.

Card at the Lock

That's Kaatje! She lived in Blokzijl a long time ago and worked in her mother's inn. Kaatje was a great cook - her stews and pies were famous throughout the city.

But when Kaatje fell in love with a sailor, everything changed. Her friend Hilbert went sailing... and never came back. Kaatje waited and waited, every day at the lock. Until one day, years later, Hilbert finally came back. But then it was too late – Kaatje had died.

Now she's waiting at the lock forever. And you know what?

Right by her statue is a restaurant called **Kaatje bij de Sluis** – with food so good, Kaatje would have liked to make it herself. The restaurant has even had a Michelin star for several years! So Kaatje is not only a legend, but also a culinary top destination!



From here, walk into Brouwerstraat.





n Question 20: Klinkert Brewery

On the left there is a brewery in a monumental building. What is being made here?



Answer: Craft special beer from Brouwerij Klinkert.

Beer with a story

Brouwerij Klinkert is located in a building from 1614, where brewery De Zwaan was once located in the 17th century. Now they brew small batches of craft beer – with love, hops and history.



Question 21: Provisions from the Land

Next to Klinkert brewery is a charming little shop with sweets, fresh eggs and gifts. There is not a salesman in sight!

How do you pay here?





• Answer: You pay yourself at the paywall, by debit card or cash – in good faith!

Do not damage this trust!

Self-service with taste

At Proviand van 't Land, everything revolves around trust. You take what you need, pay at the wall and move on. Local delicacies and old-fashioned trust – that fits perfectly in Blokzijl!

Wist je dat.... Blokzijl vroeger een eigen vuurtoren had aan de Zuiderzee. Sinds de Afsluitdijk (1932) is Blokzijl geen zeehaven Wie een kiikie wil

Wie een kijkje wil nemen, dan kun je het beste met de foets of auto de Ettenlandseweg oprijden en dan de afslag (naar rechts) via een landweggetje naar de vuurtoren lopen. (buiten het



Question 22: Blokzijl delicacy

You can't see it, but behind the shop you will find a bakery with a special specialty.

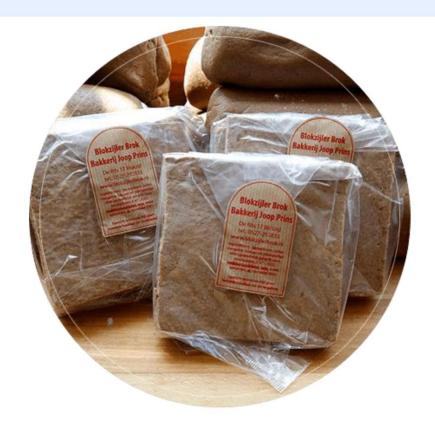
What else is baked here every week?



Answer: The original Blokzijler Brok – a kind of gingerbread with a secret recipe.

Baking chunks

The Blokzijler Brok actually originated from a baking error: failed speculaas. But it turned out to be so delicious that it became a hit. Only one baker still bakes it - and that happens behind the shop Proviand van 't Land.



If you are standing in front of the shop "Proviand van 't land", you are also standing the back of the Grote Kerk where we started this walk. We ended up here, but feel free to have a look inside if you want.

Great Church Blokzijl

Stained glass

The large stained glass window from 1662, a gift from the city of Zwolle for Blokzijl's brave stance during the Eighty Years' War.

The ship model from 1677. Originally, a silver ship model hung here, but it was taken by the soldiers of the Bishop of Munster when they occupied Blokzijl for several months. This model from 1677 is a gift from the Grootschippersgilde.





The pulpit from 1663 with an hourglass that was turned around at the beginning of the sermon to 'remind the preacher that the patience of the listeners also has limits.



End of hike

You've reached the end of the quest! Hopefully you're wiser, happier and perhaps a little bit in love with Blokzijl.

Did you enjoy it? Tell others.

Did you find any errors or do you know any fun facts? Let us know via www.blocksyl.com – together we keep the Blokzijl's history alive (and fun)!

Want to know more? Visit www.blocksyl.com!

At **www.blocksyl.com** you will find everything you want to know about Blokzijl and the surrounding area: from sights and walking routes to nice restaurants, local specialties and activities in the area.

The site is the place to be for tourists who don't want to miss anything of this charming Zuiderzee town.

Also follow us on Facebook and Instagram for the latest news, fun facts, upcoming events and surprising tips. This way you are always up-to-date on what is happening in and around Blokzijl!

