

Do's & don'ts in the Netherlands

Don't:

1 ... walk on the bike lanes, if you hear a "cling, cling" or hear someone shouting "LET OP" (Dutch for Watch Out) from behind you jump real quick or you may get mowed down by a cyclist. They do not stop for no one. **But, do rent a bike and ride around if you can.** Riding a bike is really a great way to see and get around. Watch out for the dreaded tram tracks in cities.



2 ... drink alcohol on the streets, this is against the law. You will be asked to empty your can or bottle on the ground and may receive a fine also.

3 ... go into a coffee shop and ask for a coffee. It's a café where soft drugs are sold. The Dutch tolerate ("GEDOGEN") limited sales of soft drugs for personal consumption. The police concentrate on suppressing the traffic and consumption of hard drugs. In fact the number of *junks* (drug addicts) is relatively low in the Netherlands.



Anyway, keep your body and brain healthy and don't use drugs at all!

4 ... start eating before saying "SMAKELIJK". It is rude to start eating immediately. Do not be surprised when lunch is different from what you are used to. Lunch in the Netherlands is often bread with ham or cheese) and a glass of milk. "BROODJE KROKET" (roll with a meat croquette) is considered a special treat.



5 ... be afraid to speak English to Dutch people if you do not speak their own language (Dutch). Most Dutch people speak really good English and German and some speak French and Spanish as well.

Do:

1 ... remember that tolerance is very important for the Dutch. In practice this means that people can say whatever they want. Say loud and clear what your opinion is about things and be tolerant for opinions of others. On the other hand, be modest about your achievements. If you show superiority, prepare to be criticised.

2 ... remember that the Dutch are not modest about their country and culture. They are convinced that they are living in an ideal welfare society. Until you know people well it's best to avoid criticising the Royal family, alternative lifestyles, drug tolerance policy, etc. don't say anything insulting about soccer or Dutch soccer teams



3 ... be alert for pickpockets. Pay attention to your bags and wallet. Pickpockets are a problem in big cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam) but it's about the worst that will happen to you as besides pick pockets the Netherlands is really a safe country.

4 ... greet people on entering and leaving work places or shops or when you meet someone on the staircase. The Dutch consider it rude to just wander in and out without saying "GOEDE MORGEN" (good morning) or "GOEDE MIDDAG" (good afternoon)

5 ... refer to the Netherlands as 'the Netherlands'. North- and South **Holland** are only a part of the Netherlands, 2 out of 12 provinces to be exactly. On the other hand the Netherlands is often called Holland and the people Hollanders. If you happen to encounter someone who's not from the Hollands, they might feel you've chosen to exclude the other 10 provinces because you feel they're not important anyway.

