DUTCH EXPATS HOUSING.
HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS.

AREA GUIDE



THE COMPLETE EXPAT GUIDE TO

# The Hague

*Royal, green and on the beach*

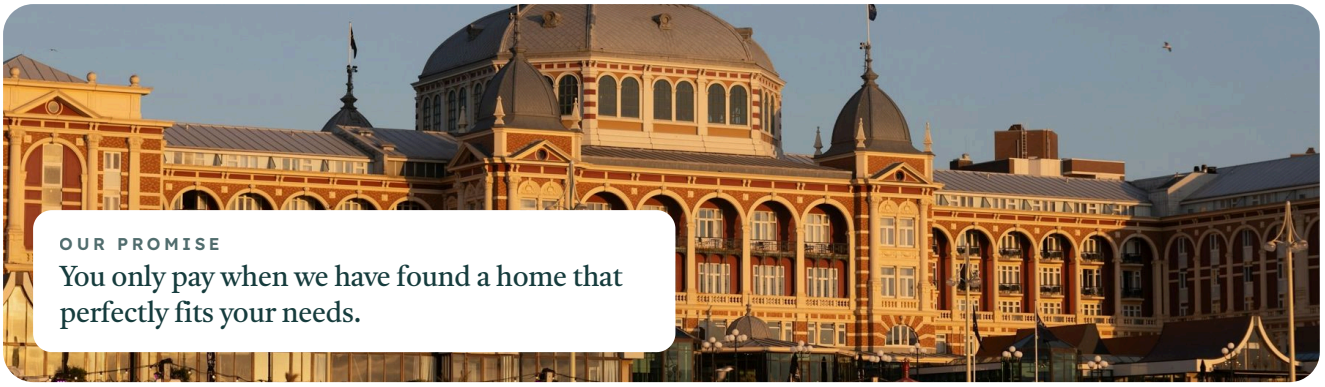
Edition 2026 / 2027 · Neighbourhoods, food, schools, healthcare, sports, cycling and Dutch life

www.dutchexpatshousing.nl

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

# Welcome to The Hague (*Den Haag*)

This guide is written by the team of Dutch Expats Housing. We help internationals find a home in the Netherlands every week, and we put everything we tell our own clients about The Hague in one place: where to live, where to eat, where your children can go to school, which sports club to join and how to feel at home the Dutch way.



OUR PROMISE
You only pay when we have found a home that perfectly fits your needs.

01 Welcome
02 Neighbourhoods
03 Eat & drink
04 Schools & education
05 Healthcare
06 Sports & clubs
07 Cycling routes
08 Getting around
09 Live like a local
10 Your first 30 days
11 How we help

*All information was checked in November 2026. Restaurants, opening hours and rents change; always check the website of a venue before you go.*

CHAPTER 01

# Welcome to The Hague

THE INTERNATIONAL CITY OF PEACE AND JUSTICE

The Hague is where the Dutch King works, where parliament meets and where more than 200 international organisations have their home, from the International Court of Justice to dozens of embassies. It is also the only big Dutch city on the beach. Expats love it for the green neighbourhoods, the excellent choice of international schools and the relaxed pace. Locals simply call it Den Haag.

| POPULATION | TYPICAL 2-BED RENT | TO SCHIPHOL | BEST FOR |
|---|---|---|---|
| about 570,000 | €1,600 to €2,400 p/m | about 30 min by train | Families, diplomats, internationals |

## Why internationals choose The Hague

- The widest choice of international schools in the Netherlands
- Beach, dunes and forest within cycling distance of the city centre
- Home to international organisations, embassies, Shell, Aramco, ministries and NGOs
- Very international community: English is widely spoken
- Calmer and greener than Amsterdam, with excellent public transport

### Rents in this guide

All rents are indicative monthly rents for unfurnished, mid-market homes in 2026, excluding utilities. Furnished homes and family houses are usually higher.

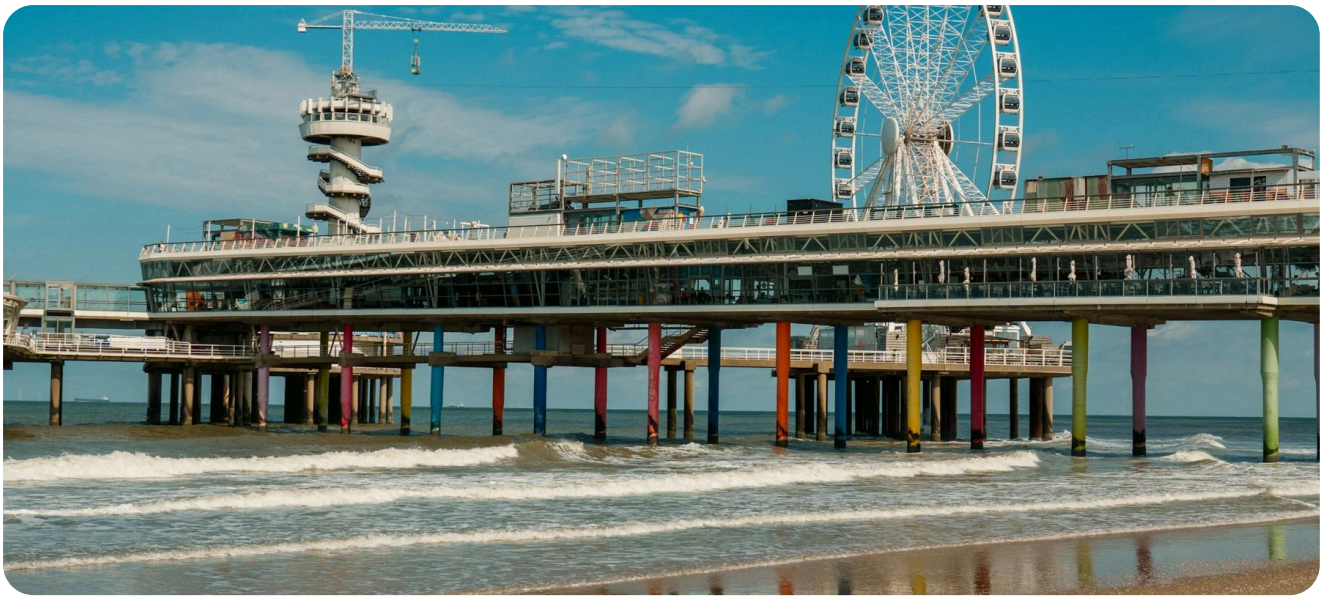
### Your official starting point

The Hague International Centre at City Hall (Spui 70): registration, BSN, residence permits and practical advice for internationals in one place.

CHAPTER 02

# Neighbourhoods

Every neighbourhood in The Hague has its own character. Here is where our clients love to live, and who each area suits best.



## City centre & Hofkwartier

**Professionals and couples** · 2-bed €1,700 to €2,500

Royal streets around Noordeinde Palace, the Lange Voorhout and the Denneweg, full of boutiques, galleries and restaurants. The Binnenhof and the Mauritshuis are around the corner.

LOCAL TIP

Sunday afternoon on the terrace of Bodega De Posthoorn on the Lange Voorhout is pure Den Haag.

## Statenkwartier

**Expat families** · 2-bed €1,900 to €3,000

Elegant early 20th century houses between the city and the sea. Shopping street Frederik Hendriklaan (locals say 'De Fred'), the Kunstmuseum and the beach within ten minutes by bike.

LOCAL TIP

Saturday coffee and croissants on De Fred, then a walk to Scheveningen beach.

CHAPTER 02

# Neighbourhoods, continued

## Archipelbuurt & Willemspark

**Senior expats and diplomats** | **2-bed €2,000 to €3,500**

Grand villas and stately apartments near the Haagse Bos and the Peace Palace. Many embassies, quiet streets and the city centre on foot.

LOCAL TIP

Join the morning runners in the Scheveningse Bosjes, the forest that links this area to the sea.

## Benoordenhout

**Families who want space and green**

**2-bed €2,000 to €3,500**

Leafy, safe and quiet, with the Haagse Bos forest and the Clingendael estate on your doorstep. Den Haag Centraal is a short bike ride away.

LOCAL TIP

Visit the Japanese garden at Clingendael: it only opens for a few weeks in spring and autumn.

## Scheveningen

**Beach lovers and active singles** | **2-bed €1,700 to €2,800**

Former fishing village turned beach resort, with the Kurhaus, the pier, the harbour and surf schools. Busy in summer, wonderfully windswept in winter.

LOCAL TIP

Go 'uitwaaien' (a walk to blow away the cobwebs) on the beach in winter, then eat fresh fish at the harbour.

## Zeeheldenkwartier & Duinoord

**Young professionals and creatives**

**2-bed €1,500 to €2,200**

19th century streets with character, the shopping street Piet Heinstraat, cosy cafés and a younger crowd. Walking distance to the centre.

LOCAL TIP

Read the papers in one of the many bruine cafés here on a rainy afternoon.

CHAPTER 02

# Neighbourhoods, continued

## Bezuidenhout

**Commuters and good value** | **2-bed €1,500 to €2,100**

Practical and well connected, right next to Den Haag Centraal and the Haagse Bos. More apartment for your money than in the west of the city.

LOCAL TIP

Cycle through the Haagse Bos every day on your way to work: one of the oldest forests in the country.

## Wassenaar & Voorburg

**Families with children** | **2-bed €1,800 to €4,000+**

Wassenaar is the green villa village near the American School and the dunes. Voorburg is charming, more affordable and connected by tram and train.

LOCAL TIP

From Wassenaar you can cycle through the Meijendel dunes to the sea in 20 minutes.

CHAPTER 03

# Eat & drink

From brown cafés to rooftop lunches: the places locals actually go to.




## Iconic Den Haag

### Bodega De Posthoorn
LANGE VOORHOUT

Classic café restaurant with one of the most beautiful terraces in the country, beneath the trees of the Lange Voorhout.

### Simonis aan de Haven
SCHEVENINGEN HARBOUR

The place for fresh fish, kibbeling and herring straight from the boats.

### Haagse Markt
SCHILDERSWIJK

One of the largest open air markets in Europe: hundreds of stalls with food from every corner of the world.

### Indonesian rijsttafel
ACROSS THE CITY

Den Haag has the largest Indo community in the Netherlands. Try a rijsttafel, a feast of small dishes, at Garoeda on the Kneuterdijk or pick up takeaway at a local toko.

CHAPTER 03

# Eat & drink, continued

## Dinner & date night

| | |
|---|---|
| **Denneweg & Frederikstraat**<br>CENTRUM | Two charming streets full of small restaurants, wine bars and boutiques. |
| **Grote Markt & Plein**<br>CENTRUM | The big terrace squares: lively on summer evenings and the place for after work drinks. |
| **Chinatown**<br>WAGENSTRAAT | Authentic Chinese, Vietnamese and Indonesian food behind the Chinese gates. |
| **Beach pavilions**<br>SCHEVENINGEN & KIJKDUIN | From spring to autumn, dozens of beach clubs serve dinner with your feet in the sand and the sun setting over the sea. |

## Bars & brown cafés

| | |
|---|---|
| **De Zwarte Ruiter**<br>GROTE MARKT | Big, classic café on the busiest square in town. |
| **Bruine cafés of Zeeheldenkwartier**<br>ZEEHELDENKWARTIER | Wooden interiors, a cat on the bar and a jenever on the table: the true Dutch pub experience. |

CHAPTER 03

# Eat & drink, continued

## Very Dutch, very Haags

### Haagse hopjes
SHOPS & MARKETS

Coffee flavoured sweets invented in The Hague in the 18th century.

### Haagse bluf
DESSERT

A light whipped dessert of egg white and redcurrant juice. Locals use the word for someone who brags.

### Hollandse Nieuwe
JUNE ONWARDS

The first herring of the season is celebrated with Vlaggetjesdag in Scheveningen.

## Markets

### Haagse Markt
MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, FRIDAY & SATURDAY

Huge multicultural market; go early for the best fruit and fish.

### Lange Voorhout antiques & books
THURSDAY (SUMMER) AND SUNDAY

Antiques, books and curiosities under the trees in the royal centre.

CHAPTER 04

# Schools & education

School is compulsory from age 5 and most children start at 4. Subsidised international schools cost a fraction of private schools but have waiting lists, so contact them as soon as your move is confirmed.

## International schools

| | |
|---|---|
| **International School of The Hague (ISH)**<br>NEAR THE DUNES, WEST | Primary and secondary, IB programmes, government subsidised. Very international student body. |
| **British School in the Netherlands (BSN)**<br>SEVERAL CAMPUSES IN AND AROUND THE HAGUE | British curriculum plus IB Diploma, from foundation to sixth form. |
| **American School of The Hague (ASH)**<br>WASSENAAR | American curriculum with AP and IB, from pre-school to grade 12. |
| **HSV International Primary**<br>CENTRUM AND WEST | Subsidised international primary following the International Primary Curriculum. |
| **European School The Hague**<br>THE HAGUE | Priority for children of staff at EU and partner organisations; other places when available. |
| **Lycée Français & German International School**<br>THE HAGUE REGION | French and German curricula for families from those countries. |

### International or Dutch school?

Staying two or three years? An international school keeps your child's education portable. Staying longer, or with young children? Many expat families choose a local Dutch school: children become fluent within a year and make friends in the neighbourhood. Bilingual secondary schools offer a middle way.

CHAPTER 04

# Schools & education, continued

## Dutch and bilingual education

| | |
|---|---|
| **Dutch primary schools (basisschool)**<br>EVERY NEIGHBOURHOOD | Free and of good quality. Many expat families combine a Dutch school with English at home. |
| **Bilingual secondary (TTO)**<br>SEVERAL SCHOOLS | Part of the lessons in English, with a Dutch diploma at the end. |

## Universities & higher education

| | |
|---|---|
| **Leiden University, Campus The Hague**<br>CENTRUM | International studies, governance and security. |
| **The Hague University of Applied Sciences**<br>NEAR HOLLAND SPOOR | Large, very international university of applied sciences. |
| **Royal Conservatoire & Royal Academy of Art**<br>CENTRUM (AMARE) | World class music, dance and art education. |

### Childcare (kinderopvang)

Daycare (kinderdagverblijf) for ages 0 to 4 and after school care (BSO) for ages 4 to 12. Working parents can receive childcare benefit (kinderopvangtoeslag) through the Dutch tax office. Put your child on a waiting list as early as possible.

CHAPTER 05

# Healthcare

## Hospitals

| | |
|---|---|
| **HMC Westeinde**<br>CITY CENTRE | Main location of Haaglanden Medisch Centrum, with the emergency department and trauma centre. |
| **HMC Bronovo & Antoniushove**<br>BENOORDENHOUT / LEIDSCHENDAM | Other HMC locations for outpatient care and planned treatments. |
| **HagaZiekenhuis**<br>LEYWEG | Large teaching hospital including the Juliana Children's Hospital. |
| **LUMC**<br>LEIDEN, 15 MIN BY TRAIN | Academic hospital for specialist care. |

## How Dutch healthcare works

| | |
|---|---|
| **112** | The emergency number for police, ambulance and fire brigade. |
| **Huisarts (GP)** | Register with a GP close to your home as soon as you have an address. The GP is the gatekeeper: you need a referral for hospital care. |
| **Huisartsenpost** | Out of hours GP service for evenings, nights and weekends. Always call first. |
| **Health insurance** | Basic insurance (basisverzekering) is mandatory within four months of registering or starting work, and is backdated. Compare policies every year in November and December. |
| **Own risk (eigen risico)** | The first part of your yearly medical costs is paid by you. GP visits are free of this. |
| **Dentist & physio** | For adults these are only covered by supplementary insurance (aanvullende verzekering). |
| **Apotheek** | Pharmacy. Prescriptions from your GP go straight to your registered pharmacy. |
| **Children** | The consultatiebureau checks babies and young children and gives vaccinations, free of charge. |
| **Kraamzorg** | After giving birth a maternity nurse comes to your home for about a week. Book it early in your pregnancy. |

*In an emergency always call 112. For urgent medical questions outside office hours call the huisartsenpost of your area.*

CHAPTER 06

# Sports & clubs

The fastest way to make Dutch friends? Join a club (vereniging). Clubs are run by volunteers, have their own clubhouse with a bar, and the drinks after the match matter as much as the match itself.

| | |
|---|---|
| **HC Klein Zwitserland**<br>HOCKEY & TENNIS | One of the biggest and most social sports clubs in the country, with teams for all ages and plenty of internationals. |
| **HDM**<br>HOCKEY | Traditional Hague hockey club with a strong youth section. |
| **Haagsche Cricket Club and other cricket clubs**<br>CRICKET | Cricket has deep roots in The Hague. Very welcoming to players from the UK, India, Pakistan and Australia. |
| **Haagsche Rugby Club**<br>RUGBY | Active club with a large international membership. |
| **Surf schools at Scheveningen**<br>SURFING & KITESURFING | Take lessons year round. Yes, the North Sea has waves. |
| **ADO Den Haag**<br>FOOTBALL (WATCH) | The city's professional club. Join the supporters in green and yellow at the stadium in Forepark. |
| **Haagse Bos & Meijendel**<br>RUNNING & WALKING | Forest and dunes on your doorstep. The CPC Loop half marathon in March is a city classic. |
| **Golf**<br>WASSENAAR REGION | Several historic golf clubs in the dunes, including the Royal Hague Golf & Country Club. |

### Tip: the kantine

Members are expected to help out a few times a year, for example behind the bar or as a referee for youth teams. It is the best way to get to know people.

CHAPTER 07

# Cycling routes

The Dutch have more bikes than people. These are our favourite rides from The Hague, from an easy Sunday loop to a proper day out.

| | |
|---|---|
| 20 km loop | **Dunes of Meijendel**<br>From Scheveningen into the dunes of Meijendel and back via Wassenaar. Sand, pine trees and sea views. |
| 25 km one way | **North Sea Route to Katwijk**<br>Follow the LF1 coastal route north through the dunes to the beach town of Katwijk. Fish lunch and the bus back. |
| 15 km | **The estates route**<br>Haagse Bos, Clingendael and the country estates of Wassenaar. Green, flat and quiet. |
| 10 km | **Den Haag to Delft along the Vliet**<br>A classic canal side ride past old country houses to the Markt of Delft. |
| 18 km one way | **Kijkduin to Hoek van Holland**<br>Coastal ride through the dunes to the mouth of the Rotterdam port. Watch the giant container ships pass. |

## Cycling the Dutch way

- Lights front and rear are mandatory after dark.
- Holding your phone while cycling is forbidden and fined.
- Traffic from the right has priority unless signs or 'shark teeth' road markings say otherwise.
- Use two good locks, one of them a chain lock attached to something fixed.
- Buy second hand at a bike shop, or start with a subscription bike (for example Swapfiets) while you settle in.

CHAPTER 08

# Getting around

- HTM runs trams and buses. Tram 1 goes from Delft through the centre to Scheveningen.
- Two main stations: Den Haag Centraal and Den Haag Hollands Spoor. Schiphol is about 30 minutes away.
- RandstadRail light rail connects The Hague with Zoetermeer and Rotterdam.
- The beach is 15 minutes by bike from the centre. In summer the tram to Scheveningen is packed.
- Rotterdam The Hague Airport is about 25 minutes away.

## Day trips from The Hague

| | |
|---|---|
| **Delft**<br>DAY TRIP | Ten minutes by train or tram 1. |
| **Keukenhof & bulb fields**<br>DAY TRIP | From late March to May, 30 minutes by car or bus. |
| **Madurodam**<br>DAY TRIP | The Netherlands in miniature, loved by children. |

### Public transport tips

Always check in and out. Use the NS app and 9292 for journey planning. If you travel by train often, an NS subscription with off-peak discount pays for itself quickly.

*Plan bike trips with the free 'knooppunten' (junction) network: numbered signposts that let you link routes together.*

CHAPTER 09

# Live like a local

## Only in The Hague

| | |
|---|---|
| Royal city | Spot the King's official car near Noordeinde Palace. On Prinsjesdag the golden coach rides through the centre. |
| Indo heritage | Den Haag is the heart of Indonesian culture in the Netherlands. The Tong Tong Fair is a festival of food and music. |
| Plat Haags | Locals have a strong accent and a fierce sense of humour. If someone says 'hoi' instead of 'hallo', you are among friends. |
| Beach life | In winter, join thousands of people for the New Year's Dive on 1 January at Scheveningen. |

## The The Hague calendar

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 January | New Year's Dive (Nieuwjaarsduik) in the North Sea at Scheveningen |
| March | CPC Loop half marathon |
| June | Vlaggetjesdag: the arrival of the new herring in Scheveningen |
| September | Prinsjesdag (third Tuesday): the King opens the parliamentary year |
| September | Embassy Festival: embassies present food and culture from their countries |

## National days to know

| | |
|---|---|
| 27 April | Koningsdag (King's Day): wear orange, the whole country is one big street party and flea market |
| 4 & 5 May | Remembrance Day (two minutes of silence at 20:00 on 4 May) and Liberation Day festivals |
| 5 December | Sinterklaas: gifts and poems, the most important children's celebration |
| 31 December | Oud en Nieuw: oliebollen, fireworks and New Year's dives |

CHAPTER 09

# The Dutch way

## Ten words you will hear on day one

### Gezellig
Cosy, warm, fun together. The most Dutch word there is; you will hear it every day.

### Borrel
Drinks and snacks after work, often on Friday. Say yes to the first invitation.

### Lekker
Tasty, but also nice, good or comfortable. 'Lekker weer' means nice weather.

### Uitwaaien
Walking in strong wind to clear your head, ideally on the beach.

### Doe maar normaal
Just act normal. The Dutch dislike showing off.

### Tikkie
A payment request via your banking app. Splitting the bill is completely normal.

### Huisarts
Your family doctor and your first stop for every medical question.

### Fietsenstalling
Bicycle parking. Never leave your bike outside one near a station.

### Gefeliciteerd
Congratulations. At a birthday you congratulate everyone in the room.

### Hoi / Doei
Hi / Bye. Informal and used by everybody, even at work.

## Dutch habits, explained

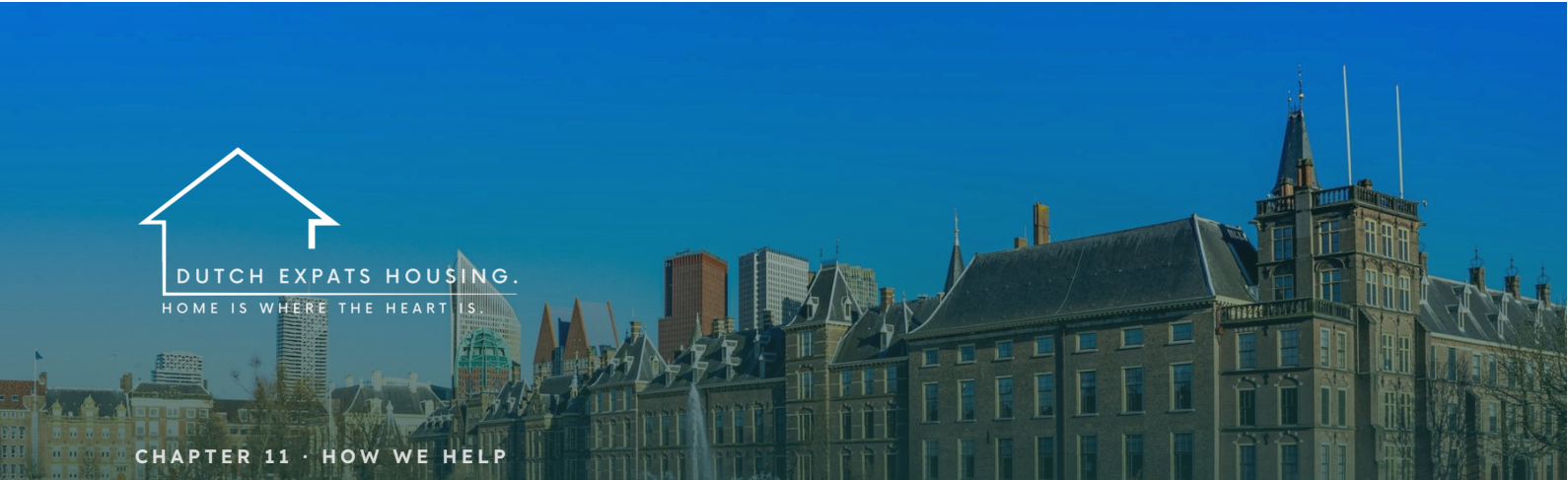
| | |
|---|---|
| Dinner at six | Most Dutch families eat between 18:00 and 19:00. Restaurants are busy early. |
| The agenda | Social plans are made weeks ahead. Spontaneous visits are rare, so do not take it personally. |
| Directness | Dutch feedback is honest and to the point. It is meant as respect, not rudeness. |
| The birthday circle | At home birthdays guests sit in a circle and congratulate the whole family. Bring flowers. |
| Paying by card | Debit card (PIN) is king. Some shops and restaurants do not accept credit cards. |
| Shopping hours | Shops usually close around 18:00, with a late shopping evening (koopavond) once a week. Most city centres open on Sunday. |
| Rain gear, not umbrellas | Wind breaks umbrellas. Buy a proper rain jacket, or rain trousers if you cycle daily. |
| Waste separation | Separate paper, glass, plastic and organic waste. Your municipality sends a calendar. |

CHAPTER 10

# Your first 30 days

Print this page and tick the boxes. Our clients get help with almost every step.

- [ ] **Register at the municipality (gemeente)**
  Within 5 days of arrival. You receive your BSN, the number you need for everything.
- [ ] **Apply for DigiD**
  Your digital ID for taxes, healthcare and government websites.
- [ ] **Open a Dutch bank account**
  Needed for your salary, rent and Tikkies. We arrange this with ING.
- [ ] **Take out health insurance**
  Mandatory and backdated to your registration date.
- [ ] **Register with a GP and a dentist**
  Do this before you need one; some practices have waiting lists.
- [ ] **Apply for the 30% ruling**
  If you qualify, your employer applies within four months of your start date.
- [ ] **Set up energy, water and internet**
  Many rental homes come empty, so arrange this before you move in.
- [ ] **Furnish your home**
  Rent a complete furniture package if you do not ship your own.
- [ ] **Get a bike and two locks**
  The fastest way to get around every Dutch city.
- [ ] **Public transport**
  Tap in and out with your contactless bank card (OVpay) or get a personal OV-chipkaart.
- [ ] **Schools and childcare**
  Register early; international schools and popular daycares have waiting lists. Check whether you qualify for childcare benefit (kinderopvangtoeslag).
- [ ] **Driving**
  Check whether you can exchange your driving licence. A short lease car bridges the first months.



DUTCH EXPATS HOUSING.
HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS.

CHAPTER 11 · HOW WE HELP

# Your new home in The Hague, found for you.

Our team searches the rental market for you every day, including homes that are not online yet. From the first call to the day you get your keys. And you only pay when we have found your home.

### Complete housing search

From intake call to signed contract. Personal search with daily matches, often before homes reach the public portals.

### Off-market network

Access to homes from our network of rental agents before they are published.

### Viewings & negotiation

We request viewings, prepare your file and write your rental proposal.

### Contract check

We explain the Dutch rental contract in English before you sign.

### Utilities & internet

Energy, water and wifi arranged through our partner Easy Nuts.

### Furniture packages

Move into a fully furnished home with our partner Keypro.

### Bank account & 30% ruling

Bank account via ING and the 30% ruling with Tax Globalizers.

### Short lease cars & moving

Mobility via Blankert Shortlease and international moving with our partners.

**Book a free consultation at www.dutchexpatshousing.nl**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