

THE NETHERLANDS: BASIC DATA

- GEOGRAPHY** The Netherlands has a total area of 41,160 square kilometres and is situated along the northern coastline of continental Europe. The country is across the North sea from the British Isles and borders Germany to the east and Belgium to the south.
- CLIMATE** Temperate continental, the hottest month is July (13-22°C), and the coldest month is January (1-5°C). The driest month is March (45 mm average rainfall), and the wettest month is August (85 mm average rainfall).
- POPULATION** 15.2 million (1992)
- MAIN TOWNS**
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|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|
| Amsterdam | 715,000 | Utrecht | 235,000 |
| Rotterdam | 592,000 | Eindhoven | 196,000 |
| The Hague | 445,000 | Groningen | 170,000 |
- TIME** The Netherlands is 1 hour ahead of GMT, 2 hours ahead in summer.
- MEASURES** The metric system is used throughout the Netherlands.
- LANGUAGE** Dutch, with most businessmen fluent in English.
- GOVERNMENT** The country is divided administratively into 12 provinces, all of which are governed by their own directly elected *staten* (councils).
- STANDARDS** Living standards in the Netherlands are quite high with disposable income levels rising consistently from year to year. Considerable emphasis has been given in the Netherlands to the establishment of a comprehensive public health and social security system.
- EDUCATION** Education is compulsory to the age of 15, and is based on the standard three stage division into primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Major universities are located in Amsterdam, Leiden, Utrecht and Groningen.
- CURRENCY** The Dutch Guilder is broken down in 100 cents, also known as *florin*. In 1992, the mean rate of exchange stood at CDN \$1 = guilder \$1.45.
- HOLIDAYS** Public holidays fall on January 1, Good Friday (partial), Easter Monday, Ascension Day, Whit Monday, December 25 and 26.