

TRADITIONALLY DUTCH: HOLLAND, THE COUNTRY OF TULIPS, WINDMILLS, BIKES AND CHEESE



Tulips

Although originally cultivated in the Ottoman Empire (present-day Turkey), tulips were imported into Holland in the sixteenth century. Today, Holland is known for its tulips and other flowers, and is often called the “flower shop of the world”. Tulip festivals abound throughout the country in spring. The season extends from the end of March to the middle of May, but mid-April usually features the most prolific blossoms. And if you want to see over 7 million flowering bulbs in one place, consider a visit to the Keukenhof in Lisse. So come to Holland in mid-April and see the tulips in bloom in their peak season!

Windmills

In a flat country where the wind always blows, windmills soon sprouted from the ground like mushrooms, starting as early as the 12th century. They were used to mill, saw, pump and press. The production of boards, paint, oil and paper, as well as bread and mustard – among other things – depended on windmills and wind. In addition, windmills were used to pump the water out of lakes and to keep reclaimed land dry.

“Unique in its kind,” announced Napoleon when he arrived at the Zaanse Schans, where 600 windmills made up the world’s first industrial area. Today, the 250-year-old windmill park is a fascinating open-air museum. The second Saturday and Sunday of May mark National Mill Day in Holland. On those days, 950 windmills and watermills open their doors to visitors.

Bikes

Holland is biking and biking is Holland. The Dutch grab hold of the handlebars for both small errands and long(er) trips. The country’s 16 million inhabitants own 18 million bicycles, which means that there are more bicycles than people in Holland. Of course, Holland is the perfect place for biking, thanks to the flat landscape with over 19,800 miles/32,000 kilometers of dedicated bike paths.

Cheese

Dutch cheese production is currently in the hands of dairy factories, which produce and export hundreds of millions of tons of cheese every year. The cheese markets in Alkmaar, Gouda and Edam remind us of the origins of a flourishing cheese trade and have become popular tourist attractions. The Dutch still love cheese and eat about 31,5 pounds/14,3 kg of it per person annually. Just like Julius Caesar, let yourself be surprised by the many types of Dutch cheese and sample the country’s “yellow gold”.

