



This booklet is provided by O2O's writing team

Articles: Moon Bach, Manavi Khanna, Loïc Remil,
Yamini Venugopal & Xanna Wind

Editing: Moon Bach, Manavi Khanna

Edit & design: Xanna Wind



IN THIS BOOKLET:

You will find several stories about different regions in the Netherlands. We hope to inspire and encourage you to go out and explore new stories outside of Amsterdam, since the Netherlands has so much more to offer. Don't worry, we are sure you won't regret it!

Groetjes 020's writing team!



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INTRODUCTION

When having spent some time here in Amsterdam as a (new) student, we'll guess that Amsterdam has offered enough for you to explore. The nice bike rides along the peaceful canals, visits to the many famous museums or just simply having the best 'borrels' at the coolest bars of Amsterdam – you probably know by now how things come and go in Mokkum. You might know your way around the capital, yet the rest of the Netherlands is there for you to explore. As every Dutch person will tell you: Amsterdam is not equal to the Netherlands! Even for Dutch people themselves Amsterdam is a unique place, like a mini world on its own.



The Netherlands has so much more to offer than Amsterdam. Instead of going to the many cheese stores in Amsterdam, consider visiting the cheese markets in Alkmaar or Gouda, two cities with a rich history in cheese production. Or learn more about the Dutch and their battle against the water while visiting Zeeland or Flevoland. You may have heard about Leiden's University, but do you also know about the city's history in the Eighty Years War? For those who are interested in historical monuments, you might visit Drenthe and learn about the 'Hunebedden' which are grave monuments from the Bronze age. And if you feel romantic enough, there is an urban legend behind the Dom garden in Utrecht that can fill your heart.

Thus, the Netherlands is a small, yet captivating country. Amsterdam has a rich and long heritage in the diamond trade and industry. However, after reading this booklet, we hope to have encouraged you to step outside of Amsterdam and explore the other hidden gems of the Netherlands.



CHAPTER 1: SAY CHEESE

DISCOVER THE CHEESE MARKETS OF ALKMAAR AND GOUDA

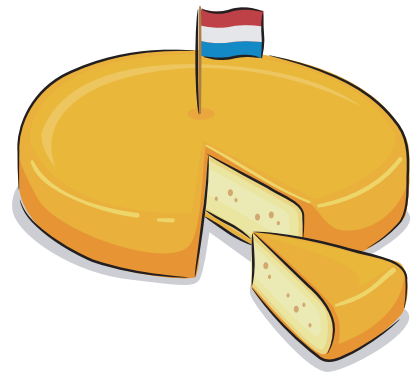
While being in Amsterdam you have probably seen lots of little cheese stores all around the city. For centuries the Dutch have a reputation of being good at producing and eating cheese. No wonder that the inhabitants of Alkmaar and Gouda have the nickname 'kaaskoppen', which translates to 'cheese heads'. These two cities are known for their traditional cheese markets, which are successful events up to the present day.

THE ORIGINS OF 'KAASKOPPEN'

Yet, 'kaaskop' is not just a silly nickname, but actually has a longer history to it. In the quaint Dutch town Gouda the cobbled streets echo with tales of centuries from the past. Once, here lived a community of cheese farmers, known for their resilience and creativity. Back in the time when Napoleon's forces casted a shadow over the region, the coveted Gouda cheese was at the center of a daring struggle. The French soldiers, set their sights on the wheels of Gouda's gold. However, the clever cheese farmers devised a plan to safeguard their precious rounds.

One moonlit night, as whispers of the impending threat spread through the town, the cheese farmers gathered in secrecy. In their humble workshops, they used their cheese barrels in a creative way. Those cheese barrels are bowl-shaped wooden molds. These are used to press the typical Dutch round cheeses. Holes in the bottom allow the whey to drain off. The entire mold goes under a press that squeezes the moisture out of the curd.

However, this time the barrels were not used for the production of cheese. Instead, the cheese farmers created helmets from them. Each helmet was a testament to their ingenuity and determination to preserve their culinary heritage.



The French soldiers were expecting an easy victory, but were met with a surprise. The cheese farmers stood proudly, donned in their makeshift cheese helmets. With their heads held high, they formed a formidable barrier between the French invaders and the wheels of the Gouda goodness. When the start sign for the attack was given, their wooden shoes clattered against the cobblestone streets. The French were surprised by the unexpected resistance and eventually withdrew, leaving the Gouda cheeses untouched.

From that moment on, the cheese farmers wore their 'kaaskop' title with pride. It became a badge of honor passed down through generations. The helmets made of cheese barrels became symbols of resilience. And so, the legacy of the 'kaaskoppen' continued. Not just as a nickname but as a symbol for the enduring spirit of the Dutch cheese farmers, who turned cheese into a symbol of resistance and a source of pride.



The antique cheese barrels which became helmets

VISIT THE CHEESE MARKETS

Now you know a little more about the story of the Dutch and their history with cheese, go and visit the iconic places: Alkmaar or Gouda. While you might have seen the cheese at the stores in Amsterdam, there is much more to the story of cheese before they end up there. Every Thursday in Gouda and every Friday in Alkmaar a centuries old Dutch tradition of cheese markets unfolds. These markets were not just places to buy and sell cheese: they were vibrant celebrations of culture, commerce and community.

Nowadays these markets are still happening. Experience Dutch culture and go back in time while visiting these markets. Go back to the times when farmers, traders and locals all gathered at the market square close to the city's church. See how the cheese wheels of all kinds of shapes and sizes are neatly arranged on the wooden carts, decorated with the colorful tulips. Watch the market master, dressed in his traditional costume, strictly oversee the proceedings while welcoming everyone. Listen to the tower bell ringing through the narrow streets, which means that the cheese market has officially begun.



Cheese market in Alkmaar

Teams of cheese carriers, recognizable by their striped shirts and straw hats, eagerly await their turn to transport the cheese wheels to the weighing area. The cheeses are rolled and tossed with precision, which are skills that are passed down through generations. Enjoy how the carriers dance, as the cheese wheels glide smoothly over the centuries old market square. As the day progresses, you should take a look at the outskirts of the market squares and find the best boutiques and restaurants to explore.

As the sun sets on Alkmaar and Gouda, the echoes of the traditional Dutch cheese markets lingered in the air. The timeless ritual of trading cheese, the rhythmic movements of the carriers and the aroma of aged Gouda cheese became part of the collective memory of these charming Dutch cities. These cheese markets are a celebration of Dutch heritage and testament to the enduring craftsmanship of cheese making. Let yourself be enchanted by the colorful markets, the taste of exquisite cheese and the warmth of the hospitality in Alkmaar and Gouda. Don't hesitate to visit, and meet the spirit of the cheese markets that endure through generations to come.



CHAPTER 2: THE BATTLE WITH WATER

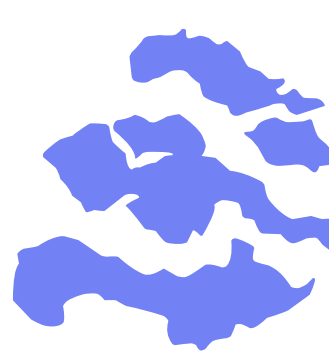
The Netherlands is intrinsically tied to the ebb and flow of life itself. The country has been in a constant strife against water for centuries. From the pivotal 1219 floods that spurred the development of the Zuiderzee and Waddenzee inner seas to the bold land reclamations of the fourteenth century. This nation's history has been a testament to resilience, adaptation, and ingenuity in the face of relentless tides. Within this narrative of resilience, two regions stand out as the Netherlands' triumphant victories against water: Flevoland and Zeeland.

FLEVOLAND

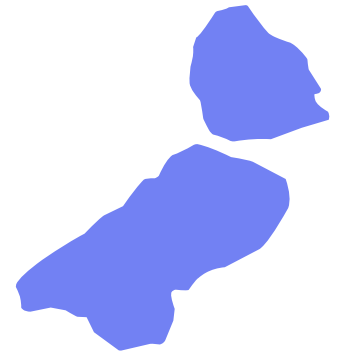
The cataclysmic 1916 flood birthed an audacious vision known as the Zuiderzee Works, which aimed to enclose and reclaim the treacherous Zuiderzee. This daring crusade found its inaugural triumph in the 1930s with the Afsluitdijk, a monumental dike of 32m long acting as the bulwark against the tides and effectively enclosing the Zuiderzee, giving birth to the IJsselmeer. A true marvel of Dutch engineering that marked the first step of a close to century year long counterattack to rest the land of the Zuiderzee. The ensuing decades were defined by slow, laborious and relentless draining. Pumps roared ceaselessly, gradually unveiling the barren yet promising canvas beneath. Slowly but surely, Flevoland triumphantly emerged from the depths.

Flevoland emerged as the largest artificial island in the world. It is an agricultural oasis boasting verdant expanses and rainbow-like fields. Its fame resonates through the tulip-strewn landscapes while the city of Lelystad stands as the testament to the Dutch triumph over the infamous Zuiderzee.

ZEELAND



FLEVOLAND



To this day, Flevoland remains afloat as a symbol of resilience, standing tall at depths reaching down to six meters below sea level, safeguarded by a majestic array of dikes and levees, resolutely defiant against the relentless assault of the waves. These silent guardians have valiantly protected Flevoland since its emergence. Amidst this battle for dominion over the land, the legendary Afsluitdijk rose in prominence, a colossus that closed the gates to the North Sea, transforming the tumultuous tides into a vast freshwater sanctuary. This monumental feat not only shielded the land from the tempestuous sea but also forged an emblem of the Dutch mastery over nature, an irrefutable proof to their ability to command the unruly waters. In the saga of Flevoland's existence, these monumental structures stand not just as barriers but as living monuments to human perseverance and triumph. They embody the spirit of a nation that dared to challenge the very elements themselves, crafting a legacy of resilience and innovation echoing through time.

ZEELAND

In the timeless chronicles of Zeeland, where the horizon meets the restless sea, unfolds a tumultuous saga etched in the land. Amidst the rolling waves and shifting sands, this tale echoes the tidal rhythms, resonating the echoes of sorrow, and the echoes of unwavering resilience. Located in the southwest corner of the Netherlands, where the rivers Scheldt, Rhine, and Meuse surrender to the sea, it bears the name Zeeland. Meaning "Sealand", its epithet is a testament to its geographical identity, a mosaic of islands and peninsulas, a land inextricably intertwined with the surrounding waters.

Lying below sea level, the water is both its lifeline and a looming threat. On the eve of January 31st of 1953, the province witnessed a tragedy. The benevolent sea morphed into an unrelenting and cruel force, casting its rage upon the land. It towered up to 5.6 meters above the customary sea level and engulfing the islands with its aqueous embrace. As dawn graced the seas in the early hours of February, Zeeland witnessed its darkest hours: the dikes had succumbed to the ocean's wrath, hectares of land inundated, infrastructure rendered inoperable and countless souls lost to the sea. However, in the wake of destruction and desolation, Zeeland's spirit stood strong as the province's motto *Luctor et emergo* (I struggle and emerge) radiated from the people and thus began the Delta Works.

The Delta Works, a symphony of colossal dams, are a response to the night of January 31st of 1953. They stand as guardians defying the ocean's embrace. At the epicenter of these monumental feats lies the Eastern Scheldt Storm Surge Barrier, revered as the Oosterscheldekering. It bridges the expanse between the hallowed islands of Schouwen-Duiveland and Noord-Beveland.



Deltawerken

This bastion reigns supreme as the grandest amongst the Delta Works. Forged between 1976 and 1986, it represents the epitome of Dutch defiance. It is said to be able to fend off a cataclysmic deluge foreseen to assail but once in the upcoming 4000 years. These titans now stand as guardians of tranquility, shielding the sanctity of Zeeland but also the western reaches of the Dutch shores from the marauding floods. The birth of the Delta Works also enkindled a flame that breathed life into the province of Zeeland's prosperity, fostering commerce between the ports of Rotterdam and Antwerp. Today, the Delta Works, with the Oosterscheldekering as its crown jewel, stands as a symbol of Zeeland's resilience and brighter future by embracing the land's motto: *Luctor et emergo*.

Together Flevoland and Zeeland embody the Dutch spirit of resilience, innovation, and adaptation. Their stories narrate a saga of human ingenuity and fortitude, a continuous battle for survival and coexistence with the capricious yet captivating forces of the sea. Yet, the looming horizons darken, as sea levels rise. Climate change unveils the unforeseen, a consequence of mankind's irreversible actions. How shall the Dutch bulwarks withstand the trials that loom on the horizon? Only time will tell.

CHAPTER 3: LEIDEN

LORE EXPLAINED

THE DUTCH LIBERATION

Leiden's Ontzet is the city's biggest festival, celebrating the Dutch's fortuitous liberation from the Spanish siege. The city of Leiden was the centre of conflict between the Dutch and Spanish forces during the Eighty Years' War. Leiden had been under siege for a whole year, except for a two-month break while the forces were used to counter the attack led by Louis of Nassau, the brother of William of Orange (William the Silent). The ephemeral relief ended with heavy losses including the death of Prince Louis.

During the break, citizens failed to stock up on food and resources and by August, over one-third of the city's population was wiped out due to starvation or disease. While the citizens grew impatient to surrender, Prince William of Orange remained insistent that they hold out for just three more months. In the meantime, he recruited the sea beggars (pirates in the Northern Sea) to fight off the Spaniards. However, these sea beggars could not sail to the landlocked Leiden. The prince decided to breach dykes around the city and flood the land, allowing the sea beggars to enter. The water was slow to flow in but it wasn't until September that the prince realised that it would never be enough for his forces to sail through and that they would have to breach even more dykes which were defended by the Spanish army. The Dutch soldiers fought bravely, joined by locals wearing white armbands as a symbol of alliance to the army, and the squadron journeyed forward.

Parallely, the population of Leiden were bereft of food. They grew agitated and pleaded with their mayor to surrender to the Spanish forces. The mayor, in response, offered them his own body as food but was firm in his refusal to surrender.



Willem van Oranje (Adriaen Thomaszoon Key, ca. 1579 - Rijksmuseum)

THEN THE ODDS CHANGED

The prince's forces were stuck. Despite all the efforts, the water was still too little for the pirates to move forward. The only canal was guarded by the Spanish troops. The Spaniards were ready to attack and seize their golden victory. But then Magdalena Moon, a Dutch woman, convinced her beau, Commander Francisco Valdez of the Spanish Army, to delay the attack another night. On the night of October 1st, heavy rains ensued, raising the water levels in the city and enabling the Sea beggars to enter Leiden without the onerous detour.



The self-sacrifice of mayor Van der Werf (Michiel Ignatius van Bree, ca. 1816 - Museum de Lakenhal)

It was then that a loud crash was heard, and the Spanish forces retreated abruptly, fearing the breach of another dyke that would flood their entire camp. Their frenzied exit left behind weapons, tools and bowls of hutspots (a dish of boiled and mashed potatoes, carrots and onions) and an undeniable victory for the Dutch.

However, the crash that was heard, was not a breach of a dyke, but rather the fall of a part of the Leiden wall which had been eroded by the water. Unbeknownst to the Spaniards, courtesy their anxious retreat, this left the city vulnerable to attack. Had they not left in such a hurry, they would have won and Leiden would have been theirs. Evident now, they did leave, pronouncing the Dutch victorious in their battle.

TODAY

October 3rd came to be remembered as a glorious day for the city of Leiden, and the memory of their victory is kept alive even today, by the festivities. Celebrations include distribution of Dutch delicacies like Herring and Houtspot, a Taptoe parade with lights and performances, and fireworks. And, of course, an entire day of drinking and debauchery.



*The sea beggars on their way to Liberate Leiden.
(J.H. Isings, before 1969 - via museum de Lakenhal)*

Leiden University was founded by Prince William in 1575, as a reward to the citizens for their resistance against Spanish forces. It became the first institution for higher education in the country that continues to boast worldwide prestige, so much so that all Dutch royalty attended the university, until of course, Princess Amalia enrolled into the University of Amsterdam.

Moreover, the city's vast network of canals makes it one of the most beautiful places in the Netherlands. That paired with its extensive lore makes it a cultural hotspot and a delight for travellers. The Leidens Ontzet is one among several festivals enjoyed by locals, making it one of the must-visit cities in the Netherlands.

CHAPTER 4: DRENTHE

BRINGING YOU CLOSER TO THE PREHISTORIC MAN

Nobody knows how they did it, but some five thousand years ago, early farmers managed to move huge, heavy boulders in order to build graves. 'Hunebeds' are prehistoric burial chambers, built around 5,000 years ago at the beginning of the New Stone Age (c 3,500 BC). Today the remains of hunebeds look like piles of large boulders in the landscape.

They were built by the first people to settle as farmers in this part of the Netherlands. They came here around 4,400 BC and made their homes on the higher sandy ground along the Hondsrug above the surrounding swamps. Archaeologists call them the Funnel Beaker Culture because of the distinctive shape of the pottery found in the tombs. Centuries ago local people thought that these massive monuments could only have been built by a race of giants, which they called Huynen. In Germany also the tombs are called Hünengräber.

HOW DID THEY GET TO DRENTHE?

The enormous boulders were brought here by the movement of glaciers during the last but one Ice Age about 150,000 years ago. The ice did not cover the whole of the Netherlands but only reached as far as a line south of Drenthe. That is why the stones – and therefore hunebeds – are only found in the north of the country. Most of the stones came from the region now known as Sweden and Finland in Scandinavia. The largest stones weigh around 40,000 kilograms.



From AE van Giffen, The dolmens in the Netherlands, Utrecht 1925-1927, fig. D27

EXPLORE THE STONE MONUMENTS

There are 54 hunebeds still to be seen in this part of the Netherlands, 52 in the province of Drenthe and 2 in Groningen. Most of them stand along the ridge of high sandy ground known as the Hondsrug which stretches from Emmen in the south to Groningen in the north. Originally there were more than 80 but many have disappeared over the centuries. They are the oldest monuments to be found in the Netherlands. There are many 'Hünengräber' in Northern Germany and a large number of 'barrows' in Britain.



D17 and D18 on old postcards

THE HUNEBED CENTER

At the crossroads of history and discovery lies the Hunebed Centre, a gateway to the mysteries of the past and a captivating journey into the enigmatic world of hunebeds. The Hunebed Centre invites you to step back in time, where giants, both in legend and geology, once roamed. Immerse yourself in the riddles of the Funnel Beaker Culture and witness the enduring legacy they left behind. As you explore the 54 hunebeds scattered across Drenthe and Groningen, the Hunebed Centre becomes your compass, guiding you through the narratives etched into these ancient stones. It's an expedition into the past—a chance to touch, feel, and connect with the roots of civilization.

The museum at the Hunebed Centre is home to the largest collection of these items in the Netherlands and well worth a visit. Of the 52 dolmens that can still be found in Drenthe today, 47 are located on the Hondsrug. They are all open to the public. The five most impressive and beautiful dolmens are the D17, D18 in Rolde, D27 in Borger, D43 in Emmen and D49 in Schoonoord. The Prehistoric Park is open next to the museum. There you can experience how our ancestors lived in their farms. You can also take a walk through 150,000 years of Drenthe's history.



The Hunebed Centre, 9531 JT Borger



Prehistoric program in the Prehistoric Park at Hunebedcentrum.



CHAPTER 5: THE LOVE STORY OF DOM GARDEN

The Domtuin, also known as the Dom Garden, is a historic and picturesque garden located in the heart of Utrecht, Netherlands. Nestled between the iconic Dom Tower and St. Martin's Cathedral, the Domtuin occupies a notable position in the city's rich history and architectural heritage.

Aside from the historic value relating to the once grand St. Martin's Cathedral, the Dom Garden also holds a hidden love story that not everybody has heard about.



The Domtuin - Dom Garden, Utrecht

THE URBAN LEGEND - THE LOVE STORY OF AN ARCHITECT

Legend had it, there was an architect who was assigned a very prestigious task of designing the lovely courtyard - the later-to-be Domtuin. To prepare himself for this huge responsibility, he went to France and Italy to study the architecture techniques and famous gardens there, leaving his wife behind. To maintain contact, they exchanged letters every now and then, but at one point, he stopped responding to her letters and didn't return for many months.

Rumors went around, people in his hometown assumed that he had died as he was gone for too long without any words. This was not something uncommon back then - men going on long adventurous trips and never coming back. Unavoidably, these horrible words reached his wife.

The poor woman was shattered and devastated. She couldn't carry on without the love of her life. As a consequence, she hung herself. Time went by and not long after that, to everyone's surprise, the architect did return to his hometown. It turned out, that he ran into some troubles overseas but was alive and well in the end. Upon return, he learnt the heartbreaking story about his wife, and to cope with the grave loss of a loved one, he committed himself to build the garden.

The relentless work of the architect had turned into the beautiful Dom Garden.



We can now even see a little memorial that the architect made for his wife: a sculpted stone feature on one of the arches.

You can find this stone upon entering the garden from the Dom square side and walking into the middle part of the garden. Once there, turn around and look at the first arch in the corner. The masonry there looks like it is tied together with ropes. Of course, these aren't real ropes but very well-crafted stone ropes. This for him was symbolic to burying the love of his life, and for us to forever remember this beautiful melancholic story.



The bronze statue of a writing monk in the Dom Garden

THE DOM GARDEN NOW

Being the concoction of nature and medieval ruins, the Domtuin marks a beautiful tourist attraction and offers a memorable visit.

As one wanders through the Dom Garden, a sense of serenity envelops the surroundings. The carefully manicured greenery provides a tranquil escape, inviting locals and tourists to leisurely explore the remnants of the cathedral.



The Dom Tower, where you can visit the Dom Garden through

This picturesque setting makes the Dom Garden a popular destination for contemplative strolls and relaxed afternoons, where visitors can appreciate the juxtaposition of nature against the medieval architectural remnants.

Beyond its aesthetic appeal, the Dom Garden serves as a tangible link to Utrecht's rich history. The medieval ruins stand as silent witnesses to centuries of change – the once-grand St. Martin's Cathedral, suffered significant damage in the 17th century during a storm, now leaving behind the hauntingly beautiful remnants including a collection of weathered stone walls and arches.

Surrounded by a sense of serenity and antiquity, the Domtuin invites visitors to reflect on the passage of time and the resilience of history. Whether one is interested in architecture, history, or simply seeking a peaceful escape, the Dom Garden in Utrecht offers a unique yet stunning blend of beauty and historical significance.