

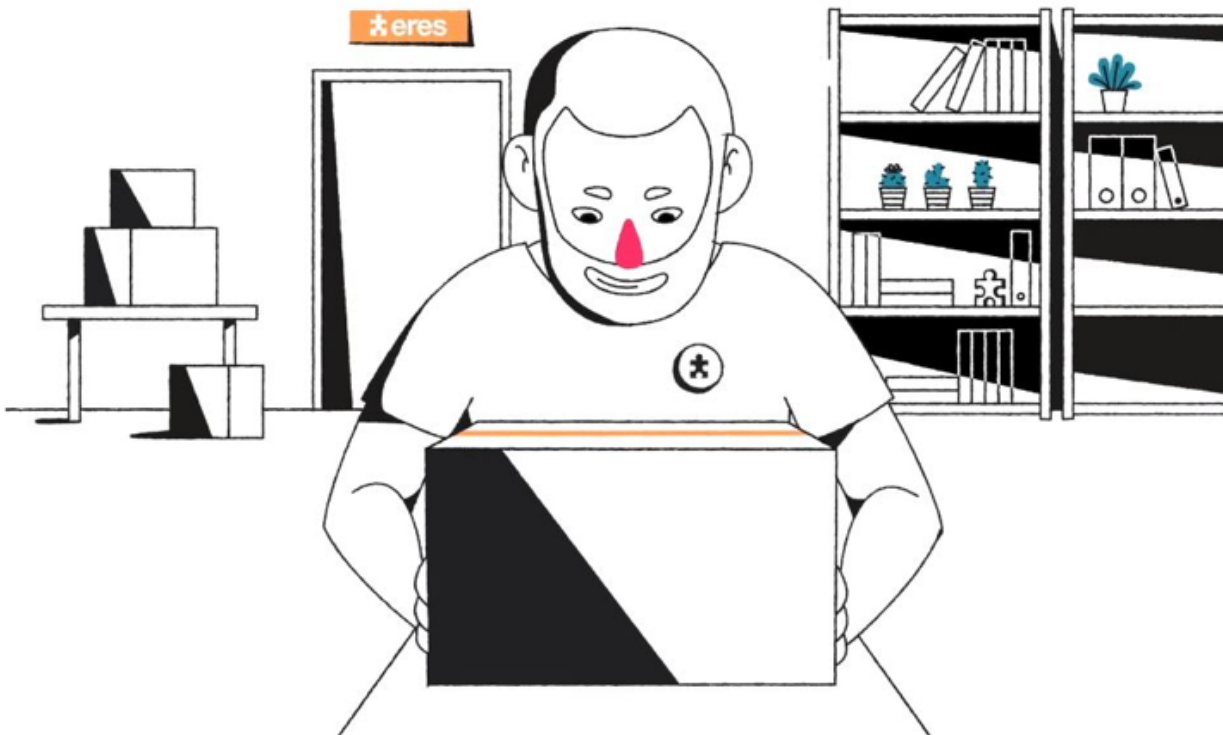
## HELLO

This guide will tell you about the Netherlands as a society, our quality of life, our religion, our climate and our population. We've added the Cost of living NL 2023 so you get an idea of your spending power.

If you are looking for the cultural aspects of the Netherlands and the Dutch, check out our **RELATE** guide.

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## 1. General

The Netherlands lies in north-western Europe, with German 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 km<sup>2</sup> (15,772 sq. miles) including the Waddensee, IJsselmeer and other lakes. The land area is 33,800 km<sup>2</sup> (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.

## 2. 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, legislations 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.

### 3. Cost of Living NL 2023

Please note that the below mentioned prices represent the *approximate* cost of living in the Netherlands as per January 2023. They are meant to give you a sense of price level and are purely an indication of Dutch market prices. No rights can be derived from this overview. Eres Relocation will not accept any liability

	Details	Price range
<b>1 UTILITIES</b>		
<b>Gas</b>	family house, 4 persons, per month	€ 441.00
<b>Water</b>	family house, 4 persons, per month	€ 25.00
<b>Electricity</b>	family house, 4 persons, per month	€ 272.00
<b>2 COMMUNITY TAXES</b>		
<b>Waste disposal</b>	per household per year (differs per city)	€ 441.00
<b>Sewerage charges</b>	per year (differs per city)	€ 154.00
<b>Water boards</b>	Family house, 4 persons, per year (differs per city)	€ 296.45
<b>3 TELECOM</b>		
<b>TV</b>	per month	€20.95
<b>Internet</b>	per month	€35.00
<b>Land line</b>	per month	€ 12.50

<b>Combined telecom packages</b>	KPN, per month	€ 55.00
	Ziggo, per month	€ 70.50
<b>Mobile connections</b>	per month (unlimited GB and calling)	€ 45.00

#### 4 PERSONAL CARE

<b>Hair dresser</b>	washing, simple hair cut woman, drying	€ 53.00
<b>Sauna</b>	one day	€ 39.50
	evening rate	€ 25.00

#### Beauty Centre

	face treatment, incl. eyebrows	€ 65.00
	½ an hour massage	€ 30.00

#### 5 HOME MAINTENANCE & CLEANING

<b>Cleaning lady</b>	per hour	€ 15.00 - € 20.00
<b>Gardener</b>	per hour	€ 40.00
<b>Plumber</b>	per hour	€ 35.00 - € 80.00
<b>Handy man/painter</b>	per hour	€ 35.00 - € 50.00

#### Dry cleaning

	Dress	€ 13.50
	Jacket	€ 12.50
	Coat	€ 19.50
	Shirt	€ 8.95
	Suit	€ 21.60
	Sweater	€ 8.35
	Trousers	€ 9.95
	Party dress	€ 20.90

#### 6 LEISURE

<b>Cinema</b>	adult/ child	€ 12.50 / € 7.50
<b>Theatre</b>		from € 35.00 up to € 85.00
<b>Concert classic</b>	depends on orchestra	€ 30.00 - € 80.00
<b>Concert modern</b>	depends on artist	€ 35.00 - € 150.00
<b>Museum visit</b>	adult/ child	€ 20.00/with discount or for free
<b>Video rental</b>	Per month	€ 10.00

#### Theme parks

	Efteling	€ 48.00
	Madurodam	€ 23.50
	Naturalis	€ 17.00
	Nemo	€ 17.50
	Walibi	€ 40.00

#### Dining out

	Fast food meal	€ 8.75 p.p.
	Main course at <b>average</b> restaurant	€ 18.50 - € 30.00
	Main course at <b>top</b> restaurant	€ 25.00 - € 50.00
	Main course at <b>Michelin star</b> restaurant	€ 40.00 - € 70.00

<b>Ordering in</b>		
	pizza delivery	€ 10.00/€ 15.00
	Chinese take out	from € 10.50
<b>Reading</b>		
	magazines	€4.50 - €10.00
	newspapers, single issue	€ 3.80
	books, paperback	€10 - €30

## 7 SPORTS

<b>Membership golf club</b>	per year	€ 360 - € 4,000
<b>Membership sports club (football, hockey, tennis)</b>	per season	€ 200 - € 400
<b>Membership fitness club</b>	per year	€ 240 - € 760

## 8 GROCERIES

<b>Food</b>		
<b>Apples</b>	1 kilo	€ 2.00 - 2.99
<b>Bananas</b>	1 kilo	€ 2.19
<b>Bread white</b>	loaf	€ 1.19 - € 2.30
<b>Bread whole-wheat</b>	loaf	€ 1.35 - € 2.50
<b>Butter</b>	250 grams	€ 2.49
<b>Butter/margarine</b>	500 grams	€ 1.79
<b>Cheese</b>	1 kilo	from € 6.80
<b>Coca Cola (regular/diet)</b>	1,0 litres	€ 1.99
<b>Coffee</b>	500 grams	€ 7.99
<b>Cereals muesli</b>	500 grams	€ 2.45
<b>Cereals cornflakes</b>	500 grams	€ 3.09
<b>Crisps</b>	250 grams	€ 1.90
<b>Eggs</b>	6 eggs, size M	€ 2.79
<b>Flour</b>	1 kilo	€ 0.70
<b>Milk semi-skimmed</b>	1 litre	€ 1.29
<b>Oranges</b>	2 kilos	€ 2.99
<b>Orange juice</b>	1 litre	€ 1.99
<b>Olive oil</b>	500 ml	€ 4.79
<b>Pasta</b>	500 grams	€ 0.99
<b>Potatoes</b>	3 kilos	€ 4.49
<b>Rice</b>	1 kilo	€ 1.99
<b>Soup</b>	800 ml	€ 2.99
<b>Sugar</b>	1 kilo	€ 1.19
<b>Tea</b>	20 bags	€ 1.99
<b>Water (mineral)</b>	1,5 litres	€ 0.89
<b>Water (sparkling)</b>	1,5 litres	€ 0.99
<b>Meat</b>		
<b>Beef</b>	1 kilo	€ 15.96
<b>Chicken</b>	1 kilo	€ 7.49
<b>Hamburger</b>	1 kilo	€ 9.97
<b>Lamb</b>	1 kilo	€ 23.99
<b>Pork</b>	1 kilo	€ 8.00 - € 18.00
<b>Non-food</b>		
<b>Shampoo, hair care products</b>	300 ml	€ 0.99 - € 6.50

<b>Toilet paper</b>	6 rolls	€ 5.39
<b>Tooth paste</b>	1 roll	€ 0.90 - € 5.99
<b>Detergent washing machine</b>	1,1 litres	€ 3.90 - € 13.00
<b>Detergent dish washer</b>	40 tablets	€ 2.99 - € 14.99

#### Drug store products

<b>Aspirin</b>	20 tablets, 500 mg	€ 0.99
<b>Pain relievers (Advil, Aspro)</b>	10 tablets	€ 5.79
<b>Vitamins</b>	60 tablets	€ 6.49

### 9 TRANSPORTATION

<b>Train</b>	example: The Hague-Amsterdam vv	€ 25.60
<b>Taxi</b>	starting fee + per km	€ 3.36 + € 2.47 per km
<b>Bus</b>	Public Transport card (OV-kaart)	€ 7.50 + traject
<b>Tram</b>	Public Transport card (OV-kaart)	€ 7.50 + traject
<b>Fuel</b>		
<b>Gas</b>	per litre	€ 1.02
<b>Petrol</b>	per litre	€ 1.98
<b>Diesel</b>	per litre	€ 1.92
<b>Fines</b>		
<b>Speeding</b>	5 km/hour - 30 km/hour	€ 39 - € 386
<b>Incorrect parking</b>		€ 110
<b>Ignoring a red light</b>		€ 280
<b>Not driving hands free</b>	(mobile phone in hand)	€ 380

### 10 CHILDREN

<b>Babysitter</b>	per hour	€ 7.50 - € 15.00
<b>Nanny</b>	per hour	€ 12.50 - € 20.00
<b>Au pair</b>	per month (excl. agency fee)	€ 300 - € 400

### 11 SCHOOL FEES

<b>Dutch schools</b>		
	Primary education	€ 25 - € 100
	Secondary education	€ 150 - € 1050
<b>International schools (double stream)</b>		
	Primary Education	€ 3,650 - € 4,830
	Secondary Education	€ 4,100 - € 7,800
<b>International schools (private schools)</b>		
	Primary Education	from € 18,000
	Secondary Education	up to € 27,000

### 12 HEALTH CARE

<b>Dentist</b>	Check-up (twice a year, excl. cleaning)	€ 25.00
<b>GP</b>	Check-up huisarts	€ 18.47
<b>Health insurance</b>	Basic package, per year per person	€ 1710.00
	incl. dental coverage, per year per person	€ 1963.00

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