



Rotterdam & South Holland

Includes »

South Holland.....	147
Leiden	147
Den Haag (The Hague).....	153
Gouda.....	161
Delft.....	163
Rotterdam.....	168
Dordrecht.....	183
Biesbosch National Park.....	186
Slot Loevestein	186
Zeeland	186
Middelburg.....	187
Waterland Neeltje Jans ..	191
Schouwen-Duiveland.....	191
Zeeuws-Vlaanderen.....	192

Best Places to Eat

- » De Dames Proeverij (p151)
- » Spijshuis de Dis (p167)
- » Z&M (p177)
- » De Ballentent (p177)
- » De Stroper (p185)

Best Places to Stay

- » Het Paleis Hotel (p158)
- » Hotel de Emauspoort (p166)
- » Hotel New York (p173)
- » Hotel Auberge Provençal (p188)

Why Go?

Think Holland and you're thinking of the region southwest of Amsterdam where tulips, cheese, Vermeer and plucky Dutch people standing up to the sea avoid cliché simply by their omnipresence.

South Holland's major cities are the biggest attractions. Mighty Rotterdam is blessed with an edgy urban vibe, surprising cultural scene and striking architecture. Leiden has its university culture and old town (and proximity to the bulbfields). Den Haag has museums, a stately air, luxe shopping and a kitsch beach, while charming, beautiful Delft is a medieval time capsule. Smaller places are also worth your time: Gouda is a perfect old canal town, while Dordrecht has its own surprises amid canals and charm.

Further south, Zeeland (Sea Land) is the dyke-protected province that people often associate with the Netherlands when they're not thinking of tulips and windmills. Cycling in this flat, mostly sub-sea-level region is unparalleled.

When to Go

The heart of Holland can be enjoyed year-round. Rotterdam is full of museums and nightlife, so you can ignore the weather while indoors. The same can be said to a certain extent for the main towns and cities such as Leiden, Den Haag and Delft. However, from spring through autumn, you'll find many more attractions open and the odds of enjoying a balmy canal stroll that much greater. Spring is the time for the explosion of colour at Keukenhof and summer means the beaches might actually be warm.

SOUTH HOLLAND

Along with North (Noord) Holland and Utrecht, South (Zuid) Holland is part of the Randstad, the economic and population heart of the Netherlands. Two of the nation's most important cities are here: Den Haag, the seat of the royal family and the government; and Rotterdam, Europe's busiest port. You could easily make a trip just

exploring the classic Dutch destinations of the region.

Leiden

📍 071 / POP 118,700

Lovely Leiden is a refreshing, vibrant town, patterned with canals and attractive old buildings. It also has a few claims to fame: it's Rembrandt's birthplace, and it's home



Rotterdam & South Holland Highlights

1 Appreciate the architecture and verve of Holland's second city, **Rotterdam** (p168)

2 Pop off for spectacular spring posies at **Keukenhof Gardens** (p156)

3 Get your Art 101 in splendid form at Den Haag's **Mauritshuis** (p155)

4 Look for girls wearing pearl earrings in old-world **Delft** (p163) home of Vermeer

5 Go for a spin at Holland's best collection of windmills at **Kinderdijk** (p181)

6 Feel the spray on your face riding a fast ferry

to surprising medieval **Dordrecht** (p183)

7 Have a meal at a genteel canalside cafe in **Leiden** (p147)

8 Discover everything that's not cheesy about quaint **Gouda** (p161)