

LIVING IN HOLLAND



think I was one of the lucky ones when I moved to the Netherlands. No visa required, no immigration office, I had a roof under which I could spend my non-working time, and I had a girlfriend. Could it have been better? Yes, because complaining is my art and I'm definitely a better whiner than a cook.

Independently of what could have been better at my arrival, what I want to address here is if there could have been preventions toward some of the unhappy situations that unaware foreigners might encounter when they decide to make the decision to migrate to Holland to make a living, or even just for a study period.

Living in Holland had (at least for me) a sort of extraterrestrial connotation at the beginning: bikes, rain, tall girls, rain, small houses, rain, windy landscapes, rain, weird 'g's which are the same of 'ch's and 'v's that sounds very similar to 'f's, rain, cheese that is called old when it's 'aged' for a month, wind and rain, flatness and still, rain, channels and dikes, rain, steep staircases, rain, everyone speaks English, small ray of sun and again. . . rain, no typical food, sun (but you'd better bring your raincoat if you are going out!).

Living in Holland has, like any other country I guess, some inconveniences in the practical matters and also in the personal matters. Dutch people are peculiar, they are rigorous persons, perfectly and strictly organized and they don't have any problem to tell you that you are not well organized, that you could have done something better and that it is inefficient.

Living in Holland can cause, to the unaware foreigner, a whole bunch of unhappy

feelings such as inadequacy and ineptitude. This, mingled with rain and Dutch etiquette, may produce strong feelings of homesickness, leading to the conclusion that living in Holland sucks.

Living in Holland will drastically reduce the brutal impact of living in Holland.

Living in Holland, published by Nuffic, is THE solution. Marilyn Warman wrote a short, right to the core and essential introduction to the Dutch, their habits, customs and costumes. Most importantly it dedicates a couple of sections to the practical matters, such as what to do BEFORE coming to the Netherlands, what to do when just landed, what is important for visas, practical suggestions for houses, bank accounts, and everything you can think of.

Living in Holland is the survival guide to the Dutch-ness, and it can be a valuable help for every PhD student that, as I did, decided to move to the Netherlands.

Living in Holland is beautiful when, from a foreigner point of view, you have learned the Dutch way. It is undeniable that every country has its peculiarities, and to know a bit what is waiting for you when you'll land in the land of tulips will definitely help.

Living in Holland will make you feel at home after a while. Especially when you realize and understand the differences, but also learn to be able to communicate them, because then the straight and close-up Dutch(es) will break themselves in four to make you feel at home.

Living in Holland, a valuable help to live Holland!

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