

Extended Description of the trip

You will definitely be challenged and pushed outside your comfort zone as you will experience the Dutch culture by doing what most Dutch people do, ride their bikes and walk a lot. The Netherlands Cross-cultural is a three-week experience of a small country with many fascinating qualities. Aside from being the tallest Europeans on average, the Dutch are experts at making the most of their tiny country, 1/3 the size of Pennsylvania. In fact, of the total land size of their country, 1/6 of it has been reclaimed from swamps and lakes, and still 26% of the country is below sea level. Likewise, the country is full of paradoxes, which we will explore during the course.

Three portions of the trip in detail

North Holland, Windmill, Tulip “Factory”, Texel island, and Flower Auction

We “hit the ground running” as our first day we visit one of the best working windmills in the Netherlands with a great tour and explanation by Fred. Then we visit a unique “factory” that forces tulip bulbs so that people all over the world can purchase tulips in the winter time. Nel gives us a fascinating and very informative tour of the “plant”. The next day we travel to the very far north of the country to an island, Texel, and tour it for the day. That tour involves visiting a museum about the seafaring nature of the Dutch, visiting a lighthouse, going to a sea lion rehabilitation center, and walking through a rather typical small Dutch town. Finally, before we join other students who will be doing the middle portion of the trip with us, we visit the amazing Royal FloraHolland, the largest flower auction in the world, where we see how such flowers that are grown by Nel, get sent all around the world.

Dutch Farm House, Amsterdam, CHE, Homestays, Central Netherlands, Rotterdam, Brussels

After visiting the flower auction, we join groups from other parts of the world coming to experience two weeks of the Netherlands hosted by the Dutch university, Christelijk Hogeschool Ede (CHE). We go to a large Dutch farmhouse, which serves as our base of operations for three days where we cook together and initiate excursions into the surrounding area. Those excursions include exploring an authentic full-sized replica of a ship used during the Dutch golden age, spending two days in Amsterdam, visiting museums, touring the Anne Frank House, taking a boat ride in the city canals, and worshipping in a contemporary church from the Hillsong group of churches. Then we head to the Dutch university, CHE, where you will get your bicycle and meet your host families for your homestays. You will stay with them for several nights, having breakfast and dinner with them, and biking each morning to the CHE where we have various programs and excursions, and the biking “home” each night when the day’s activities are done. During this time we have lectures on the Dutch culture and the nature of the European Union, of which the Dutch are a part (and of which Great Britain is no longer a part); we have excursions to Rotterdam and other significant sites in central and southern Netherlands; and we engage in the most challenging part of the course, which involves visiting Brussels, Belgium, one of the centers of the European Union. There, students will complete a project involving doing street interviews on some European topic and then reporting their findings to the rest of the group on the following day.

Amsterdam Challenge

Our final days in the Netherlands will be in Amsterdam, staying in a Youth Hostel in the city. Here students get a slower pace where there is no agenda for most of the time. They can enjoy a museum without rushing to the next group event, or they can explore areas of the city that they

were unable to do at the beginning of their time in the NL. Also, they will be “tested” on their abilities to navigate the city and beyond.

Student Expectations

Students will be expected to participate in all of the designated activities throughout the course. They will be expected to attend the three to four pre-departure, course-specific meetings, as well as attend the two Intercultural sponsored meetings, all occurring in the Fall semester. Students will also write directed journals throughout the course, as well as write a final paper on their experience. This course will be challenging in many ways, pushing students in ways they have not experienced before. It is not for the timid or reserved student, content to just watch a culture through a tour-bus window. It is likely students will be biking in rain, or at least cold weather – the Dutch do it, and so will the students. Students will do interviews in Brussels with complete strangers over topics relevant to Europeans. Student will be stretched to navigate a city and be expected to be familiar with their urban environment. “I am not good with directions” will not be a valid excuse for non-participation. If you complete the class, I guarantee you will be a changed individual – with more confidence, more faith, more sense of community, more knowledge of a world that is both beautiful as well as broken, and more awareness of the greatness of God, than what you have known before.