

DUTCH CULTURE



(Photo: Tulips in Bloom)

A Strange and Alien World

Captains Log: Day 95 of Dutch Expedition.

It has been approximately 95 days since the S.I.A. (Semester in Amsterdam) expeditionary force has arrived in this strange alien world.

The natives call this place, The Netherlands.

I am learning the ways of the native population. These Dutchman, as I have decided to call them, are a fascinating tribe. Both the men and the women stand as tall as trees, plus they are always wearing wooden shoes and orange ceremonial clothing. They live in odd shaped buildings that resemble giant fans; the Dutchmen call these structures Windmills.

Furthermore, their diet consists mainly of an abundant yellow substance known as Cheese, and they are also particularly fond of a rare delicacy known as Oliebollen. I am

told that these Oliebollen are made from the hearts of their defeated enemies! They are then promptly deep-fried and served with powdered sugar. They are delicious!

The language of the Dutchman is unlike anything I have ever heard. It is comprised of sounds which resemble that of an old man desperately attempting to cough up phlegm. I have made efforts to learn their mother tongue, but the task is proving to be difficult.

I fear that I am going mad!!!

However, I feel that I am making progress with the natives and that I am slowly gaining their trust. I am scheduled to meet with their King, Heineken of Orange, to discuss a possible alliance with the Motherland, Canada!

But little do they know that the real reason I am compiling this detailed information on their culture is to prepare our mighty Canadian Army for the inevitable Invasion! We will ride on our Moose to victory and smite the unsuspecting Dutchman with our Hockey Sticks!

AND SCENE!

Introduction (The REAL one)

Hello everyone! I hope you all enjoyed this brief excerpt from a screenplay that I am currently writing. I call it! AVATAR 2! I don't want to brag but James Cameron is attached to direct. Be on the lookout because it's in theaters December 2018 ;)

While I was compiling all of this information for this exciting project, I learned a great deal about the Culture of the Netherlands. I would like to share this intriguing information with you all in this blog. As a whole, there were three things about the Dutch that were quite interesting. For the purposes of this blog I will discuss their personalities, unique language, and their hobbies and interests.

The Dutch People (Personalities)

DISCLAIMER***

(I know that it is difficult to classify all Dutch people as having the following traits that I'm about to mention. After all, no two snowflakes are exactly the same right? But these were just the common traits that I personally noticed.)

One of the first things I noticed about the Dutch is that the majority are extremely kind and helpful. Especially when it comes to navigating around the country, I found that people were more than willing to lend me a helping hand and point me in the right direction.

The Dutch are also very straightforward and upfront during conversation. If there is something that they feel needs to be said, come hell or high water, they will say it! I've been introduced to this character trait on numerous occasions. At first it hurt my feelings and made me cry (on the inside), but eventually I developed a thicker skin and got used to it.

While it is true that the Dutch are often blunt and quick to the point, they are also very lovey dovey at times. A common greeting that I see everywhere is the traditional three-kiss greeting. They are not given out to strangers, but rather, it is most common among close friends, family members, and loved ones. Needless to say, the first time I experienced this tradition of three kisses I was definitely caught off guard. But when I understood the context it made my heart soar like eagle.

"You like me! You really like me!" :)

The Dutch Language

There is no denying that the Dutch are fortunate enough to possess one of the most interesting languages on the planet. It is a language so unique that they are the only ones in the world who speak it! Mind blowing right?

And the funny thing is, they don't even have to speak their native language because virtually all of them also speak English. Some of them even have a better English vocabulary than most native English speakers if you can believe it! While Dutch is not an extremely common language in the world, I am proud to say that I have the ability to speak it almost fluently. And mark my words ladies and gentlemen! I plan on becoming 100% fluent in my ancestral language before I return home to Canada. You can count on that!

Another thing that makes the Dutch language so unique is their use of words that contain the letter G. The best way I can describe its sound is if I tell you to picture Tony the Tiger trying to clear his throat. The mixture of growling, slurping, and attempts to cough up phlegm is roughly how it sounds. I mean no offense here, folks; I'm just being honest.

Their vocabulary is also very unique in terms of word size. The largest word in the Dutch dictionary is *Meervoudigepersoonlijkheidsstroornis*. The meaning of this word is "multiple personality disorder", which is fitting due to its letter count of 35! I thought that this was extremely impressive, that is, until I saw some of the German's vocabulary.

For example: Rindfleischetikettierungsüberwachungsaufgabenübertragungsgesetz.

I dare you to say that one ten times as fast as you can.

But I'm getting off track here. Back to Dutch Culture!

Culture (Hobbies and Interests)

As a whole, the Dutch are very social, whether it is family gatherings such as birthdays, cultural events such as Museum Nacht (Museum Night) and Turn on the Lights, or just chilling with friends in one of the many Café's scattered throughout the country. You'll rarely see a Dutchman out on his or her own. Much akin to the mighty buffalo, the Dutch travel in herds.



(Photo: Turn on the Lights 2017)

The food culture in the Netherlands is also amazing to behold. While the Dutch are not known worldwide for their cuisine, there are certainly many delicious items that everyone should try during their stay.

Such Items include the following:

Stroopwafels (syrup wafers, my personal favorite!), patat (fries), poffertjes (they resemble baby pancakes), bitterballen, kaas (cheese), hagelslag (chocolate sprinkles that you put on bread), oliebollen (deep fried dough balls dipped in powdered sugar), stamppot (mixed vegetables, potatoes, and served with sausage), and pannenkoeken (pancakes!).

Fun fact about pannenkoeken: they are eaten throughout the day and are typically a meal served at dinner. They can also be served with a whole manner of things including chicken, fish, pork, apples, tomatoes, etc.



(Photo: Dutch Pancake)



(Photo: Oliebol Wagon)

The Dutch are also extremely physically active. Most notably, you will always see bikes somewhere in the country. If you were to play the “*drink a beer every time you see a bike*” drinking game you would die of alcohol poisoning. (R.I.P Frank the Tank! You will be missed!).

The Dutch also play a vast array of sports. They are most famously known for playing soccer (or football) and are extremely talented. In fact, they are known as “the best team to never win the world cup” (Always the bridesmaid and never the bride).

Other sports they are typically known for include speed skating, rowing, and field hockey. They are also becoming more prominent in other sports such as curling (the men's national team is playing for a spot in the 2018 Winter Olympics) and even Baseball! Who knew right???

Conclusion

There is no denying that the Dutch are fortunate to possess an incredible culture. There are many things that I failed to mention which include their rich history as a nation. But if you are interested in that aspect of Dutch culture I recommend you pick up any world history book or utilize the World Wide Web. While these options will give you a rich in-depth look at the foundational characteristics of a country, the best way to experience culture is to actually go out and explore. Only if you do that will you find things that you can't find in books or on the internet. For me, personally, every time I go out and explore the Netherlands I learn something new and amazing about the fascinating Dutch culture.

So go out there and get into some trouble guys! You never know what you might find.

Thanks for reading everyone! Tot de volgende keer!

-Ruben (Semester in Amsterdam Blogger)