

## Getting in

### By plane

Schiphol Airport ( <http://www.schiphol.nl> ), close to Amsterdam, is the biggest international airport of the country and in the top 5 of biggest airports in Europe. The airport has been declared the best airport in the world, From Schiphol there are excellent railway connections to the Hague (30 minutes), Amsterdam, Leiden (both 15 minutes), and Utrecht and from these places to the rest of the country. The train station at Schiphol is located in the basement of the airport.

Airlines serving Amsterdam Schiphol International Airport include: Adria Airways, Aer Lingus, Aeroflot-Russian Airlines, Air Alps, Air Astana, Air Canada, Air France, Air Malta, Air Memphis, Air Moldova, Air One, Air Transat, Air Wales, Air Zena Georgian Airlines, airBaltic, AirExcel, Alitalia, AlsaceExcel, Arkia Israeli Airlines, Armavia, Atlas Blue, Atlasjet International Airways, Austrian Airlines, bmi British Midland, bmibaby, British Airways, Bulgarian Air, Cathay Pacific Airways, China Airlines, China Southern Airlines, Continental Airlines, Croatia Airlines, CSA Czech Airlines, Cyprus Airways, Delta Air Lines, Dutch Caribbean Airlines, DutchBird, easyJet, Egyptair, El Al Israel Airlines, Eritrean Airlines, Estonian Air, Ethiopian Airlines, EUjet, EVA Air, Finnair, Fly Air, Futura International Airways, Garuda Indonesia, Helvetic Airways, HollandExcel, Iberia, Icelandair, Inter Express Airlines, Iran Air, Israil, Japan Airlines, JAT Yugoslav Airlines, Jet2, Kenya Airways, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, Korean Air, Kuwait Airways, Lithuanian Airlines, LOT Polish Airlines, Lotus Air, Lufthansa German Airlines, Maersk Air, Malaysia Airlines, Malev Hungarian Airlines, Martinair Holland, MAT Macedonian Airlines, Meridiana, MNG Airlines, Northwest Airlines, PGA-Portugalia Airlines, Olympic Airways, Onur Air, Pakistan International Airlines, Pulkovo Aviation, Royal Air Maroc, Royal Jordanian Airlines, SAS-Scandinavian Airlines, Scot Airways, Sierra National Airlines, Singapore Airlines, Sky Airlines, SkyEurope Airlines, Smart Wings, Spanair, Sun Express, Surinam Airways, Swiss International Air Lines, Syrian Arab Airlines, TACV Cabo Verde Airlines, TAP Air Portugal, Thomsonfly, Turkish Airlines, Transavia Airlines, Tunisair, Ukraine International Airlines, United Airlines, US Airways, VARIG Brazilian Airlines, and Virgin Express.

### By train

#### France and Belgium

The Thalys high-speed train ( <http://www.thalys.nl> ), which connects to and from France and Belgium, is a bit expensive, but the earlier you book, the cheaper. Try to get a Smilys ticket. If you book more than a week in advance it can still have a reasonable price.

If you come from England or France, it is usually cheaper to change trains in Brussels.

The international train from Brussels and Antwerpen to Amsterdam is about 20-30 minutes slower but usually much cheaper and they run hourly, stopping in Roosendaal, Dordrecht, Rotterdam and The Hague. No seat reservations are required on most days - just buy your ticket and get on board.

Trains from Maastricht to Liege in Belgium run hourly, and take around 30 minutes.

#### Germany

The ICE high-speed train (<http://www.iceinternational.nl>) runs to and from Frankfurt, from Amsterdam, via Utrecht, Arnhem, Dusseldorf and Cologne.

International trains run hourly between Venlo and Cologne, but be aware that the connection is slow and you might need to change trains.

Further north, there are (slow) trains between Enschede and Muenster every hour, and between Groningen and Leer-Weener every two hours.

### By boat

There are three ferries crossing between England and the Netherlands. Stena Line (<http://www.stenaline.nl>) is serving between Hoek van Holland and Harwich, DFDS Seaways (<http://www.dfdsseaways.nl>) is serving between IJmuiden and Newcastle, the last is P&O Ferries (<http://www.poferries.com>) serving between Rotterdam and Hull.

### By bus

Eurolines (<http://www.eurolines.com/>) buses serve the Netherlands.

### By car

If you're coming from Belgium or Germany an easy way to reach the Netherlands is by car. The countries are well-connected by highways, and the trip should be comparatively fast and the route easy to find.

## Getting around in The Netherlands

### By train

The easiest way to travel between Dutch cities is to use the train. Information about the trains can be found at Nederlandse Spoorwegen (<http://www.ns.nl>). Trains are by far the best way to travel through the country from one place to the other. It gives you the opportunity to enjoy the scenery while enjoying a smooth ride, and quite often it beats driving a car for timing. Just be aware that during rush hour (in the morning and end of afternoon) most of the Dutch also rely on this mode of transportation for their commute - so it can be quite busy during those times.

Foreigners looking to travel by train in the Netherlands should look into acquiring a Eurorail Pass with the Benelux package. This allows for unlimited train travel within Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg over multiple days. Europeans, not being eligible for Eurorail Passes, should look into Interrail Passes for their discount train travel. If you want to travel around the Netherlands for a few days during the summer, the Zomertoer may be used. This pass gives you three days of unlimited travel. An add-on also allows you to travel on all other public transportation in the country.

### Reduction-tickets

You can buy a ticket with a 40% reduction (met korting.) If you don't have a reduction card, ask somebody on the train if he/she have one (most people will have it). Everyone with a reduction card can travel with 3 people on their card after 9:00am. Generally Dutch people are friendly and it isn't too difficult to find someone who will let you travel on their card, but if you can't you could have a hard time with the conductors. The fines are quite large, so if you have to explain why you have the wrong ticket, you should make sure you don't have any money to pay the fine, have misunderstood the Dutch ticket system and give them an address in your country. If you don't buy a ticket in the station, you can buy one on the train, but it costs double price!

From Schiphol, the international airport of Amsterdam, you can take a train direct to Amsterdam and The Hague. There are two main train stations in The Hague: Den Haag Hollands Spoor and Den Haag Centraal. It is somewhat confusing that many trains bypass the central station; this is because it is a terminus. From this station, which is located at the northern rim of the city-centre, you can walk (30 minutes) or take tram 9 (10 minutes) to Scheveningen. There are direct trains to every major city in The Netherlands from Den Haag Central Station.

The Thalys Paris - Amsterdam and the international train from Brussels and Antwerpen to Amsterdam stop both at Den Haag Hollands Spoor. It takes about 15 minutes to walk to

the city-centre from here.

### Hitch-hiking

In the Netherlands the density of roads and villages makes it a bit tricky to choose a good initial point for departure to the destination you wish for by hitchhiking. There is not only a lot of local, urban traffic, but many people work or have friends in the next town, just 20 kms further. Even on motorways (A-roads) the percentage of local and regional traffic is high. It is illegal to hitchhike on motorways and junctions. Nearly always two motorways that cross each other are junctions without a legal possibility to stop. On non-motorways (N-roads) the roadsides are often not very suitable for drivers to stop. On suitable places it takes usually 2 - 20 minutes to catch a motorstop to destinations within 50 kms. Like in surrounding countries an efficient way to hitchhike is to ask around at petrol stations and service stations along the motorway.

In the Netherlands (relatively) good places for catching a motorstop are:

- Official hitch-hiking sites found in most university cities. Some drivers look especially well for waiting people at these places!
- Ramps towards motorways. Outside cities there usually is only little traffic, which causes that you have to wait long. Within cities quite some ramps do not have an additional strip of asphalt free of cars, which is usually essential for safe hitchhiking.
- Fuel stations on the motorways, preferably bigger fuel stations combined with a restaurant. If you learn to get over any embarrassment to ask around drivers where they go and if they could take you along, you will travel at high speed from there! Fuel stations are used especially by long distance travellers, so they allow you to travel farther and faster!
- Long bus stops right of main roads (stand at the beginning of the strip!)
- Cycling paths if they are connected to the main road

More info on: <http://www.franknature.nl/hitchhike/hitchhike.htm>

### By car

The car is an easy way to get around if you want to see the countryside. The roads are good, and there are plenty of them. But be aware of the traffic jams. The roads are full in the West of Holland and during rushhour a lot of roads have traffic jams. The speed limit outside the city is 80 km/h (N-roads). On the highway the limit is 120 km/h except on some roads where the limit is 100 km/h. The limit in the city is 50 km/h, sometimes there are zones where there's a maximum of 30 km/h. These roads are indicated with white round signs with a red border marked with 100. Your speed will be checked regularly by the police. Drinking & driving is not allowed and there are many breath controls nationwide. A unbroken yellow line next to the sidewalk means no stopping, a broken yellow next to the sidewalk means no parking. Some crossings have "shark teeth" painted on the road, this means you have to give way to the other traffic. When your car is broken on the highway, go to the nearest yellow contact point. This is the direct connection to the emergency and assistance services. Road signs with directions are plenty, but having a map is useful, especially in cities where there are many one way streets, and getting from one part of the city to another isn't always so straightforward.

### Other public transportation

If you travel to smaller towns and villages, you can use the bus. Most busses outside of the cities are run by the company Connexion (<http://www.connection.nl>). In the cities you can use the tram, bus and metro (only in Amsterdam and Rotterdam). Trams and busses in the Hague are run by HTM (<http://www.htm.net>). Travel information can be found at 9292OV Reisinformatie (<http://www.9292ov.nl>). For information about the strippenkaart, the ticket used in bus, tram and metro, go to OV-Info (<http://www.ov-info.nl>). Note that, although many travellers tend to buy them in buses when boarding, it is much cheaper to buy them elsewhere. You can get these tickets in many places, including bus stations,

post offices, and some supermarkets.

There are some other fun ways of transportation here too, especially on the water. Go on a canoe or canal bike trip, which you can do in most cities but also on the rivers, lakes and canals on the countryside. Or go sailing on lakes like the IJsselmeer or Kagerplassen (near Leiden). Or take the Fastferry (<http://www.fastferry.nl>) from Rotterdam to Dordrecht. From there you can take the waterbus (<http://www.waterbus.nl>) to nature park Biesbos or smaller towns like Sliedrecht. In The Hague, you can make a Canal Tour in an open boat, called the Ooievaart (<http://www.ooievaart.nl>). This 1,5 hours tour takes you through old and new parts of the city of The Hague.

## Getting around in The Hague

### Trams and city busses

The Hague boasts an excellent Public Transport System. Over 30 bus and tram lines will quickly and safely take you to your destinations in The Hague, Scheveningen and Kijkduin, as well as to the adjoining municipalities.

Tickets. A one way ticket containing 2, 3 and 8 strips is available from the driver but it is much cheaper to buy a 15 or 45 strippenkaart (strip card) before you board a bus or tram. The 'strippenkaart' is on sale at the The Hague and Scheveningen Tourists Offices, all post-offices, most tobacconists and bookshops. The : strippenkaart is valid throughout the Netherlands, and includes travelling on regional buses and local trains. How to use the 'strippenkaart'? Each city is divided into zones. The basic fare for every journey is two strips. Add one strip for every zone you cross. From the central station of The Hague to Scheveningen it you need 3 strips. If you are staying in the Hague for a few days, you may use the HTM Multi-day Travel pass. This handy pass allows you unlimited travel without having to worry about the number of zones you cross or strips you need. The pass is valid in The Hague, Scheveningen, Rijswijk, Voorburg and Leidschendam and, at a slightly higher charge, also in Wateringen en Delft. You can buy this ticket at the HTM desk on the main stations of The Hague.

### By car

If coming by car, then enjoy the 'gutter', the highway that is running straight into town in a canal shaped half-tunnel. Above you buildings are built right over the road. You should be aware of the lack of parking space in Dutch cities. Fortunately you can park your car for free in front of the Vrije School in The Hague, our main meeting point. But in most of The Hague and Scheveningen you will have to pay and trying to find a parking space can often prove to be a real headache. For most parking spaces you must get a ticket from the central parking meter before parking the car. Place the ticket clearly visible on your dashboard. Keep a close eye on the maximum parking time. The city has ample parking garages for which you must follow the blue P-signs. People who park illegally or without paying are likely to find their car clamped on their return. The ensuing hefty fine must be paid immediately at the Central Collection Point situated at the Parking Garage behind The Hague Central Station. Your wheel-clamp will then be removed as soon as possible.

### By bike!

The most effective and environmentally friendly way to travel in The Hague and any other Dutch city is by bicycle. There are lots of separate cycle paths. Cyclists are expected to signal any change in direction by hand. Every Dutch person has at least one "fiets", and a good third of city-dwellers cycle regularly every day.

Bicycles can be rented in Scheveningen for about 4.50 Euro per day at Du Nord Rijwielen, Keizerstr. 27-29 (tel. 070-3554060) or at the bike stall in the main train station for 5 Euro a

day (4 if you buy a bike rental ticket beforehand in the train station).

Make sure to always lock your bike. Remember that ten thousands of bikes are stolen every month, only in The Hague. There is therefore no scarcity of bike garages and guarded parking lots. The Foundation Biesieklette offers guarded parking for bicycles, scooters, and motorbikes in The Hague and others cities in Holland.

#### Hitch-hiking

If you are leaving The Hague and you want to hitch hike, then you can use the official site at the start of the A12-motorway in the direction of Utrecht. From the Central Station cross the big green field 'Malieveld'. In the Northern corner you will find an official Hitch-hikers tarding point marked with a small blue sign with a tumb ("lifters").