



FIND YOUR WAY IN THE HAGUE

GUIDE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS



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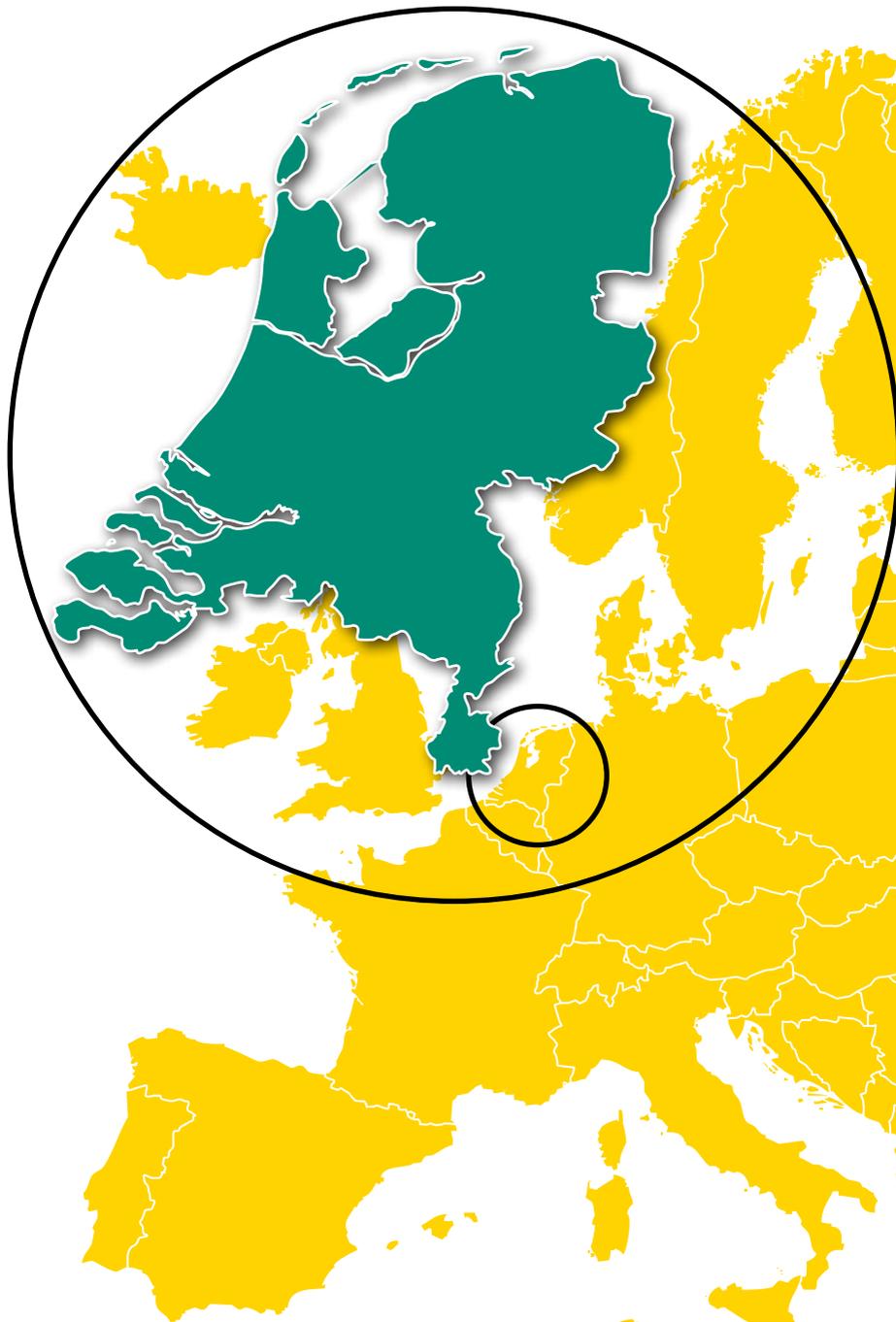
Welcome to The Hague!



The Hague is the international city of peace and justice, home base of leading institutions such as the International Criminal Court, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations' top legal instrument, the International Court of Justice. But multinationals like Shell and Siemens are equally at home here. The Gemeentemuseum's Mondriaan Collection, the work of Johannes Vermeer in the Mauritshuis and the Nederlands Dans Theater – these too are known around the world. The Hague is a city without walls – open to the world. You'll discover this. This booklet will show you the way. Find your way around the city, along the coast and to the cosy bars. Read the practical information on everyday issues as well as cultural and historical background on The Hague and the Netherlands. It is our way of reaching out to you. Be our guest – that's what we're trying to say! The city has a lot to offer you and the reverse is also true. So: enjoy your college years here in The Hague.

Ingrid van Engelshoven
alderman for Education and Public Services





1 The Netherlands

1.1 The Netherlands

The name 'Holland' or 'the Netherlands' often conjures up images of **tulips**, cheese and windmills. These associations are not exactly wrong - tulip bulbs and cheese are two important Dutch exports and you will still see windmills that have been preserved.



Today, the Netherlands, often nicknamed 'the gateway to Europe' is one of the world's most prosperous countries with advanced industries and agriculture, world trade, and large natural gas reserves. The formal name of the country is 'the Netherlands'. 'Holland' is the name of the western part of the country.

During time as a student in The Hague you will enjoy living in a dynamic, cosmopolitan and multi-cultural community in the Netherlands' third largest city - right in Europe's heart.

More information: www.holland.com

1.2 Geography & landscape

The Netherlands is one of the most densely populated countries in the world with about 16.6 million people living within 41,785 square kms. It borders Germany to the east, Belgium to the south and the North Sea to the north and west.



Sixty per cent of the population lives in the west of the country. This urban area, the Randstad, includes Amsterdam, **The Hague**, Rotterdam and Utrecht. The Randstad has a density of over 1,000 people per square km.

'The Netherlands' means 'low countries' and large parts of the country lie below sea level. These parts of the Netherlands would be under water without flood prevention.

A typical feature of the 'low' Netherlands are 'polders', or reclaimed land, surrounded by

dikes and pumping stations which regulate water levels. The Netherlands resembles a large river delta where the Rhine (Rijn), Meuse (Maas) and Scheldt (Schelde) fan out into the North Sea. You'll find wide, sandy beaches along the North Sea coast.

1.3 Climate



The Netherlands has a changeable climate, with mild winters and cool summers because of the proximity of the sea and warm North Atlantic gulf stream.

Annual rainfall is moderate but also unpredictable – an umbrella is essential. During the rare periods of sub-zero temperatures, old master paintings come alive as people venture out to practice their **ice-skating** skills.

1.4 History

- ▶ The Netherlands was part of the Roman Empire until around 400 AD.
- ▶ Under Charles V's reign (early 16th century), territories like Brabant, Gelderland, Holland, Zeeland counties and Utrecht joined with Belgium and Luxembourg to become the Low Countries.
- ▶ In 1568, Prince William of Orange led a revolt in the northern Netherlands against King Philip II of Spain. This Eighty Years' War (1568-1648) and the Treaty of Westphalia established the Netherlands as an independent republic, the 'United Provinces'.
- ▶ During the Dutch Golden Age (17th century) the west became prosperous, Dutch commerce boomed and merchants traded all over the world. Culture also flourished with masters such as Rembrandt and Vermeer.
- ▶ In 1795, France occupied the Netherlands until 1814. When Napoleon's occupation ended the Kingdom of the Netherlands was established. Today's constitutional monarchy and parliamentary system were established.
- ▶ In 1830, Belgium became a separate country from the Netherlands.
- ▶ The Dutch entered World War II when they came under attack from Germany in 1940 and were occupied for five years.

1.5 Economy

Industry in the Netherlands is made up of heavy engineering (petrochemicals, plastics, synthetic fibres and steel), light industries (electronics) and new technology (computing, telecomms and biotechnology). Many multinationals, like Phillips, Shell, Ahold and DSM Unilever were originally Dutch.

Most of the Netherlands' trade takes place within the EU. Its largest trading partner is Germany, followed by Belgium, Luxembourg, France and the UK.

Agricultural exports are also important for the Dutch economy. Fruit is cultivated on fertile marshland behind dikes, while arable land is located in Limburg to the southeast

Livestock farming can be found in Noord-Brabant, Drenthe, Friesland, Gelderland, and flowers and vegetables are cultivated in greenhouses in the west. The Netherlands is famous for its cheese production in Gouda, Leerdam and Alkmaar.

1.6 Government & politics

The capital of the Netherlands is Amsterdam, but the **seat of government** is The Hague, where Parliament and many embassies are situated.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands is a constitutional monarchy and the Queen is head of state with a representative and ceremonial role.

The Crown, the executive branch of government, is composed of the royal head of state and ministers led by the Prime Minister. Legislation is formed by Parliament along with the Sovereign and ministers. Dutch Parliament consists of two houses, the First (Upper House) and Second (Lower House) chambers.

The main political parties are the CDA (Christian democrats), VVD (Liberals) and PvdA (Social Democrats). The Netherlands has a system of proportional representation and a coalition government.

1.7 The provinces

The Netherlands consists of 12 provinces: Groningen, Friesland, Drenthe, Overijssel, Gelderland, Utrecht, Noord-Holland, Flevoland, Zuid-Holland, Zeeland, Brabant and Limburg. The Hague is the capital of Zuid-Holland.



The provinces are governed by commissioners elected in general elections and are led by the monarch. According to the constitution the provinces have the right of self-administration.

Provinces are further divided into municipalities. There are 418 in total, including 'special municipalities' in the Caribbean - Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba.

1.8 The Royal family



The Dutch Royal family descends from the House of Orange dynasty, which branches back to their ancestor, Prince William of Orange (1533-1584).

Queen Beatrix has been Head of State of the Netherlands since 1980. She was married to the late Prince Claus and their eldest son, Prince Willem-Alexander, is heir to the throne.

In February 2002, Prince Willem-Alexander married **Máxima Zorregueta**, daughter of an ex-minister of Argentina. They have three daughters: Catharina-Amalia, Alexia Juliana and Ariane Wilhelmina.

1.9 Language

Dutch, a Germanic language, is spoken everywhere in the country - it is the first language of about 21 million Dutch and Flemish people. Many Dutch people speak at least two foreign languages and nearly everyone speaks English.

Frisian (a related Germanic language) is an official language in Friesland, one of the Northern provinces.

An increasing number of courses and study programmes in Higher Education are taught in English.

1.10 Education

Children start school at the age of four, but are not legally required to do so until they are five. Primary education lasts eight years.

Secondary education begins at age 12 (compulsory until 16) and there are various levels.

Four-year VMBO programmes combine general and vocational education, which leads on to senior secondary vocational education and training (MBO) programmes, of one to four years.

HAVO (five years) and VWO (six year) programmes are needed for higher education entry. The HAVO diploma is the minimum requirement for access to Hoger Beroepsopleiding (HBO), higher professional education. The VWO curriculum prepares pupils for university and grants access to Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs (WO) education.

The last two years of HAVO and the last three years of VWO are described as 'upper secondary education'. During these years, pupils focus on one of four areas: science and technology, science and health, economics and society or culture and society.

There are two types of higher education establishments in the Netherlands: research universities (universiteiten) and **universities of applied sciences** (hogescholen). The three-level system offers Bachelors, Masters and PhD degrees.

Research universities mainly offer research-focused (WO) programmes in subjects from languages to law. They also offer doctorate degrees (minimum of four years study).

Universities of applied sciences specialise in seven practical areas: agriculture, engineering and technology, economics and business, administration, health care, fine and performing arts, education and social welfare.

More about the Dutch education system: www.nuffic.nl







2 The Dutch

2.1 The Dutch

The Netherlands has a diverse society, with a rich cultural, religious and ethnic mix.

The larger cities have a multi-cultural population, which includes immigrants from ex-colonies including Suriname and Indonesia. People also arrived from Morocco and Turkey during the labour shortages in the sixties.

2.2 Working with Dutch people

The Dutch have a unique business etiquette - appointments are necessary, business cards are always exchanged and smart dress is expected for business events. Most Dutch people are as comfortable having a chat - or reading a document - in English as in Dutch.

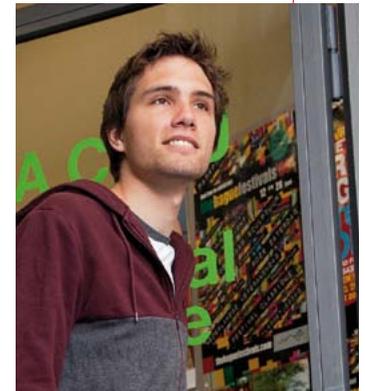
2.3 Dutch attitudes

Dutch people have great respect for good manners. You are expected to introduce yourself and your new Dutch acquaintance will then introduce you to other people.

The Dutch also use their diaries a lot - don't be surprised if you have to arrange an appointment a week or later in advance.

All Dutch people expect to be treated as equals. They are freedom-loving and direct, and they look for consensus wherever they can.

The Dutch can speak in a direct manner - especially when expressing their opinions. Natural traders and entrepreneurs, they've been trotting the globe since the 16th century. This tradition of dealing with foreigners has taught them to be easy communicators and accept people as they are.



"English is spoken everywhere and there are always different cultural events taking place."

► Pedro Kuijt Ramayor, Mexico, International Business and Management student

2.4 National holidays



New Year's Day (Nieuwjaar): 1 January
Easter (Pasen): March/April – the Dutch celebrate two days of Easter (Sunday 'eerste paasdag' and the following Monday 'tweede paasdag')

Ascension Day (Hemelvaartsdag): forty days after Easter

Queen's Birthday (Koninginnedag): 30 April. The Dutch celebrate Queen's birthday

Remembrance Day (Dodenherdenking): 4 May. The Dutch pay respects to those who have died in wars or peacekeeping missions

since the outbreak of the World War II, holding two minutes of silence, memorial services and silent marches.

Liberation Day (Bevrijdingsdag): 5 May. The Dutch people celebrate the liberation from the German occupation (1940-1945). This is an official holiday every five years.

Pentecost (Pinksteren): Seven weeks after Easter. The Dutch celebrate two days of Pentecost (on Sunday and the following Monday).

Flag Day (Vlaggetjesdag): June. Flag Day celebrates the arrival of the first herring (Hollandse Nieuwe) in the southern coastal towns of Vlaardingen and Scheveningen with festivities and decorated fishing boats.

Sinterklaas: 5 December. This is not an official holiday, but parents leave work early to celebrate 'pakjesavond' (an evening when presents are given) with their children.

Christmas (Kerstmis): 25 and 26 December.

2.5 Drugs policy

The Netherlands is famous for its tolerant drugs policy and few know that use of drugs in the Netherlands is illegal. Dealing in soft drugs is prohibited but 'tolerated' when closely supervised, for example in 'coffee shops'. Hard drugs are illegal. The Netherlands' drug policy is as follows:

- ▶ Drug use is a public health issue, not a criminal matter.
- ▶ A distinction between hard drugs (such as ecstasy or amphetamines) and soft drugs (such as cannabis and sedatives) exists.

Most policymakers in the Netherlands believe that it is better to control the issue.

More about the drugs policy: www.new-rules.eu

2.6 Religion

The Reformation in the 16th century created religious boundaries in the Netherlands. The area to the north of Groningen in the northeast and Middelburg in the southwest was predominantly Protestant, whereas the area to the south was mainly Catholic.

Protestant and Roman Catholics are the main religious groups, although over one third of the Dutch do not consider themselves to belong to any specific denomination. Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism have a growing number of followers.

2.7 Further reading

- ▶ *The Netherlands in Perspective: The Organisations of Society and Environment* by William Z. Shetter.
- ▶ *The Dutch Puzzle* by José Duke de Baena.
- ▶ *Of Dutch Ways* by Helen Colijn.
- ▶ *Minding your Manners: A Guide to Dutch Business and Social Etiquette* by Magda Berman.
- ▶ *The Low Sky: Understanding the Dutch* by Han van der Horst.
- ▶ *The Embarrassment of Riches* by S. Schama.
- ▶ *The Undutchables. An Observation of the Netherlands: Its Culture and its Inhabitants* by Colin White and Laurie Boucke.





3 History and description of The Hague

3.1 The Hague

The Hague, International City of Peace and Justice. This is the title that the city proudly holds and that the whole world is familiar with. And for good reason. There are over 130 international organisations in The Hague, employing thousands of people dedicated to the cause of world peace. It is the United Nations' second city, after New York. From The Hague, many people are working towards a peaceful and just world, in which conflicts are not settled on the battlefield, but in the courts, without violence and not at the expense of innocent people. A world in which the might of right prevails, not the right of the mighty.

The Peace Palace is the icon of international law, and it stands at the centre of the International Zone, home to many international organisations in the field of justice. There is nevertheless more to the city. The international climate is an important reason why so many companies and organisations base themselves in The Hague. In addition to the organisations that operate in the area of peace and justice, the region has over 300 international companies. Shell, AEGON and KPN all have their head offices in the city and are among the largest. The unique nature of the city also attracts an increasing number of companies and institutions in the fields of safety and innovation.

Tens of thousands of people from all over the world live and work in and around The Hague. They bring extra colour to the city and add to its special international character. This results in a powerful economy, creates jobs and contributes to the high quality of living in the city. You experience quality in The Hague. With first rate cultural, shopping and catering facilities, excellent education and sports facilities, a rich and diverse living environment and the combination of city and beach life, The Hague is truly an international city.



"A lot of European treaties and agreements have been agreed in The Hague. Historically it has been an important city where European and international political discussions have taken place. The Hague is an ideal place to study International and European Law as - not only there are a lot of legal institutions here - but also major European institutions are located in the neighbouring countries which are only a couple of hours away."

► **Olga Shelyagova, Russia, International and European Law student**

History

The Hague has a rich history, dating back to the 13th century when the counts of Holland took up residence in the Binnenhof castle. The first settlements, recorded in 1370, developed around the castle. This area became known as Count's Domain, or 's-Gravenhage' – the city's official name.

The 20th century saw The Hague's coming of age as an international city of peace and justice. In 1899 hundreds of delegates from 26 countries gathered for three months at Huis ten Bosch for the First Peace Conference. An effort to set standards for conflict resolution between nations, it gave birth to the Permanent Court of Arbitration and was followed by an even larger Second Peace Conference in The Hague in 1907.



The UN Security Council established the **Yugoslavia Tribunal** in 1993 to try individuals for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the former Yugoslavia. The International Criminal Court was established in The Hague in 2002. The Hague became a key diplomatic and business centre with the International Criminal Court, the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia and the European intelligence organisation, Europol, at its heart. There are around 80 embassies and consulates, international organisations and companies based here.

With over 100 ethnic groups living side by side, The Hague has embraced its heritage and strives to be deserving of the title 'International City of Peace and Justice'.

Interesting facts

The Hague is the third largest city of the Netherlands with a population of 500,000 (2011). The Hague has traditionally been a city of storks, thus the stork on the coat of arms and as the logo of the municipality. In the Middle Ages they were domesticated to remove fish remains at the fish market and nested on the buildings around the Binnenhof and in the area of the Groenmarkt and were seen as bringers of luck and prosperity.

In 1456 the Thirty Knights of the Mighty Order of the Gulden Vlies (Golden Fleece) came to The Hague for their first meeting in full armour, some on horseback and many on foot. The

Knights had their meeting in the Hall of Knights, or Ridderzaal, and at the Grote Kerk (Big Church) where you can still see remnants of their weaponry.

The greenery in The Hague has always been protected. In the early Middle Ages by the Counts of Holland and, from the 14th century onwards, by forest wardens and citizens alike. They were supported by the 1576 Act of Redemption, a law banning the felling or selling of trees.

3.1.1 Discover The Hague

Museums

The Hague has some 30 top-quality museums and can rightly be seen as a city full of art and culture. Some enjoy a worldwide reputation while others are less well known, which only adds to their charm.

The Mauritshuis has an extensive collection of Dutch masterpieces from the 17th century, including the gem *Girl with a Pearl Earring* by Johannes Vermeer. **The Gemeentemuseum** has a permanent collection with a number of paintings by Piet Mondrian and the only 19th-century panorama in the Netherlands can be admired in Panorama Mesdag.



The museum card (Museumkaart) provides free and reduced admission to more than 400 museums in the Netherlands. Membership costs €19.95 per year for people under 18 years old and €39.95 per year for people over 19 years (prices include a one-off handling fee of €4.95).

Performing Arts

The Hague boasts a number of nationally renowned companies as well as a lively international theatre scene. A few nationally renowned companies are based in The Hague like the Nationale Toneel, which performs in the beautifully classical **Koninklijke**

Schouwburg (Royal Theatre), Toneelgroep De Appel, with its theatre – a former coach house for The Hague's horsedrawn trams – in Scheveningen, or Theater Zwembad de Regentes. They present internationally known pieces by playwrights like Chekhov, Shakespeare, Ibsen and other.





"The Peace Palace library is where I spend most of my time so I suppose that makes it my favourite place in The Hague. But when I'm not studying there's no place I'd rather be than in the city centre enjoying a drink outside with friends, particularly in April when the spring brings the promise of warmer weather. There's always the beach nearby too, but that's another story..."

- ▶ Jolana Makraiova, Slovakia, International and European Law student

Monuments

The Hague's historic centre is well preserved with more than 740 sculptures and 1,300 protected municipality monuments. It is the capital of the Zuid-Holland province, residence of Queen Beatrix and the royal family, and the seat of government.

Among many attractions which The Hague has to offer, few highlights include:

The Binnenhof: the centre of today's Parliament and politics in the Netherlands with the oldest part of the medieval earl's castle, the Knights' Hall (Ridderzaal) and the 'Rolgebouw' behind it, dating back to 13th century.

Huis ten Bosch Palace: the residential palace of Queen Beatrix since 1981.

Lange Voorhout Palace: Banker Archibald Hope loaned Lange Voorhout Palace, built by architect Pieter de Swart, to Emperor Napoleon, when he spent a week in The Hague in 1811.

Mauritshuis: one of the first and most beautiful examples of the Dutch classicist baroque, characterised by pilasters which run the full length of the facade and by frontons with various carvings.

Noordeinde Palace: has always been the residence of the reigning Stadtholder or monarch. The first inhabitant was Louise de Coligny, the last wife of William the Silent.

The Hague – a green city

One of the greenest city's in Europe with 70.000 trees, 885,2 ha of parkland, 12 city gardens and 11 kilometres of beach, dunes and sea, The Hague has pledged to become a CO2 neutral city by 2050. A new initiative, the Climate Fund, was launched on 17 March 2009 at the World Forum.

You can take your bicycle on most types of public transport and The Hague has a 60km bike route connecting nearly all of the city's parks and country estates.

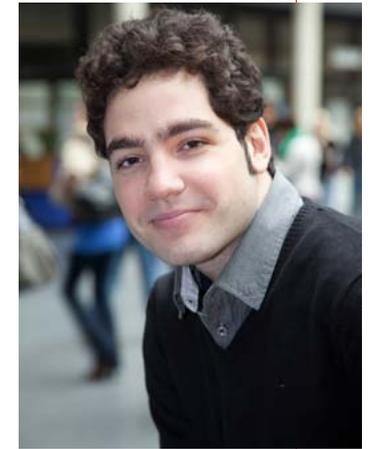
The Hague offers many sustainable services, like vegetarian restaurants, eco-friendly hotels, organic and fair-trade shops and sustainable travel organisations.

Here is selection of The Hague's top green spots:

- ▶ The Paleistuin (Palace garden), part of the Noordeinde Palace, dates to around 1609. It has a pond, walking paths, old trees and lawns.
- ▶ Meer en Bos was once a forested area around the Segmeer lake. Since then, the lake area has been developed into a country estate with ornate gardens, perfect for long walks. Features include a zandwal (ancient desert dune), dry ditches, old paths and a 16th/17th century farm.
- ▶ The Uithof is a green zone between the city and the Westland greenhouse area. You'll find woodland, reed land, pastures and meadows. Nature is abundant with 355 species of plants, such as giant horsetail, sedge grass and marsh lousewort. Leisure facilities include a tennis complex, ice rink, climbing hall, canoe centre and riding stables.
- ▶ The **scenic dunes** just outside the city at Kijkduin and Scheveningen, are perfect for strolls and bike rides.
- ▶ Zuiderpark is great for inline skaters with its asphalt paths. People gather in the summer and barbecue on the lawns. There is also a botanical garden and small zoo.

More information on what The Hague has to offer:

www.denhaag.nl/en



"When I walk through the streets of The Hague I always take my camera with me since I can always find something interesting worth remembering. The Hague is the perfect balance between quietness and fun thus it is easy for me to concentrate on my studies as well as spending afternoons and evenings in an alternative and inspiring way."

- ▶ Nicola Fraccaroli, Italy, Public Management student







4 Transport

The Netherlands has a well developed, quality public transport system with trains, buses, trams and an underground network.

Connections between the Randstad cities (Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam and Utrecht) are quick and easy by car and public transport. It takes less than an hour to get between cities off peak.

More information: www.ov9292.nl

4.1 Public transport in The Hague



Buses and trams

The Hague has an **excellent transport system** with regular bus and tram. All public transport runs via a timetable and most services stop by midnight. After 1am, trains between The Hague and Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Leiden and Utrecht depart every hour. The last tram and bus from The Hague central station (Den Haag Centraal) goes around 12.30am.

Trains

There are different types of trains in the Netherlands: the stop train (*stoptrein* and/or *sprinter*) stops at all stations, the fast train (*sneltrein*) and intercity (*intercity*) stop at main stations.

Tickets are priced by distance and can be obtained from ticket machines (slightly cheaper) as well as the ticket counter at a train station.

You can buy a separate ticket to take your bike on the train, which can be used outside of rush hour and during weekends and holidays.

Taxis

You can hop in a cab at taxi ranks located at train stations and throughout the city or order one by telephone. People don't hail cabs in the Netherlands.

More information: trams and buses www.ov9292.nl trains www.ns.nl taxis www.htmc.nl

4.2 Tickets

4.2.1 OV-chipkaart



The OV-chipkaart is a card the size of a bankcard that can be topped up with Euros and used on trains, buses, trams and metros.

You can load travel credits or products, like single or season tickets onto the OV-chipkaart online, at ticket machines and ticket offices. You can also opt for 'autoreload', which ensures that you always have plenty of credit. You will need to hold your card up to the especially designated 'check-in / check-out' point.

More information on how to obtain OV-chipkaart: www.ov-chipkaart.nl

4.2.2 Weekly, monthly, and annual tickets

If you are a frequent traveller it is more economical to buy a weekly, monthly or yearly travel card. These tickets are priced according to the zone you travel in. You will need to buy an ID card (stamkaart) with a passport photo the first time you buy one.

4.2.3 Cheaper ways to travel

When travelling by train it is cheaper to buy a weekend return ticket (weekendretour) or a day return ticket (dagretour) than two one way (enkele reis) tickets.

For a day's travel within a set distance, buy a first or second class one day ticket (dagkaart). The public transport day ticket (OV-dagkaart) allows you to use all forms of public transport that day. If you commute between two cities, more than 16 times a month, it is cheaper with a monthly ticket (maandtrajectkaart).

There are also many other discount cars useful if you plan to travel around the Netherlands.

More information: www.ns.nl/en

4.4 Cycling

A bicycle is the cheapest and most popular form of transport in the Netherlands. You can beat the urban traffic on cycle lanes in most cities.

If you cycle without front and rear lights and rear and side reflectors in the evening you could be fined 30 Euros. Cyclists are expected to use hand signals to indicate a turn. Make sure you also buy a secure lock. When cycling in the city, please steer clear from the tram lanes, it is easy to get caught in the rails.

Most stations in the Netherlands, including The Hague's stations have **bicycle parking** (rijwielstalling or fietsenstalling).

More information:

www.b-cycle-it.nl

www.rijwielshop-hollands-spoor.nl

www.denhaag.nl/en/residents/to/Du-Nord-Bicycle-Rental.htm



4.5 Driving

To drive in the Netherlands you must be over 18 and have a valid driving licence, insurance (green card) and pay road tax.

ANWB is the national motoring organisation and can help with breakdowns, insurance and guidebooks.

If you park in a street with the sign '**parkeerautomaat**', you are expected to pay for parking in advance and leave the ticket visible in the windscreen.

A Dutch or European Community (EC) driving licence is compulsory for residents in the Netherlands. International licences are no longer automatically valid and a Dutch driving licence (involving a driving test) is required.

The speed limit in the Netherlands on motorways (snelwegen) is between 100 and 130 km/hour, on the highway (autoweg) it is 80 km/hour and within urban areas it is between 30 and 50 km/hour.

More information: www.anwb.nl and www.rijbewijs.nl







5 Rules and regulations

The following checklist will help you plan your stay in The Hague:

5.1 Residence permit and visa

When you arrive in the Netherlands you must register as a resident at your local city office. Prospective students from certain countries also need to apply for a residence permit. It is worth checking with your university's international office what rules apply and whether they can arrange required documents on your behalf through a fast-track procedure.

More information: www.nuffic.nl

5.2 Travelling abroad

Students needing an **MVV entry visa** and residence permit are advised to contact their country's consulate or embassy to find out which papers they need.

While travelling around the Netherlands students must carry their passport and residence permit at all times for ID. Residence permits and visas must be valid for at least two months after your trip.

5.3 Insurance

All residents in the Netherlands must take out medical insurance. A liability insurance is recommended.

Depending on whether you study, work and/or do a paid internship you will need a different type of healthcare insurance. Students working part-time may want to weigh up the cost of insurance against potential earnings to see if working is worthwhile.

Foreign students may be eligible for a health care allowance (zorgtoeslag). Ask the university's international office for more information.

More information: www.nuffic.nl

5.4 Funding



Most international students studying and living in the Netherlands will have to cover their own costs.

Students from EU or European Economic Area (EEA) countries paying tuition fees can apply for loan tuition fees. **International students** may also be eligible for a monthly grant (studiefinanciering).

More information: www.ibgroeop.nl

5.5 Employment

Students from 'old' EU member states (countries that entered the EU before 1 May 2004) do not need a residence document to work in the Netherlands, but it is compulsory to have a social security number (Burgerservicenummer (BSN)). A BSN will be given after registration at the municipal registry office.

International students, unless coming from the EU, EEA or Switzerland, require a work permit, (TWV – tewerkstellingsvergunning) which the employer needs to apply for.

A work permit allows you to work up to ten hours a week or three months fulltime during the summertime.

More information:

- ▶ www.studyinholland.nl
- ▶ www.cwinet.nl
- ▶ www.english.ind.nl
- ▶ www.monsterboard.nl
- ▶ www.dutchisnotrequired.nl
- ▶ www.undutchables.nl

5.6 Voluntary work

If you are looking for some fulfilling extra curricular activity that doesn't involve the paperwork, try some voluntary work during your time in The Hague. An organisation called Heroes of The Hague (Haagse Helden) will help you find long term unpaid positions, one-off jobs or group work with your friends and other students.

More information: www.denhaag.nl/haagse-helden.htm

5.7 The Hague International Centre

The Hague International Centre is a good first port of call for new residents arriving in The Hague. The centre provides an introductory pack and can help with practical tips on healthcare, parking permits and making contact with other international residents.

Their regular course – Welcome to The Hague – is a good opportunity to meet people and join a guided tour of the **old city centre**.

More information: www.denhaag.nl/en/residents/to/The-Hague-International-Centre.htm







6 Getting medical help

- ▶ Police, fire brigade and ambulance emergencies: 112 (non-emergencies 0900 – 8844).
- ▶ List of hospitals, clinics and 24-hour emergency rooms (eerste hulp).
www.denhaag.nl/en/residents/to/Hospitals-and-clinics-1.htm
- ▶ GP outside of working hours contact SMASH: www.smashaaglanden.nl on 070 346 96 69.
- ▶ You can collect prescriptive medicine at the **pharmacy** (apotheek). If you have medical insurance you can often claim back expenses.
- ▶ Dental treatment is not included in standard medical insurance. If you need a dentist (tandarts) you need to make an appointment and pay on the spot. If you take an additional dental insurance, don't forget to ask your dentist for a receipt in order to receive reimbursement from the insurance provider.

Counselling services

- ▶ 24-hour emergency help line (Vertrouwenslijn) 070 - 345 45 00
- ▶ Sexual abuse help line for women (Vrouwen hulplijn tegen seksueel misbruik) 070 - 362 04 96
- ▶ Drug counselling (Parnassia Preventie) 070 - 391 81 91
- ▶ Aids and sexually transmitted diseases (Soa Aids) 0900 - 204 20 40
- ▶ Advice after traumatic events such as crimes and traffic accidents (Bureau Slachtofferhulp) 0900 - 0101
- ▶ For legal aid contact: the legal aid office (Juridisch Loket) 0900 - 80 20





7 Practical information

7.1 Money matters

The Netherlands joined **the Euro** on 1 January 2002 and later that month the Guilder was taken out of circulation. Coins come in denominations of two, five, 10, 20, 50 cent coins; one and two Euro coins; and five, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 Euro notes. Most shops don't accept 200 and 500 euro notes.



You can change money at banks, large post offices and exchanges (Grenswisselkantoren or GWK).

Most banks are open Mondays 1pm to 5pm and Tuesday to Fridays 9am to 5pm, while GWK open during weekends at larger rail stations.

The main banks in the Netherlands are ABN AMRO, ING and Rabobank. Banks do not tend to open accounts for students studying less than 12 months. To open a student account you will need your passport, rental agreement and a student card/letter from the university. You'll receive a bank card to use in **ATM's** (geldautomaat or giromaat) and in shops and restaurants.



7.2 Post offices

To post a letter, use the orange or red post boxes on the streets and in shopping centres. Use the slot in the post box that corresponds to the postcode on your letter and make sure that you have paid the correct postage. Mini-post offices in grocery stores, Bruna bookshops, as well as TNT post office and supermarket cigarette counters sell stamps. Post is collected in the evenings and arrives the next day.

7.3 Telephone calls

To make a call within your city dial the recipient's six or seven digit number. To call outside your area add the area code (zero plus three or four digits).

To make an international call dial 00, then the country's national code, then the area code (if any) without its initial zero and finally the number. The national code for the Netherlands is 31 and the area code for The Hague is 70.

Cheap pay-as-you-talk mobile phones can be obtained at Lebara Mobile or Lycamobile and top them up with your credit card. Once settled, applying for a mobile contract might be useful.

7.4 Laundry and dry cleaning



If the accommodation does not have a washing machine a **lauderette** (wasserette) can be used. A load of clothes costs around 5 Euros. It costs around 7 Euros for a service wash, including detergents and drying.

7.5 Libraries

In addition to universities collections The Hague also offers many libraries. Most require a passport and proof of address to join. The main libraries include:

- ▶ National Library of the Netherlands (Koninklijke Bibliotheek) www.kb.nl/index-en.html
- ▶ The Hague public library (Bibliotheek Den Haag) www.bibliotheekdenhaag.nl
- ▶ T.M.C. Asser Institute Library www.asser.nl
- ▶ Peace Palace Library www.peacepalacelibrary.nl

7.6 Religious institutions

There are many different religions represented in The Hague. Contact your local VVV tourist office (www.vvv.nl) for a full list of religious institutions.

7.7 VVV tourist office

The **VVV tourist office** offers tourist information on a broad range of subjects, from religious institutions and hotels in The Hague to tours and tickets. The Hague's tourist office can be found at Spui 68.

More information: www.vvv.nl



7.8 Language courses

Get the most out of your stay in The Hague with some basic knowledge of Dutch.

More information:

- ▶ List of Dutch courses www.nuffic.nl
- ▶ ROC Mondriaan college www.rocmondriaan.nl
- ▶ Babel www.babel.nl
- ▶ Direct Dutch www.directdutch.com
- ▶ Volksuniversiteit www.volksuniversiteit.nl





8 Shopping in The Hague

The Hague offers a wide range of high quality shopping from large chains to smaller, independent stores.

8.1 Opening hours

Most shops open 10am to 6pm from Tuesday to Friday In The Hague city centre. Many are closed Monday morning and there is late opening on Thursday evenings. On Saturdays shops generally open from 9am to 5pm and on Sundays from 12pm to 5pm in the city centre.

8.2 Pharmacies and cosmetics stores

You can pick up toiletries and cosmetics at Etos, Kruidvat, DA and Le Drugstore in The Hague. Prescriptions can be collected from one of the many pharmacies (apotheken) in the city.

8.3 Food and home shopping

Supermarkets and stores in The Hague include:

- ▶ Albert Heijn: with prices higher than average www.ah.nl
- ▶ Aldi and Lidl: low budget www.aldi.nl and www.lidl.nl
- ▶ Jumbo: average prices www.jumbosupermarkten.nl
- ▶ Smaller, independent food shops, including Surinam, Indonesia specialty shops
- ▶ Blokker or Hema: household goods www.blokker.nl and www.hema.nl

Save money by picking up a supermarket discount card, for example the AH Bonuskaart for reductions at Albert Heijn.



8.4 Bookshops

For study books check with your university on how to obtain them. For other English language books try the American Book Center. Students get 10 per cent discount here with an ID card.

De Slegte has a great selection of cheap new and used books in several languages and in subjects ranging from philosophy to science fiction. Pick up bargains at book Lange Voorhout and Plein book markets.

From mid-May until the end of September The Hague's city centre has a lovely and a characteristic Antique and Book Market. Open twice a week on the stately Lange Voorhout.

8.5 Markets

The Hague is bustling with colourful markets which open on various days of the week. The main markets include:

- ▶ **Haagse Markt:** produce and goods
- ▶ **Markthof:** covered market
- ▶ **Stevinstraat:** food and goods
- ▶ **Leyweg:** general goods
- ▶ **Loosduinse Hoofdplein:** food and general goods
- ▶ **Grote Kerk:** traditional market in the old centre

More information: www.denhaag.nl/en



8.6 Kringloop Holland shops

Kringloop Holland is a company that collects, repairs and sells donated and recycled furniture and household goods. You can pick up quality goods at low costs. There are 12 shops located around The Hague and Rijswijk. Kringloop Holland also collects goods by appointment.

More information: www.kringloopholland.nl



"The Hague is a peaceful and quiet city, drivers always give way for pedestrians, and you can ride a bicycle freely."

- ▶ Haiyan Hu, China, Master in Accounting and Control student





9 Life as a student in The Hague

The city is lucky to have nearly 5,000 international students studying at these institutions each year. Of course, there's a lot more to being a student than just studying. International students come here to see more of the world and meet new people. And there are plenty of opportunities to do that in The Hague!

9.1 Student organisations

In The Hague there is a variety of clubs where students can take part in sports, culture or music. Some clubs fall under one educational institution, while others are open to all students living or studying in The Hague. Ask at your university for a list of student associations that fall under your institution.

Interaccess Interaccess is a social organisation for and run by international students in The Hague. It aims to improve contact between international students and other students in The Hague, by organising speakers, presentations, festivals and debates. Weekend activities include bicycle trips, poker tournaments and parties.

More information: www.inter-access.nl

Erasmus Student Network (ESN) ESN is one of the biggest student bodies in Europe. It supports international students and develops cultural understanding via 343 higher education institutions in 33 countries.

More information: www.esn.org

Pallas Athene CSHH Pallas Athene is the largest student organisation in The Hague. Pallas Athene even has its own social club, Societeit Parthenon, which is open five evenings a week. It organizes various activities including sports, daily meals, society evenings, galas and lots of parties.

More information: www.pallas-athene.nl

Alpha Den Haag Alpha is a Christian organisation which offers cabaret, parties and social events, as well as weekly bible studies. It has a committee for international students and is open to non-Christians.

More information: www.alphadenhaag.nl

Eurasia SV Eurasia SV organises activities and events for international students who come from Turkey or are interested in countries culture and people.

More information: www.euriasiasv.nl

Haagsche Studenten Vereniging (HSV) HSV is a social group for students from The Hague, Delft, Leiden and Rotterdam. Besides social activities and seasonal parties, HSV organizes lectures on various topics.

More information: www.haagschestudent.nl

HSFN An organisation for Hindu students and students interested in Hinduism.

More information: www.hsfm.nl

INTAC INTAC is a social organisation for all students in The Hague. INTAC organizes many activities including hockey, a yearly gala, sailing trips, skiing and many parties.

More information: www.intac.nl

Mashriq SV This is a club for students interested in Indian and Pakistani culture and the Islamic religion.

More information: www.mashriq.nl

Pelargos A rowing club for students.

More information: www.pelargos.nl

Hexagon Hexagon represents students from the six islands of Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Maarten.

More information: www.studentenvereniginghexagon.nl

HSSO Valerius Orchestra The HSSO Valerius Orchestra is the youngest orchestra in The Hague. Rehearsals take place at The Hague University of Applied Sciences and students from any institution are welcome.

More information: www.studentenorkest.nl

9.2 Accommodation



Finding suitable and cheap accommodation in The Hague can be a daunting process. But there are plenty of organisations that are here to help. Housing agencies, for example DuWO www.duwo.nl specialise in letting to students. For student support contact:

- ▶ Stichting Jongerenhuisvesting Union: Youth housing foundation www.studentsplaza.nl
- ▶ Foreign Service (FSS): Supporting international students www.foreignstudents.nl

Commercial housing agencies in The Hague include:

- ▶ Housing Point International www.housingpointinternational.com
- ▶ Vesting Vastgoed www.vestingvastgoed.nl
- ▶ Franke Beheer og BV www.frankebeheer.nl
- ▶ Direct Wonen www.directwonen.nl

Hotels and hostels

For short-term stays try the following: Stay Okay www.stayokay.com

For hotels in The Hague check www.booking.com

Try the following websites for accommodation adverts:

- ▶ International Housing Network www.casaswap.com
- ▶ Craigslist www.amsterdam.en.craigslist.org
- ▶ Kamernet.nl www.kamernet.nl
- ▶ Students for Students Housing www.sfshousing.nl
- ▶ Kamerhulp.nl www.kamerhulp.nl
- ▶ ASW www.steunpuntwonen.nl
- ▶ Startpagina www.studentenhuizen.pagina.nl
- ▶ Marktplaats.nl www.kopen.marktplaats.nl/huizen-en-kamers
- ▶ Mydutchcastle.nl www.mydutchcastle.nl
- ▶ Expat Rentals www.expatrients.eu
- ▶ Duinzigt Woonservice www.site.duinzigt.nl
- ▶ Kamertje.nl www.kamertje.nl
- ▶ Funda www.funda.nl/huur
- ▶ Staedion www.staedion.nl/huurwoningen
- ▶ EasyKamer www.easykamer.nl
- ▶ Pararius www.pararius.com/english
- ▶ Wvoor Wonen www.wvoorwonen.nl

Tips on finding accommodation:

- ▶ Some agency websites are in Dutch, so use Google Translate translate.google.com
- ▶ Try your university's Facebook page for house shares
- ▶ Check notice boards on campus
- ▶ Check the notice boards in supermarkets or put an advert up

9.3 Foreign Student Service (FSS)

The FSS is a national organisation for foreign students already in The Netherlands, or those planning to study here. It provides services such as study and residence information, publications and a monthly newsletter, help finding accommodation and social activities.

More information: www.foreignstudents.nl

9.4 ACKU



It offers courses, theatre tickets and entertainment tips. ACKU organizes concerts, exhibitions and films events. ACKU also organizes the introduction festival Oh Oh Intro at the Lange Voorhout to welcome all new students of The Hague. You can easily visit us or contact us by email: info@acku.nl or phone: 070-4458885 / 070-3120585.

If you have plans to organise an event make sure to contact ACKU, they can help you organise and promote your event.

More information: www.acku.nl and www.ohohintro.nl

9.5 The Hague Student Card

Having fun in The Hague can be expensive, but you can save euros with the Hague Student Card. You can enjoy discounts on cinema tickets, clothes shopping and travel. A weekly newsletter will keep you up to date with the latest parties and events.

More information: www.dehaagsestudentenpas.nl/en





10 Additional information

10.1 Do's and don'ts

The Netherlands is a relaxed country but you can still get fined for:

- ▶ Travelling without a valid ticket on public transport.
- ▶ Drinking beer at stations, in the parks, on the street or on the Scheveningen beaches.
- ▶ Not picking up your dog's poo.
- ▶ Putting rubbish bags out on the street on the wrong collection day. Make sure you check your collection day calendar (de huisvuilkalender).
- ▶ Cycling without lights in the dark in front (white) and on the back (red).
- ▶ Cycling on 'pedestrians only' streets.
- ▶ Smoking in places of 'public access', such as restaurants.

10.2 Some beginners' Dutch

Hello: *Hallo, Hoi*

My name is: *Mijn naam is*

How much does this cost?: *Hoeveel kost dit/Wat is de prijs hiervan?*

Fine: *Goed*

Thank you: *Dank je*

How are you?: *Hoe gaat het?*

Here you go: *Alsjeblieft/Alstublieft*

Good day: *Goedendag*

Good morning: *Goedemorgen*

Good afternoon: *Goedemiddag*

Good evening: *Goedenavond*

Do you have...?: *Heeft u...?*

Where can I find...?: *Waar kan ik... vinden?*

Can I have a...?: *Mag ik...?*

10.3 Checklist

Here is a quick checklist of things you have to arrange when you move to the Netherlands:

- ▶ Accommodation with a contract so that you have a registered address
- ▶ A bank account
- ▶ Register at the municipal office, the Gemeentelijke Basis Administratie (GBA), and apply for an Ooievaarspas
- ▶ A part time job and/or apply for student finance (EU students)
- ▶ A bicycle and lights
- ▶ OV Chipcard / NS rail discount card
- ▶ Health insurance
- ▶ Student discount card
- ▶ A Dutch mobile phone

10.4 References

The following sources were used for this online guide:

- ▶ Den Haag.com
- ▶ The Hague Visitors and Convention Bureau brochures
- ▶ Nuffic brochures
- ▶ Municipality of The Hague brochures
- ▶ The Low Sky: Understanding the Dutch by Han van der Horst
- ▶ The Holland Handbook by Stephanie Dijkstra
- ▶ Find your way in Amsterdam
- ▶ Find your way in Rotterdam
- ▶ The Education system in The Netherlands by HBO-raad
- ▶ Students' Charter by The Hague University
- ▶ ov-chipkaart.nl

Colophon

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Photography: city The Hague and Kim ver Maat

Design: Kitchenpilot and The Hague University of Applied Sciences

Text: Dawn Jelley

Editorial address: study-information@hhs.nl

We have done our utmost to provide you with the best possible information about The Hague, but as the city evolves and changes, no rights can be derived from the information in this guide. For the latest information please consult www.thehague.com





FOR MORE INFORMATION
WWW.THEHAGUE.COM

GEMEENTE DEN HAAG
POSTBUS 12 600
2500 DJ THE HAGUE
THE NETHERLANDS

