



Rotterdam & South Holland

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(The Hague)	168
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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ FG Food Labs (p155)
- ➔ Restaurant Allard (p173)
- ➔ In den Doofpot (p185)
- ➔ Brasserie 't Crabbetje (p178)
- ➔ Fenix Food Factory (p156)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Villa Augustus (p164)
- ➔ King Kong Hostel (p153)
- ➔ Des Indes (p172)
- ➔ De Vier Seizoenen (p186)
- ➔ Hotel The Roosevelt (p188)

Why Go?

In the iconic region southwest of Amsterdam, tulips, windmills, cheese, Dutch Masters and blue-and-white Delftware china abound, but it's the cities here that are the biggest draws.

The country's second-largest, Rotterdam, is riding a wave of urban development, redevelopment and regeneration with striking additions to its dramatic skyline, and electrifying art, food and bar scenes that are fuelling an international buzz. Leiden has a centuries-old university culture, historic canal-laced core and exceptional museums. Den Haag, the seat of government and the Dutch royals, as well as the capital of Zuid-Holland (South Holland), also has a trove of magnificent museums, along with a stately air, luxe shopping and resort beach, while Vermeer's beautiful home town Delft is an exquisite medieval time capsule.

Zeeland (Sea Land), the country's southernmost, dyke-protected province, is anchored by the mast-filled port of Middelburg. Cycling throughout this gentle, mostly sub-sea-level region is unparalleled.

When to Go

- ➔ Rotterdam's museums, shopping, restaurants, bars and nightlife – as well as its excellent public-transport network – mean you can ignore the weather while indoors, and comfortably visit year-round.
- ➔ Spring brings an explosion of colour to the glorious tulip-filled gardens at Keukenhof (p187), which open just eight weeks a year and are worth scheduling a trip around.
- ➔ Between spring and autumn, you'll find many more attractions open throughout the region than in the winter months, and greater odds of enjoying a balmy canal stroll or a beach swim.



Rotterdam & South Holland Highlights

1 Delving into experimental galleries, street art, inspired food and bar scenes, and cutting-edge architecture in 'the city that's never finished', **Rotterdam** (p147).

2 Strolling amid the **Keukenhof Gardens** (p187) in Lisse, filled with thousands of flowering tulips in spring,

and viewing its castle and tulip museum year-round.

3 Touring the splendid **Binnenhof** (p168) palace in regal Den Haag.

4 Climbing the spiralling steps inside the tower of Delft's **Nieuwe Kerk** (p177) for sweeping views over the medieval townscape.

5 Exploring the creaking windmills and windswept dykes at **Kinderdijk** (p161).

6 Boarding the hand-built, full-biblical-scale **Ark van Noach** (p162) in Dordrecht.

7 Unwinding in Leiden's lush 16th-century botanical gardens, the **Hortus Botanicus Leiden** (p181).