

UNDUTCHABLES

THE RECRUITMENT AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONALS

What attracts expats to the Netherlands?

Although most Dutch people love their country, from the outside the Netherlands does not seem particularly attractive to foreigners. Lots of rain, a flat and boring landscape, an unpronounceable language, surly and stingy people; characteristics which do not immediately make you shout "Let's move to the Netherlands!"

Still, about 150,000 people move to the Netherlands every year!* More than 63 percent come from Western Countries, so to some point we can assume that these people make a well-considered choice to leave their home country, not just for economic reasons, but because they like *something* about the Netherlands.

What we see among our Undutchables candidates is that many of them leave their home and family for a Dutch partner. As young people travel much more abroad than previous generations, multi-cultural relationships are becoming increasingly common. Dutch girls and boys seem to be attractive to Spanish girls and Norwegian boys! I once asked two very pretty Brazilian young ladies "What makes the Dutch guys so attractive for you? I can imagine Brazil is packed with muscled, tanned and charming men, why did you fall for a tall, slim, pale Dutch guy?" Well the answer was both flattering and depressing at the same time: "Dutch guys are so reliable..." Nevertheless, a relationship brings many people to our country, and they have the courage and the willingness to build up a new life only to be with their beloved ones. Now, if that isn't romance...!

Besides immigrating for love, reasons for coming to the Netherlands are work(possibilities) and the liberal atmosphere. Once they are here, 85 percent of immigrants feel at home because they like the Dutch culture and customs.** They like how things are well-organised, the tolerance, the good possibilities and even the bikes, houses and cheese make them happy. Before we flatter ourselves, remember, we also have lots of strange and annoying habits, like serving only one cookie with a cup of coffee and bad service in shops. If you are willing to take off your rose-tinted glasses, please visit the website www.howtosurviveholland.nl for countless examples.

Although Dutch customs are sometimes odd or frustrating, expats like their life in the Netherlands. The "relaxed atmosphere", "good possibilities" and the "open-minded" Dutch people make life easy, or in some cases at least easier than in their home country.**

So the Netherlands is an "easy" country where integration and adapting is fairly "easy" because of the presence of many other expats plus tolerant, English speaking Dutch people; it is an "easy" country to work in because of an "easy" work attitude and accessible bosses.

I feel proud and happy that, despite the boring landscape and tongue-struggling language, expats choose our country as their home. I am even more proud that it is the Dutch people and way of life that makes us attractive. And I am also scared that these attractive characteristics, which we ourselves built up during the last ages, might fade away in today's mood of xenophobia. Fortunately politic statements come and go, and they must be very strong to be able to turn these ancient national customs around.

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*Statistics CBS

**survey of 300 visitors to website www.undutchables.nl