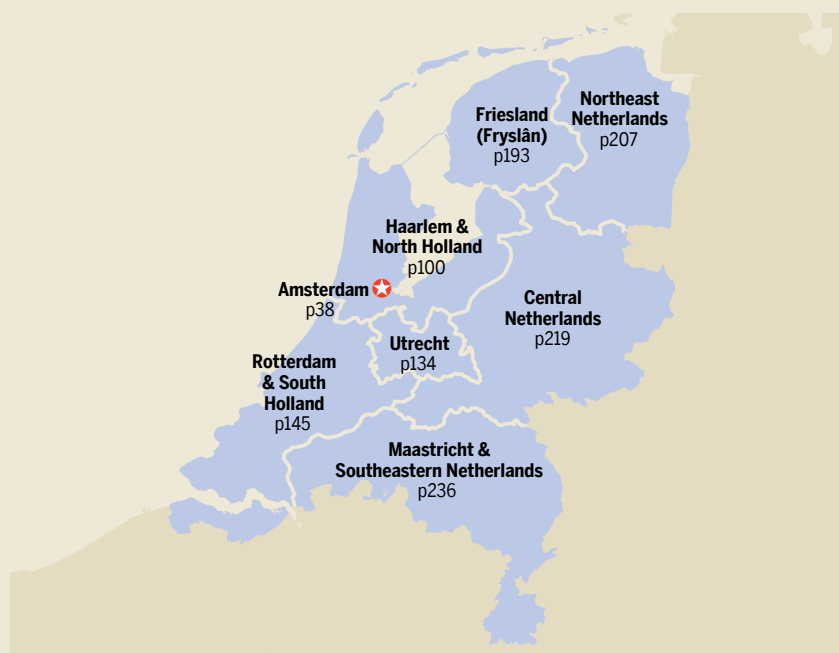




# The Netherlands



THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

Catherine Le Nevez, Daniel C Schechter

## PLAN YOUR TRIP

Welcome to the Netherlands.....	4
The Netherlands' Map... ..	6
The Netherlands' Top 10.....	8
Need to Know .....	14
What's New .....	16
If You Like.....	17
Month by Month.....	20
Itineraries .....	23
Cycling in the Netherlands .....	26
Travel with Children... ..	31
Regions at a Glance... ..	34

## ON THE ROAD

<b>AMSTERDAM .....</b>	<b>38</b>	Texel .....	121
<b>HAARLEM &amp; NORTH HOLLAND .....</b>	<b>100</b>	Muiden .....	129
<b>North Holland .....</b>	<b>102</b>	Het Gooi.....	130
Haarlem.....	102	<b>Flevoland .....</b>	<b>132</b>
Around Haarlem.....	107	Lelystad .....	132
Zaanse Schans.....	107	Urk .....	133
Waterland Region.....	108	<b>UTRECHT.....</b>	<b>134</b>
Alkmaar .....	112	<b>Utrecht City.....</b>	<b>135</b>
Broek op Langedijk .....	115	<b>Around Utrecht City... ..</b>	<b>142</b>
Hoorn .....	116	Kasteel de Haar .....	142
Enkhuizen .....	118	Utrechtse Heuvelrug National Park .....	142
Medemblik.....	120	Amersfoort .....	143
Den Helder .....	121	Oudewater.....	144



CUBE HOUSES, ROTTERDAM P148



DUTCH TULIPS P255



BRIDGE OVER SINGEL CANAL, AMSTERDAM P73

# Contents

## UNDERSTAND

### ROTTERDAM & SOUTH HOLLAND ..... 145

<b>South Holland</b> .....	147
Rotterdam.....	147
Around Rotterdam.....	161
Dordrecht.....	162
Biesbosch	
National Park.....	165
Slot Loevestein.....	165
Gouda.....	165
Den Haag (The Hague) ..	168
Delft.....	175
Leiden.....	180
Around Leiden.....	186
<b>Zeeland</b> .....	187
Middelburg.....	187
Around Middelburg.....	190
Waterland Neeltje	
Jans.....	191
Schouwen-Duiveland.....	192

### FRIESLAND (FRYSLÂN) ..... 193

<b>Leeuwarden (Ljouwert)</b> .....	195
<b>Waddenzee Coast</b> .....	198
Harlingen (Harns).....	198
<b>Southwestern Friesland</b> .....	199
Sneek (Snits).....	199
Hindeloopen (Hylpen) ..	201
<b>Frisian Islands</b> .....	201
Vlieland.....	202
Terschelling.....	203
Ameland.....	204
Schiermonnikoog.....	205

### NORTHEAST NETHERLANDS ... 207

<b>Groningen City</b> .....	208
Around Groningen.....	215

Northwest Groningen ...	215
Hoogeland.....	215
Bourtange.....	216
<b>Drenthe</b> .....	217
Assen.....	217
Kamp Westerbork.....	218
Dwingelderveld	
National Park.....	218

### CENTRAL NETHERLANDS ... 219

<b>Overijssel</b> .....	221
Deventer.....	221
Zwolle.....	224
Kampen.....	227
Weerribben-Wieden	
National Park.....	228
Northern Overijssel.....	228
Twente.....	229
<b>Gelderland</b> .....	229
Nijmegen.....	229
Around Nijmegen.....	232
Arnhem.....	233
Oosterbeek.....	234
Hoge Veluwe	
National Park.....	234
Apeldoorn.....	235

### MAASTRICHT & SOUTHEASTERN NETHERLANDS ... 236

<b>Maastricht</b> .....	237
Around Maastricht.....	243
North Limburg.....	243
<b>Noord Brabant</b> .....	244
Den Bosch	
('s-Hertogenbosch).....	244
Around Den Bosch.....	247
Eindhoven.....	247
Tilburg.....	248
Breda.....	248

<b>The Netherlands Today</b> .....	252
<b>History</b> .....	254
<b>The Dutch Way of Life</b> .....	264
<b>Dutch Art</b> .....	269
<b>Architecture</b> .....	276
<b>The Dutch Landscape</b> .....	281
<b>Dutch Cuisine</b> .....	286

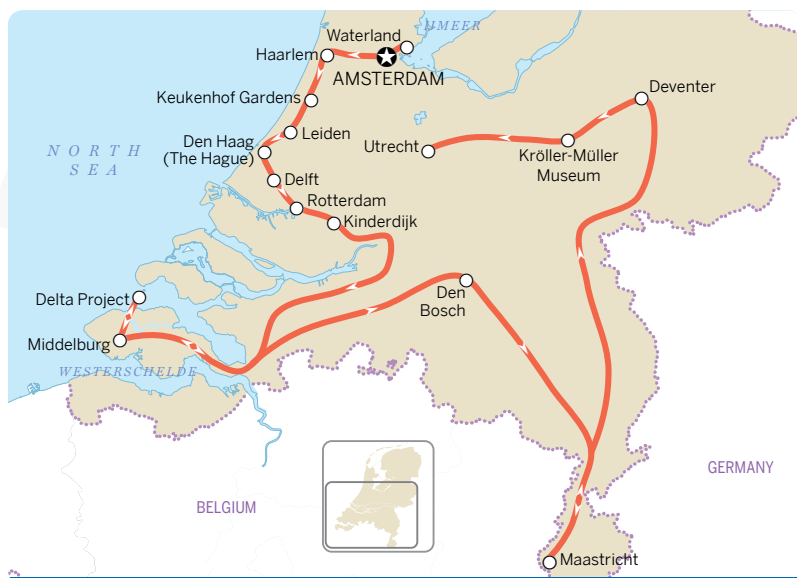
## SURVIVAL GUIDE

<b>Directory A–Z</b> .....	292
<b>Transport</b> .....	299
<b>Language</b> .....	306
<b>Index</b> .....	314
<b>Map Legend</b> .....	319

## SPECIAL FEATURES

<b>Cycling in the Netherlands</b> .....	26
<b>Travel with Children</b> .....	31
<b>Cheese, Gin &amp; Monuments Walking Tour</b> .....	64
<b>Dutch Art</b> .....	269

# Itineraries



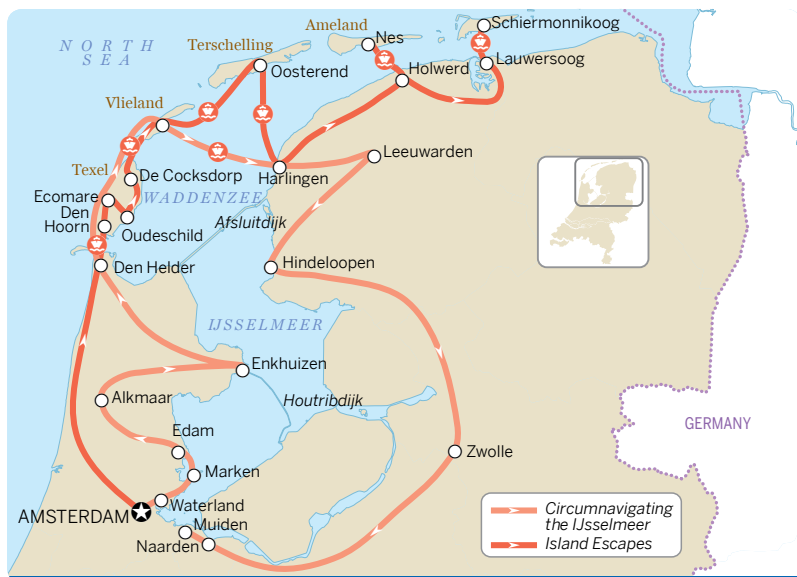
## 3 WEEKS Southern Sojourn

Catch the Netherlands most iconic sights on a leisurely spin around the country's south.

Spend three days in lively **Amsterdam**. Visit the big museums, relax in Vondelpark, discover the foodie De Pijp neighbourhood and hang out with the locals at earthy brown *café* Hoppe on the Spui. Plunge into the city's celebrated nightlife in the Southern Canal Ring and escape the city by bicycle to enjoy the classic beauty of the **Waterland** region.

During your second week, visit Golden Age **Haarlem**, **Keukenhof Gardens** (in season), museum-filled **Leiden**, the Dutch seat of government **Den Haag (The Hague)**, and Vermeer's charming home town **Delft**.

Kick off week three in cutting-edge **Rotterdam**. Take the ferry to see the windmills at **Kinderdijk**, then head for Zeeland's restored capital **Middelburg** and the nearby **Delta Project**. Travel through the Netherlands' southern provinces, stopping for the hidden canals of lovely **Den Bosch**. Continue to **Maastricht** to sample some great cuisine and meander through its medieval centre. Head north to Hanseatic **Deventer** and then west to the extraordinary **Kröller-Müller Museum** in the Hoge Veluwe National Park. Polish off your trip in historic, cosmopolitan university-city **Utrecht**.



## 2 WEEKS Circumnavigating the IJsselmeer

This itinerary focuses on beautiful IJsselmeer – Central Netherlands’ vast, shallow 1100-sq-km artificial lake.

Spend three days in **Amsterdam** for museums, parks, canal tours and nightlife. Head north along the IJsselmeer coast through the **Waterland** region to the tiny, traditional fishing village of **Marken**. Cycle the dykes to cute-as-a-button **Edam**. Stay overnight, then reach **Alkmaar** early to experience its centuries-old cheese market (in season), then explore the enthralling Zuiderzeemuseum in **Enkhuijzen**.

Travel to **Den Helder**, and take a ferry to **Texel**. Spend two days on the island, enjoying the beach and bike exploration, then catch a ferry to **Vlieland** to appreciate the wilder side of the Frisian Islands. From Vlieland, get a ferry to charming **Harlingen**, from where Friesland’s lively capital, **Leeuwarden**, is only a short journey away – as are the nearby chain of coastal towns including boat-filled **Hindeloopen**.

Head to Hanseatic **Zwolle** and also visit the historic fortress towns of **Naarden** and **Muiden**.

## 1–2 WEEKS Island Escapes

The low-lying Wadden Islands are strung out like pearls in the Unesco-listed Waddenzee and are perfect for island hopping. Some ferry links require advance planning.

From **Amsterdam**, head to **Texel**. Bike along the island’s western coast from sleepy **Den Hoorn** through dark copses to the **Ecomare** seal and bird refuge. Comb the eastern side, visiting the superb Maritime & Beachcombers Museum in **Oudeschild**.

From **De Cocksdorp** at the northern end of Texel, board the morning ferry to car-free **Vlieland** to explore its nature and hiking trails before catching the boat to **Terschelling**, Friesland’s main tourist island. Hole up in peaceful **Oosterend** and cycle the untouched dunes, then hightail it by ferry to **Harlingen**, a pretty little port on the Frisian coast, and on to **Holwerd**, to ferry across to languid **Ameland**. Stay in the whaling port of **Nes**. Return to the mainland and continue east to the port of **Lauwersoog**. From here catch the ferry to the smallest of the Frisian Islands, **Schiermonnikoog**, home to an evocative, windswept national park, before returning to the mainland.



2

## Eastern Experience

The Netherlands' eastern expanse is largely ignored by tourists, but there are myriad highlights to be discovered.

Begin in **Groningen**, a vibrant city with students, bars, cafes and fine museums. Travel southeast to **Bourtange**, a perfectly preserved 17th-century fortified town, then move on to **Borger** and its prehistoric *hunebedden*, stone arrangements once used as burial chambers. Make your way through the woods to **Kamp Westerbork** to encounter its moving, horrible heritage. Head to **Zwolle**, an unhurried Hanseatic town ideal for backstreet meanders, and then to **Weerribben-Wieden National Park** for canoe-paddling.

From Zwolle it's a short hop to **Deventer**, one of the most appealing small towns in the Netherlands. Next, explore **Hoge Veluwe National Park**, a natural oasis that's home to a renowned art museum. Head to **Den Bosch**, which has a dynamite museum dedicated to its namesake artist. Stop at **Breda** to enjoy the city's *cafés*. Go back to nature at **Biesbosch National Park** before finishing in the lovely old streets and canals of **Dordrecht**.

1

## The Lay of the Lowlands

Hit the country's most unmissable high-lights. Begin with two days in **Amsterdam**. Visit the big-hitting museums and rent a bicycle to explore the charming Jordaan neighbourhood. On your second day board a canal boat tour and stroll through the Red Light District before getting cosy in a brown *café*.

Travel west to beautiful **Haarlem** – stroll the compact historic core, and view masterpieces at the Frans Hals Museum and the stained glass of the Grote Kerk van St Bavo. In tulip season witness the kaleidoscopic colours of the **Keukenhof Gardens**. Spend a day among old-world splendour in **Leiden**. Next, take a day in **Den Haag (The Hague)** and catch the Mauritshuis' exceptional art collection.

Head south to happening **Rotterdam** to tour the harbour and visit the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, the Maritiem Museum and the architecturally striking food hall, Markthal Rotterdam. The next morning, take a walking tour of the city's incredible contemporary architecture, then travel to **Kinderdijk** to explore Unesco-recognised windmills.



## OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

## OUR WRITERS



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[Plan Your Trip](#), [Amsterdam, Haarlem & North Holland](#), [Rotterdam & South Holland](#), [The Netherlands Today](#), [History](#), [The Dutch Way of Life](#), [Dutch Art](#), [Survival Guide](#)

Catherine's wanderlust kicked in when she first roadtripped across Europe, including the Netherlands, aged four, and she's been returning to this spirited, *gezellig* country ever since, completing her Doctorate of Creative Arts in Writing, Masters in Professional Writing, and post-grad qualifications in Editing and

Publishing along the way. A freelance writer for many years, Catherine has written scores of Lonely Planet guides and articles over the last decade or so, covering Amsterdam, the Netherlands and destinations all over Europe and beyond.

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Born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, Daniel C Schechter now lives closer to Breukelen, Utrecht. During a 2006 visit to Leiden to see his niece who was studying there, he was so struck by the sight of a steady stream of commuting cyclists that he determined to relocate to the country. In 2010 he moved to

Amsterdam, got a second-hand Gazelle and hit the trails. Five years later, he still marvels at the morning commute and has cycled through all 12 of the country's provinces. Follow him around at [netherlandsbikeways.blogspot.com](http://netherlandsbikeways.blogspot.com)

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