



## The Netherlands

To help you discover the beautiful culture of this small foreign country you're travelling to, Allstar Au-Pairs is providing you with some useful touristic information.



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## Popular Cities

The Netherlands is a densely populated country.

**Amsterdam** is the capital and largest city known for its many canals, historic buildings and red light district (De Wallen). Amsterdam is also a city of rich culture and history with popular attractions like the Van Gogh Museum, Rijksmuseum (national museum), Rembrandt House Museum and Anne Frank House.

**The Hague** is another tourist destination in the Netherlands. It hosts the Royal Seat, has a beautiful city centre and beaches.

**Rotterdam** is known for its harbour, shopping and skyline. Delft and Utrecht are former rich trading cities.

**Maastricht** is located in the south of the Netherlands and is one of the oldest Roman cities.

**Valkenburg** is also located in the south and is a very old village lying in a landscape with old castles and hills.



## Typically Dutch

The tulips and windmills of the Keukenhof flower gardens, the Kinderdijk, Madurodam and the traditional fishing villages of Volendam and Marken are typically Dutch.

### Keukenhof

A historic park filled with blooming tulips, hyacinths, daffodils and other spring bulbs. A feast for the eye, and so are the unique flower shows in the different pavilions. And in the midst of this magnificent spectacle of colour you will also find exquisite works of art. At Keukenhof you can gain inspiration and relax in the beautiful surroundings. The 32-hectare park has 15 kilometres of footpaths. Keukenhof has surprises in store for visitors of all ages. Be sure to bring your camera along on this unique experience. Come to Keukenhof with your friends, family and associates and enjoy the ultimate spring feeling!

### Kinderdijk

The Netherlands is famous for its windmills. Today there are still more than 1.000 mills. Nowhere in the world you will find as many windmills as near (the Dutch village) Kinderdijk. Around 1740 no less than 19 sturdy mills were built here. They have been well preserved to the present day.

The mills drain the excess water from the Alblasserwaard polders - which are situated below sea-level - after which the water is sluiced into the river Lek (the Rijn).

The powerful mill sails serve to transmit the force of the wind on to large paddle-wheels which scoop up the water. Nowadays power-driven pumping engines do the job, including one of the largest water screw pumping-stations in Western Europe.

The foundation "Wereld Erfgoed Kinderdijk" maintains and preserves the windmills in Kinderdijk.

The preservation is not limited to the windmills themselves, but also covers the area in which the windmills are situated. The foundation makes use of funds from the government and the members of the foundation each contribute to the cost of maintenance. Additional sponsoring should take care of reducing the backlog of repairs.

In 1997 the mills of Kinderdijk were put on the World Heritage List of UNESCO.

## Madurodam

In miniature city Madurodam you will see the well-known buildings and scenes in The Netherlands replicated on a scale 1:25. The Parliament buildings of The Hague, the canal houses of Amsterdam, the Alkmaar cheese market and little trees and gardens, all replicated in minute detail. Windmills turn, ships sail and modern trains are tracing the city on the world's largest miniature railway.

## Volendam and [Marken](#)

Legend has it that the Volendam coat of arms is a compliment to the beauty of the Volendam girls ! No wonder that a famous singer sang the praise of this characteristic Dutch fishing village in the words: "Anyone who wants to see the real beauty of Holland, goes to Volendam". As a result of its completely insulated location, this village preserved its character for six centuries, also because of the tough vitality of the fishermen. The characteristic small houses, which together with the canals and the drawbridges form the most picturesque spots, present the visitor an atmosphere of geniality and romance. Don't forget to visit the Volendam museum with the 'Sigarenbandjeshuis', where cigar rings are on display



## Museums

### **Van Gogh Museum**

A visit to the Van Gogh Museum is a unique experience. The museum contains the largest collection of paintings by Vincent van Gogh in the world. It provides the opportunity to keep track of the artist's developments, or compare his paintings to works by other artists from the 19th century in the collection. The museum also holds an extensive offer of exhibitions on various subjects from 19th-century art history.

The Van Gogh Museum is located at the Museumplein in Amsterdam.

### **Rijksmuseum (national museum)**

As a museum of art and history the Rijksmuseum aims to provide a domestic and international public with a representative survey of Dutch art and history since the Middle Ages as well as key aspects of European and Asiatic art.

To this end, the Rijksmuseum maintains, manages, conserves, restores, researches and publishes, collects, presents and makes objects accessible as well as organises exhibitions.

The Rijksmuseum is also located at the Museumplein in Amsterdam.

### **Rembrandt House Museum**

The Rembrandt House Museum is the house in which the painter Rembrandt van Rijn lived and worked from 1639 to 1658. Rembrandt bought this large and imposing house for 13,000 guilders: an immense sum for the time. He was not concerned by such high expenditure. He was a celebrated artist and his earnings were good.

But Rembrandt did not pay off his mortgage and he experienced financial problems. Eventually, in 1656, he went bankrupt. The creditors had his house sold and his possessions were auctioned off. After the sale Rembrandt moved to a modest rented house on the Rozengracht, where he was to live until his death in 1669.

The inventory of Rembrandt's property that was drawn up when he went bankrupt has survived. It lists the furniture, paintings, prints, drawings, statues, weapons and rare objects found in each room. This inventory has been used as the basis for a reconstruction of the interior of Rembrandt's house.

## **Anne Frank House**

The Anne Frank House has been a museum since 1960. The history of the former hiding place for Anna and her family during World War II starts with the premises of Opekta in 1940. The former hiding place, where Anne Frank wrote her diary, is now a well-known museum. The museum tells the history of the eight people in hiding and those who helped them during the war. Anne Frank's diary is among the original objects on display.

## Fun Parks

### **The Efteling**

The Efteling has been welcoming visitors to its World of Wonders for almost 60 years. Today, Efteling is proud to be an international leader in the tourism and recreation industry. Efteling has been entertaining its visitors since the opening of the Fairytale Forest in 1952, and continues to surprise them with new and exciting attractions and entertainment. The Efteling has a reputation as a highly-professional, creative and efficient organisation which has been achieved through continued dedication to customer-oriented and customer-friendly products and services.

### **Walibi World**

Walibi World takes you to a world full of suspense, fun and companionship! No matter how young or how old you are, the more than 40 exiting attractions will guarantee an unforgettable experience.

True heroes are ready to test gravity and take up the challenge that roller coasters such as Robin Hood, Xpress and the Goliath mega-coaster have to offer. Plenty of splashing is guaranteed in the unique Splash Battle, Crazy River and El Rio Grande! Will you manage to stay dry in one of these adventures?

Our youngest guests can enjoy themselves the whole day long in Walibi Land, with attractions that are specially designed for them. And, of course, they will also meet Walibi and his friends here.

## Dutch Kitchen

The Dutch kitchen is a mix and has been influenced from all over the World. You will find many restaurants with different culinary backgrounds.

When cooked at home a typical Dutch meal most of the times consists of boiled potatoes, boiled vegetables and a pork chop or steak. During winter the Dutch often serve winter food.

**Boerenkool and Erwtensoep** is typical Dutch winter food.

**Bitterballen**, frikandellen and kroketten are typical Dutch fast-food, it's not very healthy but often served at parties.



## Transportation

### Train

The Dutch Railways are called the NS (Nederlandse Spoorwegen).

You can travel to almost every city by train. Tickets can be purchased at the stations but are (without a discount card) quite expensive. Taking the train is a good option though when you are traveling to a big city compared to traveling by car. It can be very difficult to find a parking spot and the parking rates are usually quite high as well.

### Bus/Tram/Metro

In every city you will find busses for transport within the city itself. Tickets can be purchased in the bus but a cheaper option is to buy a so called 'strippenkaart' at a central post (usually near the Central Station).

In the larger cities of the Netherlands you will find trams and metro's. Tickets must be bought up front at a central post.

### Car

In the Netherlands there are highways from and to most cities. The speed limit is set at 120 k/h but often you'll find restrictions set to 100 k/h. The Dutch highways are quite busy, especially around the areas of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht.

Good to know: the Dutch drive on the right side of the road.

### Bikes

Dutch people like to bike. Most distances within cities are small and the city centers are not well accessible by car. They ride typical Dutch bikes and you'll find that everyone in the Netherlands owns at least one. Prepare yourself for some bike rides!



Tot zo	See you in a minute / See you soon
Tot vanavond	See you tonight
Tot vanmiddag	See you this afternoon
Tot morgen	See you tomorrow
Tot straks	See you later
Tot ziens / Doeï / Houdoe	Good bye

Ontbijt	Breakfast
Lunch	Lunch
Avondeten	Dinner
Eet smakelijk	Enjoy your meal

Maandag	Monday
Dinsdag	Tuesday
Woensdag	Wednesday
Donderdag	Thursday
Vrijdag	Friday
Zaterdag	Saturday
Zondag	Sunday
Weekend	Weekend
Week	Week
Maand	Month
Jaar	Year