



photo by M. Snodgrass

Have you ever seen a planting of hundreds of tulips? These colorful, graceful flowers are a symbol of the Netherlands, also known as Holland, a country in northern Europe. (Netherlands means “lower country.”)

For hundreds of years, more tulips have been raised there than in any other place on Earth. But there’s more to the Netherlands than tulips.

A small country

The Netherlands is on the North Sea. It is bordered by Germany and Belgium. It’s about the size of Massachusetts. With 17.5 million people, it is one of the Earth’s most crowded countries. We call the people from there and the language they speak **Dutch**.



map by TUBS

The Netherlands is a flat and low country. Much land is below sea level. The Dutch have created almost two-fifths of their land by draining water from it. The drained lands are called **polders**. Polders are protected from the sea by **dikes**, either dirt mounds or cement barriers.

Cities

The biggest cities are Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague. Amsterdam’s

center has many canals with old homes built along them. The homes are built on long poles, or piles, because the soil is very loose.

Many tourists visit there to see the canals, the art museums, the home of Anne Frank, the zoo and many other sites.

Rotterdam is the largest seaport in Europe. The Maas River flows through it and connects the city to the rest of Europe. Ships from around the world dock there to load and unload their cargo.

Government and business

The Netherlands is a **parliamentary democracy**. Dutch people choose who represents them in government, including ministers and a prime minister.



The Dutch king, left, Willem-Alexander.



The Dutch prime minister, Mark Rutte, right.

It is also a **constitutional monarchy**. This means the Netherlands has a king or queen, but the country’s constitution limits their powers and lays out their responsibilities.

The country has many successful businesses, including those in the chemical and electronics industries. The nation’s natural resources include natural gas and salt.

Dutch cheeses such as Gouda and Edam are sold all around the world. Many people work in the service industries.

Try ‘n’ Find

Words that remind us of the Netherlands are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:

AMSTERDAM,
BICYCLES, CANAL,
DIKE, DUTCH, EUROPE,
HAGUE, HOLLAND,
KING, MONARCHY,
NETHERLANDS,
PARLIAMENT, POLDER,
RIVER, ROTTERDAM,
TOURIST, TULIPS,
WINDMILL.

O M A D R E T S M A Q C P B A
N T S I R U O T C D C A L I D
R O T T E R D A M R T N L C N
G T N E M A I L R A P A I Y A
R R E D L O P N K H D L M C L
E U W D U T C H G N I K D L L
V D O S P I L U T J E D N E O
I V A M O N A R C H Y N I S H
R N E T H E R L A N D S W K T
H A G U E E U R O P E C V S E



Cook’s Corner

Stamppot Boerenkool (Kale)

You’ll need:

- 3 pounds white potatoes, peeled and cut into four quarters
- 2 to 3 pounds curly kale, stalks removed and leaves chopped very fine

What to do:

1. Place potatoes in a large pot. Cover with water and sprinkle with salt.
2. Put kale over potatoes, and then sausage on top. Cover and simmer on low for 30 minutes.
3. Remove sausage and drain off any excess water.
4. Mash potatoes and kale together with a masher or a fork.
5. Add enough milk to make a smooth mixture. Then add butter and sausage.
6. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serves 8.

The name of this Dutch recipe is pronounced **STAHM-pot BOOR-n-COAL**.



- 1 pound smoked sausage
- milk
- 4 tablespoons butter
- salt and pepper to taste

* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

1. Machine with sails or vanes at the top of a tower (8-letter noun)

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

3. Cup-shaped flowers growing from bulbs (6-letter noun)

□ □ □ □ □ □

2. Curd of milk pressed for food (6-letter noun)

□ □ □ □ □ □

4. Food made from ground cacao beans (9-letter noun)

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

1. Brenda saw a _____ with turning arms on the hillside.
2. Mark made a grilled _____ sandwich with tomatoes.
3. Señora Diaz cut six _____ from her garden for a vase.
4. Julie ate a piece of _____ after her dinner.

ROOTONYM®
by Jan & Carey Orr Cook



Study the definition. When you know the missing word, fill in the letter boxes and the sentence blanks.

Answers: Windmill, Cheese, Tulips, Chocolate.

Life in Holland

While many Dutch do have cars, most travel by bikes. Experts say that there is at least one bike for every person. Cycling cuts down on traffic, and it saves money because gas is very expensive. It is good for the environment and is also good exercise.

The Dutch enjoy sandwiches for breakfast and also for lunch. Dinner often includes potatoes, pea soup and kale with sausage. The Dutch also enjoy peanut butter, chocolate and licorice.

French fries are popular with the Dutch, too. They put mayonnaise on them instead of ketchup.

Dutch kids enjoy ice skating, swimming, listening to music, soccer, basketball, computer games and Dutch movies and TV.

Windmills

The Netherlands is a windy country.

The Dutch have been building windmills for hundreds of years. At one time there were about 9,000 in the country. Today there are only about 1,000 left.

The earliest windmills were used to grind grain. They were later used to furnish the power to make paper, chalk or paint.



photo by Alfred Grupstra

Resources



On the Web:

- bit.ly/MPNetherlands

At the library:

- “The Netherlands” by Martin Hintz
- “Pedal Power: How One Community Became the Bicycle Capital of the World” by Allan Drummond

Mini Jokes



Wendy: What did the windmill say to the pop star?

Will: “I’m a huge fan!”

Eco Note



The scattering of plastic pollution in the world’s waterways and atmosphere is now resulting in the “plastification” of the planet, with the debris “spiraling around the globe” in the wind. A new study says that smaller microplastics can remain in the atmosphere for nearly a week, which is long enough for them to be carried across an ocean or a continent. The biggest sources are roadways, where the tires of large trucks and other vehicles degrade into tiny bits and are picked up by the wind.

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For later:

Look in your newspaper for articles about the Netherlands.

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