THE NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands is a country whose history and livelihood have long been tied to the sea. Bridges, dams, dikes and boats are a common sight, as are bicycles as a means of transportation. The Dutch countryside consists of sandy dunes, flat polderlands, firwoods and meadows which turn gradually to rolling hills at the German border. Quaint villages and bustling modern cities each have a charm of their own.



AREA: 16,164 sq. miles **POPULATION:** 17,800,000 **CAPITAL:** Amsterdam *(population: 900,000)*
GOVERNMENT: Constitutional Monarchy **LANGUAGE:** Dutch

FOOD & DRINK Discover such Dutch specialties as hearty soups and stews, cheeses to suit a variety of tastes, rijsttafel (a spread of rice and exotic spiced side dishes), and raw herring (a Dutch delicacy sold fresh by street vendors in the major cities) topped with loads of onions. Suggestions for inexpensive lunch favorites are: erwtensoep (thick pea soup with sausage), ossenstaart soep (oxtail soup), broodje kroket (sandwich with meat croquettes), broodje paling (roll with smoked eel), or uitsmijter (bread with roast beef or ham topped with fried eggs). Favorite drinks are beer and jenever (Dutch gin).

CLIMATE The Netherlands has a mild and damp maritime climate. Temperatures are seldom low in winter or very high in summer. Rain falls are common throughout the year.

BANKING HOURS Banks are generally open Monday-Friday from 9:00AM - 6:00PM, but may open later on Monday. Banks are also open Saturday from 10:00AM - 1:00PM.

SHOPPING The quality of diamonds from Amsterdam is unsurpassed. Porcelain, silverware, pewterware and Delftware are sold throughout the Netherlands. Genuine Delftware is made in the city of Delft by only two factories. At Dutch markets the vendors sell everything imaginable, from fresh flowers to a variety of chocolates and Dutch licorice. Wooden shoes are a popular souvenir. Family and friends who enjoy sweets will appreciate a gift of Stroopwafels (caramel syrup waffle cookies) or Droste chocolate. In order to completely experience Holland, you must try Dutch cheeses, such as Gouda or Leiden. Most stores are open from Tuesday to Friday between 9:00AM - 6:00PM, and on Saturday between 9:00AM - 5:00PM. On Monday, many shops are closed in the mornings, opening between 11:00AM and 1:00PM and closing at 6:00PM. Most cities have late-night shopping (until 9:00PM) on Thursday or Friday. In the main cities, many shops are open on Sunday from 12:00 noon to 5:00PM.

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