

Netherlands



Welcome



Where is the Netherlands?

The Netherlands, or Kingdom of the Netherlands, is located in Western Europe, between Belgium and Germany, bordering the North Sea.



Time difference

South Africa is one hour ahead of the Netherlands during South Africa's summer.



Population

16.8-million



Language

The official language is Dutch, but English is widely spoken.



Economy

The GDP of the Netherlands in 2014 is estimated at about US\$880-billion. In 2012 it was the 18th-largest economy in the world. Services dominate economic activity, followed by agriculture and industry.



How to make a Dutch person's day

Formal greeting:

'Goedemorgen' means good morning

'Goedemiddag' means good afternoon

'Goedenavond' means good evening

More informally, you may use 'hallo' ('hah low'), which means hello, or 'hoi', the equivalent to 'hi'.

The Dutch love bicycles, so cycle tours would definitely hold great appeal, as would tracks that include wildlife viewing (but bear age and fitness in mind).

They also pride themselves on their 'gezelligheid', or sociability. This is best described as the quaint pleasure of meeting and socialising in any context. Going to family pubs (or similar outings) would fall into this category, as would a cultural family event that includes them.

Dutch flower exports comprise €5-billion, so there's a great focus on floral beauty, and not just on tulips. A visit to a botanical garden or local nursery would probably be greatly enjoyed.



Trade statistics on travellers from the Netherlands

More than 80% of the Dutch population goes on vacation, with more than 45% travelling abroad.

The largest proportion (30%) of Dutch holidaymakers is aged 35 to 49.

The Netherlands is the 10th-largest outbound travel market in the world, and ranks 15th in terms of long-haul outbound travellers.

The Netherlands is South Africa's fifth-largest European market, with 47% of Dutch tourists revisiting South Africa.



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Restaurants

Dutch manners are unpretentious and follow good basic etiquette.

The Dutch generally use a knife and fork to eat all food – sandwiches, fruit and pizza included.

Dutch people consider it rude if people leave the table during dinner.

Men would usually wait for all ladies to sit before they do.

Professionalism

Direct speaking with plenty of eye contact is common. Dutch people may come across as abrupt, but that is just their manner.

They keep excellent time and punctuality is highly regarded.

Apologies for late arrival will be accepted in good faith, but phone ahead.

Although very focused during business dealings, the Dutch also watch the time spent and tend to

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keep rigidly to an agenda.

While they have a reputation as formidable business people, the Dutch are also known to be scrupulously honest, and they regard bribery with distaste.

Phone calls

The Dutch consider it rude if someone is wearing a cellphone headset at lunch, meetings or among colleagues.

If you have private matters to discuss, excuse yourself.

Set your phone on silent in a meeting or during work.