

Tour
Information



Christmas in Delft





Travel

Passports

Please ensure your 10 year British Passport is not out of date and is valid for a full three months beyond the duration of your visit. EU, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino or Switzerland valid national identification cards are also acceptable for travel to the Netherlands.

Visas

British and EU passport holders are not required to have a visa.

For all other passport holders please check the visa requirements with the appropriate embassy.

Dutch Embassy: 38 Hyde Park gate, London SW7 5DP. Tel: (0)20 7590 3200 or (09065) 508 916 (visa information line). Fax: (0)20 7581 348.

Email: consular@netherlands-embassy.org.uk.

Website: www.netherlands-embassy.org.uk

Open Mon-Fri 0900-1700; 0900-1200 (for visa and passport section)



Tickets

You will be issued with a return train ticket.

Please take care not to lose your tickets and please check that the details on your tickets are accurate. Your ticket is non-transferable and non-refundable. No refund can be given for non-used portions.

Standard Premier on Eurostar tickets is indicated by an asterisk in the class type section in the top right hand corner. A light meal will be served to passengers travelling Standard Premier on Eurostar. Standard class Eurostar tickets do not include any food or drink on board, although there is a buffet car serving drinks and snacks.

Local train tickets do not include any food or drink on board, although a buffet car is available.

Train Seats

On the Eurostar legs of the journey you have reserved seat and carriage numbers which are shown clearly on your ticket. There are no seat reservations between Brussels and The Hague, your tour manager will have a group ticket for this section of the journey.



Baggage

As with most trains, passengers are responsible for carrying baggage onto and off the train. Baggage can be stored on overhead shelves or at the entrance to the carriages. Trolleys are available at St Pancras and Lille, but bags do need to be carried on to the platform. Porters are sometimes but not always available at St Pancras.

Travel Editions recommends a luggage delivery service called **thebaggageman**, where your suitcase can be picked up from your home before departure and delivered straight to your hotel; therefore removing the worry about carrying your cases onto and off the trains.

For further information:

<http://www.thebaggageman.com>

Labels

Please use the luggage labels provided. It is useful to have your home address located inside your suitcase should the label go astray.

Transfers

On arrival, transfer by coach to Delft (approx. 20 min.) and Hampshire Delft Centre Hotel.

Special Requests

If you haven't already, please notify Travel Editions of any special requests as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements.



Accommodation

Hampshire Delft Centre, Delft

The family-owned 3-star Delft Centre Hotel is in a great location - as its name suggests - in the heart of Delft across a canal behind the *Nieuwe Kerk* within a few minutes' walk of the main square and all the main sights. The hotel's public areas are stylish and modern and are themed around music – you might even find a pianist accompanying breakfast or dinner. Facilities here include bar, restaurant, waterfront terrace and comfortable bedrooms with private bath/shower, hairdryer, TV, telephone, safe, wi-fi and coffee/tea making facilities.

For more information visit their website
<http://www.hoteldelftcentre.nl/?lang=en>



Food

There are few dishes that can be described as quintessentially Dutch, and those that do fall into this category are a far cry from the elaborate creations of French or Italian cuisine. Almost every large town, however, has a wide range of restaurants specialising in their own brands of international dishes. Indonesian cuisine, a result of the Dutch colonisation of the East Indies, with its use of spices and exotic ingredients, is particularly delicious.

A typical Dutch breakfast usually consists of several varieties of bread, thin slices of Dutch cheese, prepared meats and sausage, butter and *hagelslag* (chocolate sprinkles), or jam, often a boiled egg and a cup of coffee. For lunch, most common are *Koffietafel* (breads, various cold cuts, cheese and preserves with a side dish of omelette, cottage pie or salad and coffee) and *broodjes* (sandwiches), served in the ubiquitous sandwich bars – *broodjeswinkels*.

More substantial dishes are generally reserved by the Dutch themselves for the evening meal: *erwtensoep* (thick pea soup served with smoked sausage, cubes of bacon, pig's knuckle and brown or white bread), *groentensoep* (clear consommé with vegetables, vermicelli and meatballs), *Stamppot* (hearty, traditional mash-up of potatoes with endive, turnips or some other earthy vegetable, customarily accompanied by smoked sausage), *klapstuk* (an accompaniment of stewed lean beef) and *boerenkool met rookworst* (frost-

crisped kale and potatoes served with smoked sausage).

Seafood dishes are often excellent, particularly in Amsterdam, and include *gebakken zeetong* (fried sole), *lekkerbekjes* (fried whiting), *gerookte paling* (smoked eel), royal imperial oysters, shrimps, mussels, and lobster. Lightly salted 'green' herring can be bought from street stalls (they are held by the tail and slipped down into the throat).

Favourite Dutch desserts include *flensjes* or *pannekoeken* (25 varieties of Dutch pancake), *wafels met slagroom* (waffles with whipped cream), *Poffertje* (small dough balls fried and dusted with sugar) and *Stroopwafel* (two thin layers of waffle filled with sweet sticky syrup – placed on top of a hot cup of tea or coffee, the caramel syrup melts deliciously).

Restaurants usually have table service. Bars and cafes generally have the same, though some are self-service. Usually, a discretionary service charge is added to your bill in restaurants and bars, but it is customary to leave small change when paying a bill.



Drink

Dutch beer is excellent, with pilsener-style lagers the most popular. It is always served chilled, generally in small (slightly under half a pint) glasses. The most popular brand in Amsterdam is *Amstel*.

The local spirit, *Jenever* (Dutch gin), flavoured with juniper berries and served chilled, is usually taken straight and knocked back in a single go, but it is sometimes drunk with cola or vermouth. It comes in many varieties depending on the spices used. Favoured brands are *Bols*, *Bokma*, *Claryn* and *De Kuyper*. Other excellent Dutch liqueurs include *Curaçao*, *Parfait d'Amour*, *Triple Sec* (similar to Cointreau) and Dutch-made versions of crème de menthe, apricot brandy and anisette.

Meals included in the price of your holiday are:

Breakfast – daily

Dinner – included on the first night and Christmas Eve and Christmas Day



Destination

The atmospheric Dutch towns of Delft and Leiden provided much artistic inspiration for two of history's great painters: Vermeer and Rembrandt. Following in their footsteps, you will explore the towns where they were born, as well as visit world-class galleries including the newly re-opened Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and the Mauritshuis in The Hague, which features Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, back in its rightful home after a worldwide tour. As well as admiring paintings by the old masters, enjoy provincial Dutch architecture and charming canals.

Places of interest included in the tour:

Delft

It isn't hard to see why Delft is one of the most popular attractions for visitor's to the Netherlands – set on several beautiful tree-lined canals, the town is one of Holland's most beautiful and is a charming base for our tour. Birthplace and home to Vermeer, the town was featured in the recent film, "Girl with a Pearl Earring" inspired by the painting of the same name. Famed for its distinctive blue and white ceramics and tiles, Delft has a gorgeous centre – a jumble of old tiled houses, narrow streets, and lovely little bridges, though it is the feeling of the place that holds most of the appeal. Highlights here include the 14th century *Nieuwe Church*, the *Town Hall*, the *Oude Delft Canal*, *Prinsenhof* and 13th century *Oude Church* and *Hippolytusbuurt canal*, where florists display their wares.

For more information about Delft:
<http://www.delft.nl/delften/>

Gouda

A typical Dutch country town with delightful old buildings surrounded by quiet canals, Gouda is famed for its cheese, available in *jonge* (young), *belegen* (mature) and *oude* (old) versions. Although it is a fairly small town, Gouda's *Market square* is the largest in the Netherlands, an echo of its days at the centre of the medieval cloth trade and is still host to a busy market. It is also a beautiful old town renowned for its *Stadhuis* which dates from 1450, the *Stedelijk Museum* housed in the 14th century St Catherine's Hospital and the church of *St Janskerk*, which is home to some of the world's best stained glass windows.

Leiden

Home to one of Europe's most prestigious universities and the birth place of Rembrandt, Leiden is a vibrant and appealing city with a number of exceptional museums. Its beautiful and historic old town, crisscrossed by ancient canals and full of lovely antique buildings, is best explored on foot. The *Stedelijk Museum de Lakenhal*, located in the old cloth merchants' hall, houses some 17th century Dutch paintings. Other highlights include the *Rapenburg canal* lined with fine houses, *Van Oudheden Museum of Antiquities* and the 17th century *fish market*.

For more information about Leiden:
http://portal.leiden.nl/en/tourism_leisure

The Hague & the Mauritshuis collection

Home to the Dutch government and Parliament, the Hague is a pleasant and spacious seaside town, with a multitude of squares, parks and more than 700 public gardens, that spreads over a vast area yet with a relatively small population, earning it the title of the "biggest village in Europe." Interspersed with elegant boulevards lined with mansions, it is a stately place with an air of being well kept and well moneyed.

The Hague is famous for its superb museums and entrance is included to the excellent *Mauritshuis* collection. After a painstaking restoration the Mauritshuis reopened on the 27th June 2014, as an enhanced new museum with its full collection restored to its rightful home including Rembrandt, Van Dyck, Rubens and Vermeer's '*Girl with a Pearl Earring*' back on display after a worldwide tour. Other sights include the *Groenmarkt* main square, the *Picture Gallery* of William V, the *Bredius Museum*, *Noordeinde Palace* and *St Jacobs Church*.

For more information about The Hague:
<http://denhaag.com/en>
For more information about the Mauritshuis:
<http://www.mauritshuis.nl/en/>

Amsterdam & the Rijksmuseum

One of Europe's great cities and the capital of The Netherlands, Amsterdam started life as a small fishing village and became one of the world's most important ports during the Dutch Golden Age. Wander the narrow atmospheric lanes and canals lined with 17th century merchant's houses and visit some of the many cultural and historic sites, such as the intensely moving *Anne Frank's house*, the *Flower Market*, the canals such as *Herengracht* and *Singel* and the lovely houseboats, *Westerkerk Church* and the *Van Gogh museum*, that has some 100 of the artist's paintings on display as well as letters to his brother Theo.

Do not miss the *Rijksmuseum*, reopened after renovation in 2013, is one of the world's finest art galleries with a large collection of Dutch works, particularly Rembrandts and several excellent Vermeers and a huge cache of sculptures and applied arts.

For more information about the Rijksmuseum:

<https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en>

Haarlem

Little known Haarlem is one of the Netherlands' most appealing cities with a relaxed pace of life and delightful pedestrianised streets in its lovely historic centre, perfect for leisurely exploration. A former centre of cloth-making, in the 17th century Haarlem became the place to be for a flourishing school of painters, much of whose work is displayed in the excellent *Frans Hals Museum*. Housed in a former almshouse where Hals himself lived the last years of his life, the museum's collection consists of works by Hals and a sample of Dutch paintings from the 15th century to the present day. Other sights include the lively *Grote Markt* square, lined with cafés and restaurants, the *Stadhuis*, the *Vieshal meat market* and the *Grote Kerk Gothic church* built between 1400 and 1550 and housing one of Europe's finest organs, said to have been played by Handel.

For more information about Haarlem:

<http://www.visithaarlem.org/>

Utrecht

Canal-lined Utrecht is a delightful town with a wealth of sights including the picturesque almshouses, 15th century St Catherine's Convent, Oudegracht canal and – for lovers of modern architecture - the Rietveld Schroder House (limited opening, please check for details).

For more information about Utrecht:

<http://www.visit-utrecht.com>

Reading Suggestions

R. H. Fuchs, *Dutch painting (World of Art)*.

An overview of Dutch painting from the Middle Ages to the 20th century, from Van Eycks to Hals, Rembrandt, Vermeer and Van Gogh.

Mariët Westermann, *A Wordly Art. The Dutch Republic 1585-1718*.

Placing the art and artists of the Dutch Golden Age in a political, social and historical context, this proves an interesting and informative read, as well as being filled with plenty of high quality colour illustrations.

Christmas

It is traditional in Holland for families to have their main Christmas dinner on Christmas Eve. Most shops will be closed on Christmas Day and Boxing Day although there will be a limited selection of bars and restaurants open. Your tour manager will have details of opening times and Christmas services.

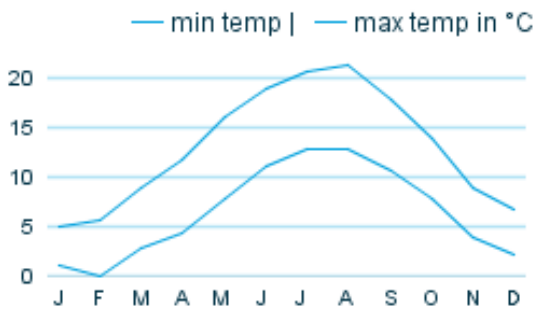
Tour manager

Your tour manager will be on hand throughout the tour to ensure that everything operated according to plan. If you have any problems or questions please see him or her immediately – it is often possible to resolve complaints or problems very quickly on the spot, and do everything to help you enjoy your holiday.



The Basics

Climate – The weather in Delft at this time of year is likely to be cold and there is the chance of rain or snow. Our best advice is to come prepared.



Time – GMT +2 hours (Summer time Apr-Oct); GMT + 1 (Standard time Nov-Mar).

Language – Dutch.

Religion – Roman Catholic (30%), Dutch Reformed Church (11%), Other or non (42%).

National holidays – New Year's day (01 Jan); Good Friday; Easter Monday; King's Day; Liberation Day (05 May); Ascension day; Whit Monday; Christmas day (25 Dec); Boxing Day (26 Dec).

Currency – Euro. €1 = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of €2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

Banks – Cashpoints compatible with international banking networks are located in all towns and cities, as well as airports, major train stations and other spots. They usually offer an attractive exchange rate. Those banks that still exchange foreign currencies into local money will always charge a transaction fee, so withdrawing money from an ATM usually represents the most logical means of obtaining euros.

Credit cards – American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted across the country. If you're eating at a restaurant, check prior to the meal that your card will be an acceptable form of payment. Even in cities, it's advisable to carry a supply of cash with you at all times. Varying amounts of commission can be charged.

Electricity – 230 volt, two-pin continental plug.

Drinking water – Tap water is safe to drink. (Although you'll find a huge amount of bottled water for sale too)

Shops and museums – Special purchases include Delft blue pottery, Gouda cheese and diamonds from Amsterdam.

Shops are open Mon 1100-1730, Tues-Fri 0930-1800 and Sat 0900-1700. In big cities, supermarkets are open from 0800-2000/2100. In large city centres, shops are open Sun 1200-1700. In many towns there is evening shopping till 2100 on Thursday or Friday.

Please note that some museums close on Mondays.

Clothes & Shoes – You may like to bring a warm sweater for cool evenings. Light rain wear for the occasional storm and good grip/flat walking shoes are recommended.

Camera – bring plenty of memory cards/film and any spare camera batteries as these are not always available. Please check with your guide before photographing people.

Bath plugs – The hotel has plugs for basins, but it is useful to carry a 'universal' one with you.

Telephones/mobiles – You should be able to use your mobile phone in France, depending on your operator and contract.

Tipping – To keep our tours affordable, we do not increase the tour price by adding in tips. However, in the tourism industry, there is a certain level of expectation that when receiving a good service, one does award with a tip. Tour Managers, Representatives, Guides and Drivers appreciate a tip at the end of their involvement with the tour, but this is entirely at your discretion. We believe in allowing you to tip according to your level of satisfaction with their services, but for your guidance about £2-3 per person per day for the tour manager is the norm. We would like to reiterate that tipping is an entirely optional payment and this information is given purely to answer any questions you may have about it.



Health

Doctor/Dentist/Chemist

Please talk to your tour manager if you are feeling unwell and they will organise for you to see a doctor.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.



Hospital

Your tour manager/hotel reception will arrange hospital transport.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.

General Health Advice

We suggest you take a good supply of your own individual medicines with you and always keep some in your hand luggage in case you get delayed or your luggage goes astray. General-purpose supplies for bites, stings, or scratches, and your usual medication for headaches, or stomach upsets are always recommended. Oral re-hydration sachets are excellent for topping up salt and glucose levels.

Visit the NHS Fit For Travel website for more generally information specific to the country you are visiting – www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

Sun Protection

Always ensure you take sufficient sun protection and moisturiser. A sun hat and sunglasses are also advisable.

Inoculations

You should check with your own doctor and take their advice as to which inoculations are required for the country you are visiting, as only they know your medical history and recommendations are liable to change at short notice.



Insurance

To be covered under your Travel Insurance Policy, if you become ill, it is essential that you contact a local doctor and also telephone the emergency number of your insurance company. You will **NOT** be covered for any claim unless this procedure is carried out. Your insurance company will then decide on the best course of medical attention.

European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

The EHIC replaced the old E111 in 2006. Valid in all EEA countries, the card lets you get state healthcare at a reduced cost or sometimes for free. It will cover you for treatment that is needed to allow you to continue your stay until your planned return. It also covers the treatment of pre-existing medical conditions.

Please note that the EHIC **is not** an alternative to travel insurance. It will not cover any private medical healthcare or costs such as being flown back to the UK, or lost or stolen property. Therefore, it is important to have both an EHIC and a valid private travel insurance policy. It is also important to note that each country's healthcare system is slightly different, so the EHIC might not cover everything that would be generally free on the NHS.

We strongly recommend that you take out an appropriate travel insurance policy when you travel abroad.

For more information about the EHIC please visit:

<https://www.ehic.org.uk>



Emergencies

Should an emergency arise, please call our offices on:

00 44 20 7251 0045

Outside office hours (Mon-Fri 0900-1700), telephone our emergency staff on:

00 44 20 7431 8201 or

00 44 7899 796542 or

00 44 7831 133079 or

00 44 1235 850720

PLEASE USE THESE NUMBERS ONLY IN THE EVENT OF A GENUINE EMERGENCY.

If you find that you are in need of consular assistance during your holiday:

British Consulate General Amsterdam

Koningslaan 44

1075 AE Amsterdam

Netherlands

+31 (0)20 676 4343

Open Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri 0900-1230. Telephone enquiries Mon-Fri 0900-1300 and 1400-1630. Outside these hours a consular Emergency Service is in operation and can be contacted on +31 (0)20 676 43 43.

Travel Editions

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Email: info@traveleditions.co.uk www.traveleditions.co.uk

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