



## *Holiday Guide*

*Living and Driving in Holland*

## Living and Driving in Holland

The Netherlands has a population of 16.5 million. The country covers a total area of 41,526 square kilometres, including its many rivers, canals and lakes. The landscape is mainly flat with hilly areas in the south and east. The name 'the Netherlands' refers to the flat nature of the country ("nether" means "low"). The Netherlands is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system. The monarch and the ministers constitute the Crown. The seat of the government is The Hague, but Amsterdam is the capital.

A wonderfully compact land, you are never far from the coast, where long, sandy beaches line the whole of the western shore, from the north all the way down to the Belgian border.

## General Information

### Money and banking

The currency of Holland is the Euro (€) which is divided into 100 cents (c).

**Notes:** €500, €200, €100, €50, €20, €10, €5.  
**Coins:** €2, €1, 50c, 20c, 10c, 5c, 2c, 1c.

Business hours differ between banks. Most banks are open from Tuesday to Friday between 9am and 4pm. On Mondays business hours start mainly at 1pm. On Saturdays and Sundays banks are closed. If you need to change your currency then the banks will charge you a small commission. You can also change your money at hotels, campsites and railways stations, but not at such a good rate.

Please note that while credit cards are generally widely accepted, some smaller shops and



restaurants may not accept them, so it is always worth carrying some cash with you.

### Shopping

Most shops are open Tuesday to Friday between 9am and 6pm. On Saturdays opening hours are 9am - 5pm. On Mondays shops open from 11am to 6pm. Most cities have late-night shopping (until 9pm) on Thursdays or Fridays. In holiday and tourist resorts many shops are open at night and on Sundays. For business hours on Sundays or late night shopping, please call a local tourist information office.

Extended shopping is available in the following cities:

- Amsterdam** On Sunday every week from noon to 7pm. Late night shopping every Thursday until 9pm.
- The Hague** On Sunday every week from noon to 5pm. Late night shopping every Thursday until 9pm.
- Maastricht** Late night shopping every Thursday until 9pm.
- Utrecht** Sunday: first Sunday of each

month from 12pm to 5pm.  
Late night shopping every Thursday until 9pm.

**Rotterdam** On Sunday every week from noon to 5pm.  
Late night shopping every Friday until 9pm.

American Express, Visa and Mastercard are very useful for shopping purposes.

### Museum hours

Business hours vary, however, most museums are open from 10am until 5pm every day of the week, except Mondays.

### Public holidays

Holland takes the following public holidays:  
2nd & 5th April  
30th April  
5th, 13th & 24th May

### Restaurants and eating out

Dutch cuisine offers substantial, simple, and straight-forward fare. Many bars serve meals at a reasonable price and there is also a good supply of cafeterias. If you like to dine a little more formally, restaurants are usually open for lunch from 11am to 2.30/3pm and for dinner from 5.30pm-10/11pm. A 10% tip is the norm for waiters.

### Telephones

Orange and grey coloured telephone booths are located inside and around most Dutch train stations. From these booths you can make calls with coins, credit cards and special telephone cards. Telfort telephone cards are available from the GWK - Holland Welcome Service, Wizzl Shops at a wide range of train stations and all ticket offices at train stations.

### Calls to the UK

To phone the UK from Holland dial the international code 00 followed by 44 for the UK. Remember to leave out the zero from the beginning of the area code.

### Calls from the UK

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To make a call to Holland dial the international country code 0031, then the number.

## Clothing

Summers in Holland are generally lovely but along with your shorts and beach wear pack a lightweight raincoat - the odd rain shower is possible. One of the great things about Holland is that the Dutch are relaxed about clothes. You wear what you feel good in - particularly in Amsterdam when an opera audience happily turns up in jeans and T-shirts. Men should bring a tie and women a skirt or dress if you plan on dining up-market. Otherwise feel free to wear what you please.

## Radio World Service (All times GMT)

The BBC World Service broadcasts in English 24 hours a day, with World News on the hour which can be picked up on (times in GMT):

From	To	Days	Frequency
00.00	24.00	Daily	648kHz
00.00	05.30	Daily	198kHz
05.00	07.00	Daily	6195kHz
05.00	08.00	Daily	9410kHz
14.00	15.00	Sat. only	12095kHz
15.00	19.00	Daily	12095kHz
17.00	21.00	Daily	9140kHz
17.00	22.00	Daily	6195kHz

**Frequency FM, AM or SW**  
FM 95.2

## Language

The national language is Dutch. English is widely spoken and understood virtually everywhere. In addition, many Dutch people speak German and French.

## Driving Information

### Speed limits

Unless otherwise stipulated, the speed limits on dry roads are:

- 50km/h (31mph) in all built up areas.
- 80km/h (55mph) on roads outside built up areas.
- 120km/h (74mph) on motorways (minimum speed on motorways is 60km/h - 37mph).
- Police in Holland are authorised to impose and collect fines on the spot. Remember to ask for a receipt for the amount paid.

### Regulations

- Children under the age of 12 yrs. or 1.5m in height are not permitted in the front seat of a car unless in an approved harness/seat.
- The minimum driving age is 18 years.
- The alcohol limit is 0.5mg/ml and random tests are frequent. Drink driving can lead to imprisonment.
- It is compulsory to carry a warning triangle and headlight beams must be adjusted for right hand drive. Headlight converter kits are available from most motoring shops or your car dealership.
- It is recommended that you carry a fire extinguisher, high visibility jacket, first aid kit and a spare set of bulbs for the car.
- Cyclists on cycle paths and trams have the

right of way.

- Priority is to be given to traffic coming from the right.
- Use of mobile phones whilst driving and radar detectors are strictly forbidden.
- A GB/IRL sticker must be displayed at all times.

### Emergency numbers and breakdown

Fire	112
Ambulance	112
Police	112

### Fuel

- Fuel is cheaper at larger supermarkets than at petrol stations.
- Major credit cards are widely accepted.

### Documents

- Drivers licence, vehicle registration (V5) and car insurance documents must be carried at all times.
- A Green Card is recommended but not essential.

### Tolls

There are no toll roads in Holland. However, some tunnels and bridges charge tolls.

### Translations

#### Main Road Signs

Dutch	English
Alle richtingen	All directions
Wegwerkzaamheden	Roadworks
Autobaan	Motorway
Weg afgesloten	Road closed
Geen toegang	No entry
Waarschuwing	Warning
Eenrichtingsverkeer	One way street
Weg Omleiding	Diversion
Lichten ontsteken	Switch on your lights
Afrit	Exit (from motorway)
Langzaam rijden	Slow
Vertraging	Delay
Parkeerplaats	Parking

#### Fuel Terms

Diesel	Diesel
Loodvrije benzine	Unleaded petrol

