

the world's  
cycling experts

english



## Dutch Cycling Embassy

Sharing know-how, experience and contacts

We facilitate cycling worldwide as the most modern, efficient and sustainable means of transportation by sharing our expertise and technology as the world's number one cycling country.

### Who are we?

The Dutch Cycling Embassy is a comprehensive network of:

- > private companies: traffic and infrastructure consultants and manufacturers;
- > NGOs, universities and research institutions;
- > national and local governments.

### What can we do for you?

The Dutch Cycling Embassy can put you in touch with its extensive Dutch network. Whether your goals involve research, planning, policy-making, product development, manufacturing, construction or building, we can help you find the best possible partners.

*The Dutch Cycling Embassy Foundation*

Address > Trans 3, 3512 JJ Utrecht  
> The Netherlands

Tel. > +31 (0)30 230 4521  
Fax. > +31 (0)30 231 2384

Web > [www.dutchcycling.nl](http://www.dutchcycling.nl)  
Email > [info@dutchcycling.nl](mailto:info@dutchcycling.nl)



the world's  
cycling experts >





# The Netherlands

## A history of cycling innovation

With 26% of all traffic movements done by bike, we are the bicycle champions of the world. Our country has a bicycle-friendly infrastructure that promotes a healthier, more active lifestyle. Without wishing to boast, we at the Dutch Cycling Embassy can genuinely say that our country is a veritable trendsetter when it comes to sustainable transport.

*In this highly motorised country, 16 million inhabitants own 18 million bicycles*

The Netherlands is a small, densely populated country in Western Europe. It is a wealthy country in which 1 in 2 people owns a car. Bicycle use, however, is higher than anywhere else in the world.



### So how did we do it?

Cycling has always been popular in the Netherlands. Since the 1960s, however, car-ownership and car-usage have increased significantly and bicycle usage has fallen, reaching an all-time low in 1978. Cities began to struggle with congestion, air pollution, a poorer quality of life and many traffic accidents. As a result, the governments decided to develop a large array of measures to promote cycling, walking and traffic calming, such as:

- > Reducing car access to city-centres and create car-free areas;
- > Making parking in city-centres more expensive;
- > Constructing cycle paths and reducing road space for cars;
- > Facilitating cycling through cycle network planning, road design, signalling, parking and enforcement;
- > Reducing maximum speed on the majority of urban roads to 30 km/h or less;
- > Promoting cycling to encourage the use of bikes and discourage car-use.

*People in Amsterdam currently cycle more often than they drive their cars*

### It worked

Bicycle use in cities increased. In 1975, 25% of all non-walking journeys in Amsterdam involved a bicycle. By 1995, this had increased to 35%. We also managed to improve the safety of cycling and traffic fatalities fell from 3,200 in 1972 to 700 in 2010.

### The advantages

- + You travel 10% faster in cities by bike than by car
- + The quality of life in cities improves
- + Traffic congestion reduces
- + Local, city economies improve



## Sustainability



Despite billions spent on the development of electric cars, cycling is still the most sustainable mode of transport.

Worldwide, levels of CO2-emissions from transport are growing faster than from any other sector and this represents another great reason to cycle more often. After all, cycling is emission-free!

*Every euro invested in cycling is well spent: better health, less congestion, fewer serious accidents, improved economy*

Cyclists even enjoy cleaner air. In Dutch cities, cyclists inhale less pollution than car drivers on the same route. A study has shown that if the inhabitants of Utrecht stopped cycling, car-use would increase from 22% to 38%. This would not only lead to horrendous traffic jams, a lower quality of life for residents and more air pollution but also an increase of 70% traffic-related CO2-emissions.

## Culture



In the Netherlands almost everybody uses a bike. No less than 84% of Dutch people own at least one bicycle. From Joe Bloggs to Queen Beatrix. Car owners also use their bikes because it can be faster and is always cheaper and healthier.

Cycling is ageless. Children learn how to use a bicycle around the age of two and although teenagers are the most avid bicycle users, adults of all ages and even the elderly often use the bicycle.

### A 'rich' means of transportation

People at all levels of society and income use the bicycle, including CEOs, ministers and members of the Royal family. In the Netherlands people with high incomes cycle more than people with low incomes and women cycle more than men.

### Why cycle?

Cycling is first and foremost a mode of transport. While half the population uses the bicycle for leisure and sports, 9 out of 10 bicycle trips are for transport to work, shops and visits. It is also, by far, the most important mode of transport for travelling to school with 40% of primary school pupils cycling to school and 25% being brought by car. In terms of secondary school pupils (12-17 years old), no less than 75% use the bicycle to go to school, while only 6% are brought by car.

### How much and how far?

- > 14 million journeys by bicycle every day;
- > Total of 15 billion kilometres per year (as much as travelling by train);
- > Average cycling distance is 3 km;
- > 15% of all journeys between 10 and 15 km are made by bicycle (more than by public transport over the same distance)!

## Safety and security



Currently, the Netherlands has over 29,000 kilometres of segregated cycle tracks. This is 12,000 more than in 1996. Clearly, the Dutch continuously invest in cycling.

All this cycling has had an impact on the urban landscape. It is important to create calm roads so that cyclists and cars can share the roads safely. Along major roads, however, dedicated cycling infrastructure such as bike lanes and segregated cycle tracks are required. Millions of euros are thus invested in making intersections safe for cyclists or creating dedicated tunnels and bridges. Amsterdam, for instance, spent 20 million euros (28 million dollars) a year on cycling projects between 2007 and 2010. The economic benefits far outweigh the costs.

### As bike use goes up, accident rates go down

The number of cyclists killed per 100 million kilometres cycled and the percentage of journeys by bicycle in different countries:

Netherlands	1.1 fatalities	26% bicycle use
Denmark	1.4 fatalities	19% bicycle use
Germany	1.7 fatalities	10% bicycle use
United Kingdom	3.6 fatalities	2% bicycle use
United States	5.8 fatalities	< 1% bicycle use

### Parking spaces

All these bicycles need to be parked and, in the Netherlands, there are millions of bicycle parking spaces. The largest concentrations can be found around railway stations, since about 40% of train-users cycle to the station. Around Utrecht Central Station there are 19,000 indoor and outdoor bike parking stands. Technical standards indicate how to use space most efficiently and incorporate specific demands for all bicycle varieties.

## Innovation



The Dutch are passionate about cycling. We continuously search for ways to improve cycling conditions, cycling safety, and of course, the bicycle itself. We have succeeded in integrating cycling within urban and transport planning. It has become one of our most important modes of transport.

It is vital to join forces in order to make cycling a success. Dutch municipalities and local politicians need solutions to the problem of mass car use in their cities. Agencies support them in developing strategies, mobility plans and designs and the bicycle industry and producers of street furniture and parking provisions invest hugely in innovative products and creative designs. And cyclists also make themselves heard: special organisations have been campaigning for better cycling conditions since the seventies.

### Experience-based tips to promote city cycling

- > Create integrated multi-modal traffic and transport policies providing efficient door-to-door transport;
- > Implement traffic calming measures;
- > Create more public space;
- > Provide high-quality cycle tracks and lanes;
- > Create high-quality car parking outside the city centre;
- > Provide cycle parking facilities, particularly at public transport stations.

## Leisure and health



Research shows that cycling contributes to happiness. Our country has a network of signposts and recreational routes and half of the population makes recreational cycle tours. This type of activity allows you to enjoy the fresh air, take in the fantastic sights and benefit from the physical exercise. The Dutch even go on holidays by bike: we take one million cycle holidays every year. All this recreational cycling is not just fun, it is also important for the economy as cyclists spend about 750 million euros (1 billion dollars) every year while out and about.

*Driving a car is stressful, riding a bike is liberating*

### Health benefits

Compared to countries with similar wealth, the Netherlands has a relatively low rate of obesity and heart disease. People riding a bike for 30 minutes a day are physically 5 years younger than people lacking this daily exercise. And another thing... one of the most commonly used excuses for not cycling is the weather but most Dutch people keep on cycling even when it rains or snows...

## The bicycle market



The Dutch spend 1.4 billion dollars annually on bicycles. Dutch bikes are famous world-wide because they are robust, sustainable, reliable, comfortable and easy to pedal. They also allow the user to carry passengers and goods.

### We export about 1 million bikes per year

Each year, 1 million Dutch bicycles are sold abroad. But did you know we even export double layered bicycle parking facilities? We also produce a wide variety of accessories, from (rain) clothing to child seats. The Netherlands can be considered a cycling laboratory: creating perspectives for people and organisations abroad that want to enjoy the benefits of cycling.

*The Netherlands provides the widest range of cycling know-how, products and infrastructure*

- > 66,6% of the bicycles sold are city bikes and hybrids, i.e. bicycles for transport purposes;
- > 1 in 8 bicycles sold is an electric bicycle.