

## Dutch People - The Manual

1. Never use the word "Dutch" in front of a Hollander. It reminds him too much of the word "Deutsch" which is a word for Germans and other things he doesn't like. A Dutchman is a Hollander or a Nederlander.
2. Never ever try to speak Hollands even if you have lived in Holland for more than five years. Not only will it give you a splitting headache but also Hollanders won't understand a single word of what you are trying to say. Foreigners are expected to speak English or gibberish. Speaking gibberish they are easy prey for pickpockets since they can't make a report to the police.
3. Also never try to eat "drop". Drop is a kind of licorice that only Hollanders can eat. It can be recognized by its colour: black. The taste is a cross between printer ink (blue) and earwax. Hollanders absolutely love it and eat kilos of the revolting stuff. There is a nationwide conspiracy to look at the faces of foreigners who are tricked into believing it is edible.
4. Do not buy wooden shoes. They will look absolutely silly on you. Which is of course the main reason for selling them to you in the first place. A Hollander himself wouldn't like to be found dead in them.
5. Do not make holes in dikes. Behavior like that is not only frowned upon but in certain cases can get you stoned to death with wooden shoes by an angry mob. You may feel free however to stick a finger in any dike you like. It'll get you a few good laughs from the natives.
6. A Hollander is always right and he knows it. With this in the back of your mind it is easy to deal with most of them. If ever you get into an argument with a Hollander, tell him that he is absolutely right and that you see the error of your ways.

This will drive him absolutely crazy:

Since you are a foreigner you can't be right. You agree with him. Therefore he also cannot be right. Impossible! He is a Hollander. But.. why.. he.. At this point you may want to stand back and watch him try to strangle himself with a tulip.

7. Windmills are unavoidable.

8. It is not necessary to show an interest in tulips, windmills, wooden shoes or cheese. Every Hollander knows that you came for the soft drugs or the Amsterdam red light district, the Walletpjes. Both are available in a large quantity and are easy to find. Ask any Hollander age six or older or any French tourist (see items 19 & 20)

9. Avoid fans of soccer games at all cost. Soccer in Holland is merely an excuse used for bashing in the brains of just about everyone else, including yours, after the game is won. ...Or lost...Or if it is a draw. It is also very unwise to stand near a policeman during these festivities. (see item 10) Also, whenever there's a Hollander around: "Don't mention the '74 final!". You'll end up in an ongoing discussion about how well the Orange team played and how marvelous it is that a small country like Holland has such a good team and blah-de-blah-de-blah.

10. Policemen in Holland may be used for throwing things at. If you feel like hitting someone or something, use a policeman. No Hollander will pay any attention if you decide to hit, maim, or kick a policeman in the groin. Policemen represent authority and no Hollander recognizes any authority higher than himself. You may also note that a lot of Hollandse policemen are in fact foreigners tricked into taking the job.

11. Hollanders do not like to spend money, they'd sooner cut off their own ears. A Hollander will become a friend for life if you give him something for free. (Note: Social diseases are an exception) This might

explain the success of McDonald's in Holland. The story that copper wire is an invention of two Hollanders fighting over a found cent is absolutely true.

12. Holland is small. There is a rumor that Holland is put inside during rainstorms. Not true, but that is mainly because it rains about 365 days each year. This might also explain those wooden shoes: They float. Yes, Holland is small and Hollanders are proud of it. They will grab every opportunity to point out to you that the nation has accomplished great things, despite of it being so small. A suitable answer to this swank is the Hollander's imperialistic past. Which brings us -rather nicely- to item 13.

13. If you wish to insult a Hollander -and sooner or later you will - simply tell him you don't think he is a pacifist. Now immediately start running for your life. He'll want to prove to you that he is a peace loving person and he won't stop proving this until your intestines are scattered all over the floor. However, mentioning a supposedly imperialistic past considering Surinam and/or Indonesia, will instantly reduce a Hollander to a pathetic, sniffing and crying child, begging for forgiveness.

14. The Hollanders are supposed to be tolerant. They are not. They simply make too much money from the sale of soft- and hard-drugs, Malaysian women and pornography to foreigners to let an opportunity for making a good profit go by.

15. The main form of public transportation in Holland is bikes. Feel free to take any bike of which you are able to pick the lock. Don't expect your own bike however to be where you left it three minutes earlier. The hunting season for bikes is open 365 days a year. Have fun.

16. At nearly every meal in Holland you will find a small vicious looking blade with a slit in it. It is called a "kaasschaaf" and is used for taking very thin (the see-through kind) slices of the cheese. Yes,

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it is indeed an invention made by a Nederlander. Never cut cheese with a knife, you'll make an utter fool of yourself. Another peculiar dinner tool is the "flessenlikker", which literally means "bottle-licker", but which is best translated by "yoghurt-scraper". Note that this tool is not meant to get rid of an itchy back or for your nightly escapades. It's designed to clean out bottles of yoghurt or "vla" which is a sort of custard. The Nederlanders wants to use absolutely every millilitre of the yoghurt or 'vla' he bought. He paid for all of it and he'll jolly well eat all of it.

17. At the time of this writing, the Hollandse economy is doing quite well. The Hollanders say that this is the result of extensive negotiating between parties like the unions, the employers and the government. They even have a name for this: The polder model. Foreigners are made to believe that this polder model is the key to a healthy economy and if others should follow this polder model, their economy's will also improve dramatically. This is utter nonsense. Hollanders just love to talk and talk and talk. Calling all this talking negotiations only gives them a sense of doing something useful. Talk is not cheap in Holland.

18. Hollanders like to drown fried potato's in litres of mayonnaise and put it in small paper bags. This is called "een patatje met". One of these bags can sustain life over an indefinite period. Not everyone agrees if it is the sort of life worth living. Some foreigners however are reported to have actually liked eating it.

19. Hollanders have a special and unique service for -mainly-French tourists. As soon as they cross the border between Belgium and Holland, they are welcomed enthusiastically by young men in fast cars. These young people wish to point out to the French tourist where the more interesting touristy places in Holland can be found. Strangely enough they always seem to end up in a coffee shop (see item 20). Funny people those French.

20. There is a fast and guaranteed way of making a complete fool of yourself in Holland: Enter a coffee shop and ask for a cappuccino. Coffee shops do not -remember this- do not sell coffee. You can however get a good number of other stimulating drugs there. For some unknown reason coffee shops are extremely popular with French tourists.

21. A Fries is a semi-detached sort of Nederlander, living in the north of the country in a province all for himself. He is fond of frozen water, Beerenburg (which is a form of euthanasia with alcohol) and continuously pointing out to non-Fries Hollanders that they are -indeed-not Fries. The rest of the Hollanders look upon this behaviour with the good natured ambivalent feelings that parents have for an obstinate child.

22. On the matter of what books to buy before you come to Holland, I can recommend the following: The complete works of William Shakespeare or a leather-bound volume of the Encyclopaedia Britannica (the 1913 copy: Fr to He). In my experience these two books have just about the right weight for clubbing a pushy drug dealer or pimp on the head without leaving any marks. After hitting you might want to drop the book you were carrying at that moment for a more speedy retreat. Bring plenty of books.

23. Do not bother to hire a car. Not only can you steal more bikes than you will need but car-traffic in Holland is not something you will enjoy. In the rest of the world traffic jams are measured in miles or kilometers, Nederlandse traffic jams are measured in weeks. As a matter of fact, the more persistent traffic-jams are well worth a touristic visit. The sight of starving people in an expensive Mercedes can be quite uplifting if you are of a philosophic nature. You may want to bring some pieces of bread with you to throw through open car windows. The resulting fights can often be worth watching.

24. Contrary to popular belief, you may not bring your mother-in-law to

Holland for do-it-yourself euthanasia. Tourists are warned not to take these matters into their own hands.

25. Whether you are catholic, Muslim or worshipper of Urrrgl, god of all honest politicians, in Holland you are likely to run into a church, temple or oak-tree-and-virgin of your liking. Hollanders are supposed to be very tolerant of other believes, ways of life and religious convictions. They are not. The only reason for there being so many different churches, sects and cults is the fact that Hollanders disagree on just about anything. A Hollander is always right (see item 6) and anyone who thinks different than him can jolly well bugger off and start his own church.

26. Holland is a kingdom. It has no king but a queen and her husband is no king but a prince. The queen doesn't rule the country -well, not much anyway- but she is very good at opening bridges, roads and visiting other countries. She is also very decorative at state banquets. Her son, the crown prince, will be king as soon as she stops queening (nice word eh?). Now his wife won't be a queen but she will be a princess because Nederland is much too small for a king and a queen at the same time. On April the 30th its Queen's Day, which is not the birthday of the queen, but the birthday of princess Juliana the queen's mother (who used to be the queen). It is no wonder that more and more Nederlanders wish to make Holland a republic. Queen's Day, by the way, has nothing to do with royal festivities. It's just a Hollander's excuse to drink large quantities of alcohol. On Queen's Day Hollanders also sell garbage in the streets.

27. It might be wise to learn how to swim if you visit Holland. No, the dikes will hold, that is not the problem. The huge amount of ditches, moats, canals, rivers and brooks can however lead to mistakes. The shiny nice new asphalt road that you wish to drive your car on during a rainstorm, may in fact not be a road at all.

28. The Hollandse art. Most Nederlandse painters get to be famous only after they have died. That is a very sensible arrangement from the public's point of view. Not only do you get large quantities of paintings - a man has got to eat, right? - but it also makes a nice investment for art-lovers. The painters themselves do not share this view at all but are unable to do anything about it. In at least one case the frustration has led to self-mutilation involving an ear.

29. If one of your Hollandse friends invites you for a birthday party, prepare yourself for a unique experience. Unique, because it can only be compared to taking place on a wooden chair which has a sharp nail driven through the underside of the seat, and not being able to move for a month. More than one foreigner has been driven to the brink of insanity in just one evening. A Hollandse birthday party consists of sitting in a chair, talking to other Hollanders about your work, your car, foreigners and politics. You are expected to leave at 11 pm and you'll gladly do so.

30. Do not get sick in Nederland. Over the last ten years, the famous Hollandse healthcare has been privatised. These days some operations, like open heart surgery, have a waiting list of more than six months. The doctors don't think that is a problem, "More than half of our patients for open heart surgery never even show up anyway" they say. Some Nederlandse patients who have become desperate, move to a country like Mozambique, Iraq or Pakistan where healthcare is infinitely better.

31. Nederlanders leave their curtains open in the evening. This used to be so that the neighbours could always check if your family didn't gamble or drink alcohol. These days it is a precaution against junkies trying to steal the stereo from the family cars parked in front of the house. It has the fortunate side effect that you can watch Hollanders in their natural surroundings, in front of the television, watching soaps.

32. Holland has more cities than only Amsterdam. Like ..erm.. Well, it has!!

33. Hollandse beer has made quite a reputation for itself over the years. Some people even drink it. Brewing is indeed one of the things Hollanders traditionally do very well. Holland never used to be a country with anything more interesting to do than to drink oneself blind in new and interesting ways or make paintings. This made the beer industry very popular. Experts claim that once you have drunk Hollandse beer like Heineken, Grolsch or Amstel, all other beers taste like the tapwater in a Rotterdam hotel.

34. Hollandse tapwater is safe to drink. This is quite remarkable considering that most drinking water comes from polluted rivers like the Rhine. Plans to improve the quality of the river water, so that fish like salmon will return to Hollandse rivers to spawn, can count on strong resistance from the Nederlanders. They don't like the idea of animals having sex in their drinking water.