

Netherlands

As an exchange student in Holland, you'll most certainly hear the words, "We're only a small nation..." Don't miss the pride behind these words. While the Dutch do live in a small country, it's a nation of which they are fiercely proud.

Living among the Dutch, you will learn about their rich history of being one of Europe's major centers not only in trade and transportation, but in the arts and culture as well. You can enjoy fabulous orchestral music or enjoy the cutting edge of Dutch pop music. The Netherlands is home to about 20 professional theater groups, as well as amateur drama groups. Fine arts museums can be found in all cities and major towns. In summer, many towns organize street theater and concerts, traditional trade markets, and multicultural events.

Family Life: The Dutch live in close-knit families and enjoy each other's company. Family activities are important so you should plan to participate in family outings.

Children are taught to respect their parents but interaction is generally informal with an emphasis on friendship and sharing. Dutch families gather over meals, especially dinner, and the table is often the family gathering place at other times as well. Your host parents will want to know about your school, friends, and activities. Like in Belgium, one of the most common forms of transportation for everyone in the Netherlands is a bicycle - so plan on riding a lot!



Major center in Arts and Culture



Koninginnedag Queen's birthday

Education: For Dutch students, school begins at age four with primary school. Age 12 students choose between general secondary education or vocational training. If they choose general secondary education, Dutch young people make another choice between MAVO, or intermediate level, which is a four-year course of study that prepares students for secondary vocational training; HAVO, or higher level, which is a five-year course of study leading to higher vocational training; or gymnasium and atheneum, both pre-university schools that last six years.

You'll go to either HAVO, gymnasium or atheneum where you'll find a relaxed atmosphere, though you will be expected to study hard just as you do here in Australia. While Dutch is fairly easy to learn - it takes about two months - you can take advantage of tutoring in the Dutch language through your school. What you won't find in Dutch schools are many extracurricular activities, including sports, but numerous community clubs offer you a chance to enjoy your favourite recreation and make new friends.

Culture: You can enjoy fabulous orchestral music in the Netherlands or enjoy the cutting edge of Dutch pop music, which combines the best of jazz, classical, and contemporary music. Music, though, is not your only cultural option since the Netherlands is home to about 20 professional theater groups, as well as amateur drama groups. Many famous painters including Rembrandt, Vermeer, Van Gogh, Hals, and Appel have their work in the galleries and museums found in every city.

In summer, many towns organize street theater and concerts, traditional trade markets, and multicultural events. On Koninginnedag, when the Queen's birthday is celebrated, all of the Netherlands joins in one big national feast. In early spring, the Catholic south celebrates Carnaval.

Geography: Bordered by Germany on the east, the North Sea on the west, and Belgium to the south, the Netherlands is one of the smallest countries in western Europe. The name "Netherlands" literally means low lands and about 27 percent of the country lies below sea level. The weather is tempered by the sea's proximity, with temperatures ranging from 30 degrees Fahrenheit in the winter to 70 degrees in the summer.

The Netherlands is the most densely populated country in Europe. In fact, over 15 million people inhabit its 14,400 square miles. As a result, cities and towns are not far apart from one another and they are linked by an extensive public transportation system which makes travel easy.

History, Government, and Economy: Until 1568, the Low Countries included the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg, all ruled by King Philip II of Spain. In that year, Prince William of Orange led a revolt that started the Eighty Years War, culminating in an independent republic known as the Seven United Provinces in 1648. The end of the war was followed by a Golden Age for the Netherlands with vast expansion in shipping and trading, accompanied by a flowering culture. After a brief annexation to France, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, once again taking in Luxembourg and Belgium, was born in 1814. The Kingdom shrunk twenty-five years later when Belgium declared its independence and the Netherlands as we know it today took shape. The government is a constitutional monarchy with a democratic parliament. The third woman in succession to sit on the throne, Queen Beatrix, serves as ceremonial head of state. Flowers, vegetables, dairy products, and electronics are its leading industries.



Netherlands

Low lands

YFU Activities: An arrival orientation is organised for all YFU students in the Netherlands approximately one-week after your arrival. All YFU year students, and semester students arriving in January, to the Netherlands and Belgium will participate in a five-day mid-year orientation in a European city that includes sightseeing, shopping, dining out, and going to the theatre. This trip is included in your program tuition. During the year there are also regional get-togethers and activities.

Quick Facts

Departures: July departures for semester and year programs.

Language: Dutch. No previous language study required.

Host Families: All over the Netherlands in cities and towns like Amsterdam, Nymegen, Eindhoven, Appeldoorn and Utrecht.

School: From early autumn until summer with a six week summer vacation. One week holiday in autumn, at Christmas, in early Spring and at Easter.

Trips: Educational trips included in program fee.

Pastimes: Soccer, tennis, ice skating, and sailing. Attending the theatre and going to the movies.

JANUARY DEPARTURES

JULY DEPARTURES

N/A

N/A

\$ 8,880

\$ 8,880

