



NETHERLANDS

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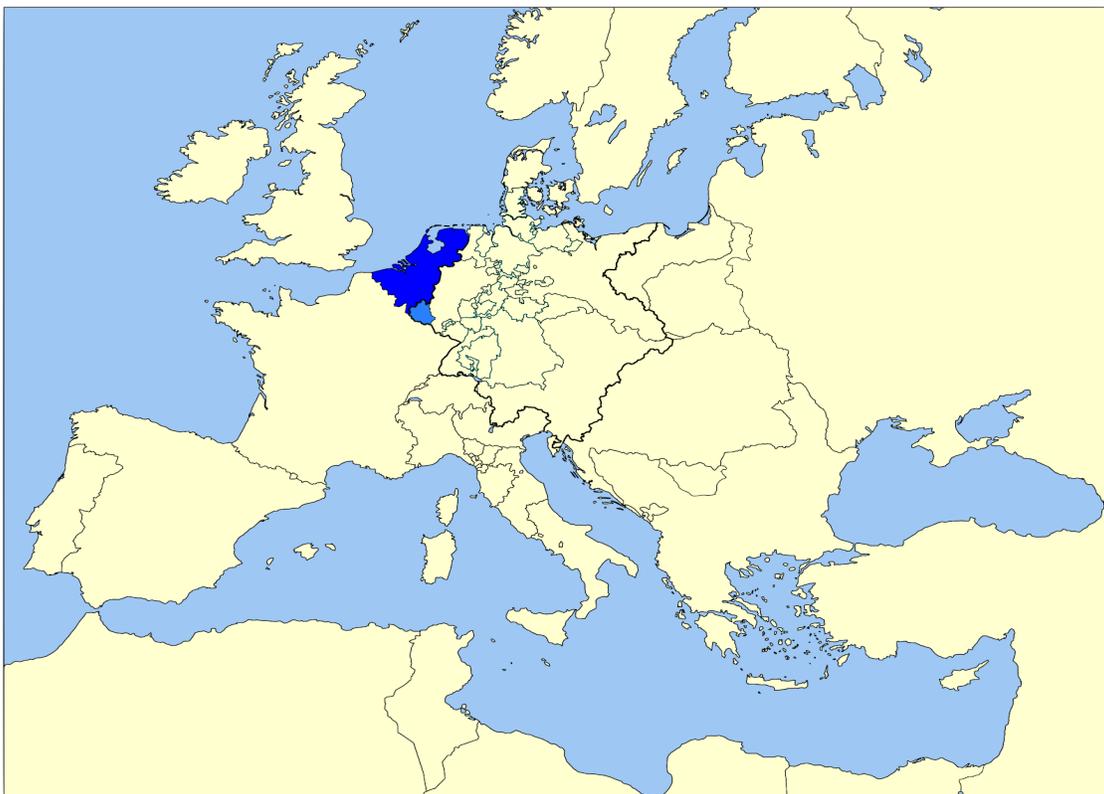
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Introduction:

The Netherlands, a country in northwestern Europe, is known for a flat landscape of canals, tulip fields, windmills and cycling routes. The country shares a border with Germany in the East and Belgium in the South. The West and North are the Dutch coast and are delimited by the North Sea. The euro is the official currency.

•People

With 17 million people and a population density of 488 people per km², the Netherlands is the most densely populated country of the European Union and one of the most densely populated countries in the world. The total size of the Netherlands is 41,500 km². Amsterdam is the capital, but the government resides in The Hague. More than 40% of the total population live in the Randstad, the agglomeration of the cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht.

•Language

The official language is Dutch. The population of the province of Friesland has a choice between Dutch and Frisian, the only officially recognized regional language. The Netherlands also include the regional languages of West Low German and Limburg. In other parts of the Netherlands, people often speak a dialect besides Standard Dutch. Many Dutch people also speak German and English.

•Landscape

Water dominates the Dutch landscape. Three big European rivers (Rhine, Meuse and Scheldt) reach the ocean via the Netherlands and create an important delta. 26% of the Netherlands is under sea level. During an age-long battle against the water, the Dutch constructed a water system consisting of dykes, polders and weirs.

•Economy

The Netherlands is known as a politically stable country with sound financial policy. The Netherlands is one of the most open economies in the world and is one of the world's top 5 biggest exporters.

Three-quarters of the professional population work in the tertiary sector, one quarter in the industrial sector and only 4 per cent in agriculture. Despite these figures, the Netherlands is a big exporter of agricultural and horticultural products

•Sports

The most popular sports in the Netherlands are football, hockey, tennis, cycling, golf, volleyball, korfbal, handball, swimming and ice-skating. Dutch football and speed skating especially enjoy a worldwide reputation.

Orange is related to the Dutch Royal Family and represents the national identity of the Netherlands. That's why Dutch fans dress up in orange. During some sports events, the whole country turns orange and people become infected with what we like to call the 'orange fever'.

•Social ways

The Dutch are creative, open-minded and pragmatic. They are also rather direct, honest and open in their dealings with others. The Dutch are known for their tolerant attitudes towards topics such as abortion, euthanasia and (soft) drug use.

Some interesting facts:

1. Never visit around dinner time if you don't have an appointment to meet. The Dutch like their privacy and prefer to eat with their family. It is likely that there is not enough to go around and offer you a meal.
2. While Holland is most commonly used to talk about the Netherlands, 'Holland' is actually just a part of the Netherlands. When we talk about Holland, we mean the provinces of North and South Holland. But the Netherlands includes another ten provinces.
3. Orange is the colour of the Dutch royal family.
4. On the islands of Texel, there are more sheep than people.
5. The Netherlands boasts some 35.000 kilometres worth of bike paths.
6. The highest museum density can be found in Leiden. Here, there are as many as 13 museums within walking distance.
7. Avoid walking on cycle paths if you don't want to be run over.
8. Drinking in the street is forbidden, except on terraces.

National Holidays and Celebrations:

When it comes to national holidays it is surprising to note that the Netherlands has the least number of national holidays as compared to the rest of the EU, it ranks second to last for the same. Here are some of the important holidays observed in the Netherlands.

Holidays and festivals:

1) King's Day :

About: it is a national holiday in the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Celebrated on 27 April the date marks the birth of King Willem-Alexander. Until the abdication of Queen Beatrix in 2013, the holiday was known Queen's Day and was celebrated on 30 April.

Celebration: The festivities on "Koningsdag" are often organised by Orange Committees, local associations that seek sponsorship and donations for their activities. The people dress in the colour orange and some even go to the extent of colouring their hair. The festivities include a nationwide flea market, at which many people sell their used goods. King's day is the one day of the year that the Dutch government permits sales on the street without a permit and without the payment of value-added tax. In recent times Kings day is welcomed with large scale celebrations which include live concerts with huge crowds.

2) Liberation Day:

About: Liberation day is celebrated on 5th May every year to mark the end of the occupation by the Nazi's during World War II.

Celebration: The Liberation day is celebrated with a grand parade and live concerts. They also honour military memorabilia. It is however celebrated once in 5 years and when it is celebrated, many businesses

remain closed and public transport either remains non-functional or sticks to a changed timetable.

3) National Remembrance Day:

About: It is celebrated on 4th May to remember the fallen soldiers who fought in World War II but is not an official holiday.

Celebration: It is celebrated by observing a 2-minute silence during which all transport facilities stop and people immediately stop what they are doing.

4) Sinterklaas:

About: Sinterklaas is a legendary figure based on Saint Nicholas, patron saint of children. It is celebrated on 6th December but is not an official public holiday.

Celebration: It is celebrated with great festivities which include giving gifts to loved ones, dressing up in fancy attire and even painting ones face in all sorts of colours. These festivities have brought around a controversy which is being debated to this date.

Other national holidays and festivities in the Netherlands:

Good Friday, Easter Monday, Ascension(40 days after Easter), Pentecost(7 weeks after Easter), Christmas day.

Celebrations:

- **Birthdays or “Year Days”:**

Birthdays are highly social affairs in the Netherlands, and spending your birthday alone may be seen as rude or anti-social. If they know it's your birthday, they will likely either force you to celebrate it or set up some celebrations themselves. Secondly, if you do manage to make your solitary plan a success, people will eventually find out. The Dutch birthday greeting is “Gefeliciteerd!” which is usually translated as “Congratulations!” as you say this, you shake hands and kiss the person three times and you also say this to the entire family. As far as the party is concerned, no matter how old you are, a birthday cake is compulsory and should be brought by yourself.

- **Wedding Day Celebrations:**

The Dutch Civil Code and the Criminal Code Act stated that it is illegal to execute a sacramental marriage without a prior civil marriage. So if you want a church ceremony, to go to your local city hall first to find out what paperwork you need before you are legally allowed to do so. A long term tradition in Holland has been to hand out ‘bridal sugar’ to the wedding guests. At the end of the night, there used to be little pouches with exactly 5 pieces of sugar-coated almonds. The five sweets represented happiness, love, fidelity, prosperity and fertility. So if you want to gift your guests something typically Dutch to thank them for attending your wedding.

- **Tulip Festival:**

The world-famous Keukenhof Flower Parade is held on 13 April 2019. Every spring, Holland is the place to admire colourful flower fields and to welcome the new season. People from all over the world come to see the beautiful Keukenhof tulip garden and marvel at the flower fields just 30 minutes outside the centre of Amsterdam. The festival is celebrated with a beautiful display of tulips followed by parades.

Unique Practices and Customs:

The Dutch people are known to be very private. People are very formal when they deal with each other. They have high self-control, they are known to not ask personal questions and they refuse to answer them. Their common greeting is a handshake and a smile. Very close friends will kiss each other three times on the cheek.

Amsterdam, the capital of the Netherlands, is a city without prejudice, a city of free and open-minded people. Here, abortion, prostitution, euthanasia, and same-sex marriages are legalized. At the same time, the Netherlands can be called a country of contrasts and paradoxes.

National features of the Dutch are politeness, punctuality, and thrift. Travellers will feel comfortable among the friendly and calm locals. Dutch interaction, on the other hand, is generally stylized and formal. As long as you are polite enough to respect other people's social space, they will politely respect yours, and tolerate almost anything you want to do. They are very tolerant of someone else's opinion, never get into a dispute, and respond to rudeness by politeness and a smile.

As in many other cultures, the Dutch have a custom of pausing at the end of a sentence, to indicate that they have finished talking and that someone else can take a turn. However, a Dutch person will typically only leave a short pause, when he or she has finished speaking.

If you know someone very well, it is acceptable to drop in on them in the morning and to ask whether you can come by that evening. Normally, however, you should call in advance. In the Netherlands, grown children even call their parents and vice versa to see if it is all right to come by for a visit. They never boast with their wealth, and tourists shouldn't do that too. In this country, such gestures are considered a bad form, the same as non-punctuality. Dutch people simply cannot stand that.

The Dutch are very fond of the holidays. They are happy to celebrate the triumph of the royal family, national holidays, and birthdays. A person of a different culture will be very surprised by the Dutch birthday party. At the celebration, it is customary to congratulate

not only the hero of the day but all those present too. Dutch tradition called for the groom to fetch the bride at her place of residence, namely her parents' home, on the day of the wedding with the bridal bouquet in tow. The couple would venture off together, followed by an entourage in a specific order called the bruidstoet: first, the bride and groom, joined by the flower girls; second, the parents of both the bride and groom; third, the witnesses; and finally, the rest of the guests

About once a month, residents throw out large items on the street. These include old furniture, household appliances, interior items, building materials, and anything that they no longer need. Almost all things are in perfect state. Such dumps became popular places. They act as free flea markets, where any Dutchman can pick up the right thing. Pragmatic and thrifty Dutch people do not consider this to be any shameful. On the contrary, they are happy to use an opportunity to save or find unique stuff for their home.

The Cultural Dimensions:

• **Power Distance Index (PDI)** is the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept that power is distributed unequally. The Netherlands scores low on this dimension which means that the following characterizes the Dutch style: Being independent, the hierarchy for convenience only, equal rights, superiors accessible, coaching leader, management facilitates and empowers. Power is decentralized and managers count on the experience of their team members. Employees expect to be consulted. Control is disliked and attitude towards managers are informal and on a first name basis. Communication is direct and participative.

• **Individualism (IDV)** is of opposite collectivism, that is the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups. The Netherlands, with a very high score of 80 is an Individualist society. This means there is a high preference for a loosely-knit social framework in which individuals are expected to take care of themselves and their immediate families only. In Individualist societies offence causes guilt and a loss of self-esteem, the employer/employee relationship is a contract based on mutual advantage, hiring and promotion decisions are supposed to be based on merit only.

• **Masculinity (MAS)** versus its opposite, femininity, refers to the distribution of roles between the genders which is another fundamental issue for any society to which a range of solutions are found. The Netherlands scores 14 on this dimension and is, therefore, a Feminine society. In Feminine countries, it is important to keep the life/work balance and you make sure that all are included. An effective manager is supportive of his/her people, and decision making is achieved through involvement. Managers strive for consensus and people value equality, solidarity and quality in their working lives. Conflicts are resolved by compromise and negotiation and Dutch are known for their long discussions until consensus has been reached.

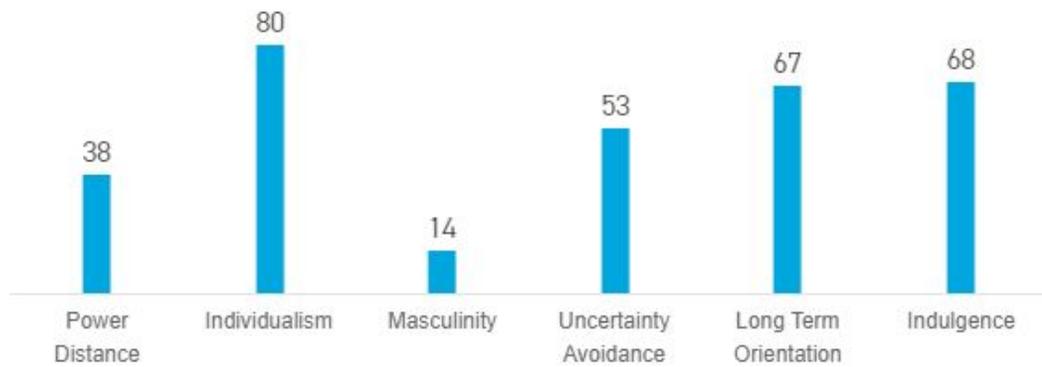
•**Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)** deals with a society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity; it ultimately refers to man's search for truth. The Netherlands scores 53 on this dimension and thus exhibits a slight preference for avoiding uncertainty. Countries exhibiting high Uncertainty Avoidance maintain rigid codes of belief and behaviour and are intolerant of unorthodox behaviour and ideas. In these cultures, there is an emotional need for rules (even if the rules never seem to work) time is money, people have an inner urge to be busy and work hard, precision and punctuality are the norms, innovation may be resisted, security is an important element in individual motivation.

•**Long-Term Orientation (LTO)** versus short-term orientation: this fifth dimension was found in a study among students in 23 countries around the world, using a questionnaire designed by Chinese scholars It can be said to deal with Virtue regardless of Truth. The Netherlands receives a high score of 67 in this dimension, which means that it has a pragmatic nature. In societies with a pragmatic orientation, people believe that truth depends very much on the situation, context and time. They show an ability to easily adapt traditions to changed conditions, a strong propensity to save and invest, thriftiness and perseverance in achieving results.

•**Indulgence**, one challenge that confronts humanity, now and in the past, is the degree to which small children are socialized. Without socialization, we do not become “human”. This dimension is defined as the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses, based on the way they were raised. Relatively weak control is called “Indulgence” and relatively strong control is called “Restraint”. Cultures can, therefore, be described as Indulgent or Restrained.

With a high score of 68, the culture of the Netherlands is clearly one of Indulgence. People in societies classified by a high score in Indulgence generally exhibit a willingness to realize their impulses and desires with regard to enjoying life and having fun. They possess a positive attitude and have a tendency toward optimism. In addition,

they place a higher degree of importance on leisure time, act as they please and spend money as they wish.



Social Adjustment:

While Dutch etiquette closely mirrors that of the rest of the Western world, there are certain traits and practices specific to Dutch citizens.

Greetings: The Dutch either shake hands upon greeting and departing (somewhat formal), or, if they have a close bond with the person, kiss the cheek three times, starting with the left cheek. A simple accompanying “hello” will suffice. The Dutch consider it rude not to identify yourself. The Dutch will shake hands and say their last name, not "Hello." They also answer the telephone with their last name. It is considered impolite to shout a greeting. Wave if greeting someone from a distance.

Scheduling: Don't be surprised if dinner with a Dutch friend is scheduled for six weeks in advance. The Dutch live by schedules and are strict on adhering to them. There's no such thing as stopping by someone's home. It needs to first be agreed upon by the other party, and then properly placed into the schedule.

Manners: Dutch citizens are very straightforward and direct. What some people would call rudeness, they call it “openness.” They tell it like it is – honest and straight to the point. It's not meant to be rude, it's just their particular style.

Conversation: The Dutch maintain strong eye contact when conversing with others.

Money: While the Dutch have nothing against becoming wealthy, it is typically seen as a negative character trait if you publicly spend large sums of money. You are labelled as a “show off.” Also, never ask someone how much money they make.

Social interaction: Compared to many cultures, the Dutch are reserved in public and refrain from extreme displays of physical affection,

anger or exuberance (except at/after certain sports events). The Dutch don't tend to strike up a casual conversation with strangers but will respond readily when addressed and always try to be helpful when asked a question. In conversation, the Dutch are very direct, use a lot of eye contact and don't consider it impolite to express criticism or speak on their own behalf. They allow - and even expect - the same behaviour from the person they are talking to. This shouldn't be interpreted as rudeness. Most people in the Netherlands speak English because it is taught from primary school on, but fluency differs depending on age and background. German is also widely spoken.

Visiting: As a rule, the Dutch do not like visitors to stop by unannounced. If you know someone well you can call in the morning to ask if you can come by later that day or evening, but normally you should call further in advance. The greater the social distance between you, the longer in advance you need to call. Grown children even call their parents - and vice versa - to see if it is all right to come by. It is considered impolite to enter a house without being invited to. Once inside, people tend to stand around and chat for a while until the host or hostess suggests that everyone sits down. If you want to sit down right away, ask where first.

Fashionably late: Conversely, do not invite Dutch acquaintances to 'drop by any time'. Set a specific time and date and mention what kind of refreshments or food you intend to serve. 'Come by next Tuesday at two for coffee' and they will be there at the stroke of two. 'Fashionably late' in Dutch culture is waiting for the bell on the clock tower to stop chiming before you ring the doorbell.

Coffee: Since the Dutch do not like 'surprise' visits, the coffee will be ready to pour when you arrive. Yours should be too. An offer of coffee (or tea) is the absolute minimum expected when someone visits your home. Even the workmen who come to fix a leaky tap will be offered a cup of coffee. Suffice it to say that there will also be biscuits or if this is a special occasion like a birthday or anniversary, cake or pastries. Always wait to be served. It's considered very impolite to help yourself. And don't forget to offer

your Dutch guests the second round of coffee, tea or biscuits; they will not help themselves.

Gifts when visiting

A visit to someone's home invariably calls for a gift. Flowers, biscuits, or sweets are almost always appropriate. If you think that your host or hostess might be dieting or diabetic, take flowers. Flowers are quite inexpensive in the world's largest flower exporter and are a welcome present.

Kissing

The arrival ritual for good friends and family members at a Dutch home catches many foreigners by surprise. Ladies begin first, kissing each person there three times - the number is significant - on the cheek (right-left-right). The men follow, shaking hands with the other men and kissing all the ladies lightly on the cheek three times (right-left-right). Foreigners can get by with shaking hands instead of kissing.

On the phone

Unlike many countries where some form of 'hello' is sufficient, the Dutch always identify themselves immediately when they answer the phone. They either use their first name, or last name or both. The caller is also expected to identify him or herself before stating the aim of the call. If you're using English or some other commonly shared language to communicate on the phone in the Netherlands, you should adopt this custom. It is considered rude to answer or initiate a phone call saying only 'hello'.

Co-Cultures and Regional Differences:

Population: 16,877,351 (2014 est.)

Ethnic Make-up: Dutch 83%, other 17% (of which 9% are non-Western origin mainly Turks, Moroccans, Antilleans, Surinamese, and Indonesians) (1999 est.)

Religions: Roman Catholic 31%, Protestant 21%, Muslim 4.4%, other 3.6%, unaffiliated 40%

The Dutch distinguish between two major cultural subdivisions in their nation. The most important distinction is between the Randstad (Rim City) and non-Randstad cultures. Randstad culture is distinctly urban, located in the provinces of North Holland, South Holland, and Utrecht. The non-Randstad culture corresponds to the historical divide between the predominantly Protestant north and the Catholic south, separated by the Rhine River.

Significant local variations of Dutch culture include the Friesian culture in the extreme north and the Brabant and Limburg cultures in the south. The southern culture was subject to discriminatory policies until the nineteenth century. The Friesians prize their language and descent from the ancient Friesian people, while the Limburgers and Brabantines emphasize their southern culture and Catholic heritage.

The Netherlands has for centuries provided a safe haven for ethnic minorities fleeing from discrimination and persecution, with each minority influencing Dutch culture in its own way. Many Jews from Spain and Portugal and Protestant merchants from the Spanish-ruled southern Netherlands sought refuge in the Dutch Republic in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The twentieth century was characterized by the influx of guest workers from the Mediterranean, migrants from the former Dutch colonies, and refugees from war-torn countries.

The Netherlands does not have a strong uniform national culture. Most Dutch people reject the notion and consider it to be tainted with an unacceptable form of nationalism. Instead, they emphasize the country's cultural diversity, tolerance of difference, and receptiveness to foreign influences. Nevertheless, the Randstad culture has been hegemonic in the Netherlands because of the concentration of political, economic, and cultural power in that densely populated region.

Folklore:

The folklore of the Netherlands has its roots in the mythologies of pre-Christian Gaulish (Gallo-Roman) and Germanic cultures, predating the region's Christianization by the Franks in the Early Middle Ages.

From ancient regional mythology, most names of ancient gods and goddesses in this region come from Germanic origins, particularly in the North. Many of the deities are the same as West Germanic deities, especially in the north: Wodan is Dutch for Woden/Odin, the god of war and leader of the Wild Hunt. The Wild Hunt was retold in Dutch with Wodan leading under different guises: Gait with his dogs; Derk with his dogs; Derk with his boar; the glowing horse; Henske with his dogs.) Donar is Dutch for Thor the god of thunder.

In Dutch, the days of the week are named for Germanic gods, a custom derived from parallel Roman practice. Note that the following days were named through Roman influence, because the Romans found them to be (roughly) equivalent to their Roman deities: dinsdag (Tuesday) named after Tyr - compared to "dies Martis" (Mars' day), woensdag (Wednesday) after Wodan - compared to "dies Mercurii" (Mercury's day), donderdag (Thursday) is named after Donar - compared to "dies Jovis" (Jupiter's day), vrijdag (Friday) after Fríja - compared to "dies Veneris" (Venus' day).

The Dutch words witte wieven and wittewijven in Dutch dialects means "women of wits" (wise women), although it sounds the same and often translated as "white women". The witte wieven were similar to völva, herbalists and wise women in life; in myth, they lived on as spirits or elves. These beings may have originated as deities or supernatural beings in mythology, and later characterized as nature spirits during the Middle Ages; The Dutch like other Germanic people believed in elves, the Dutch words for them are elfen, elven, and alven. The moss maidens, who appear in Old Dutch and Southern Germanic folklore were known as tree spirits or wood elves often chased in the Dutch version

of the Wild Hunt. The Kabouter was the Dutch name for the kobold (gnome), a household spirit and earth spirit who usually lived underground.

Objects considered magical or sacred in the Low Countries (7th century) included: Oak trees, springs, and wooded groves had sacred and medicinal powers. Corn dollies (“vetulas”) were thought to hold the spirit of the corn in harvest rituals. Amulets and charms were worn on the head or the arms (“phylacteries”) for protection and veneration of the gods and goddesses. Stone age tool shards were held sacred, thought to be Donar’s lightning.

The Dutch etiquette and values system is considered a very important piece of Dutch life. People tend to view Dutch people as modest, tolerant, and independent people who are also very kind. They believe that social behaviour is a key component of a proper lifestyle. They usually put a very deep emphasis on religion and education to ensure a good future for the youth. They also have a sense of how you should spend your money. The Dutch have no problem with accumulating a large quantity of money, but you should not spend that money lavishly or gratuitously.



The Coat of Arms of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The banner, on which the two lions holding the shield appear to stand reads, "***Je maintiendrai***" which is the Dutch motto; it is French for "I will uphold." It is the official motto of the Netherlands. The phrase is supposed to have been uttered by William the Silent, Prince of Orange and Nassau, who was elected William I, Stadholder of the Netherlands (actually, of Holland and several other provinces), in 1572.

Body Language & Business Protocol:

People

Dutch society is egalitarian and modern. The people are modest, tolerant, independent, self-reliant, and entrepreneurial. They value education, hard work, ambition and ability. The Dutch have an aversion to the nonessential. Ostentatious behaviour is to be avoided. Accumulating money is fine, but spending money is considered something of a vice. A high style is considered wasteful and suspect. The Dutch are very proud of their cultural heritage, rich history in art and music and involvement in international affairs.

Meeting and Greeting

Shake hands with everyone present -- men, women, and children -- at business and social meetings. Shake hands again when leaving. Introduce yourself if no one is present to introduce you. The Dutch consider it rude not to identify yourself.

The Dutch will shake hands and say their last name, not "Hello." They also answer the telephone with their last name.

It is considered impolite to shout a greeting. Wave if greeting someone from a distance.

Body Language

The Dutch are reserved and don't touch in public or display anger or extreme exuberance.

The Dutch value privacy and seldom speak to strangers. It is more likely that they will wait for you to make the first move. Don't be afraid to do so.

The Dutch expect eye contact while speaking with someone.

Moving your index finger around your ear means you have a telephone call, not "you're crazy." The crazy sign is to tap the centre of your forehead with your index finger. This gesture is very rude.

Business protocols

The Dutch take punctuality for business meetings very seriously and expect that you will do likewise; call with an explanation if you are delayed.

Lateness, missed appointments, postponements, changing the time of an appointment or a late delivery deteriorates trust and can ruin relationships.

Exchange business cards during or after a conversation. No set ritual exists. Business cards in English are acceptable.

The Dutch are extremely adept at dealing with foreigners. They are the most experienced and most successful traders in Europe.

The Dutch tend to get right down to business. Business negotiations proceed at a rapid pace.

Presentations should be practical, factual and never sloppy.

An individual's cooperation and trust are valued over performance. One-upmanship is frowned upon.

The Dutch tend to be direct, giving straight "yes" and "no" answers.

The Dutch are conservative and forceful and can be stubborn and tough negotiators. They are willing to innovate or experiment, but with minimal risk.

Companies are frugal and careful with money. Business is profit-oriented with the bottom line being very important. However, the Dutch are not obsessed with numbers.

The strategy is cautious and pragmatic, usually involving step-by-step plans. Preparations are made to improvise the plan if needed. The strategy is clear and communicated to all levels.

In many companies the decision-making process is slow and ponderous, involving wide consultation. The consensus is vital. The Dutch will keep talking until all parties agree.

Once decisions are made, implementation is fast and efficient.

In the Netherlands, commitments are taken seriously and are honoured. Do not promise anything or make an offer you are not planning to deliver on.

Dining and Entertainment

To beckon a waiter or waitress, raise your hand, make eye contact, and say ober (waiter) or mevrouw (waitress).

It is appropriate to discuss business during lunch. Business breakfasts are not very common.

Most business entertaining is done in restaurants, but the Dutch do a fair amount of entertaining at home as well.

The Dutch will make it clear that you are their guest if they intend to pay the bill, otherwise, expect to "go Dutch" and pay your fair share. No one will be embarrassed at splitting the bill.

Spouses are often included in a business dinner. Ask if your host expects your spouse included in a business function. Business is not generally discussed if spouses are present.

Dutch manners are frank -- no-nonsense informality combined with strict adherence to basic etiquette.

Food does not play a major role in hospitality that it does in many other cultures. It is not considered essential for making someone feel welcome. Do not expect to be served a meal unless the invitation specifically mentions a meal.

Men should wait until all women are seated before they sit. Allow the hostess to start eating and drinking before you eat.

Take a small quantity of food to start. A second helping will be offered and it is polite to accept.

Keep your hands on the table at all times during a meal -- not in your lap. However, take care to keep your elbows off the table.

Use a knife and fork to eat all food including sandwiches, fruit and pizza.

To signify that you would like more food or that you are not finished, cross your knife and fork in the middle of your plate in an X.

It is considered rude to leave the table during dinner (even to go to the bathroom).

When finished eating, place your knife and fork side by side at the 5:25 position on your plate.

Parties may go very late. Plan to stay for an hour or so after dinner.

Do not ask for a tour of your host's home; it is considered impolite.

Dress

The Dutch prefer fashions that are casual, unpretentious, conservative and subdued.

A traditional suit and tie are required only in certain circles of business and government.

When conducting business in the Netherlands, foreign men may wear suits and ties, though sports coats are acceptable. Women should wear suits or dresses.

Taking off your jacket in an office is acceptable. It means getting down to business. Do not roll up the sleeves of your shirt. When leaving an office, put your jacket back on.

Gifts

Gifts are generally not given or expected at business meetings.

Gifts are exchanged in business only once a close, the personal relationship has developed.

The Dutch find any form of ostentation a bit embarrassing. A grand gesture of generosity will only make them uncomfortable. Lavish displays of wealth are considered bad taste.

Give books, art objects, wine, liquor. Do not give knives.

When invited to someone's home, bring a small gift for the hostess. Bring children a small gift or candy. Sending flowers before or after the party is also appropriate.

Helpful Hints

The Dutch avoid superlatives. Compliments are offered sparingly, and to say that something is "not bad" is to praise it. A person who never offers criticism is seen as either being simple-minded or failing to tell the truth. A foreigner need not worry too much about saying something that will hurt feelings. The Dutch will argue but seldom take offence.

Dutch humour is subtle rather than slapstick.

The Dutch speak directly and use a lot of eye contact. To a foreigner, they may appear abrupt, but it is just their manner of communicating.

Do not call the Netherlands "Holland." Holland is a region within the Netherlands.

Smoking is prohibited in many areas. Always ask before lighting up.

Stand when a woman enters the room.

Don't chew gum in public.

Do not discuss money or prices or ask personal questions.

Keep your hands out of your pockets while talking to someone or shaking hands.

Indian Organization/Host Organization in India:

India and the Netherlands have had cultural relations over 400 years. In Europe, the Netherlands has the second largest population of Indians (after the UK). For quite a long time, India and the Netherlands have established a good relationship with each other. There exist several organizations to support this. These organizations which work with Indians, Dutch and businesses have helped in strengthening this relationship by enhancing the various aspects of giving and take between these countries. Examples of such organizations are:

- Netherlands-India Chamber of Commerce and Trade(NICCT)
- Brabant Development Agency
- India Netherlands Business Association [INBA]
- Netherlands India Business Meet
- Netherlands India Association (NIA)
- Bridging the gap foundation (BTG)
- Dutch Indian Youth Association (DIYA)

•Netherlands-India Association:

To promote entertaining and informative insights into the cultures of India and Netherlands, the countries came up with an association called a Netherlands-India association, which is situated in the Netherlands. It has been almost 68 years since this association has been set up.

The association was founded in the year 1951. It is very great to acknowledge the fact that this is the oldest as well as a very active association between the people of India and the Netherlands.

Its uniqueness is identified by the fact that it is the only Indo-Dutch intercultural organization, situated in the Netherlands.

NIA establishes itself as a strong networking medium between Indians and Dutch where they can understand each other's culture and can become friends. Its main objectives are: to promote information and understanding of culture, religion, social structure, philosophy etc. of India and Netherlands between people of both countries as well as to develop amiability between Indo-Dutch by exchange of culture, social contact, personal contact. They do so by conducting a.o. programmes and symposia which presents academic content, cultural content like dance shows, film shows, heritage sites etc.

•Netherlands-India Chamber of Commerce and Trade:

NICCT is an organization which aims to enhance the commerce, trade and business relations between the two countries.

It was established in 2003 as a result of the merge between the India Trade Council and Indo Dutch Chamber of Commerce, both of which had resemblance in several activities as well as their aims and also, had functioned in the Netherlands for several years.

As a community also, it is quite good. It gives information regarding several business developments going on in India and the Netherlands. It helps in building strong connections among the people and promote business between the two by organizing various programmes in its community.

•India Netherlands Business Association:

INBA is a member-driven organization. INBA aims to strengthen the business developments as well as boost the economy of India and Netherlands by providing several services and conducting several activities such as business talks between the concerned people,

topical meetings and also cultural events. It fosters commerce through exchanging ideas and experiences among the members. It also encourages Dutch companies, people to build a business as well as social relations with Indians.

•Bridging the Gap:

Founded in 2009, the BTG has grown to become a vast network for an association for both Dutch and Indian communities. The foundation aims to bridge the gap between Netherlands and India by holding workshops for young and old. Every 4-6 months, Dance Party, Children's day out and some small event are conducted.

Conclusion:

The Netherlands is the country of quite less population with very small landmass, although it is the most densely populated country of the European Union. Overall, it has a low-context, monochronic culture with a feminine society. It has various unique practices, customs. In general, it has distinct cultural dimensions, social adjustments, co-cultures, regional differences and non-verbal communication aspects as compared to India.

It is a tertiary country which relies mainly on trade. Due to its heavy dependence on trade, it is an integrated country. It is one of Europe's main trading country as a result of the fact that it has numerous ports situated on the seas and rivers, which eases the process of trading. It is a key contributor to World Banks and United Nations as well as contributes to its own organizations as well. It is a great tourist spot as well. Thus, the Netherlands is an important and prominent country in Europe that affects not only itself but countries all over the world. When in the Netherlands, the above report shall help you with all the innocuous customs and believes Dutch follow on a regular basis.