



Delft Netherlands: The South Holland Delight

Description

What land is this? Yon pretty town is Delft, with all it wares displays: The pride,
the market-place, the crown And centre of the Potter's trade.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Traveling to Delft, Netherlands, is a must-do delight during any visit to South Holland. The Netherlands has so many beautiful things to see, and Delft is one of the more popular destinations to visit while in the country. There is charm and vitality to this city that is immediately apparent. The residents exude a strong sense of community, which is heartwarming. Children were giggling and running everywhere. Families were enjoying the park; friends were having drinks along the canal, and bikes were everywhere!! Though it seemed we were invading their private world at first, all our interactions with locals were warm and welcoming.



Entering Delft, Netherlands

When visiting, you can enter the central historic area near the southeast corner of the town. Oostpoort, a 1400s city gate with twin Gothic spires on the waterway, will greet you. This prepares you for the unique things to come. Delft is a vibrant historic city with much to offer. Magnificent churches, an old town hall, and a large town square with fantastic cafes and bars. All set in beautiful brick and stone architecture dating back centuries, radiating that Dutch feel. It is a lovely day trip; you can spend the night if you are lucky enough.

So join us, enter through that gate, walk with us, and let's experience delightful Delft.



Netherlands

First impressions

First impressions always make a significant impact on our outlook on a destination. Stepping up to the multi-spired Oostpoort, you begin to get that fantastic feeling washing over you when you know you found something special. We stepped through the gate and headed toward the most prominent church tower we could see in the distance, knowing it would be the center of town.

As we walked, we couldn't help but get immersed in the town's beauty. The lovely homes and brick walkways lead us along the charming canals. They provide a peaceful, relaxed feel to this busy, popular destination of around 100,000 residents. We had limited time as we had to be in Amsterdam that evening, but we couldn't resist keeping a leisurely pace while trying to find all the landmarks that might wow us with their beauty, and they did just that!

History because to know is to understand



Beside a canal in an elevated area, a Count established his manor around 1075. That and many other events made Delft the vital market town it was during that time. With such a large central market square, it is easy to see why.

In the early Middle Ages, Delft was a rural village that quickly grew into a bustling city. The city was granted its city charter by Count Willem II on 15 April 1246. Continuing to flourish, the Delfshavensche Schie canal was dug through to the river Maas in 1389, where the port of Delfshaven was built. That connected Delft to the sea, which increased the city's prosperity. Those canals are a prominent feature of this city today and provide the city with unique European charm.

In 1536 though, tragedy struck the city of Delft when the great fire of Delft destroyed a large part of the city. However, numerous buildings remain from the 16th century, especially in the Wynhaven, Koornmarkt, and Voorstraat districts.

William of Orange



William of Orange Photo from the [Delft Official Tourism Site](#)

The town's association with the House of Orange started when William of Orange (Willem van Oranje), nicknamed William the Silent, took up residence in 1572 in the former Saint-Agatha convent (later called the Prinsenhof). Prince Willem van Oranje (William of Orange) was the founder of Dutch independence. He led the growing Dutch resistance against Spanish occupation, known as the Eighty Year War.

By then, Delft was one of the leading cities of Holland and served as a headquarters because of the city walls that offered protection. During the Battle of Delft in October 1573, Delft fended off an attack by Spanish forces due to those walls.

In 1581, Delft became the de facto capital of the newly independent Netherlands as the seat of the Prince of Orange after the Act of Abjuration was proclaimed.

Sad end to the Dutch founder

William of Orange was assassinated on 10 July 1584 by Balthazar Gerards in the hall of the Prinsenhof (now the Prinsenhof Museum). The family's traditional burial place in Breda was still in the hands of the Spanish. Therefore, he was buried in the Delft Nieuwe Kerk (New Church), starting a tradition for the House of Orange that has continued today. An inscription is marked to the right by the staircase on the first floor where the assassination occurred. A sad memorial attaches to the Prinsenhof, on the Oude Delft, as the scene of his death.

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The Delft Explosion

Another tragedy hit Delft on 12 October 1654. The Delft Explosion, also known as the Delft Thunderclap, occurred when a gunpowder magazine with around 66,000 pounds of gunpowder stored in barrels exploded, destroying much of the city. It was a former Clarist convent in the Doelenkwartier district, where the Paardenmarkt is now located. The magazine keeper, Cornelis Soetens, opened the store to check a powder sample, and a massive explosion followed.

More than a hundred people were killed, while thousands were left injured. Luckily, many citizens were away from the city that day, or the toll would have been much higher. Today, the explosion is primarily

remembered for killing Rembrandt's most promising pupil, Carel Fabritius, and destroying almost all of his works. Delft artist Egbert van der Poel painted several pictures of Delft, showing the devastation.

The famous blue earthenware of Delft



A new style of glazed earthenware was introduced to the city after several Italian makers settled in Delft. Thanks to the Dutch East India Company (VOC) office that opened in 1602 and began manufacturing Delft Blue China, Delft experienced a renewed birth in the 17th century. "Delft's Blauw" (Delft Blue, Delft pottery) was celebrated throughout Europe. This was an imitation of Chinese and Japanese porcelain. In subsequent years the industry fell to the wayside, but a revival took place, and to this day, Delft Blue remains a signature of this city.

Fun Facts

This city is home to some brilliant minds and artists in history. Here are a few.

- Delft was the birthplace of Hugo de Groot (also known as Grotius; 1583-1645), the statesman and popular scholar who laid the foundations for international law.
- The painters M. van Mierevelt (1567-1641) and Jan Vermeer van Delft (1632-1675). One of Vermeer's most famous paintings is "View of Delft," depicting his hometown.
- Anthony van Leeuwenhoek the Father of Microbiology and the inventor of the microscope.
- Several notable artists based themselves in the city, including Leonard Bramer, Carel Fabritius, Pieter de Hoogh, Gerard Houckgeest, Emanuel de Witte, and Jan Steen.
- Dutch physician Reinier de Graaf received international attention for his discovery of the follicles of the ovary.

What to see and do in Delft, Netherlands

This is a city full of life and energy. With so many activities, any visitor could stay occupied for days. The day we were there was early Spring and quite cool, but people enjoyed the outdoors as if it were summer. Looking closely at the photos, people looked relaxed in the sunshine despite to cool temperature.

During our visit, we barely touched the surface of all Delft has to offer. We hope to get back one day and give it the time it deserves. Here are the top suggestions of what to do if you are lucky enough to visit this Dutch gem.

Nieuwe Kerk (New Church)

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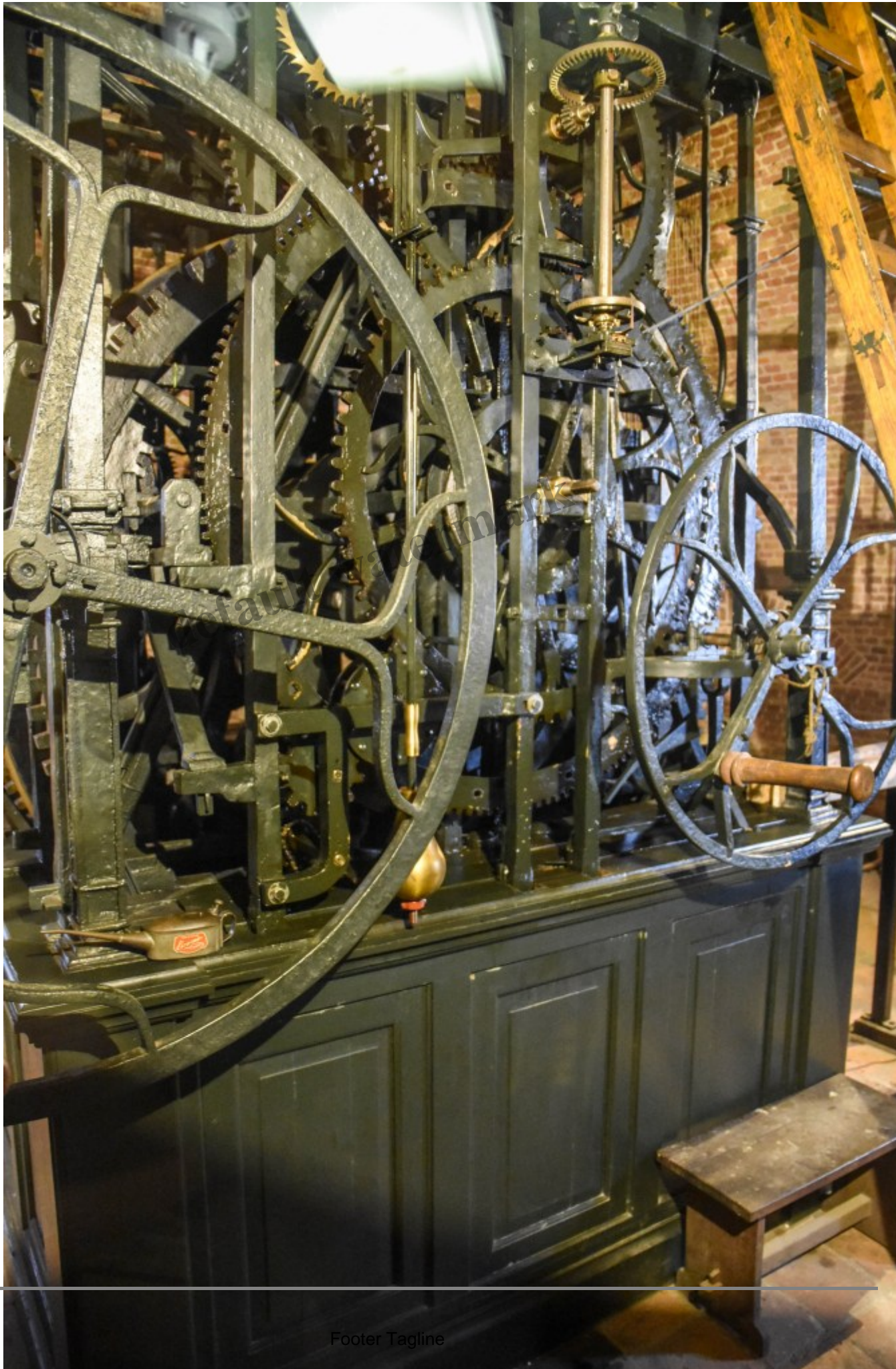
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To understand the history of The Netherlands, a visit to Nieuwe Kerk (New Church) is a must. Here, the father of The Netherlands' William of Orange' is buried, and subsequently, all the House of Orange royals found their resting place in Nieuwe Kerk.

The choir of the Nieuwe Kerk contains a magnificent monument by Hendrik de Keyser (1608-19), erected by the United Provinces to the memory of William of Orange. The interior of the church is quite understated but elegant. The stained glass windows are intricate and impressive.

But best of all is the view after you've climbed the 375-foot-high tower with a magnificent view of the city. On bright days you'll even be able to see Rotterdam and The Hague. Ryan took all the cityscape photos on this post from the high tower. In front of the church, in the marketplace, is a bronze statue of Hugo Grotius by Th. Stracké, which was erected in 1886.

Market Square



Wandering the Delft market square is a real treat. On Saturdays, it's easy to stock up on Dutch souvenirs by simply checking out all the stalls: cheeses, cookies (fresh stroopwafels!), and poffertjes: a food festival all in itself. The day we were there was a cobbler in the square making Dutch wooden clogs, a commonly recognized symbol of the Netherlands. Of course, we could not resist buying some of his handiwork.

And, of course, you can't miss the grand Stadhuis, Delft (City Hall), built in the 17th century. On the west side of the marketplace, restored in the Renaissance style by H. de Keyser after a fire in 1618, has an ancient Gothic belfry.

Behind the most beautiful façade on the market, you'll find Koos Rozenburgs' shop, where some fantastic antiques are found. What was most striking about the Square was all the people relaxing and enjoying the day's beauty. This is a gathering place for this community.

Delft by Water



Compared to the grand canals of Amsterdam, a tour through the channels in Delft is simple and cozy.

Canal boats run around every hour from Koornmarkt and take about 50 minutes. You will see the best of Delft from the water and explore the canals up close.

If you'd like to try other ways to enjoy the water, rent a stand-up paddleboard (or take a lesson). Paddle your way around the city while discovering the canals of Delft.

Museum Prinsenhof

In [Museum Prinsenhof Delft](#), you can discover the history of the Netherlands. The museum was the scene of one of the most important events in Dutch history: the assassination of William the Silent. William moved into the Saint Agatha monastery in 1572, which was then renamed Prinsenhof and eventually became the Delft Museum Prinsenhof. In July 1584, he was shot by Balthasar Gerards as he climbed the stairs to his office. You can still see the bullet holes in the wall of the museum.

In Museum Prinsenhof Delft, you're taken on a journey through Delft's rich past along with its artistic and cultural heritage. Museum Prinsenhof tells about the war, William of Orange, and displays beautiful paintings from the Golden Age. In the museum, you can learn about many of the famous residents of Delft, such as Johannes Vermeer, Michiel van Mierevelt, Antoni van Leeuwenhoek, and Hugo de Groot. Learn how centuries of trade and commerce, engineering, art, and science have brought

prosperity to the Netherlands.



Museum Prinsenhof Photo from [Delft Official Tourism Site](#)

In the Netherlands, at some point in time, all children in primary school will visit the Museum Prinsenhof. The Netherlands began in Delft, and the children must know about their nation's origins. It is a must-see when in Delft.

Royal Delft Museum

Royal Delft is the only remaining earthenware factory from the 17th century, where the world-famous Delft Blue ceramics are still made. The painters perform their craft with passion and vitality, following centuries-old traditions.

In the museum, you can admire all the highlights of the iconic collection of Delft Blue and Royal Delftware, such as the blue and white tulip pyramid. During the Royal Delft Experience, you can discover the complete history and learn all about the production process of Royal Delftware.

You can't leave Royal Delft without seeing how the famous Delft blue is made, so visit the famous factory. You will learn that the iconic Delft earthenware is painted black and gets its bright blue hue after being baked. You'll see painters at work during the tour and see the fantastic ceramic collection.



Vermeer Centrum

The Vermeer Centrum in Delft is the only place in the world where you can admire actual-size reproductions of Johannes Vermeer's complete artwork. You can learn about Vermeer's life, family, work, and the city that inspired him.

The master painter from Delft is particularly famous for his stunning depictions of sunlight. Step into the light studio, imagine you are Vermeer at work in the 17th century, and try to see if you can uncover his

secret.

Take a free walking tour

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This city is meant to walk, and you can choose from many free tours. Delft may be famous for its historic center with rows of impressive canal houses, but there are many other attractive sights to discover as you wander through the city. Some walking tours include:

- Delft Waterways and Canal System
- Following the Footsteps of Antoni Van Leeuwenhoek, the father of microbiology
- Delft Ceramics Route: Learn all about the world of this world-famous pottery
- Tu Nord is a stroll through a neighborhood with a beautiful collection of historical buildings with a rich heritage.
- Tu Nord's 75 years of Freedom reflects on the powerful stories from World War II.
- Famed artist Johannes Vermeer's walk will lead you along to the places in the city center that played an essential role in the work of this mysterious Dutch artist.

Visit the Five Historic Churches of Delft



The Nieuwe Kerk (New Church)

The New Church in Delft is mainly known for its royal crypt. Nearly all the Dutch Royal House members are buried in this church. The most famous grave is that of our “Father of the Fatherland,” William of Orange (William the Silent). However, you can also find the grave of law scholar and writer Hugo de Groot in this church.

The views from the tower are magnificent.

The Oude Kerk (Old Church)



The Old Church has been given the nickname ‘Topsy John’ (Scheve Jan) for a good reason! It leans heavily to one side and has a distinct tower bend. At the time, the people of Delft were not aware that they were building the tower on an old canal that had been filled in. They discovered this during construction and decided to build ‘vertically’ again on top of the section already leaning to the side. This explains the bend in the church tower that we can still see today. Fortunately, the church has been fully stabilized now. Buried here: Piet Hein, Johannes Vermeer, Anthony van Leeuwenhoek.

Maria van Jessekerk on Burgwal

A striking building because this church has not one but two towers – which is quite unusual for a church. Furthermore, the towers also differ from each other architecturally. Learn the story behind the towers here and admire the beautiful interior.

St. Hyppolytus Kapel

This is one of the oldest buildings in Delft! The chapel was built at the beginning of 1400 and was used for various functions in later centuries. Initially, the chapel was part of the Heilige Geest Zusterhuis (an almshouse and hospital run by a community of devout women). After that, it was used as a storehouse for weapons. The restoration began at the beginning of 1900, and the Roman Catholic church started to use it as a place of worship.

Waalse Kerk on Agathaplein (the Chapel of the St. Agathaklooster)

The church has not been used for worship for a long time. This was formerly used as a chapel by the court of William of Orange. Many of his grandchildren are buried here instead of with their families in the Nieuwe Kerk.

Molen de Roos

Molen de Roos is a conspicuous landmark as you visit through Delft. De Roos is the only remaining windmill of 18 that used to operate in Delft. Windmill De Roos, a tower mill built in the 1760s, was restored to working order in 2013. Wind power is still used weekly in the De Roos mill to grind organically grown grain down to flour. You can enter the mill to see the mechanism and enjoy a beautiful view over Delft from the upper platform.



Search for Street Art

Delft is a city known for its street art. Klokseeg, a short walk from the station, transports you into the world of street artist Micha de Bie. His work includes icons of Delft, such as Hugo de Groot, Antoni van Leeuwenhoek, and Vermeer's Milkmaid. The rest of the alley has been decorated with a color block pattern inspired by the colors that frequently appear in Pieter de Hooch's paintings.

Botanical Gardens

The city of Delft is full of lovely parks and gardens. The highlight is the botanical gardens, a quiet oasis where you can admire an extensive collection of plants, even from tropical regions, and centuries-old trees. The botanical garden is located next to Delft Technical University.

Cycling



This is the Netherlands, and a lot of biking is happening. For all practical purposes, it is the most common form of transportation. It is a popular activity among tourists and allows you to see more of the city faster. Please become familiar with the local rules of the road, and **DO NOT DO** what the above picture shows.

Shopping and Eating in Delft

This city has many shopping options, but what people are most often interested in is Blue Delft, china. Royal Delft, also known as De Porceleynse Fles, is a great place that showcases Delftware and has it for sale.

We came across many restaurants, cafes, and bars to sample the local food and brews in our wandering. It was a beautiful fabulous spring day, but the locals were outside in masse. The streets were full of laughter and conversation. Gathering around some drink and food is a prevalent activity in Delft.

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Want to learn more about The Netherlands? Check out our [Netherlands Travel Guide](#)

Map of Delft, Netherlands

Want to download a free city map? Click [here](#), courtesy of the Delft, Netherlands Tourist office.

Where to Stay in Delft, Netherlands

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There is a wonderful collection of hotels and vacation rentals in Delft. We only came for a day's visit so we can't speak about where to stay. We will plan an overnight next time. Below are links to Expedia, VRBO, and Booking.com to look at options. Make sure to look at recent reviews carefully. There is also camping available in the area and hostels.

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[Booking.com](#)

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Of course, you are not far from many of the major cities of the Netherlands. Amsterdam is about a 50-minute drive, Rotterdam is about a 20-minute drive, and Hague is about a 16-minute drive. All have extensive and beautiful accommodations to enjoy. Click any of the links above and change the city you are viewing.

If you use these links to buy something, we may earn a small commission at no additional cost to you. Thank you!

Getting to Delft, Netherlands

- You can get to Delft, the Netherlands, from Amsterdam airport and Rotterdam/The Hague airport. From Amsterdam and Rotterdam/The Hague airport, you'll be able to reach Delft easily by train or bus in about an hour.
- Get to Delft by train, tram, or bus from anywhere within The Netherlands. You can buy a single-use ticket at the station, or you'll need an OV chip card, which allows you to charge as you go.
- You can drive yourself, which is what we did. The roads and signage in The Netherlands are excellent, and we found parking easily on the street. There are paid parking lots available as well.
- A visit to Delft is on most tour companies' options, especially from Amsterdam. In a day, you can join a small group tour and discover the best of The Hague, Rotterdam, and Delft.
- Once in Delft, two tram lines run through the town, which will be the fastest way to move around

town unless you rent a bike.

What is the weather like in Delft?



The Netherlands has a mild sea climate. The summers are never sweltering, nor the winters very cold.

There are lovely dry and sunny periods in both the summer and winter, but as would be expected, you will also find many days with cloudy skies, wind, rain, and snow in the winter.

To be prepared for all seasons in the Netherlands, you should always pack sunglasses, an umbrella, and some warm clothes just in case.

Final Thoughts

During our short visit to Delft, Netherlands, we enjoyed every aspect of the city. The architectural beauty will have you walking every alley, searching for all the city's quiet corners to relax and admire its simplicity. You will want to stop in every shop to see the local goods and at every coffee shop, bar, and restaurant to try the local treats. This is one of those perfect essential spots you must do while traveling through The Netherlands. A day trip is excellent, all day is better, and overnight would be ideal. No doubt those canals are peaceful and stunning at night, like in Amsterdam.

Find out for yourself by visiting Delightful Delft on your next adventure through The Netherlands.

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Check out the [Official Tourism site](#) for Delft, Netherlands, for more information.

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Our Delft, Netherlands Photo Gallery

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top-rated and reputable insurance carriers, and most policies cover COVID-19 medical issues and cancellations. They also mediate on your behalf if you have problems with your policy.

To empower you as a consumer, we suggest you read our [blog post](#) on the importance of travel insurance and how to get the best coverage from top-rated companies for an affordable price.

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[Expedia.com](#)

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[Expedia](#) is a US-based company whose mission is to power global travel for everyone and everywhere. Whether planning a family vacation, booking for business, or organizing the trip of a lifetime, they are a fantastic resource. Wanderers Compass focuses on independent travel, and using sites like [Expedia](#) makes that possible. Every aspect of travel you need, from airfare, accommodations, rental car, and cruises to activities to do at your destination, can be booked on [Expedia](#).

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[Booking.com](#) connects millions of travelers to memorable experiences, various transportation options, and incredible places to stay – from homes to hotels and much more. It is one of the world's largest travel marketplaces for established brands and entrepreneurs of all sizes.

We always check Expedia and Booking.com to verify prices. At times, one is sold out of rooms while another at the same place has rooms. We also often find some European hotels, especially smaller ones, on Booking.com but not on Expedia. It could be they are a Europe-based company. Try both before booking accommodations.

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[VRBO](#) is now under the Expedia group's ownership, which many were worried about, but it hasn't panned out to be a concern. It is a massive network with access to all lodging forms should issues arise. Joelle has used VRBO for many years with her family and has had no problems with it.

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