



# **WELCOME GUIDE**

## **to East Netherlands**

[www.ecen.nl](http://www.ecen.nl)



**WORLD TRADE CENTER®**  
**TWENTE**

**EXPAT CENTER**  
**EAST NETHERLANDS**

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#### Colophon

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# WELCOME GUIDE to East Netherlands



WORLD TRADE CENTER®  
TWENTE

EXPAT CENTER  
EAST NETHERLANDS

Opening hours Hengelo  
In World Trade Center Twente  
Monday to Friday 09.00 – 14.00

Opening hours Welcome Center in  
Stadskantoor Enschede  
Hengelosestraat 51  
Every Monday 10.00 – 16.00

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welcome guide

to the

Nether

## Hi, Expat! Welcome to the Netherlands!

You choose to settle in the east of the Netherlands. A choice you will not regret. The people in this region are kind and down to earth and there's so much to explore.

In this guide we will give you all the useful information on the most important topics you will need during your relocation. How does the public transportation work? How do I greet someone in Dutch and what are fun activities for the kids? You will find a mix of formal and informal information both from a national as well as a regional point of view. Just arrived? Check the boxes of the You've Arrived Checklist to help you with the first necessary steps.

### Expat Center East Netherlands

The Expat Center East Netherlands is a central point for expats living and working in the east of the Netherlands. Our mission is to support international companies and highly skilled migrants, scientific researchers and their families. We aim to realize a fast and smooth introduction of expats and their families to this region by providing comprehensive information about formalities, services and activities in the area.

This guide will lead you to the most important institutions and companies needed for your relocation. If you have any more questions, the team of Expat Center East Netherlands is more than happy to help you.

### The team of Expat Center East Netherlands



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**Welcome to Overijssel! A beautiful province in the eastern part of the Netherlands. We are very glad that you and your family have chosen to work and live here. We welcome adventurous and entrepreneurial people from all over the world because they are of great value to our society. Diversity is an important contributor to innovation and development in our economy.**

**Moving from another country to the Netherlands can be a challenging experience. Therefore the Expat Center is here to help you and your family to get off to a flying start. They will support you with all the necessary practicalities. And, more importantly, they will help you with learning the language, understand our culture and getting to know people. In this welcoming guide you will find everything you need for your stay in Overijssel and more!**

Overijssel is known for its innovative companies and entrepreneurial spirit but also for its rich history, culture and spectacular nature. When you are in Overijssel there are a few things that you must have seen or done. A visit to our Hanseatic cities Deventer and Zwolle is recommended if you enjoy architecture and history. Are you more into art and culture! Then Ootmarsum in Twente is the place to be. A boat trip through “Dutch Venice”, the town Giethoorn, is also a great experience. Of course the best way to explore our province is by bike. There are beautiful routes throughout the province, especially alongside the rivers Vecht or IJssel.

**Enjoy your stay, gather great experiences and I wish you all the best on behalf of the people of Overijssel.**

**Sincerely,**

**Eddy van Hijum  
Vice-Governor Province of Overijssel**



As you might have noticed, you found yourself in the east of the Netherlands. In the province of Overijssel, to be exact. In this section you will get some basic information about the region and its main cities.

### Overijssel

With 1,1 million inhabitants, Overijssel is the 6th of the 12 provinces of the Netherlands. The name of the province literally means across the river IJssel, which gives a perspective of how historically the country saw Overijssel; eastwards and far from cities like Amsterdam and the Hague. The capital of Overijssel is Zwolle, located in the north-west of the province, but it's not the largest city, Enschede is.

Overijssel is characterized by its Hanzesteden (Hanseatic towns). These are towns situated along the river IJssel that formed a traders union in the Medieval Period that led to enormous prosperity and wealth. In Overijssel, the Hanzesteden are Hasselt, Kampen, Zwolle, Hattem and Deventer. To this day, you can still sense the rich history of this period by strolling through the cobbled streets.

Apart from the main cities, Overijssel is known for its beautiful nature in national parks such as the Sallandse Heuvelrug, and Weerribben-Wieden and also the scenic countryside in the region of Twente.

Overijssel comprises of three smaller regions: **Twente** in the east of the province, **Salland** in the centre and **Kop van Overijssel** in the northwest.







📷 Oude Markt, Enschede

## Twente

Almost half of the inhabitants of Overijssel live in Twente and they are known as 'Twentenaren' or 'Tukkers'. People in this part of the country feel more related to the region of Twente, than to the official district, the province of Overijssel.

The local dialect is Twents, and is still used in daily life.

Home to the University of Twente and many tech-entrepreneurs, Twente is known as an innovative entrepreneurial region in the Netherlands, making it an attractive region for expats to settle in.

The region of Twente comprises of main cities Enschede, Hengelo and Almelo and smaller towns such as Oldenzaal, Borne, Delden, Diepenheim and Hertme.

## Main Cities

### Enschede

With almost 160.000 inhabitants, Enschede is the largest city in Twente. The nickname 'textile city' refers to the big role that the city used to play in the Dutch textile industry in the late 19th century. This past is still visible in the old factories with new purposes, like museum De MuseumFabriek and art gallery Tetem, big city villas and parks named after the 'textile barons', the wealthy owners of the factories.

Enschede is one of the best cities in Twente for a full day of shopping. There are many shops varying from dozens of clothing shops to stores specialized in comics or guitars. Be prepared to practice your German. Because of the close location to the German border, Enschede is very popular amongst Germans.

The university campus of Enschede is unique in The Netherlands. The University of Twente, which is located in the western outskirts of the city, is a green area where students follow their classes and also live, play sports and relax in the parks. Other Dutch universities have more city-based campuses spread over several locations. University of Twente and Saxion University of Applied Sciences are at the heart of the technical knowledge in Twente, with a nano-lab, the successful Solar Team Twente, the International Institute for Geo-information Science and Earth Observation (ITC) and thousands of international students.

During summer, you can visit one of the many music festivals in the town centre, UT campus or Rutbeek park.





📷 Hengelo



📷 Galerie & Skulpturenpark, Almelo



#### **My favorite by Maham Fatima**

*"My favourite place in the east Netherlands is the Library's café in Enschede. It's no high end café but the interior is being done nicely and they have added lots of indoor plants in the café which adds soul to the place. Being surrounded by the plants always makes people happy. I love having a cup of coffee or breakfast (great waffles!) in this café after my trip to the market, it just refreshes me. The café also has toys and kids' books and they have special menu for kids so this café is loved by all the parents with little ones. This café has this positive energy that makes you happy and the best thing is that it is loved by all the age groups".*

### **Hengelo**

You like cities that have the atmosphere of a village? Then Hengelo is the right place for you. With one of the best open air markets in the Netherlands (on Wednesdays and Saturdays) and a compact area with terraces, Hengelo has a cozy feeling. The city is known for many open air concerts in spring and summer in the city center, the Prins Bernhardplantsoen and outside the city in the Houtmaat park.

Hengelo has 81.000 inhabitants and is known as 'City of Metal'. This does not refer to the local alternative rock scene, but to the old industries of the city. Companies related to metal and machinery flourished in the early 20th century, which led to a central logistic infrastructure. Hengelo is a main point of the Dutch and German railroad and highway system.

This makes the city very attractive to big technical and international companies like Thales, Sensata, Opra Turbines, HP Valves and Eaton. And of course you'll find World Trade Center Twente and the main office of Expat Center East Netherlands in this city of business.

### **Almelo**

Almelo has a population of people from various cultural backgrounds. The city, which is situated in the heart of Twente, has around 73.000 inhabitants; and it is the third city in Twente.

Almelo is the most green city in the province of Overijssel. Beautiful sites to visit are the stately park, found in the Noorderkwartier, the courtyards and gardens of De Riet garden and the leafy lanes in the Paradijs. Almelo is one of the only cities in the dry-lands of Twente where you will find water in the city center. Lakes invite the recreational sailors. There are beaches, a yacht marina and an international rowing course. Make sure you visit Almelo only for its beautiful sites and don't end up in jail. The only court in Twente is based in the city which makes Almelo the juridical centre of the region.



### Smaller towns and villages

#### Oldenzaal

The medium-sized city of Oldenzaal is the gate to North-East Twente; the Dutch-German border area with old woods, elevated farmland, heathlands and picturesque villages. This forms a variety of attractive views, making it an ideal environment for country walks and cycle excursions.

With only 31.000 inhabitants, Oldenzaal has surprisingly many small shops in the beautiful city centre. The streets meander around one of the oldest churches in Twente; the basilica of Saint Plechelmus. Archaeologists still find jugs and graves around the church that was built in the 12th century.

On a hot summer day, Oldenzaal is the place to be to cool down. The water in the lake Hulsbeek is clean and there are many beaches and lawns for sunbathing, a picnic or even a barbecue. Once a year, in February or March, the town is the centre of attention in the region; Oldenzaal has the biggest and most colourful carnival celebration in Twente. Around 100.000 people come to watch the floats that have been made over a period of several months.

In August all shapes and sizes of hot air balloons depart from the lake Hulsbeek, near Oldenzaal. Twente Ballooning is a 4-day event with a market, music and entertainment. Highlight is the 'nightglow' where you can admire the balloons in the dark and watch a fireworks show.



#### Fun fact:

*The catholic cities and villages, that celebrate carnival, have different names at this time of the year. Oldenzaal for example transforms into Boeskoolstad, Enschede is called Krekelstad and Zwolle is Sassendonk.*

#### Borne

The town of Borne is surrounded by beautiful countryside, with a population of over 23.000 people. Borne is a lovely village to live in, due to its central location between all the main cities in Twente. There are two highways (A1 and A35) nearby and with a train station, the town has easy access to the rest of the region.

The historical city centre is well preserved and has a great atmosphere, nice shops, and restaurants. In August the town is full of festivities for a long weekend (Thursday to Sunday) called the Melbuul'n Dagen with an art fair, book market, a fun fair, sports and music.

#### Ootmarsum

With only 4.400 inhabitants, Ootmarsum is a popular town amongst art lovers. This enclave of galleries in Twente houses painters, sculptors and glass artists. Make sure you don't insult the people of Ootmarsum by calling it a village. It very proudly calls itself a city. Due to the rich past of churches, monasteries and fortresses, Ootmarsum has medieval city rights. This past is still very visible in the well preserved historical centre. Discover the ancient stories on one of the guided city tours. History comes to life on the Siepelmarkt (onion market), held over three Thursdays in July and August, with demonstrations of old crafts and local, Twentse folklore.





Kasteel Twickel, Delden

### Delden

One of the oldest towns in Twente is Delden. With its cobbled streets and classic architecture in the old town centre, Delden is a typical castle town.

The castle of Twickel is just across the throughfare and played an important role in the development of the town and Twente. Any day of the year the forest around the castle is beautiful and especially popular amongst dog owners. The castle, its gardens, and the shop with food from the garden, are worth a visit; but it has limited opening hours, especially in winter. Check the opening hours online when you plan your visit.

Explore one of the many hiking and biking trails that start and end in Delden, or visit the farmers market every first Saturday of the month. This diverse market with biological and local produce is always a treat.

### Diepenheim

In the south of Twente, on the banks of the river Regge, you'll find the medieval town of Diepenheim. This area of Twente is known for its castles and old mansions, which were holiday houses for the nobles and royals. The industrialization of cities like Hengelo and Enschede, totally passed the calm and green area, making it feel as if time stood still. The scenery is especially inspiring for artists, who gather at the annual Kunstmoment. This is a ten day festival in October with artists from all over the country, exhibiting on surprising locations.

### Hertme

The small village of Hertme with under 500 inhabitants and close to Borne, offers many activities and events, especially in and around the open air theatre. Get creepy on the family event at Halloween and enjoy national artists during the open air concerts in summer. The highlight is the annual Africa Festival in July, with lots of music and dancing, internationally known artists, and an exotic food market.

### Salland

**Although its borders are not well defined, the region of Salland is mostly described as all of Overijssel with the exception of Twente and Kop van Overijssel. With a population of approximately 500.000, almost half of the total inhabitants of Overijssel live in Salland.**

**Salland is home to beautiful large cities as Deventer and Zwolle, the capital of Overijssel, but also charming smaller towns and villages.**

### Main cities

#### Zwolle

With over 128.000 inhabitants, Zwolle is the second largest city in Overijssel. The city is a perfect base for commuters, because the main railway station serves as a major hub, with trains departing in 8 different directions.

Zwolle has been recognized as a city since 1230, although archeological findings suggest that the area has been inhabited since the Bronze Age. Its name derives from the word 'suolle' which roughly translates to hill; a reference to its relative altitude between the rivers IJssel, Vecht, Aa and Zwarte.



Being a hanseatic town, Zwolle has a charming medieval city centre, with the Peperbus as its icon. This tall and famous church tower (that literally translates to 'pepper box', because of its shape) characterizes the skyline of Zwolle.

Zwolle is home to Windesheim University of Applied Sciences and ArtEZ University of the Arts. Because of the students, many boutiques, museums, restaurants and bars, the city centre has a lively atmosphere.

Moreover, Zwolle is a must for all foodies out there, since the three Michelin starred restaurant De Librije is located in the centre of the city. This is one of the 10 Michelin star restaurants in the province of Overijssel, so try them all.



### Deventer

With over 100.000 inhabitants, Deventer is a city along the banks of the river IJssel, with a lot of IT companies. With the province of Gelderland just across the river, Deventer is the gate to the rest of the Netherlands. Taking the highway A1, Amsterdam is only one hour and fifteen minutes away.

Like Zwolle, Deventer is a hanseatic town and even one of the oldest cities in the Netherlands. Its history dates back to the 9th century and in 1123 Deventer received city rights. The history is still visible in the city centre and its architecture; Deventer has the country's oldest brick house, the oldest park and the oldest academic library.

With lots of boutiques and stores, Deventer is a great city for shopping. And on a sunny day, settle on one of the many terraces on the Brink square, that forms the centre of the city.

Deventer is known for its Dickens Festival. As its name might suggest; local volunteers and business owners turn the city into a 19th century town, dressing up to be Oliver Twist, Scrooge or any other character of the famous Dickens' novels. Each year, the last weekend before Christmas, the famous event attracts about 140.000 visitors to Deventer.

Throughout the year, there are other events in Deventer worth visiting. For example, in summer, the city hosts 'Deventer op stelten' (Deventer on stilts), a festival for international open air theatre with more than 120.000 visitors each year. Also, Deventer is known as the city of books. No wonder it hosts Europe's largest open air book market, every first Sunday in August.



#### **My favorite by Wai Ying Yip**

*"My favourite event in the east of the Netherlands is the annual Dickens Festival in Deventer, The Netherlands. I love how the fictional characters from Charles Dickens's books relive at the street theater. It is always fun to spot and guess different characters from his books and also to soak into the 19th century ambience. Christmas market in the old town with cobblestone streets, christmas carol and hot wine are all adding points to the event."*



## Overijssel

### Some Facts & Figures



**Inhabitants**  
1,15 million



**Municipalities**  
25



**Size**  
3.327 km<sup>2</sup>



**Rivers**  
6  
IJssel, Zwarte Water, Vecht,  
Dinkel, Regge and Reest



**Museums**  
73



**Internationals**  
15.500



**Highest building**  
**Alpha Tower**  
in Enschede with 101 meters



**Highest point**  
**Tankenberg**  
(Tanken Mountain) with  
85 meters



### Smaller towns and villages

#### Dalfsen

On the banks of the river Vecht and close to Zwolle, you find the village of Dalfsen. Even though most of its inhabitants think of Dalfsen more as a small town than a village, Dalfsen never received city rights. Dalfsen is known for its green surroundings, so don't be surprised to see lots of cyclists and hikers passing by.

Close to Dalfsen, you find the Rechteren Castle. Built in the 12th century, it is the only Medieval castle in Overijssel that still exists. The castle is owned by the Van Rechteren family since the 15th century to this day. Since the family still lives there, the castle has never been open for tours, but you can sneak a peek wandering the surroundings of the castle.

#### Ommen

Following the river Vecht from Dalfsen, you will arrive in Ommen, a small town with the characteristic feel of a village. With many campsites, bungalow parks and hotels, Ommen is a popular destination and base for tourists wanting to explore the green countryside of Salland.

Make sure to visit Ommen in summer, during the so-called 'Ommer Bissingh', a fair with an age-old tradition. This fair, that is known to originate in the 16th century, is held every second Tuesday in July. A week later, the actual Bissinghdagen (Bissingh Days) kick off, with events and activities the next five Wednesdays in July and August.

#### Hardenberg

Close to the German border, you will find Hardenberg, a town that is home to about 60.000 inhabitants. The surroundings of Hardenberg are again great for hiking and cycling. Moreover, with theme park Slagharen just around the corner, Hardenberg has much to offer. Don't expect much of the architecture however; the town is home to the country's ugliest building: the city hall.

In summer, Hardenberg presents itself as 'Klepperstad', with lots of festivities. The annual hot air balloon festival kicks off in this period. You'll see all crazy kinds of hot air balloons ascend near the river Vecht.

#### Kampen

In the northwest of Overijssel, located at the lower reaches of the river IJssel, you find the city of Kampen. Like Deventer and Zwolle, Kampen is a well-known Hanseatic town and this has left its mark on the city and its about 54.000 inhabitants. The city of Kampen has one of the best preserved old town centres in the Netherlands, including remains of the ancient city wall, of which three gates are still standing.

Kampenaren, as the inhabitants are called, are still known as hard-working and venturesome. In the 19th century, the tobacco industry became of great importance for the city, that was soon to be known as the Cigar City. Around the year 1880, almost half of its inhabitants worked in the many cigar factories in town. Today, only one factory is still producing: De Olifant. This monumental factory is open to visitors.

Once every couple years, during the Easter Weekend, hundreds of national and international sailboats moor the waters around Kampen. Sail Kampen, as this maritime event is called, is extremely popular, attracting about 250.000 visitors.

### Kop van Overijssel

Kop van Overijssel literally means Head of Overijssel, due to its position in the top of the province. With about 43.000 inhabitants and an area of about 322 square kilometers, this region is the smallest of all three regions in Overijssel. Its main city is Steenwijk. Other noteworthy places are Blokzijl, Giethoorn and Vollenhove.

### Steenwijk

With over 20.000 inhabitants, Steenwijk is the main city of de Kop van Overijssel. The name of the city literally translates to stone quarter, referring to the many boulders that can be found in the ground. With its schools, stores and jobs, Steenwijk has an important regional function in this part of the province.

The city of Steenwijk existed back in the Middle Ages and was an important fortress in earlier times. However, not much is known about its early history, probably due to fires and floods destroying the sources.

The city is home to the Sint-Clemenschurch and its tower is the highest church tower in Overijssel (87 meters). In dialect, the tower is better known as the 'Steenwieker Toorn'.

### Blokzijl

Southwest of Steenwijk, you find the small town of Blokzijl. With a picturesque harbour and the national park Weerribben-Wieden just around the corner, the town attracts lots of water sports enthusiasts and nature lovers.

An interesting sight in Blokzijl is the old cannon, located on the harbour quay. This cannon did not serve to scare or attack possible invaders, but as a warning device during storm and high tide.

### Giethoorn

Don't be surprised to see lots of tourists in the village of Giethoorn. The village is mostly only accessible by boat, and because of the many canals and bridges, the village is often referred to as 'Little Venice' or 'Venice of the Netherlands'. Giethoorn is extremely popular especially amongst Chinese tourists. The village of less than 3000 inhabitants sees between 150.000 and 200.000 Chinese tourists every year.

For nature lovers, Giethoorn is the place to be, as it lies within the national park De Weerribben-Wieden. From Giethoorn, you can cruise a boat to De Wieden, part of the national park.



Expat Center trip to Giethoorn

### Vollenhove

Though it might seem like a village, don't be mistaken; Vollenhove is a city as it received Medieval city rights in 1354. In earlier times, Vollenhove was the summer residence of the bishop of Utrecht, the ruler of these parts. He lived in castle Toutenburg, of which only some small ruins are left now. To be near their lord, quite a lot of the nobility moved to Vollenhove. They built their estates ('Havezaten'), which is why Vollenhove was often referred to as the city of palaces.

Nowadays, you won't find that many palaces in town, since most of the so called 'havezaten' were demolished in the beginning of the 19th century. However, you can still find some gems in or around town.





Checklist: You've Arrived!

# Check

Moving to another country can be an overwhelming experience and proper organization is necessary to make it a smooth process. Below is a basic checklist to help you, once you've arrived in the Netherlands. More detailed information about all the items below can be found on the website of the Expat Center East Netherlands and in this Welcome Guide.

### Once you've arrived

- ✓ Register with the local municipality where you are going to live and apply for a BSN (social security number)\*
- ✓ Collect or apply for a residence permit and/or work permit\*
- ✓ Find long-term accommodation\*
- ✓ Get connected, arrange telecom, internet and utilities
- ✓ Open a bank account
- ✓ Apply for Dutch health insurance\*
- ✓ Take the TBC test (if applicable) within 3 months\*

### Settling in

- ✓ Apply for a DigiD to access governmental sites
- ✓ Register with a local dentist and family doctor (general practitioner)
- ✓ Investigate schooling/childcare possibilities in the region
- ✓ Obtain a driver's licence or exchange your current licence
- ✓ Buy a bicycle
- ✓ Investigate possibilities for applying for 30% tax ruling
- ✓ Join the international community by signing up for the Expat Center East Netherlands newsletter and social media
- ✓ Learn the local language

### Leaving the Netherlands

- ✓ De-register from your local municipality (online, using DigiD or by appointment at the municipality hall)\*
- ✓ Send your residence card to the IND. Close utility contracts, insurances, bank account etc.

\* Items marked with an asterisk are mandatory



## Formalities

# Formalities

### How can we help you?

On behalf of Expat Center East Netherlands we would like to welcome you to this beautiful part of the Netherlands. Our team is more than happy to help you regarding any questions you might have about the formalities described in this section of the Welcome Guide. More detailed information can be found on our website [ecen.com](http://ecen.com). For any other questions please do not hesitate to contact us by email or phone.

Email: [info@ecen.nl](mailto:info@ecen.nl)  
Phone: 074-250 3325

### How to register

You need to register with your local municipality (gemeente) as soon as possible after arrival, which will also provide you with a BSN (burger service nummer/social security number). To guide you through this process, the Expat Center hosts the Welcome Center for residents in Twente, together with the municipality and immigration service (IND). This takes place every Monday at the Stads Kantoor in Enschede. For regions outside of Twente (Salland, Kop van Overijssel), you can make an appointment directly with the municipality.

The Expat Center hosts a service desk in the municipality hall of Zwolle every other week. Practical information about living in the Netherlands is given during your registration. Contact us for details and making an appointment.

Make sure to always bring your passport, proof of address and birth and marriage certificates (both with apostille or legalized). Furthermore, the exact documents you need, depends on your nationality or what kind of visa or work permit you have.

Unfortunately, some municipality websites are in Dutch only, but you can always contact Expat Center East Netherlands for advice and assistance.

### Burger Service Number (BSN)

If you are going to live and work in the Netherlands you will need a burger-service-nummer. This is the equivalent of a social security number. Everyone residing in the Netherlands must have a BSN; an exclusive personal number to arrange all your matters with the Dutch government.

Moreover, it is also required in almost every formal step, like opening a bank account, starting a job, registering with the health care system and paying taxes. Obtaining a BSN is the first thing you want to arrange after arriving.



## DigiD

The DigiD (Digital Identification) is a personal ID number, which you need to obtain if you want to use governmental services online. More and more organisations use the DigiD as an identification method, like your insurance company or health services. You can request a login with your BSN-number. By logging in online with the DigiD you can identify yourself to the organisations, for example to submit your tax returns or register at a new address in case of moving.

You can find more information on how to obtain a DigiD, the app and how to use it, on the website of Expat Center East Netherlands.

**Tip: Mijnoverheid.nl**  
*The communication of the Dutch government is becoming more and more digitalised and DigiD is the key to all this information. This also means that most correspondence is digital and not via the post, for example taxes, benefits and registration of cars. This email will arrive in your inbox on the website Mijnoverheid.nl, where you can login with DigiD. Check the site regularly or change your settings so you get a notification when you received a new email.*



## Useful words and websites

English	Dutch
Municipality	Gemeente
City hall	Stadhuis
Municipal office	Stadskantoor
Appointment	Afspraak

Governmental topics: [www.government.nl](http://www.government.nl)  
 Tax authorities: [www.belastingdienst.nl](http://www.belastingdienst.nl) (with an English section)  
 Benefits: [www.belastingdienst.nl/toeslagen](http://www.belastingdienst.nl/toeslagen) and [www.svb.nl](http://www.svb.nl) (both with English sections)  
 Mail of governmental offices: [www.mijnoverheid.nl](http://www.mijnoverheid.nl)

I'm going on a  
trip and I'll take...  
a visa!

visumservice  
twente

Bisschopstraat 45  
 NL-7595 AS Weerselo  
 the Netherlands  
 T +31(0)541 662407  
[visumservicetwente.nl](http://visumservicetwente.nl)

### Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND)

In the Netherlands the Immigratie en Naturalisatie Dienst (IND) is the government organisation that takes care of everything regarding visa, residence and work permits.

If you have the status of 'knowledge migrant', 'scientific researcher', 'start-up visa' or 'orientation year, highly educated persons' you can pick up your work and residence permit at the Welcome Center at the Stads Kantoor (municipal office) in Enschede. You will receive an invitation or you can make an appointment through Expat Center East Netherlands. During this appointment, it is also possible to have biometrics (photo and fingerprints) taken and have a residence/work notification sticker (Verblijfsaantekening / VA sticker) placed.

More information about immigration procedures can be found on the website of the IND ([ind.nl](http://ind.nl)). Feel free to contact Expat Center East Netherlands if you have any questions regarding your documents.



#### Fun Fact:

*Almost all embassies in the Netherlands are located in The Hague, the political heart of the country. If you need to go to your embassy for documents or voting, bear in mind that you'll spend all day travelling back and forth from the east of the Netherlands to The Hague. Taking a train to The Hague is a very good and fast alternative to the car due to the high parking costs in the city. Direct trains to The Hague depart on a regular basis from all main cities in Overijssel.*

### In case of moving to another city

When you are moving from one Dutch municipality to another, you must inform the municipality accordingly. You can do this on the website of your city, where you log in with your digital identity (DigiD). The new address will be registered in the BRP (central registration of persons) and passed on to all relevant governmental offices.

### In case of moving out of the country

Going back to your home country or moving abroad? Report the move at your current municipality. You have to de-register from the BRP (central registration of persons). This can be done in person at your local city hall or, in some cases, online with a DigiD. If you have a residence pass, you should return this to the IND by post or bring it in person on a Monday to the Welcome Center in Enschede. For details of the process; check the website of the Expat Center East Netherlands or contact us for more information.

### Healthcare

Every person living and working in the Netherlands is legally obliged to subscribe to at least a basic health care insurance. You are free to choose any provider of health insurance, but you will need a BSN (Burger Service Nummer or social security number) before you can do so.

The insurance must provide standard coverage including, for example, the cost of consulting a general practitioner, undergoing a test in a hospital or buying medication at a pharmacy. Additional insurance like dentist, physiotherapy, birth control and family planning is optional and provided by all health insurers.

#### Important

Even if you are insured back in your home country, taking a Dutch health insurance is mandatory in most cases. You have to arrange your health insurance immediately after your arrival. Once you acquire your health insurance policy, the company (by Dutch law) automatically starts charging the insurance costs from the day you received your residence permit, and not from the day you acquire your insurance policy. In this way you are insured from the first day of arrival.

### Dutch Healthcare System

The Dutch patient has a lot of freedom in choosing his own healthcare. A good website to find a GP, midwife, dentist and other services is [zorgkaartnederland.nl](http://zorgkaartnederland.nl), which also gives reviews. The website is in Dutch, but easy to understand; type in your city of residence and narrow the search by profession ('beroep'). At the end of this chapter you can find a list of useful Dutch words.

#### GP

General practitioners (GP)/family doctors or 'huisartsen' play an essential role in the Dutch healthcare system. They are your first point of call receiving medical treatments of any kind.

When you've arrived in the Netherlands you need to choose a GP from your area or neighbourhood and register yourself. In case of illness or for common consultations you must call your GP first. In some cases your GP might refer you to a specialist in the hospital.

**Tip:**  
*In case of illness or accidents that are not life threatening (for example bruises, cuts or medium fevers) you can always call your GP for an emergency appointment. At night and weekends GP's are taking shifts at the 'huisartsenpost' (GP Centre). Find the number of your local huisartsenpost and call for advice or last minute consults.*

### Dentist

Finding a dentist is much like finding a GP, but doesn't need to be in your neighbourhood. After registration, the dentist will contact you for a check-up twice a year. Most dentists will discuss the treatment and costs before they treat you. Be aware of your level of insurance. Uninsured treatments can lead to high costs you have to pay yourself.

### Emergencies

**Dial 112 to contact an ambulance, fire department or police.**

### Pregnancy

When you are pregnant, your first check will be with your GP/family doctor (huisarts). Depending on your situation, you can have your follow up checks and ultrasonography with a midwife (verloskundige) or gynaecologist in the hospital. You can choose you own midwife, ask your GP for advice. Gynaecologists are mostly appointed.

### Pharmacy and drug store

In the Netherlands medicines are not as freely available as in other countries. Most medicines can only be purchased with a prescription at a pharmacy (apotheek). Your GP or specialist at the hospital will send the prescription to the pharmacy that is usually in the same building or, in case of a GP, in your neighbourhood.

The drugstore (drogist) is a more general shop to buy medicines that don't need a prescription and items for personal care. Drug stores that are found in almost every city are Etos, Kruidvat and Trekpleister. Also supermarkets often sell basic medicines.

### Useful words and websites

English	Dutch
General Practitioner	Huisarts
Dentist	Tandarts
Midwife	Verloskundige
Physiotherapist	Fysiotherapeut
Hospital	Ziekenhuis
Pharmacy	Apotheek
Drug store	Drogist
Municipal Health Service (for vaccines, infant and youth healthcare)	GGD

Ministry of health & sport: [government.nl/ministries/ministry-of-health-welfare-and-sport](https://government.nl/ministries/ministry-of-health-welfare-and-sport)  
 Expat information on healthcare: [h4i.nl](https://h4i.nl)  
 Finding a GP, dentist etc.: [zorgkaartnederland.nl](https://zorgkaartnederland.nl)



### Fun Fact:

*The Netherlands is one of the only Western countries where home deliveries are possible. More than halve of the Dutch women prefer to give birth at home instead of in the hospital. Almost third of the babies are delivered at home. Interested? Ask your midwife about the possibilities and risks.*





📷 MST Enschede

### Hospitals in the region's main cities

#### Enschede

Medisch Spectrum Twente (MST)

Locations:

Koningsplein 1

Ariënsplein 1

053 487 2000

#### Oldenzaal

Medisch Spectrum Twente (MST)

Prins Bernhardstraat 17

0541-574 000

#### Hengelo

Ziekenhuis Groep Twente (ZGT)

Geerdinksweg 141

088 708 7878

#### Almelo

Ziekenhuis Groep Twente (ZGT)

Zilvermeeuw 1

088 708 7878

#### Deventer

Deventer Ziekenhuis

Nico Bolkesteinlaan 75

0570 53 53 53

#### Zwolle

Isala Ziekenhuis

Dokter van Heesweg 2

038 424 50 00

### Importing your car into the Netherlands

When you live in the Netherlands, registered at the local municipality, and want to use your car with foreign licence plates, you are obliged to pay Motor Vehicle tax (Motorrijtuigenbelasting or Wegenbelasting) and BPM tax (tax on cars and motorcycles). The rules of registration depend on your previous country of residence, the country where the car is registered and when the car was bought. To obtain registration and be allowed to drive the car, it must always pass a technical test called APK. Every car in the Netherlands must be tested annually, to get permission to drive on the public road. Also make sure you arrange a proper liability insurance for your car, this is mandatory.

For more detailed information about the process of importing your car, check out the website of Expat Center East Netherlands, contact the RDW (National Vehicle Administration Agency) or visit their website [rdw.nl/over-rdw/information-in-english](http://rdw.nl/over-rdw/information-in-english).

### Driver's Licence

As an international resident in the Netherlands, you can use your own driver's licence for a certain period of time, after which you will be required to obtain a Dutch licence (rijbewijs). For many countries licences are valid for six months (185 days) from the date you register at your local municipality.

Depending on your nationality you can either exchange your foreign licence or need to take some lessons and do a theory and practical test.

If you qualify for the tax benefit, 30% ruling, the process is different; in this case, you can exchange your license at the local municipality.

For more information about the conditions, go to the website of the Expat Center East Netherlands or the RDW (National Vehicle Administration Agency) [rdw.nl/over-rdw/information-in-english](http://rdw.nl/over-rdw/information-in-english).



#### Fun Fact

*In the Netherlands you can get your licence at the age of 18. If you really cannot wait, you can take your theoretical exam at 16, get practical lessons when you are 16,5 years old and get your licence at 17. Until you are 18, you will get an additional provisional licence. This is similar to the system in the United States, where approved adult mentors have to be in the car with you.*



**Moving to another country means you will run into some financial and tax matters. In this section, we give you some basic information about opening a bank account, taxes and insurances. More information can be found on our website [ecen.com](http://ecen.com) and by contacting the Expat Center East Netherlands**

### Opening a bank account

To open a bank account, you need a BSN (the only exemption is the ABN Amro bank, and even then you have to meet some requirements) which you obtain when you register at the municipality. All major banks have branches in the region's main cities. For opening a bank account, you must make an appointment with the bank of your choice. Opening hours are usually from 09.00-17.00, but banks are closed on Sunday and have limited opening hours on Mondays and Saturdays.

Major banks are ABN Amro, ING and Rabobank and they can all help you in English. For information about opening a bank account and obtaining a credit card, visit their website or make an appointment.

### Tax system

The Netherlands has an extensive system of taxes, which provides for the many benefits and infrastructure that the country is known for. For example the taxes are used for government support for unemployed and sick people, road and railroad infrastructure but also for water management to keep everybody safe in this country below sea level. Alongside the central government, three other governmental bodies are permitted to levy taxes: the provincial, the municipal and the water authorities. The provincial authorities impose environmental taxes. The water control authorities mainly levy taxes relating to water purification and management. In Overijssel, water taxes are collected by GBLT.

City councils can choose their own level of municipal taxes. Whereas some municipalities collect these taxes themselves, some municipalities have an office that collects the taxes for them. For example, in Zwolle and Dalfsen, the municipal taxes are collected by GBLT. In Twente the municipal taxes are collected by GBT (Municipal Tax Office Twente):

- Property tax for house and property owners
- Garbage taxes
- Sewer taxes
- Dog licence fee
- Parking fee
- Tourist fee



In most cases you will automatically get a notification when you have to pay taxes. Once a year you have to give a tax report to the Belastingdienst (administrative tax office). The service partners of Expat Center East Netherlands can help you with filing your taxes. Check out the contact details of our service partners, mentioned in the separate overview.

### Insurances

You can insure almost anything and most Dutch people cover the risks regarding health, house damage and belongings, burglary, theft of cars and even bikes.

Compulsory insurances that you should arrange for upon arrival are basic health insurance and liability insurance for owners of cars, motor bikes and scooters.

All other insurances are optional, but in some situations you are obliged to take one, for example when you take a mortgage on a house.

Before you apply for any insurances, check with your employer what is already insured through the company and if you can join their collective insurance.

For more information about insurances, check the website of Expat Center East Netherlands or contact us.



#### Tip:

*You can save money if you join a collective insurance. These are bigger groups of people that cover risks. For example insurances through workers unions or health insurances for people from one big company or branch. Ask your employer about the possibilities.*

### Social Security

The taxes in the Netherlands are used for an extensive system of social security and government support. People that can no longer provide for themselves because of unemployment, invalidity, illness or old age, have a guaranteed basic income so they can still participate in public life.

For more detailed information, contact Expat Center East Netherlands or visit the website of SVB (agency for social insurances) or the offices of UWV/Werkplein (administrative and reintegration offices regarding social security).

### Benefits

As a working expat you will most likely not have anything to do with these governmental allowances. The benefits are there to help pay for health care, rent for housing and child care, for people with lower and medium income. When you are living in the Netherlands with children you might be eligible for child support (Kinderbijslag).

To check if you are eligible, visit [belastingdienst.nl/toeslagen](http://belastingdienst.nl/toeslagen) or ask Expat Center East Netherlands for assistance.

### Useful words and websites

English	Dutch
Tax authorities	Belastingdienst
Tax	Belasting
Social Insurance Bank agency	SVB
Employee insurance implementing agency	UWV
Benefits	Toeslagen

Tax authorities  
UWV  
SVB

[belastingdienst.nl](http://belastingdienst.nl)  
[UWV.nl](http://UWV.nl)  
[SVB.nl](http://SVB.nl)



Roombeek Enschede

Dutch homes are probably very different from the houses in your home country. The style and size may differ, but also the way utility bills are handled or rental contracts are set up. In this chapter, we give you useful tips and 'what to expect' when you go house hunting.

### What to expect in a Dutch house?

- Houses are smaller and more compact than in many countries.
- One bathroom is standard; 'en suite' bedrooms are very rare.
- The toilet is often separate and on the ground floor.
- Showers are more common than bathtubs.
- Dining rooms are a luxury – normally there is an open kitchen and living room with a dining area.
- Ovens and dishwashers are not always standard.
- Separate utility rooms are found only in larger houses.
- Garages that fit your car are not always present. There will usually be a shed or storage space to place your bike, in apartment buildings these can be shared spaces with the neighbours.
- Parking permits are needed in some areas, particularly if you are living in or close to the city centre.
- Houses are well insulated, with gas heating and newer buildings will be double-glazed.



#### Fun Fact:

*The Netherlands is one of the most densely populated countries in Europe, with more than 400 people per square kilometre. The high population density explains why many houses are small and compact. Dutch builders are extremely skilled in maximizing the use of space.*

Housing

# Living

### Renting a house

As an expat in the Netherlands you will most likely rent a house or apartment. Basically there are two types of rentals: social renting through a housing association and private renting through a real estate agent. In both cases be aware of the composition of the rent. The rent can include or exclude the cost for gas, water and electricity and in social renting you might have to pay local taxes for garbage and sewer.

Houses and apartments for rent are available in three different states of furnishing:

- **Bare (kaal):** there are no carpets, curtains, light fittings, etc., though there will probably be a fitted kitchen. Sometimes the rooms need to be (re)ainted.
- **Soft-furnished (gestoffeerd):** like the 'bare' category, but with carpets and curtains and sometimes a more complete kitchen.
- **Furnished (gemeubileerd):** generally includes all of the above, plus furniture, appliances, cutlery, crockery, bed linen, etc.

### Housing associations

Rental houses offered by social housing associations are houses meant for people with a low or medium income. You have to register with the association upon arrival in the Netherlands to become entitled to a house. Be aware that there can be a waiting list, but some associations work with lottery systems where the computer randomly picks one of the people that subscribed to the house. Rental costs are relatively low (around € 700 per month, unfurnished).

### Private rentals

Estate agents manage private rental housing. The rental price for these houses is considerably higher than accommodation found through a social housing association, but in general these houses are available for immediate tenancy and there are no requirements regarding income. The owner can however require a minimum income to make sure you can pay for the house.

Rent varies widely, but you could expect to pay the following (excluding service costs and utilities):

### Type of housing with rental price per month (indication):

- **Studio apartment €400-700**
- **Two bedroom apartment €700-1200**
- **Three bedroom apartment €1000-1450**
- **Semi detached house > €900**
- **Detached house > €1200**

Dutch housing rental contracts generally consist of the actual contract plus 'General Terms and Conditions'. The latter document is standard for all properties rented by the agency in question. You will have to sign the Dutch version of the rental contract, as only this one is legal, but you can ask for an English translation so that you know what you are signing for.



Bricks Twente rental agency assist companies as well as private individuals in achieving a smooth relocation.

Bricks Twente rental agency is a medium-sized rental and purchase real estate agency located in the Roombeek district in Enschede. We offer a varied range of rental properties in the Twente region.

You can choose from bare, upholstered or fully furnished houses, apartments and studios. In most cases, the minimum rental period is 12 months, but we also offer short-stay homes that can be rented for 1 to 6 months.



BricksTwente

[www.brickstwente.nl](http://www.brickstwente.nl) | +31(0)53 4824648 | [info@brickstwente.nl](mailto:info@brickstwente.nl)



## Looking to buy or rent a house?

We are a full service estate agent

representing you!



In **good hands!**

- ✓ Buying process
- ✓ Bidding process
- ✓ Mortgage
- ✓ Transfer to notary

*Your partner in the entire home buying or renting process!*

## CONTRACT

- ✓ PRICE
- ✓ DEPOSIT
- ✓ DATE OF ENTRY
- ✓ DURATION
- ✓ MAINTENANCE
- ✓ REPAIRS
- ✓ DURATION
- ✓ DIPLOMATIC CLAUSULE

Major points to look for in the contract are:

- The correct rental price (whether it includes service charges and energy bills, etc.)
- The correct deposit (one or two month's rent is normal).
- The correct date of entry.
- Duration of the contract. Most are fixed for one year, with a notice period of one month from either party thereafter.
- Who is responsible for maintenance, repairs and the garden?
- The 'diplomatic clause'. It is advisable for expats to insist on a clause allowing them to break the contract quickly if they need to return to their home country unexpectedly.

**Fun Fact:**

Houses in the East of the Netherlands are less expensive and/or more spacious than in the Amsterdam, Utrecht, Den Haag and Rotterdam area (known as 'de Randstad') This region offers a wide range of housing – from the city feel to village life in the surrounding countryside.

**Utilities**

For obtaining a gas and electricity connection, you can choose your own provider. But to know which one suits you best (depending on your personal situation), you can compare the providers using: Easynuts.nl.

The supply of water in the province of Overijssel is always arranged by Vitens. Information about getting connected can be found on their website [www.vitens.nl](http://www.vitens.nl) (in Dutch) or by phone 0900-0650.

It is customary in the Netherlands to pay your utilities in advance with monthly payments. After a year, the utility company will check your actual usage and payments you've already made. Depending on the total amount paid, you will get a refund or have to pay extra. Most companies will offer you a price based on estimated use for your type of house and family composition. After a few months you can review your actual use online and adjust your monthly payment. When you do this be aware of using more gas in winter for heating.

**Fun Fact**

Gas is relatively cheap in the Netherlands, as we have our own gas reserves in the province of Groningen and under the North Sea. But pumping gas from the well in Groningen led to earthquakes in the North of the Netherlands, causing damage to houses. After large protests, the government decided that the gas tap will be turned off completely in 2030.

## Fully furnished Apartments for rent

Resort Bad Boekelo  
Oude Deldenerweg 203 | 7548 PM Boekelo



Starting price:  
€ 1200,-



Resort Bad Boekelo

7KM FROM ENSCHEDE/HENGLO

FOR RENT

FLEXIBEL RENT CONDITIONS

2



2







58 m<sup>2</sup>



Free parking



Resort Bad Boekelo

+31(0)53 428 30 05

[www.tijdelijkewoonruimteenschede.nl](http://www.tijdelijkewoonruimteenschede.nl)

[www.sheetz.nl/resortbadboekelo](http://www.sheetz.nl/resortbadboekelo)

[receptie.badboekelo@sheetz.nl](mailto:receptie.badboekelo@sheetz.nl)

Oude Deldenerweg 203 | 7548 PM Boekelo

**Housing benefit**

In case your income is relatively low in proportion to the rental cost of your house, there is a rent benefit that is granted by the government as compensation to your costs. This arrangement can also be applied to the housing possibilities that are described, as long as the monthly rent costs do not exceed a certain amount.

To find out if you are eligible for this grant, visit the website of the tax authorities [www.belastingdienst.nl](http://www.belastingdienst.nl) and go to the section Individuals/benefits.

**Buying a house**

Although most people will rent for a while before buying a house, the difference in monthly payments can make purchasing property an attractive option for those staying longer.

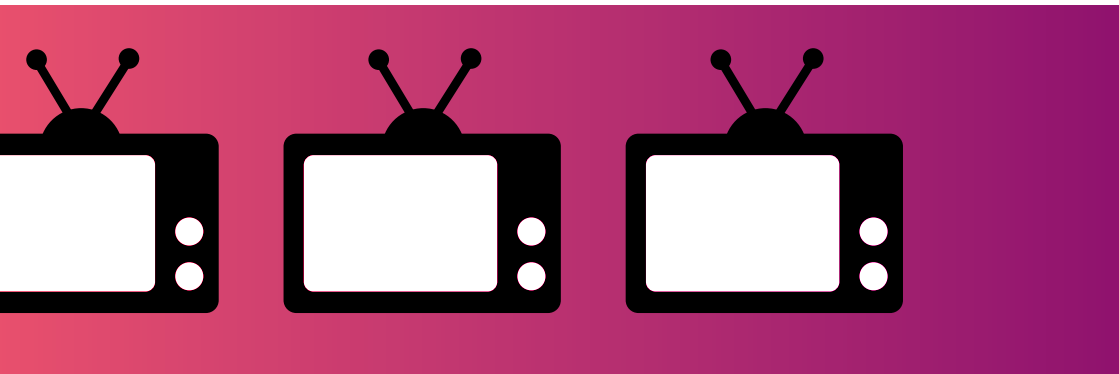
The difference comes largely from the fact that (for the time being at least) the Dutch government repays some of the mortgage interest as tax relief. But before you acquire your new property you need to go through a time-consuming

process with quite a lot of third parties involved, such as the real estate agent (property broker), the bank that is granting you a mortgage, the civil law notary and the tax consultants.

**Some parts of the process include:**

- Starting to look around for the house (research).
- Doing the negotiations with the selling estate agent and making sure that the right conditions for the purchase are accepted.
- Taking care of the technical survey.
- Making a proper judgment of the (legal) contents of the purchase agreement.
- Taking care of the mortgage with the requested conditions.
- Collecting the required documents for the mortgage.
- Contacting the civil law notary for setting up the legal deeds for delivery to you of the property and the mortgage (including translations).
- Taking care of the involved tax matters.

For finding a house and assistance in tax matters, we can recommend our partners in real estate as mentioned in the separate overview.



## Get connected

### Phone

There are several possibilities for mobile phone providers.

Some will offer a complete package with phone and contract, others prepaid or simcard only. Some providers also offer discounts when you register several sim-cards at one address for the whole family.

**A lot of the information can be found online. Good websites to compare the providers are:**

**[www.easynuts.nl](http://www.easynuts.nl)**

**[www.prijsvergelijk.nl](http://www.prijsvergelijk.nl)**

**[www.telecomvergelijker.nl](http://www.telecomvergelijker.nl)**

**[www.vergelijk.nl](http://www.vergelijk.nl)**

In the city centres you will find general telecom shops and specific shops per provider.

### TV and internet

Some providers for mobile phones, also offer connections for TV and internet. You can choose an all-in-one package: phone, TV and internet or just one or two of the connections. You can order your subscription online or at the shop of the provider. You can request for a technician to set up the system in your home, which is sometimes included in the price.

**To compare the various providers, you can use the websites [www.easynuts.nl](http://www.easynuts.nl), [www.utility-provider.nl](http://www.utility-provider.nl) or [www.aanbiedercheck.nl/en](http://www.aanbiedercheck.nl/en).**





As an expat you most probably already have a job when you arrive in the Netherlands. For partners arriving with you, there are several options to finding a job. Found a job and negotiating your contract? Check the website of Expat Center East Netherlands for information about employment conditions.

Do you want to follow an education or you have school-going children? Read on and learn about the possibilities of (international) education in the region.

### Finding a Job

As in most countries, your network is the best source for job vacancies. Not all job offers are made public online or through employment agencies. So make sure all your friends and neighbours know you are looking for a job.

Besides using your personal network, finding a job in the Netherlands is mostly done through employment agencies. The biggest in Overijssel are Randstad, Tempo Team and Timing. You usually register online, after which you can apply for vacancies that they offer. They will invite you for an interview when they think you are a suitable candidate or when they have found you as a match for a client with the help of their database.

You can also use websites that give an overview of all jobs. For example, a good website for international jobs in Twente is [twente.com/jobs](https://twente.com/jobs) or [twente.com/talent](https://twente.com/talent) and international jobs in the Netherlands is [togetherabroad.nl](https://togetherabroad.nl). Also [justlanded.com](https://justlanded.com) is helpful for international jobs and offers a forum for expats in the Netherlands for questions about working and living.



### Networks in Twente

To increase the chance of finding a job, you can broaden your network by visiting the events organized by the Expat Center East Netherlands and World Trade Center Twente. Some of the events are with a specific topic, others more general. Women can join specific women network groups such as Women.inc, Tafel van 1 and Twente VOS. Although these groups are not necessarily international, they welcome expats as well.

### Job Coaching and Courses

Thinking about switching careers or want to improve certain skills like presenting yourself or get job interview training? Perhaps you want your resume to be checked or get practical tips on how to find a job in the Netherlands. Job coaches can help you with this.

Our partners listed on the separate overview are all experienced in helping international employees. Contact them for more information.

Want to learn how to speak some Dutch? Read more on page 83.

### Volunteering

Doing work for free for your community is deeply rooted in the Dutch culture. Almost half of the Dutch population volunteer at least once a year, differing from helping at school, sport clubs, in the community centre or helping the elderly.

Volunteering is a great way to spend time when you are unemployed, help your community, meet new people (and with that grow your network) and learn the language. Volunteering is highly appreciated on resumes when you are applying for jobs. For finding voluntary work you can visit these websites, offer your expertise and look for vacancies (in Dutch):

- Overview in the **Netherlands**: [www.vrijwilligerswerk.nl](http://www.vrijwilligerswerk.nl) (click on your province to find projects in your city)
- **Hengelo** and surroundings: [www.servicepuntvrijwilligerswerkhengelo.nl](http://www.servicepuntvrijwilligerswerkhengelo.nl)
- **Enschede** and surroundings: [www.m-pact.nl](http://www.m-pact.nl)
- **Almelo** and surroundings: [www.avedan.nl](http://www.avedan.nl)
- **Zwolle** and surroundings: [www.zwolledoet.nl](http://www.zwolledoet.nl)
- **Deventer** and surroundings: [www.vrijwilligersstad.nl](http://www.vrijwilligersstad.nl)

### Adult Education

**Want to go back to school? The region has several options for studying both full time and part time.**

The highest education possible in the province of Overijssel is at the University of Twente in Enschede. You can follow several bachelors, premasters and master programmes that are mostly offered in English in the fields of technical science, politics and business. Also check out their Dutch language classes, public lectures and events on [www.utwente.nl](http://www.utwente.nl).

When it comes to universities of applied sciences, Overijssel has two: Saxion University, with locations in Enschede and Deventer, and Windesheim University in Zwolle. They offer more practical bachelor and some master programmes. Some courses and international events are open to non-students.

The biggest provider of practical courses is ROC (Regional Educational Centre). Here you can find many courses like Dutch language courses that can be followed during the day or in weekends. Most other courses are in Dutch.



#### Fun Fact:

*Overijssel has a university of arts. ArtEZ, with locations in Enschede and Zwolle, offers bachelor and master programmes. The students also exhibit and perform their work. Check out the ArtEZ website for events; [artez.nl](http://artez.nl).*



## Schools and childcare

**Children usually attend a preschool ('peuterschool' or 'peuterspeelzaal') around the age of 3. This gives them the opportunity to interact with other children in a playful manner and become accustomed to certain school-like rules. From the age of 4, children are permitted to attend school in the Netherlands and school is compulsory for children from the age of 5 to 18.**

In the Netherlands you are not appointed a school, so you can choose the school for your child yourself. Be aware there is no transport to and from schools provided by the government or school, apart from schools for children with special needs. Children from the age of 4 are first admitted to an 8-year primary school. After completion of primary school, children make a choice for their secondary education. In cases where a school offers both primary and secondary education, the transition from one educational level to the next is uninterrupted.

Both local and international education is available in the region. Especially when you plan to stay in the Netherlands for a long period, local, Dutch, education can be an option to consider. In the main cities of the region, you will also find local secondary schools that offer Dutch-English bilingual education.



## Dutch education

Keep in mind that, when you choose a Dutch School, foreign children aged six and older are usually required to follow a Dutch immersion programme ('schakelklas' or 'nieuwkomersklas'), before starting regular education in the Netherlands. Special classes are offered in Hengelo, Oldenzaal, Almelo, Deventer, Zwolle & Enschede for primary education and in Enschede, Zwolle & Deventer for secondary education. Younger foreign children, however, can usually start at a regular Dutch primary school or preschool straight away as they pick up the language more easily. If you would like to know more about these immersion programmes and at which schools they are offered, you can always contact the Expat Center East Netherlands.

## International education

If you want your child(ren) to attend international preschool, primary or secondary education, these are the possibilities the region has to offer:

### Preschool

#### The Little Prince

An international preschool with two locations in Enschede, with a bilingual curriculum (Dutch and English) especially for toddlers. Here children from various nationalities are prepared for a smooth transition to primary school in the Netherlands or elsewhere in the world.

**Main Address: Bisschopstraat 41, Enschede**

**Website: [www.humankind.nl](http://www.humankind.nl)**



#### Fun Fact

*You will discover many types and sorts of school education in the Netherlands. Historically every religion and/or philosophy had its own school, like catholic or protestant education. This diversion is still visible although educational beliefs are more and more the diverging factor for example in Montessori, Dalton or Freinet schools.*



### Primary Education

#### International School Twente (IST):

IST offers international education from age 4-18 with the primary and secondary school at separate locations in Enschede. The primary school works with the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) alongside the National Curriculum for England, offering an exciting thematic approach.

**Address:** Johannes ter Horststraat 30, Enschede

**Website:** [www.internationalschooltwente.nl](http://www.internationalschooltwente.nl)

### Secondary Education

#### International School Twente (IST):

IST offers international education from age 4-18 with the primary and secondary school at separate locations in Enschede. The secondary school works with the Cambridge International Secondary Curriculum and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme which allows graduates to continue their (university) studies in the Netherlands or elsewhere.

**Address:** Het Stedelijk Lyceum Zuid, Tiemeister 20, Enschede

**Website:** [www.internationalschooltwente.nl](http://www.internationalschooltwente.nl)



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### Primary and Secondary combined

#### The International School Eerde

Situated near Zwolle, ISE is the only boarding school in the Netherlands and housed on the grounds of an old mansion. The school also offers regular daily education for primary and secondary years. The IPC (International Primary Curriculum) program is followed for the primary school and IGSC and IB for secondary school.

**Address:** Kasteellaan 1, Ommen


**Website:** [www.eerde.nl](http://www.eerde.nl)



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## Transportation & Everyday Life

# Life



**Finding your way in everyday life, both literally and figuratively, takes some time! how does the public transportation work? Do I need a bike? What to do with my garbage? And where can I find a handyman? All these questions are about to be answered here.**

### By car

Overijssel is connected to the rest of the country by some highways, of which the A1 and A28 are used most frequently. The A1 connects the east to the west and leads you from the German border via Oldenzaal and Deventer all the way to Amsterdam. The A28 connects the north (Groningen) to the central part (Utrecht) of the Netherlands. Departing from Zwolle to one of these directions, you will take this highway.

Within the region of Twente, the A35 connects the three cities: from Enschede, through Hengelo to Almelo. If you continue on your way to Zwolle, you'll be driving on the N35 to the west of the province.

### Rent or buy a car

Although the public transport brings you almost everywhere, you might want to explore the region by car or you need a car for easier commuting and getting around. You will find several car dealers in the area, usually specialised in a certain brand. They sell new and used cars.

Renting a car is easy and not very expensive for short periods. Most prices are fixed per day from early morning until late evening or for small cars per 24 hours. Needless to say you need a driver's licence and be aware that the years of driving experience and the minimum or maximum age of the driver can differ per rental company.

### Public transportation

Since the Netherlands is a small country with a dense population, public transport is everywhere. The Dutch trains and buses are known for their punctuality and extensive schedules. In Overijssel there is no metro or tram, only bus and train.

Confused concerning your connections? Use the website 9292.nl. It will plan the best route for you with all existing types of public transport, considering delays and maintenance.

### OV chip card

For all types of public transport it is advised to use an OV chip card, a public transport pass.

This is an easy electronic payment method for public transportation in the whole country. Besides in trains and buses, you can also use it on trams, metro's and ferryboats in all other cities, like Amsterdam, The Hague and Rotterdam.

If you have an OV chip card, always make sure you have enough electronic credit before travelling. How much credit is needed, varies per transport company.

Don't forget to check IN and check OUT with your card every time you travel, or you can get a fine. On the website ov-chipkaart.nl you can find all the necessary information, in English.

#### There are 2 types of OV chip cards:

- **Personalised card:** available online on ov-chipkaart.nl. You need this card if you want to buy monthly or annual subscriptions for discounts with transport companies or invoice your transport costs to your employer. It's connected to your bank account and you are the only one that can travel with it.
- **Anonymous card:** available at the ticket machine or ticket office at train and bus stations, some kiosks and supermarkets. The card needs to be topped up manually and can be passed on and used by other people. You can check your travel details and invoice your employer.



#### Fun fact

The Dutch value their punctuality so much, that a delay for a few minutes is already seen as an inconvenience. It will be mentioned on the information screens and announced through the intercoms at the (train) station. Don't be surprised if people get upset by this, as they might miss their connections during their trip in the tight schedule of trains and busses.

### Train

Trains are very convenient for medium and long distance travel, as the Netherlands has an extensive railway network. All main cities and also many towns have a train station. Most trains offer a choice between first and second class.

Use your OV-chip card or buy a ticket. Tickets are available at the Netherlands Railways (NS) ticket offices, at the ticket machines at train stations, or directly via the NS web page [www.ns.nl](http://www.ns.nl).

For national travel, there is no need to make seat reservations and you can buy tickets up to the moment the train is leaving. For rides across the borders, you do need to buy your ticket in advance and often make a seat reservation.



#### Tip

Planning a day trip or a weekend by train? Check out the NS Spoordeelwinkel at [spoordeelwinkel.nl](http://spoordeelwinkel.nl). Here NS offers discounts and special deals, often in combination with visits to shops, museums and hotels. Also shops like Hema, Kruidvat and Blokker offer discounted train fares on a regular basis. Keep an eye on the advertisements in the stores or online.

### Bus

The regional bus network is very efficient and covers pretty much all of the region. If you are travelling to or from a small town without a train station, then the bus is the way to go! However, for long-distance travel, regional buses are not convenient, as they are slower than the train. There are different bus companies, depending on the municipality. You can pay either by OV chip card, in cash and in some buses using your debit card. When paying in cash, the bus driver would appreciate it if you paid in coins instead of large banknotes.



### Airport

Flying for business, going back to your home country or receiving guests that are arriving by plane? Consider the airports around the east of the Netherlands, besides Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam. At a 1,5 to 2 hour drive by car you find Eindhoven Airport and across the German border Dusseldorf, Münster-Osnabrück and Weeze. The Dutch cities of Rotterdam, Groningen and Maastricht also have airports, with flights within Europe, especially in summer to holiday destinations.

### Bicycles

Cycling is the most common way to travel short distances in the Netherlands. Wonderful bike paths all over the country and flat lands make biking a popular way to get around or spend leisure time. Wearing a helmet is not obligatory, but recommended for children or when you go cross country cycling or mountain biking.

You can travel with your bike on trains but be aware that you have to buy an extra ticket for your bike, these are available at the ticket machines at the stations. Foldable bikes can go on the train for free.

Be aware that the theft of bicycles is one of the most common crimes in the Netherlands. If you spend a lot of money on a bike, buying insurance is advisable, but do realise that the bike needs to have approved locks.

Make sure you have a strong lock or even a second lock, with which you can attach your bike to the assigned parking facilities, trees or fences. Also buying a non-standard bike or painting and decorating your bike prevents theft, since it stands out more and is easier to be recognised. Make pictures of the bike to hand in to the police or insurance in case it gets stolen. Note the frame number, which can be found on the frame of the bike. This number is important in identifying your stolen bike.

**Tip**  
*Going downtown on your bike? Most big cities all have free parking facilities in their centres that are secured by staff of the municipality. Look out for these or search online with the words 'bewaakte fietsenstalling' or 'gratis fietsenstalling'.*



The city bikes in the Netherlands have a distinct difference between bikes for men or women. The male bikes have a horizontal shaft, making the frame a strong triangle. When ladies starting riding bikes this shaft was removed because of the struggle with their long skirts.

### Buying a bike

With an average of 1,1 bike per inhabitant, the Netherlands offers a wide range of bikes in all shapes and sizes. Nowadays it becomes more and more common to buy an e-bike (electronic bike). With the help of a small motor in your bike it becomes even more easy to commute or to explore the area by bike. If you think of buying an e-bike it's advisable to do some proper research, as there is a big difference in the technique being used which is then related to the price of the bike.

You'll find many shops with new and used bikes, including workshops for repairs and maintenance and the possibility of renting a bike.

You can find good deals in the second hand department of the shops or you can buy a second hand bike privately such as offered on the website Marktplaats.nl. If you do buy a bike privately, do check if the bike was perhaps stolen on [fdr.rdw.nl](http://fdr.rdw.nl) by filling in the chip number, brand or frame number.

Some things to check when buying a bike: good brakes, working lights, good tyres and a working bell. The bike should not make any noise when cycling and you should be sitting comfortably and able to reach the peddles easily.

## Public Facilities

### Emergency services

The emergency phone number in the Netherlands is 112, like most European countries. For questions or reports that are not urgent you can call the police on 0900 8844.

### Emergencies

**Dial 112 to contact an ambulance, fire department or police.**

In the Netherlands, most municipalities have special police officers in the neighbourhoods, called 'wijkagent'. This officer gives information about improving the safety in the neighbourhood. He can be approached for questions or suggestions and non-urgent reports.

### Garbage

Depending on the municipality you live in, the garbage in Overijssel is collected and processed by either Twente Milieu or ROVA. The Dutch are very keen on separating and recycling the different types of garbage, like glass, paper, biological/green waste and plastics. Often you will find special bins at local supermarkets where you can dispose of different types of garbage such as plastic, glass or clothes. This separation is not only good for the environment, in most municipalities the more you separate your waste, the less you pay through taxes. Check out the website of Twente Milieu or ROVA or ask your neighbours about the system of separating and collecting garbage in your neighbourhood.



#### Tip:

*'Reduce, reuse, recycle' is a rule of thumb you can keep in mind when processing your garbage. Try to use fewer resources in the first place, figure out a way to reuse the objects you did use (like a jam jar as storage for food and herbs) and lastly dispose of rest of the waste accordingly.*

### Help around the house

Most people in the Netherlands do the chores in and around the house themselves. Hiring a professional gardener, handyman, housekeeper or nanny/babysitter is not difficult, but can be expensive. For (cheaper) options, check out the advertisement wall at your local supermarket to get in touch with help from your neighbourhood. Also the website marktplaats.nl is a source of people who offer their services.

### Smoking in public

You're not allowed to smoke in public buildings, bars and restaurants. Most of them offer separate smoking areas, although rules will become more strict the coming years. Be aware that in some places, smoking is prohibited, both indoors and outdoors.

### News media

Following the Dutch news can be difficult if you don't speak the language (yet). There are English news media in the Netherlands for expats like you. Take a look at the websites Dutch News, NL times, Dutch Daily News and IamExpat.

If you do want to follow the Dutch-spoken news: NOS is the most known broadcaster on a national level. For regional and local news check out the websites and channels of RTV Oost, De Twentsche Courant Tubantia and De Stentor.





📷 Market Enschede

# Dutch

Dutch Language & Culture

The official language in the Netherlands is Dutch, which is one of the Germanic languages. Most foreigners find the pronunciation difficult, which consists of growling g's and rolling r's. Also, the order of the many small words can be quite a puzzle when you are still learning to make your own sentences. But learning the language is the key to understanding Dutch people and culture. You will find an introduction to the Dutch language and culture in this section, and you will learn much more about during your stay in the Netherlands.

Most people in the country speak or understand English. However, when you're looking for a job, understanding Dutch will help. Also, some of the public and governmental information is still published in Dutch only, which makes it a good idea to invest some time learning the local language. Besides, what better way to integrate than by speaking the language a little?

If you are gathering information online or you receive letters in Dutch and you need help translating, feel free to contact the team of Expat Center East Netherlands.

Many regions in the Netherlands have their own dialects and accents. In the South, the sounds are more soft and the growling g is more like a whisper. In Overijssel, there are many different dialects that belong to the West Low German ('Nedersaksisch') dialects, of which Twents is the most frequently used. In Twente, this dialect is actively used by about half of the inhabitants.

In the North, there even exists an individual language. This is Frisian, which is spoken in most parts of the province of Friesland.



## Fun Fact

*The Dutch language is also spoken in the overseas parts of the kingdom of the Netherlands: on the Caribbean islands of Saba, Sint Eustatius, Bonaire, Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten. In South Africa you'll hear an old version of Dutch and in the former colony of Suriname you will find Dutch-speaking communities.*



## Useful Dutch words and phrases

English	Dutch
Do you speak English?	Spreekt u Engels?
Hello	Hallo
Goodbye	Dag, tot ziens
Good morning	Goedemorgen
Good afternoon	Goedemiddag
Good evening	Goedenavond
Thank you	Dank u
Please	Alstublieft
Yes	Ja
No	Nee
Excuse me	Pardon
Entrance	Ingang
Exit	Uitgang
Lovely	Mooi
Tasty	Lekker
How do I get to the city centre?	Hoe kom ik in het centrum?
Where can I find a supermarket?	Waar is een supermarkt?

## Language Training

Even though nearly all Dutch speak or understand English, learning some Dutch yourself is recommended if you want to find your way in everyday life. It will help you find a job and Dutch people will highly appreciate that you have made the effort. Learning a language on your own can be a challenge. Fortunately, there are many options that will help you.

Expat Center East Netherlands offers such a Dutch language course. In a small group you will get personal attention and coaching while learning Dutch. A digital Dutch language method is used as an effective guide to learn a variety of practical language skills. The course book also provides insights in the Dutch culture. In addition to the book you will get extra information and exercises tailor-made for your own language level and background. Check out the website of Expat Center East Netherlands to find out more about the course.

For Dutch language training we can also recommend our partners, listed in the separate overview. They are professional trainers who have experience in teaching expats and foreign students. The lessons can be given at the time and location of your choice, can be individual or in small classes, are tailor made to your current level of Dutch with competitive rates. If you want official recognition of your Dutch language skills, you will need to follow a course that offers exams within the NT2 structure ('Dutch as a second language').

Thanks!

Bye!

Lol

See you!

Ha-ha!

Yes!

ok!

Good bye!

The following 'taalcafés' are also often held in public places like libraries and neighbourhood centres and you can join these gatherings for free:

- **Taalcafé Hengelo:** every Tuesday from 10.00 - 12.00 and Friday from 14.00–16.00 in the library (bibliotheek) at Beursstraat 34 in Hengelo.
- **Praathuis Enschede:** every Monday and Thursday morning from 09.45-12.00 at the library (Centrale Bibliotheek) at Pijpenstraat 15 in Enschede. At the library south at Wesselernering 46 (Bibliotheek Enschede Zuid) every Wednesday and Thursday from 10.30-12.00.
- **Taalcafé Zwolle:** every Thursday from 09.30-11.30 at the Stadkamer (library) Stadshagen at Werkerlaan 1b in Zwolle and every Friday from 09.30-11.30 at the Stadkamer (library) Centrum at Zeven Alleetjes 1a in Zwolle.
- **Taafcafé Deventer:** Once every two weeks on Friday from 09.00-11.00 at the library (bibliotheek) at Brink 70 in Deventer.



#### Practice Dutch

Do you want to practise your Dutch in a casual setting? In all major cities in Overijssel you can find Dutch conversation groups, like the Dutch Conversation Club in Enschede.



#### Dutch Culture

Virtually everyone shakes hands in the Netherlands, both upon greeting and upon departure. In informal situations (with friends or relatives) women and men may also exchange three kisses, on alternating cheeks. Men usually only exchange three kisses with women, not with men.

The Dutch find it very important to be punctual, both in professional and private situations. Call if you are delayed, and avoid cancelling meetings at the last minute. Don't forget that work meetings usually adhere to a strict agenda, finishing at an appointed time.

#### At work

Many foreigners find the Dutch direct and abrupt at first. However, there is no intention to be rude. The Dutch say what they mean and speak their minds! Also in work situations feedback and criticism can be very direct between the different layers in the hierarchy. But it's encouraged and appreciated as long as it's done in a respectful way.

Dutch people value their personal time. Therefore, not many people will work late or over the weekend. In valuing their personal time, Dutch also tend to keep work and private life separate. They will not easily ask you over to their house or invite you to hang out after work. Exception is the typical 'borrel': a drink and a small snack after work with a group of colleagues. Like in any professional situation, it is not appreciated to get wasted.

If you come from a country where decisions are made by bosses and meetings are short, you could be in for a shock. Dutch society puts great emphasis on the need for people at all levels to have their say in the decision making processes, and on finding consensus. This can slow the process, but it ensures that everyone's view is heard.

Many international managers find that the Dutch dress very casually in the work place. In sectors such as banking and law, the dress code is formal and traditional, but in many other industries it is casual. It is useful to realize that even if outer appearance differs greatly, the focus in the Netherlands is on content rather than form.

### At Home

Dutch people value their personal lives very much. From a historical point of view shaping your own life and making your own decisions for example about religion, education and free time is deeply rooted in the Dutch culture. The home is a central symbol of this freedom.

Although people are open and welcoming to foreigners, it is not usually appreciated if you stop by someone's house unannounced. The Dutch prefer to schedule a visit or night out in their agenda's. It's not uncommon for close friends to plan a visit two weeks in advance. But don't get stuck with this oddity and see how it goes with the people in your social circle.

Invited for a dinner at someone's home? It is common to bring a bottle of wine or flowers. However, do not expect the host to open the wine for the meal, as they might do in some cultures. The bottle is very often put aside and will be enjoyed on another occasion.

### Special occasions

For big events like weddings and funerals, Dutch people tend to invite only their close friends and family. In both cases, the real service or ceremony can even be privately held with only people that are specifically invited. Not invited? Funerals do have a moment (mostly the evening before the service) for everyone to pay their respects to the family. It's appreciated to just shake hands and keep it short. You don't have to bring any gifts.

When invited to a wedding, your card will specifically say when you are expected. If you are a colleague, neighbour or not a very close friend of the couple, you are mostly invited to the party after the wedding. Do keep in mind that there will not be any dinner or meals served, unless this is mentioned in the card.

### Holidays

The official holidays in the Netherlands mostly follow the Christian calendar. National days off are 1st of January, the Monday after Easter, Ascension Day, the Monday after Pentecost and Christmas (25 and 26 December).

The biggest and most colourful national holiday is King's Day, which is celebrated on the 27th of April. On this day, the birthday of the King is celebrated throughout the country.

The night before you will find many parties and concerts in the cities. On the day itself the whole country turns into one big market place. Everyone can freely sell second hand toys, clothes and books on the streets, although some cities do appoint a restricted area like a park, and some areas are only for children. You can stroll through the markets all day whilst enjoying music, old fashioned games and homemade sweets. In the afternoon, there are also big open air concerts and festivals in most cities.



#### Fun Fact

*On King's Day, and when the Dutch national soccer team is playing, the whole country turns orange. Weird, since this colour is not in the national flag. This is due to 'the father of the Dutch nation' - Willem van Oranje (William of Orange, 1533 - 1584). He was also prince of the city of Orange, in France and the first of our royal family.*





Another holiday in spring is on the 4th and 5th of May. On the 4th of May the Dutch commemorate Dutch war victims since the Second World War. At 8 PM the country holds two minutes of silence (even some trains will stop). You can join public memorials at monuments and graveyards to show your respect.

On the 5th of May, the atmosphere totally changes, when the Dutch celebrate the liberation after the Second World War and freedom in general. There are parties all over the country. The biggest series of events is called 'bevrijdingsfestival' (liberation festival). National artists go from city to city on this day to give free concerts in the open air. One of these cities is Zwolle, where each year over 120.000 visitors come to celebrate liberation day. Also in other cities you will find many other festivals, for example in Enschede on the terrain of the University of Twente.

**Note**  
Freedom day (5th of May) is only a national holiday once every 5 years. You want to join one of the open air concerts? Do ask your employer for a day off since this is not standardly given.



Photo, Koningsdag, Zwolle

A holiday that's unique in the Netherlands is Sinterklaas or Sint Nicolaas. On the 5th of December, all Dutch children that behaved well, receive presents from this Saint who (according to the legend) lives in Spain and arrives by steam boat every year with his helpers called Piet. Also adults tend to celebrate it playing "Secret Santa". On this night, and the weeks before, you'll find special cookies, chocolates and treats in store, specific for this time of the year like 'speculaas', 'pepernoten' and chocolate letters.

Another day when kids get all the sweets they want is Sint Maarten (11th of November). Similar to Halloween, children go door to door to receive candies. They carry lanterns and have to sing a song to receive the goodies. This holiday is not celebrated everywhere, but depends on the community.

**Quote by Adam Michael Breedham** (see image below)  
"There is nothing quite like Carnaval in Oldenzaal. Every year I'm excited to see all of the hard work and creativity put into the amazing parade floats and beautiful costumes."



Photo, Adam Michael Beecham, USA

### Food and restaurants

Dutch food is rather similar to German and Nordic cuisine. Traditionally, it consists of potatoes, cabbages, tubers, beans and other vegetables that naturally grow in this climate, fish and seafood. National dishes for example are 'snert' (pea soup) 'haring' (herring that is pickled in salt) and 'stampot' (potato mash with vegetables, for example kale, endive, carrots and onions, and sauerkraut).

The history of the country can be reflected in Dutch dishes. Trading herbs and spices, first used during the colonial period and the 17th century, are still used (cinnamon, nutmeg, clove, cardamom and laurel) nowadays. Also, the Dutch food culture is strongly influenced by dishes that foreigners brought to the country. You can find excellent Indonesian restaurants, Surinamese take-out meals like roti, and after drinking some beers Dutchies love a big döner kebab.

Going out for a meal? Do notice restaurants might be open, but their kitchen is not always available for service. For lunch and dinner there are different dishes on the menu that are served at specific times (mostly from 11:00 - 15:00 and 17:00 - 22:00). Breakfast in a restaurant is not very common (except in bakeries and lunchrooms), although brunch in the weekend is becoming more and more popular.

When you go out for drinks or a meal with a Dutch person, the expression 'going Dutch' does apply. It's common to split bills or even pay exactly for what you ordered. Tipping is not necessary. This is only common when you are extremely pleased with the service or food.



#### Tip

*Just like at work, the Dutch don't like hierarchy and people are seen as equals. Because of that your waiter might be more informal than you would expect. Calling out for them with a loud voice is considered rude. Try to wave or wink discretely to catch their attention.*

## EXPAT CENTER DUTCH LANGUAGE COURSES

To find your way in everyday life and grow your social (Dutch) network learning Dutch will help you to integrate.

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION

- [info@ecen.nl](mailto:info@ecen.nl)
- 074-2503325
- [www.ecen.nl](http://www.ecen.nl)



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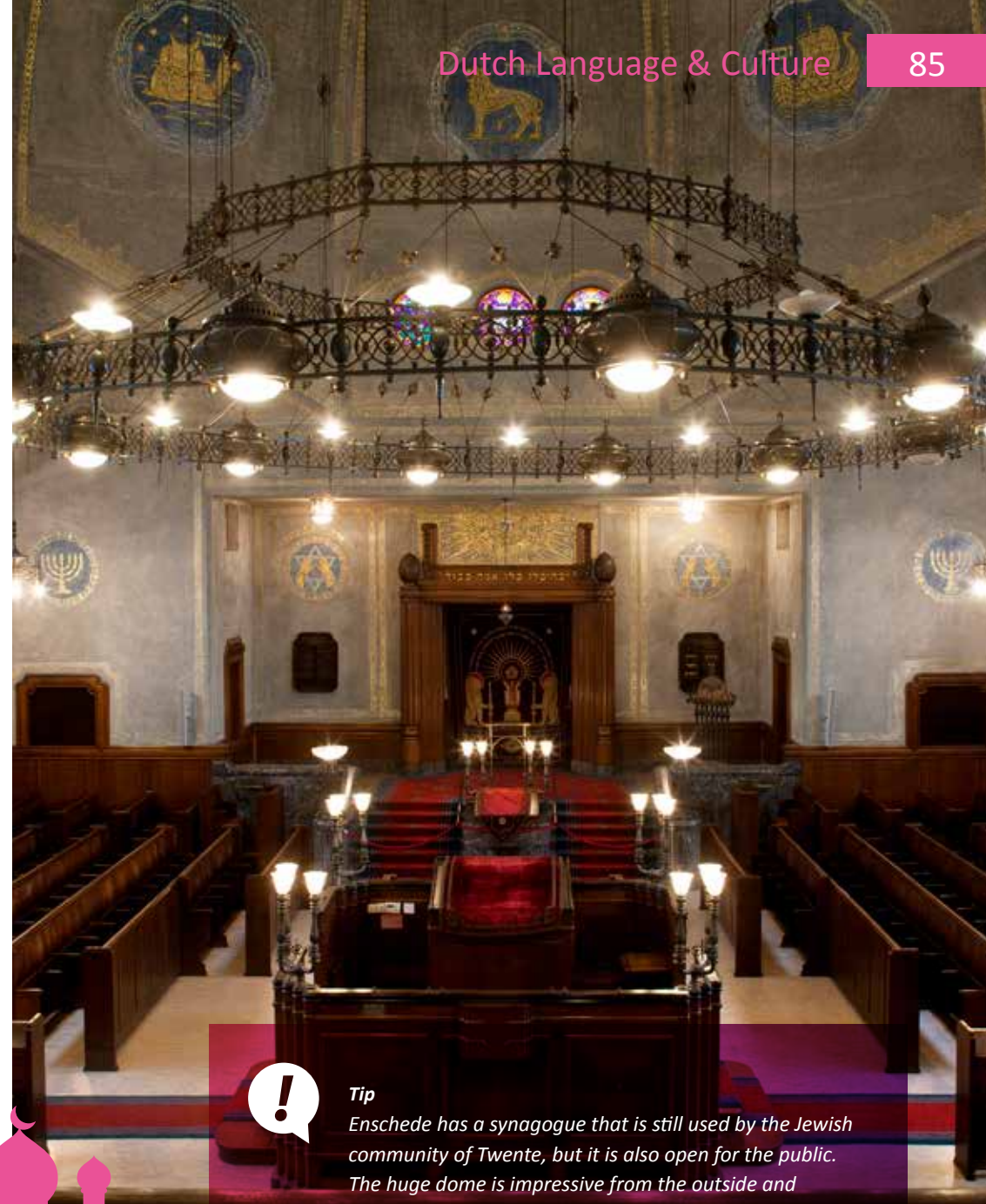


### Religion

Almost half of the people in the Netherlands say they are not religious. Half of the religious people are reported catholic, which is most actively practised in the south of the country. 16 percent of the population says they are protestant, divided in several communities of which the Reformed, Evangelic and Lutheran are the largest. Minorities are Islamic (5 percent), Jewish, Hindu or Buddhist.

Although not many people practice religion anymore in the Netherlands, Christianity does still play a role in public life. Most holidays revolve around it and Sunday is still a day of rest, with most shops closed. The shops in the city centres are open on 'koopzondag' (shopping Sunday) on fixed dates; check [www.koopzondagen.net](http://www.koopzondagen.net) to see which dates exactly.

If your local supermarket is open on Sunday, this depends on the rules of the municipality. Some cities have more restrictions than others because of Christian communities or political parties.



#### Tip

Enschede has a synagogue that is still used by the Jewish community of Twente, but it is also open for the public. The huge dome is impressive from the outside and beautiful from the inside. Check out their schedule for visits and events like lectures and concerts.





📷 Buurse

# Dialect

Regional Language & Culture

Of course, Overijssel is part of the Netherlands and the culture is mostly the same as anywhere else in the Netherlands. However, there are some noteworthy and typical traditions that distinguish Overijssel from the rest of the country.

With own dialects, food, celebrations and traditions, the different regions in Overijssel all have their own character. But despite some differences, their traditions are pretty similar. Overall, the regional culture and feeling of belonging in the regions of Overijssel is strong.

## Dialects

The dialects that are spoken in the province of Overijssel belong to the West Low German (Nedersaksisch) dialects. These can be divided into three main dialects: Stellingwerfs (Kop van Overijssel), Sallands (Salland) and Twents (Twente). However, within these dialects there are many different versions. There are over 50 different dialects throughout Overijssel; almost every city or village has their own typical dialect.

That way, there are many different ways to say different words. Some examples:

English: house

Dutch: huis

In dialect: hoës, huus, uus

English: man or boy

Dutch: kerel

In dialect: kaerel, keal, kearel, keel, kjeal

English: girl

Dutch: meisje

In dialect: daerntie, deerntie, deerntje, meiken, meaken, wich, wicht, wichie, wichke, wichtke

English: neighbour

Dutch: buurman

In dialect: buuman, buur, buurmon, naober, noaber, noawas

English: to talk / talking

Dutch: praten

In dialect: kuiern, kujern, küren, kwaekn, praot'n, proat'n

English: telephone

Dutch: telefoon

In dialect: kuierdraad, kuierdroad, kuierdroad, luliezer, praotiezer

### Food

Many regions in the Netherlands have their own food and recipes and so does Overijssel. The food can be similar to versions in the provinces of Drenthe, Groningen and Gelderland. However, Overijssel has some very specific, unique specialties, often linked to its town of origin.

For example, in Deventer, they make **Deventer koek**. This cake is inextricably linked to the city, that is often called 'Koekstad' because of their specialty. Deventer koek is a spiced honey cake that has been produced for over 400 years by cake maker Bussink. Baking this cake on your own? Impossible, the age-old recipe is still a secret.

Zwolle is known for its '**Zworse balletjes**', a traditional old Dutch candy. De 'balletjes' are small little balls that taste sweet. They come in all kinds of forms and flavours and are also made according to a secret recipe. The candy is only available in one store in Zwolle; the 'Zworse Balletjeshuis'.

'Baklever' (baking liver) and '**bloedworst**' (blood sausage) are typical Twents (from the region of Twente). They are fat sausages that are sliced and baked in butter and go nice with some dark bread. You'll find this regional specialty in many supermarkets. Blood sausage can be served with baked apples.

Another specialty from the region of Twente is '**Twents kuiernat**'. It is an alcoholic drink (30%) made with vanilla that is sometimes served next to your coffee.

'**Krentenwegge**' is a sweet bread with raisins served with a layer of creamy butter. This specialty is traditionally mostly eaten around Christmas and Easter. There are special, luxurious versions of this sweet bread around that time, called 'stol', filled with chopped almonds and almond paste and dusted with icing sugar.



Next to the national tradition of eating the so-called '**pepernoten**', '**speculaas**' and **chocolate letters** around the celebration of Sinterklaas, the town of Ommen has its own specialty around this holiday: '**zuute plassies**'. To give you an idea of what it is: 'zuute' means sweet and 'plassie' stands for bread.

'**Droge worst**' is a dried sausage, mostly eaten at a 'borrel' (drink) with your beer.

**Balkenbrij** is a dish that is mostly known in the eastern regions of the Netherlands, including Overijssel. It is traditionally made of stock left over from the making of sausages like liverwurst, boiled with flour and bacon, together with odd scraps and various organ meats of the animal. There is a great variety in recipes for this typical dish.

### Celebrations and traditions

In Overijssel there are some unique celebrations and traditions. Also some national holidays have their own version or characteristics in Twente.

For example a lot of villages in the province **light bonfires** (Paasvuur) on the evening of the Easter Sunday. It's a get-together for the community but also open for guests. The fires are of impressive size, but always approved and supervised by the fire department. Feel free to bring your own drink to celebrate the end of winter and the beginning of spring.

Another popular tradition in the countryside of Overijssel is 'carbide schieten', which translates to English like '**Carbide Shooting**'. On New Year's Eve, youngsters in the region gather in a deserted grassland with old milk cans to shoot away a football or the lid of the milk can. Make sure to cover your ears, as the noise that comes from the explosions are earsplitting.

On the afternoon of the 24th of December, Enschede and Hengelo have the tradition of '**Kerstmiddag**' (Christmas afternoon). All bars are open from noon till eight and youngsters come to drink and celebrate their Christmas holiday.

In the east of the Netherlands, people go cycling and picnicking on Ascension Day. This is called 'dauwtrappen' (stepping on the dew) since originally people used to walk and dance barefoot in the night or at dawn to cleanse themselves and mark a new period. Lots of people still start their cycling route early in the morning.

A unique tradition in Overijssel (mainly in Twente and parts of Salland) is blowing the '**midwinterhoorn**'. This is a hand carved wooden pipe that is traditionally played from the first Sunday of Advent (fourth Sunday before Christmas) until Three Kings (6th of January). Enjoy the deep sounds and typical melodies at one of the Christmas events during this period with markets, glühwein and hot chocolate.

In spring and summer, many villages in Overijssel have their annual festivities. Some of those '**zomerfeesten**' (summer parties) grew from small local parties into proper festivals and are open for everybody. Like in Beckum (Whitsun weekend), Sint Isidorushoeve (weekend of Ascension Day) and Hengevelde (2 weekends in June).

In July, Zwolle revolves entirely around the so-called '**Blauwvingerdagen**'. During this month, every Wednesday the city centre turns into one of the biggest fairs in the country. The fair is called after the inhabitants of Zwolle, who are colloquially referred to

as 'blauwvingers' (blue fingers) after a 16th century money-counting fable.

Every year, in the last week of August, the village of Raalte revolves entirely around the **Stöppelhaene**. This is a big harvest festival where old harvest traditions come to life, with a big parade and performances of famous Dutch artists.

Overijssel is home to some of the country's biggest **flower corso's**. Every year, in Vollenhove and Sint Jansklooster, the most beautiful creations of flowers parade through town.



### Noaberschap and neighbourhood life

A typical word in dialect and at the heart of the culture is 'noaberschap' or 'naoberschap'. In Twente and parts of Salland it's a very common notion. It means being there for your neighbours and look out for each other in good and bad times. You help each other in times of sickness and death, take care of the plants and animals when your neighbour is on holiday, decorate the garden for weddings, anniversaries and important birthdays (25, 50, 80 years old etc.).

In bigger cities this custom is less intense but your neighbours will still appreciate it if you drop by to introduce yourself when you just moved into the neighbourhood. They might invite you in for a coffee but you don't have to bring a welcoming gift. Feel free to ask for day-to-day-items or to borrow tools and when you are more familiar it's common to have a set of spare keys at the neighbour's house for emergencies.





Leisure

ing out

## Going out

In Overijssel there is lots to do in your free time all year round. Not only in the main cities, but also in the smaller villages and countryside; there is plenty of entertainment and events.

No inspiration? Check the websites or Facebook pages of the tourist offices, they show year-round activities but also cultural agenda's. Or just go and explore the natural beauty of the province on foot or by bike. There are many routes you can follow but going without a plan is also possible, since you don't have to be scared of getting lost in the small nature areas with many visitors and farms around.

## Culture & music

The main cities in Overijssel all have their own **theatres** with regular programmes of music, dance, plays and operas, but also cult movies and documentaries. Tickets can be quite expensive, but cheaper when you buy in advance or book several shows of the season. Main theatres in Overijssel are:

- Wilminktheater in Enschede
- Schouwburg Hengelo
- Theaterhotel Almelo
- Deventer Schouwburg
- Theater de Spiegel in Zwolle
- Schouwburg Odeon in Zwolle
- Theater de Meenthe in Steenwijk
- HOFtheater in Raalte
- Parkgebouw in Rijssen
- De Bond in Oldenzaal

In every big city in Overijssel you'll find a **cinema**. The international commercial movies are not dubbed but have Dutch subtitles with the original audio, mostly in English. When you are visiting an (animated) family movie, do check before you buy tickets. These movies are most often Dutch spoken. Biggest cinemas are Kinepolis in Enschede, Cinema Hengelo, Movie Unlimited Bioscoop Almelo, Pathé Zwolle and Vue Deventer.



### Fun Fact

*Unlike most countries, the movies in the Dutch cinema's have a break (pause) halfway through of about 10 minutes. This gives you time to stretch your legs, buy a drink or a snack and use the toilets.*



Foodtruck Festival Trek, Enschede

For **concerts** of national and international bands and artists, Overijssel has some cool stages, of which Hedon Zwolle, Burgerweeshuis Deventer, Muziekcentrum Enschede and Metropool in Hengelo are best known. It's not likely to see big international stars climbing the stages, as they only visit big stages in the west of the country. Nevertheless, the line-ups of these venues are very impressive, so check out their schedules, there is something out there for everyone.

Moreover, in spring and summer you can enjoy the music in the outdoors on festivals all over Overijssel. Big festivals in Overijssel include Bevrijdingsfestival in Zwolle on Liberation Day (5th of May), Freshtival in Enschede during the Whitsun weekend and Dauwpop near Hellendoorn on Ascension Day, although the latter is sometimes held another weekend to be sure of good weather.

### Fun & shopping

Overijssel also has a lot of other entertainment to offer, for example bowling, billiards, laser gaming, paint balling and go karting. At GoPlanet in Enschede you can find an entertainment area which even has a scuba diving tower. Activities for big groups while exploring the landscape of Overijssel are for example canoeing and rides on solex scooters or with tuk tuks. Moreover, so-called escape rooms gain in popularity as group activities. Players are locked into a room and by solving puzzles and riddles they try to escape. You can find these escape rooms throughout the whole province of Overijssel and offer a great activity to undertake with friends or colleagues.

For fans of shopping, the main cities in Overijssel offer a broad pallet of shops, both big stores for clothes as well as small specialised shops with comic books, decorations and music. Enschede, Zwolle and Deventer, but also Hengelo and Almelo are good for a long day of shopping. Smaller towns like Oldenzaal and Borne can keep you strolling for an afternoon.

Second hand purchases are becoming more and more normal and the quality of the offered items is growing. Check out shops that say 'tweedehands' like Het Goed or "Kringloop winkel" in almost all cities for cheap but good furniture, kitchen equipment and books.

Also second hand clothing shops are very clean and reliable for example Appel & Ei and La Penderie in Enschede, where you can also sell your old (designer) clothes. Buying from individuals is also very common for example on the website Marktplaats.nl or via ads that people hang at supermarkets and community centres. If you buy from



individuals living afar (ie. the item will be sent by mail): make sure you see pictures of the item before sending money and with expensive purchases suggest that you pay a part before and a part after having received the item.

In most cities you'll find charity shops where you can donate your goods that will be sold again. The profits will go to charity projects.

**Tip**  
*Just across the border, in Germany, there are also many fine cities and shopping centres. Some products are cheaper or you'll find different products, like shoes, electronics and furniture. Visit Gronau by train, Nordhorn or the outlet stores in Ochtrup by car. During the Christmas season Münster and the medieval town of Bad Bentheim have an amazing atmosphere at their Christmas markets.*



## Kids

### Playgrounds

There are many opportunities for kids in Overijssel to run around and have a good time. Both indoors and outdoors.

Indoor playgrounds are common, where you can buy a big jug of lemonade for a couple of euros and let the kids go their own way. The playgrounds ask a small entrance fee, but you can enjoy yourself all day. The children are still your responsibility, so do keep an eye on them! You could for example visit Bengeltjesdorp in Hengelo, Kids City in Borne, Avontura in Enschede, Preston Palace in Almelo, Djambo Kidsplay and Monkey Town in Zwolle or De Wolventuin in Ommen.

Nice weather? Enjoy one of the restaurants with lunchrooms that have big outdoor playgrounds outside of the cities, like Molenven in Saasveld, Villa Kakelbont in Vasse or 't Hoogspel in Delden. The entrance is mostly free, if you order a beverage and enjoy the terrace.

**Tip**  
*You want the kids to meet some children from your neighbourhood? Go visit a local playground. Those are the fenced playgrounds, sometimes run by volunteers that offer activities especially in summer and during school holidays.*

### Theme parks

For a full day of amusement with the whole family, you can go to theme parks. In Twente you'll find De Waarbeek in Hengelo, Attractiepark Hellendoorn en Themepark&Resort Slagharen. The biggest are outside of the region, like Walibi Flevoland and the typical Dutch Efteling.

Don't forget about Germany! Just across the border you can find Wunderland Kalkar and Movie Park Germany.

Tickets can be expensive, so plan your visit well so you can enjoy it as long as possible. Most parks offer deals online that include meals or a stay at their hotel or bungalow park.





## Sports

### Sport clubs

There are sporting facilities in every city and village. You can find fitness gyms in almost every town, which offer different types of deals and group lessons. If you want to join a team you can become a member at one of the many sport clubs in Overijssel, where you pay a monthly or annual fee to join a team. The most popular sport is football (soccer), with clubs even in the smallest villages. Other sports you can join are volleyball, hockey, rowing, handball, rugby, American football, baseball and softball, water polo, golf, tennis, ice skating and many more.

Once you have found a club of your interest, just contact them and ask for a trial to see if you like the sports and fit in the team. Most of the phone numbers or email addresses can be found on the websites and English is usually understood, especially with the more internationally played sports.

### Swimming pools

Water is everywhere in the Netherlands. Because of that you'll find a public swimming pool in almost every city to teach children at a young age to swim and feel safe in the water.

In Overijssel the biggest swimming pools for lessons and leisure are Aquadrome in Enschede, Twentebad in Hengelo, Preston Palace in Almelo, De Scheg in Deventer, Optisport Zwembad de Vrolijkheid in Zwolle and Het Ravijn in Nijverdal. The price for a day-ticket is inexpensive, but the pools are not available all day for leisure swimming because of lessons and sport clubs.

You want to go swimming to do some serious tracks or you want to learn how to swim? Almost every pool offers swimming lessons, clubs for different water sports and hours for trackers. Check out the website of your local pool to see the schedule.



#### TIP

*Want to cool down at the pool on a hot summer day? Check if your local pool actually has an outdoor section. This is not always the case. Some pools (like De Mors in Delden) only have outdoor pools and are closed in winter.*

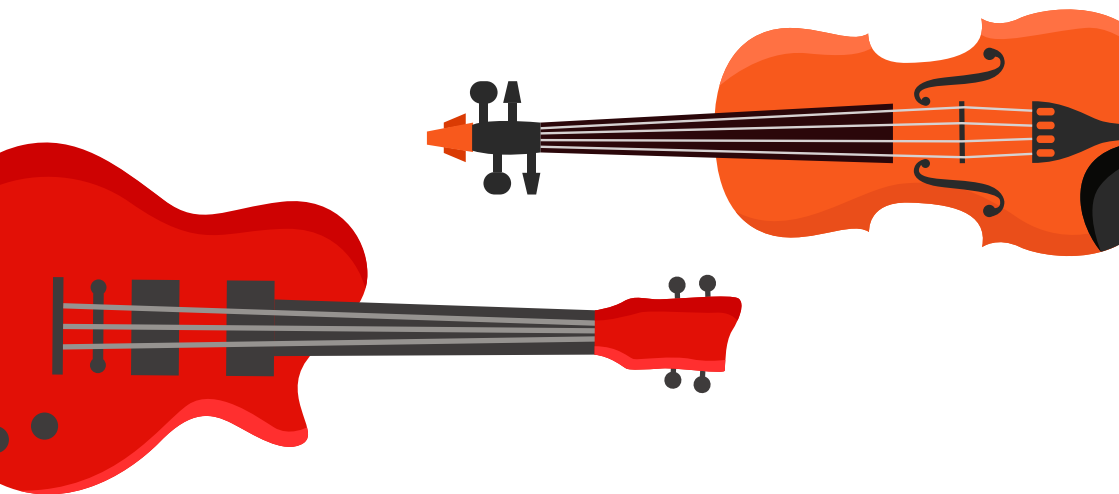
### Lakes

Although it may seem tempting to jump into the river IJssel or other canals in the region on a hot summer's day, be aware; this is dangerous, due to strong currents and sudden temperature changes, and therefore in most cases forbidden. Feel like swimming outdoors anyway? Overijssel has several lakes with a very high water quality, grass fields around and small sandy beaches, like Hulsbeek in Oldenzaal, Rutbeek south of Enschede, Het Lageveld in Wierden, De Oldemeijer in Hardenberg, the Wijthmenerplas in Zwolle or Bussloo southwest of Deventer. You don't have to be afraid of getting sick, although in July and August there is a risk of algae. The authorities will let you know if that's the case. In summer there are lifeguards keeping you safe.

Most lakes have facilities like toilets, changing rooms and small shops to buy snacks, ice creams and drinks. Showers are not always present.

### Music & arts

Feel like playing a musical instrument or want to explore your artistic side? You can follow several courses in both public institutions as well as private classes. At public institutions, like local music schools (muziekschool), de Zwolse Muziekschool (Zwolle), Muziekhuis Deventer, Kaliber Kunstenschool (Enschede, Almelo en Oldenzaal) and Oyfo (Hengelo), courses are usually cheaper. Private teachers and groups can be found online. If you want try out music classes, theatre or joining an art or choir, it's common to ask for a trial. More serious groups can ask for an audition before welcoming you into the classes.



📷 Expat Center Meet & Greet

### Expat Center East Netherlands Social events

The Expat Center East Netherlands organises events on a regular basis, both informative and social. It is a great opportunity to get familiar with Overijssel and meet other expatriates from the region, exchange experiences and meet your new friends.

- Every month we host the **Expat Meet&Greet** in Enschede which is a great opportunity to meet other expats.
- A few times a year, we organise a **morning activity**, like a city walk or coffee morning.
- Our **special events** vary from a visit to a museum to an outdoor event; fun for the whole family!
- A few times a year we issue our **English Expat Newsletter**; sign up through our website or drop us an email.
- **Information evenings** are held on practical topics like taxation, buying a house, finding a job, etc.
- In Zwolle you can join the **events and outings** of the Zwolle Expats group.

To stay posted on upcoming events and news: follow us on Linked-In or Facebook and visit the news & events section our website [ecen.nl](http://ecen.nl)



World Trade Center Twente is the central point for international connections, this includes startups as well as experienced entrepreneurs. We deliver a significant contribution to the support of companies in the east of the Netherlands. We do this by utilizing our powerful international network, which consists of 325 World Trade Centers located in 90 different countries. Together we make global entrepreneurship into a success. Worldwide over a million companies are connected to the World Trade Center network. We play an important role in strengthening and growing of the regional economy and are an important player in attracting and retaining international talent.

Our departments are:

- Expat Center > supporting companies in hiring international employees. We take care of all the formalities for employers, such as applications for work- and residence permits. Next to this we assist expats in their search for housing and settling down in the east of the Netherlands.
- Business Services > where offices and flexible working spaces are available, where one can meet other businesses and where foreign companies can start to build their own business in the Netherlands.
- Business Club > a platform for international business. Sharing knowledge and experiences.
- Trade Services > giving advice, doing research, supporting companies upon entering a new market, competitor analyses and organising trade missions.

Our tailor-made services are focused on providing suitable solutions for our clients in the field of internationalisation. With our business center we are a service-hub for local and international businesses. A place where people can meet, discuss ideas, make new contacts, can do business and work at their (hybrid) workspaces. We welcome you for a personal, online, spontaneous or planned appointment.

Working days are Monday till Friday. We are available via the following phone number: +31 742915604 or feel free to send an e-mail to [info@wtctwente.eu](mailto:info@wtctwente.eu) / [info@ecen.nl](mailto:info@ecen.nl).

Please feel free to visit our website [www.ecen.nl](http://www.ecen.nl) or [www.worldtradecentertwente.nl](http://www.worldtradecentertwente.nl)

### Expat Center East Netherlands

Expat Center East Netherlands is one of the 4 departments of the World Trade Center Twente (WTC). The main office is located within the WTC in Hengelo and once a week we host our Welcome Center at the Stadskantoor in Enschede together with Immigration Service, IND. Every other week we host our service desk in the Stadskantoor of Zwolle.

Our aim is to provide information and offer services to companies in the east of the Netherlands and their highly skilled international employees on all matters concerning moving to the Netherlands. With this we want to make the relocation for both HR managers and expats as smooth as possible.

Together with our social and service partners we offer services which vary from practical (formalities, finding a house, information meetings, Dutch language training) and social aspects of moving to another country. For the latter we organize events on a regular basis, like the monthly Expat Meet&Greet and family outings a few times a year. Through our English newsletter and social media we keep the internationals informed about practical matters, but also fun facts and interesting activities in the area. The Expat Center works closely together with International School Twente (IST), Immigration & Naturalisation Service (IND) and Twente Branding (Twente.com). We are supported by the province of Overijssel and Regio Twente, specifically the municipalities of Almelo, Borne, Enschede, Hengelo, Hof van Twente and Oldenzaal

The Expat Center East Netherlands is a central point for companies and expats. Our team of locals and expats are here to serve you.



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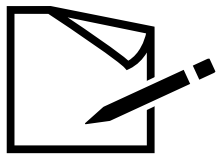
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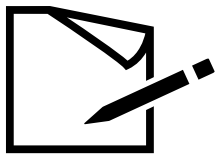
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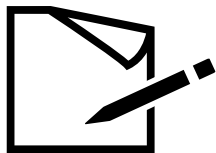




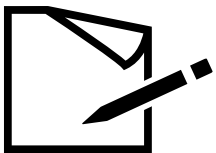
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# Twente

No matter the  
focus on technology,  
**people are always  
key in Twente.**



**Discover your potential**

[www.twente.com/twente-for-you](http://www.twente.com/twente-for-you)

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