

The Netherlands & The Dutch

A glance at a tiny European country and its inhabitants

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1.1 Facts & figures

A few facts & figures on the Netherlands or Holland, as you might also know it as well:

General

The Netherlands lies in north-western Europe, with Germany to the east and Belgium to the south. Across the North Sea, to the west, is Great Britain. The Netherlands is quite a small country – only 120 km from the beach at The Hague to the nearest German territory. The maximum distance from north to south is a mere 400 km. The total area is 41,870 km² (15,772 sq. miles) including the Waddenzee, IJsselmeer and other lakes. The land area is 33,800 km² (12,731 sq. miles)

Climate

The Netherlands has a temperate maritime climate with cool winters and mild summers. It can get pretty drizzly here, especially in autumn and spring when it can seem as though it's going to be grey forever. But because the Netherlands is such a flat slab of a place, changes sweep through quickly when the wind starts to blow. Rain and humidity can occur in all seasons, which makes winter days very chilly and summer days sticky.

The weather is changeable and unpredictable, which might explain its importance as a topic of casual conversation.

Scenery

The Netherlands is largely a flat country. Vast amounts of land have been reclaimed from the sea over the centuries, and the drained polders are protected by dykes. More than half of the country lies below sea level. The lowest point is some 7 metres (21 feet) below sea level and only in the south-east Limburg and in the Overijssel province will you find hills. The Rhine is the

major river, slurping up run-off from the proper mountains in Germany and Switzerland and slopping it out all over the flatlands.

The Netherlands is Europe's most densely populated country, but it feels like the most organised place in the world. The western hoop of cities including Amsterdam, The Hague and Rotterdam, is one of the most crowded conurbations on earth, and even out of this area (Randstad) it doesn't get exactly isolated. Towns often blur from one to the next, linked by highways and bicycle paths. Neat, flat, muddy fields and tame and pleasant woodlands act as buffers; there are even places where you can hear the twittering of birds above the constant traffic drone. However, even in the densely populated area in the western part of The Netherlands, there are several subcultures.

Population

About 83% of the population are Dutch (Germanic and Gallo-Celtic stock); most of the remaining 17% are Indonesian, Surinamese, Moroccan, Turkish or Antillean.

Religion

Of the Dutch people who claim to have religious affiliation, which is less than 60%, about half are Roman Catholic and half are Protestant. Only about 20% of the population attend services regularly. The Southern provinces (Limburg, Brabant) are predominantly Catholic, the other provinces predominantly Protestant. Of the total population, about 6% are Muslim.

Instead of being members of churches, some people belong to groups that share a particular philosophical look on life: Anthroposophist, Humanists or New Age for instance.

1.2 Dutch culture

A lot has been written on Dutch culture and the way the Dutch are perceived in the international community. You might recognise the following stereotypes:

(source: "Dealing with the Dutch" by Jacob Vossestein)

The sturdy image

A flat, wet country, most of it lying below sea level (60%!). A place where it never stops raining and which would surely be flooded if it were not for the windmills, the famous Delta Works and little Hans Brinker sticking his finger in the dyke.

The tourist image

Charming King Alexander ruling over an innocent little country, the inhabitants of which wear wooden shoes, and ride bicycles and peacefully produce milk, cheese and flowers. The

residents live in old, quaintly-gabled houses along canals or in picturesque, thatched-roof farmhouses. Ofcourse the sun is always shining.

The cultural image

A small country with a great tradition in the arts. Famous painters past and present, with their works on display in wonderful museums. Also renowned for its world-famous symphony orchestras and ballet companies; a good place for avant-garde theatre and modern design. Of late, it is also gaining fame as a source of great literature, which the outside world reads in translation.

The permissive, lenient image

A place where apparently anything goes. Although most of the journalists and travellers typically concentrate on downtown Amsterdam, they tend to depict *all* of the Netherlands quite sensationally as a far too liberal society, where specialist shops sell legal drugs and pornography. A nation that finds it perfectly normal for gay couples – officially married of course – to obtain children by artificial insemination, and where people are helped to die by itinerant doctors legally practising euthanasia.

The human image

A comfortable, safe haven, an idea held by immigrants and political refugees coming into Europe, linked to the permissive image above, but from yet another perspective. A country that takes seriously its international obligations in providing development assistance and not only takes part in international peace missions, but also presents initiatives in environmental and other global issues.

The blunt and opinionated image

A tiny country with a big mouth, wanting to appear larger than it is. Its people tactlessly expressing their views on other people's and other nations' affairs.

The sporting image

A nation of excellent football teams applying intriguing techniques. Fans dress in bizarre orange outfits, feasting and partying, even literally painting the town orange. Dutch hockey teams may be among the best in the world, but back home they are lucky to receive more than a few minutes of TV coverage.

The tight-with-money image

Money-minded people whose greatest pleasure is extracting every last cent out of any transaction. Many people abroad are convinced that when the Dutch go on holiday elsewhere in Europe, they load up their caravans with food from their own supermarket rather than spend money in local restaurants.

You will know the expression “Going Dutch” and possibly have come across “Kijken, kijken, niet kopen” meaning looking, looking, but never buying.

The economic image

Even now that the polder model has lost its spell, the Dutch economy internationally is still taken very seriously. Small as it is, the Netherlands is one of the world’s larger trading nations and aims to maintain the “Gateway to Europe” position. It is the home of a large number of globalising companies and financial institutions and has the highest “multinational company density” in the world.

While these images may be over-generalised and over-simplified, many Dutch people, and I think you as well, will recognise them.

NOTE: *If you are interested in culture and want to learn more, you might consider buying one of the following books on the topic yourself.*

<i>“Dealing with the Dutch” by Jacob Vossestein</i>	<i>ISBN 978 94 6022 079 1</i>
<i>“Minding your Manners” by Magda Berman</i>	<i>ISBN 978 90 4390 926 6</i>
<i>“Living with the Dutch” by Noreen Sharpe</i>	<i>ISBN 90 6832 574 4</i>
<i>“The Undutchables” by Colin White & Laurie Boucke</i>	<i>ISBN 13 978 1 88850 32 7</i>
<i>“Riding the waves of Culture” by Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner</i>	<i>ISBN 13 978 1 85788 176 9</i>

1.3 Customs & habits

The Dutch have their own unique customs and characteristics. In order to achieve some measure of integration, you should try to find out what being Dutch is all about. You will then avoid misunderstandings and feel more at home amongst the Dutch. Though the Dutch may appear to be somewhat reserved to the outsider, they are actually very cordial, friendly people to know. They just believe in the right to privacy and, until proper introductions are made, they feel that what you do is entirely your own business.

Neighbours

There is a Dutch expression that says, “a friendly neighbour is better than a distant friend”. In the Netherlands it is customary that you introduce yourself to the next-door neighbour. The new arrival, you in this case, is expected to make the first move. If you for any reason don’t introduce yourself, your neighbour will think that you do not wish to be bothered and will probably leave you alone for the rest of your stay out of respect for privacy.

When extending an invitation for coffee, tea, or a drink, make sure to agree on a date and time as the Dutch do not like dropping in unless they are very good friends. So, if you have just become acquainted never visit unannounced for a drink. Call first so that you do not surprise them.

Birthdays

Almost every Dutchman, old or young, celebrates his birthday. When visiting the home of the birthday person, you'll find that everyone congratulates each other. Not only the birthday person, but all that are present at the party.

You may also observe that every family will have a birthday calendar showing birthdays of everyone they know. This calendar usually hangs in the family's bathroom.

For children a real party will be thrown with candies, cakes and lots of presents. All little friends are invited and usually an outing will be organized (movies, McDonald's, swimming pool or bowling). When your child is invited for a "*Partijtje*" (children's birthday party), it goes without saying to bring a small gift. When you bring your child, do not forget to congratulate the parents and other family members. The birthday child hands out a sweet, a piece of cheese or fruit to classmates at school (only in his/her class) and to the teachers of all other classes. It is best to ask another mother what your child should hand out.

If you are invited to a birthday party bring a small present like flowers, a plant, a book or for the men, for instance, a bottle of good wine.

Birthdays are usually celebrated at work among colleagues. You are expected to treat your colleagues to special cakes with morning coffee and normally you will receive a birthday present bought with donations from your colleagues.

Tipping

Although you might have read that one does not tip in the Netherlands, there are exceptions:

- Coat check; If you are not charged you are free to pay €1,00 e.g.
- Paperboy; At the end of the year your paperboy will ring the doorbell and hand you out his card with season greetings. In return he expects some money, like €2,00 or €5,00 for services rendered.

Most of the people make an exception for the paperboy who is bringing the daily paper and give him a bit more.

- Restrooms; (Public restrooms) the minimum is 50 eurocent or more.
- Restaurants; If you are happy with the service, 10% is customary over the standard.

- Taxi; Although the tip is included in the fare, it is not uncommon to round fare off to the next euro. The driver should at least help you with your luggage.

“U” and “jij”

The Dutch have two words for the word “you”.

“U” is used in more formal situations when people do not know each other very well.

“Jij” is used if people talk to each other on a first name basis and if you address children.

First name, last name

Although Dutch society seems very informal, it is best to ask Mr Peter Smith “can I call you Peter?” The rule is to start using first names only when the person suggests it.

1.4 Language

The casual attitude the Dutch have to their language may explain why foreigners learning to speak Dutch are looked upon with pleasant surprise, but not taken very seriously. A few quotes by expatriates:

“Dutch is not a language, it is a secret code for business people and they don’t want foreigners to learn the business code. Keep the knowledge of Dutch restricted, then we all make more profit.”

One American lady comments: *“now that I have taken it upon myself to learn and speak the Dutch language, the locals are more than flattered – they’re shocked that any outsider would make an effort to “bother” with such an obscure language!”*

You will find that the Dutch are prouder of speaking foreign languages than of mastering their own. Most Dutch people will choose to switch to English rather than exercise the patience to wait for the slow beginner’s answer or listen to their accent. In some respects, the Dutch are perhaps embarrassed for the struggling foreigner and simply revert to English to accommodate them. Do not let all of that stop you though in your efforts. Speaking the language will for sure help you getting in touch with the locals and learn and understand them quicker. It will enhance the experience of living and working abroad!

I can recommend you to read chapter 17 of the book “The Undutchables”. It tells about the Dutch language and had me (and I am Dutch!) laughing out loud.

NOTE: ask your IMC at the Eres NL office or your HR representative for their preferred supplier on language course.

1.5 Food

The Dutch have many specialities for you to try.

Popular Dutch treats are, in alphabetical order:

<i>Beschuit</i>	Rusk's served for breakfast or lunch. Very crisp and light. When a baby is born, you will often get served <i>beschuit met muisjes</i> (Rusk's covered with anise flavoured pink or blue topping).
<i>Bitterballen</i>	<i>Bitterballen</i> are the same as <i>kroketten</i> but shaped in small round balls. Deep fried and often served with cocktail sticks and mustard.
<i>Boerenkool</i>	A very famous <i>stamppot</i> of curly cabbage with potatoes served with smoked sausage.
<i>Drop</i>	The national sweet/candy or salt liquorice in every shape.
<i>Erwtensoep</i>	Old fashioned, thick, split pea soup cooked with pieces of fat bacon and sausage. A typical winter dish.
<i>Frikadel</i>	Ground meat in the shape of a Frankfurter.
<i>Kroketten</i>	Known as rissoles in the U.K. similar to <i>timbales</i> or <i>croquettes</i> but with less meat. Often served for lunch on a sandwich. Always served with mustard.
<i>Muisjes</i>	Grain-like topping to be sprinkled on bread or <i>beschuit</i> . <i>Muisjes</i> are aniseed flavoured.
<i>Hagelslag</i>	Chocolate rain comes in dark, milk and white chocolate.
<i>Nieuwe Haring</i>	Raw and salted herring preserved in a uniquely Dutch way. Eating raw herring may take some courage but it is worth the try.
<i>Oliebollen</i>	Doughnuts without a hole, with or without raisins, eaten especially on New Year's Eve.
<i>Poffertjes</i>	A two-inch version of the pancake. A plateful is served with a topping of icing sugar and butter. A favourite for the children.
<i>Speculaas</i>	Cookies with a spicy (cinnamon) flavour. Large sizes are sold during St. Nicholas time (November and December).
<i>Stamppot</i>	A casserole dish of diced meat, vegetables and potatoes.
<i>Stroopwafels</i>	Two thin waffles with a light sugar syrup in between.
<i>Zuurkool</i>	<i>Sauerkraut</i> , usually served with sausage or bacon.

1.6 Safety & crime

“There is a certain order in Holland that makes things easier. Society functions well and is also quite stable. If the government changes, nothing else really changes. This order leaves you free to develop yourself the way you want to.”

General

The Dutch law reflects the basics of Dutch culture: it is equal for all, it has an open eye for anyone in underprivileged positions, and it follows strict rules. The law tends to be on the side of weaker parties, such as employees (rather than employers), house renters (rather than owners) and victims rather than culprits. Dutch courts sometimes evoke public irritation. Tiny procedural mistakes have led to obvious criminals being set free and the psychological circumstances of the accused can lead to sentences which – in public opinion – do not at all reflect the atrociousness of the crime. Moreover, legislation is not always up-to-date in the face of social changes such as multicultural diversity or all kinds of digital sophistication and high-tech developments.

But, the law is the law in our procedure-oriented culture.

Personal safety

The Netherlands is indeed a very stable and safe country where - in most cases - you do not have to be afraid for your personal safety. It is most unlikely that you, or one of your relatives, will be kidnapped.

Petty crime

When arriving at Schiphol you will have heard the announcer warning you about pick pockets. Especially in city centres, pick pocketing is common. Please be aware of it and never keep your valuable items in a place where other people can easily grab it. Always keep an eye on your personal belongings. Always take all your valuable items with you when leaving your car. Do not leave your laptop in the boot or your navigation system in the dashboard. These are the usual places where a possible thief will look for those items and you will (in most cases) not be insured if these items were to be stolen. If you transport your laptop either walking or on your bicycle, always keep it in your hand or hang it across your shoulder. Laptops, iPods and any other devices are very popular items amongst thieves.

Certainly, in the bigger cities, many bicycles are being stolen. You could decide to buy a second-hand bike rather than a new one. And you'd better use at least two approved locks - a normal lock and a padlock, with which you can lock your bicycle to a tree or a lamp post. In an attempt to safeguard your bike, you could ask the bicycle store to incise your postcode in the bicycle.

If personal items are stolen, please contact the local police via the number 0900 - 8844. This number is meant for non-emergency situations. You will be asked to make an appointment in order to report the theft. If you catch someone red-handed, you may indeed use the emergency number 112.

Burglary

You will be wondering why the Dutch always keep their curtains wide open at night for anyone to look inside. We have nothing to hide, we are ordinary people – that’s the actual clue. Although burglary is just as common as in any other nation, it is not common practise to have a security system installed in the house. You will find these in the more expensive residential areas though.

Still, it is wise to always lock the doors of your house, even when you are at home. If you are away for a while, make your house look as though you were still there by making use of automatic time switches for the lights and the television, ask the neighbours to empty your mail box, etc.

You can ask the local police department to come and check the house for you. They will be able to hand you good advice on how to secure the home. Even when you will be away for a longer period (on home leave for instance), they will keep an eye on the house for you if you ask them to.

Drugs & the Dutch policy

This sure is a “hot” issue among expats, raising eyebrows and causing a great deal of worry. Granted, the Netherlands is known throughout the world for its lenient policy on cannabis and marijuana. You will indeed be able to obtain these drugs from coffee shops and street vendors, but contrary to what foreign media report, neither of these – nor any other drug – is officially legal.

Drugs are forbidden in the Netherlands. So, why then are they so easy to get?

We understand that for outsiders (and sometimes insiders too) Dutch policy of combining legal prohibition with turning a blind eye is confusing indeed. You should understand that the Dutch leniency is towards small scale usage of soft drugs only. Coffee shops may sell up to 5 grams of cannabis under strict conditions without facing prosecution and no legal action is taken for possession of small quantities of drugs for personal use. Big scale and hard drugs are being prosecuted in a fierce way.

For more details, please consult the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

<https://www.government.nl/topics/drugs>

NOTE: 112 is the general emergency number in the Netherlands.

The operator will listen to your story and put you in contact with either the police, the fire department or an ambulance. Put the number in the memory of your home phone and mobile phone.

1.7 Event calendar & national holidays

A cold January invites endless speculation about the nation-stopping *Elfstedentocht* (Eleven Cities Race), a gruelling 200km (124mi) skating marathon through the countryside of Friesland. The last one was held in 1997, and it could be decades before it all freezes over again.

The Holland Festival in June is celebrated mostly in Amsterdam and The Hague. It's often highbrow and pretentious but there are many fringe events. The Port of Rotterdam's North Sea Jazz Festival each July is the world's biggest jazz junket.

Vying for attention as Holland's oldest city, Nijmegen attracts revellers from all over for the country's hugest walking festival. The *Vierdaagse* (Four Day March) over 200km (124mi) through the surrounding countryside is a major event for serious walkers and partygoers alike, starting on the third Tuesday in July. The event is ushered in and drawn to a close by the *Zomerfeesten* (Summer Festival), that start on the Saturday before the *Vierdaagse*.

January 1

New Year's Day (*Nieuwjaarsdag*)

The 1st of January is a bank holiday in the Netherlands, so all shops and offices are closed. Everybody may drop in for a visit and wish you Happy New Year. The next couple of days at the office everybody shakes hands and wishes you a Happy New Year.

January 6

Epiphany/Twelfth-night (*Drie Koningen*)

Especially in the south of the Netherlands, the Catholic festival of the three kings (Casper, Melchior and Balthasar) is celebrated by the children. They dress up as kings and parade through the streets or ring the doorbell. Some people eat a special dessert with a hidden almond in one of the portions; the person who finds the almond will be the king and will receive a crown.

February 14

Valentine's Day (*Valentijnsdag*)

Not a typical Dutch celebration, but warmly welcomed in the last decades by the Dutch. An opportunity to secretly admire a loved one and send presents or cards.

February

Carnival (Catholic Celebration)

The Netherlands have been divided in two factions for a number of years: those living below the large rivers (Maas, Rijn, Waal) and those living above them. The Southerners, mostly

Catholics, know how to throw a party and to exuberantly celebrate life. The northerners, mostly Calvinists and protestants, take life a lot more seriously. Nowadays, that fine line seems to fade and many Northerners visit the south of the Netherlands to take part in the celebrations.

The key to a city is symbolically transferred to the “Council of Eleven” and a Prince of Carnival is selected. He will be the figurehead for the celebrations during two or three days. There are carnival parades and most people dress up. Shops and offices might be closed. Children go to school in fancy dresses and children’s parties are organised locally. The end of carnival marks the beginning of the spring season.

March/April

Palm Sunday (*Palm Pasen*)

On the Sunday before Easter certain areas of the Netherlands still hold processions through the streets with the children carrying a *Palmpasenstok*, a long stick decorated with a rooster, a duck or a swan made of bread, some fruit and garlands. This Christian celebration is in remembrance of the procession into Jerusalem with palms and olive branches.

March/April

Good Friday (*Goede Vrijdag*)

Again, a Christian holiday in remembrance of the crucifixion of Jesus. Offices might be closed, shops are mostly open, but will close earlier in the afternoon.

March/April

Easter (*Pasen*)

In the Netherlands Easter Sunday and Easter Monday are celebrated, which are bank holidays and therefore shops and offices are closed. On Easter Sunday people usually have a large Easter breakfast and the children hunt for hidden eggs, which are usually hard-boiled and painted or nicely decorated. Go to a performance of the St. Matthew’s Passion by Bach, details available at any VVV (=tourist information office).

March 8

International Women’s Day

April 1

April Fool’s Day

Sometimes an April Fool’s joke, always good natured and not hurtful, is found to be so good and creative that it is mentioned in the national press.

April, 27

King Willem-Alexander's birthday

We celebrate King's Day on 27 April, Willem-Alexander's birthday. This is a national Holiday and an absolute favourite day for all Dutchmen around the world. In every town there is a "Kermis" or pleasure fair and lots of other activities like street markets, games and parties. Many houses show the Dutch flag often in combination with an orange banner. A well-known drink on this day is *oranjebitter*: a strongly alcoholic and orange coloured spirit made of an extract of spices and fruit.

April/June

Ascension Day (Hemelvaart)

Takes place 40 days after Christ's Resurrection on Easter. It is always a Thursday, so people tend to take long weekends of. Nice break to visit the Keukenhof in Lisse (check your tourist information centre or VVV).

April 20

Secretary Day

Your secretary will appreciate a bouquet of flowers

April/May

Pentecost or Whitsuntide (Pinksteren)

Fifty days after Easter is *Pinksteren*. This follows the celebration of *Hemelvaartsdag* (Ascension Day). *Pinksteren* now has more of a May Day spirit than a religious meaning. The following Monday is also a bank holiday.

The Saturday before *Pinksteren* is called **Luilak** or "**Lazybones**". Mostly in the western provinces of the Netherlands. Children get up very early or do not go to bed at all. They make a lot of noise and try to wake you up. Some are even looking for trouble and try to damage cars, etc. Put away any belongings around the outside of the house and switch off your front door bell. Park your car in the garage or somewhere safe.

May 4

Remembrance or Memorial Day (Dodenherdenking)

On May 4, ceremonies are held all over the Netherlands in remembrance of those who died during the Second World War. Ceremonies and parades are held at the Waalsdorpervlakte near The Hague and at the National Monument on the Dam in Amsterdam.

From 6:00 p.m. to sunset flags are flown at half-mast. At 8:00 p.m. two-minute silence is observed in memory of the dead. Everyone in the Netherlands is expected to refrain from all activities and think of those who fought for the Netherlands' freedom. This day is not a holiday.

May 5

Liberation Day (*Bevrijdingsdag*)

The end of World War II is celebrated. It is a (working) national holiday and a day of rejoicing with many activities at school and in the community. Every 5 years this is celebrated as a national bank holiday.

May 9

Europe Day

May

Mother's Day

Always on the second Sunday in May all mothers are thanked and surprised with gifts.

June

Father's Day

Let's not forget the fathers. This is the third Sunday in June!

September

Prinsjesdag (State Opening of Parliament)

The third Tuesday of September is *Prinsjesdag*. The King and Queen rides in the *Gouden Koets* (golden carriage) through the streets of The Hague and the King gives an annual speech – the *Troonrede* (throne speech) at Parliament. This can be watched on television.

October 4

Animal Day (*Dierendag*)

Popular with kids of course. Pets will be treated extra well on this day.

October 31

Halloween

This is a relatively new celebration in the Netherlands. Although it originates from the Catholic festival of *Allerheiligen* or All Hallows (all saints) it was abolished by the Protestants.

It is becoming more and more popular, specially among the young.

November 11

Sint Maarten

Especially celebrated in the provinces of Utrecht and northern Netherlands. Children walk through the streets carrying lighted lanterns, ring doorbells, sing a song and get sweets, fruit and biscuits. It could be considered the Dutch equivalent for Halloween

End of November

Saint Nicholas arrives (*Sinterklaas*)

Dutch children are just as excited about *Sinterklaas* as about their own birthday. He arrives in November from Spain by boat. From then on, the children may put their shoe in front of the chimney. In the morning they will find a small present/candy in it. This can continue until the 6th of December, St. Nicholas' birthday. During this period, you can eat special sweets such as *speculaaspoppen*, *marsepein*, *pepernootjes*, *taai taai* and *borstplaat*.

November

Thanksgiving

Holiday for US citizens and also celebrated in Leiden, a stopover for the Pilgrims before their departure to The New World.

December 6

Sinterklaas

Sinterklaas celebrates his birthday. Early in the evening of December 5 – *Pakjesavond* - he visits every house with lots of presents. He may come in person or he may just knock on your door and disappear, leaving a bag of presents on your doorstep! *Sinterklaas* is celebrated as a very cozy family evening when family members buy presents for each other and make poems which provide a clue for the contents of the gift. As soon as the kids are old enough, the family will draw straws containing the name of one family member. This is the person for who a special and creative Surprise present will have to be prepared.

Sinterklaas is not a national holiday but shops and offices usually close an hour earlier.

December 25/26

Christmas

Christmas in the Netherlands is also a time filled with the magic atmosphere of the holiday season. More and more, the American tradition is followed, placing gifts under the Christmas Tree instead of giving them at *Pakjesavond*.

Christmas is for the most part a family occasion with the *kerstdiner* as a high point. The Dutch sensibly have two Christmas Days (December 25 and 26), which is handy for in-laws.

It is also the time of the *Kerstpakket*. Your employer might present you with a box filled with some wine, luxury foods and decorations. It is customary to send *Kerstpakketten* to business relations as well. Both days are public holidays (shops are closed).

Fireworks are only allowed to be sold in the days preceding New Year's Eve.

December 31

New Year's Eve (*Oudejaarsavond* or *Oud en Nieuw*)

In the evening of December 31, the Dutch will serve "*oliebollen*" or oil balls and "*appelflappen*" or apple turnovers dipped in powder sugar and drink champagne to celebrate the New Year.

When the clock turns 00.00 family and friends will kiss and wish one-another all the best for the new year and go out to meet the neighbours.

Fireworks are being lit together with the neighbours in the streets. Everybody eats *oliebollen* and *appelflappen*, the shape of a doughnut without a hole, with or without raisins or slices of apple. People meet up with family and friends.

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