



Edisi 2017 - 2018



Survival Guide

FOR
DUMMIES[®]

What you need to know to start your new life as an Amsterdammer



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1. GET TO KNOW US

1.1 WORD OF WELCOME

Hi guys! Welcome to **Amsterdam!**

Firstly, I would like to congratulate you for being accepted to study in your selected university in Amsterdam. Living in a place that is quite far away from home can be difficult. A lot of questions may pop up in your mind. We have prepared this handbook to answer your questions and to provide you with basic information to help you settle in.

Also, I would like to remind you that you are now a part of a big PPI Amsterdam family. This organization is the right place for you to share your concerns and cheerfulness while studying and living in Amsterdam. From now on, please read through this handbook. If you found any difficulties, don't hesitate to inform us via email (amsterdam.ppi@gmail.com).

Good luck with your new chapter in life! Welcome to our family and see you soon!

Fahmi Fathurrahman
Ketua PPI Amsterdam 2017



1.2 More about PPI Amsterdam

PPI Amsterdam (*Perhimpunan Pelajar Indonesia Amsterdam*), a.k.a ISVA (*Indonesische Studenten Vereniging in Amsterdam*) or ISAA (*Indonesian Student Association in Amsterdam*) is an organization dedicated for Indonesians who are currently residing and/or studying in the area of Amsterdam, Diemen and Haarlem. Since its inception in Dec 4, 2004 PPI



Amsterdam has continuously acted as a platform for the members to gather, interact, exchange information and participate in numerous educational as well as non-academic activities or interests.

Meet the 2016 committee!



Here’s how you can get in touch with the committee members. Don’t be shy to contact any of us about anything, even just to say “Hi”. We are a group of friendly, down-to-earth and social people; and most importantly, we won’t bite you... scouts honor!

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Moreover, if you haven't already, be sure to fill in our [online registration form](#) so we know how to contact you with important updates, upcoming events, etc. Please go to <http://bit.ly/2ondjhl>.

1.3 About this Amsterdam for Dummies

This 'dummies' handbook was initiated by the Media, Communication and Information (MedCommInfo) Division of PPI Amsterdam back in 2015, led by Hioe Muliadi (Mul). The purpose of this handbook was to help new students that come every year to Amsterdam so that they could survive their student lives in Amsterdam without much difficulty.

Eventually, an updated version of this handbook was required. And so we, the current officers of PPI Amsterdam 2016-2017, made it our responsibility to contribute new, updated information to this handbook – especially designed for new students such as yourself (yes, you who's reading this sentence as we speak). Specifically our MedCommInfo team (Chris, Neysa, Aldi, Wimzy and Maria) took their time and effort for this. We would also like to acknowledge our contributing authors such as Amel (2015) and Beby (PhD,



intake 2015) who wrote the section *Dutch Health Care Service*, which will also be published on our website ppiamsterdam.org (go have a look at it!).

We encourage the next MedCommInfo team to carry on this handbook legacy such that new Amsterdam-ers shall carry on their lives in peace and harmony (far, far away from hardship and struggles). Hence, updating this handbook would really help future students to come. For readers, we are also very open to updates and suggestions. To conclude this rather *grand* introduction to an even *grander* handbook, we hope that the notes and guidelines found here could ease the study lives of Indonesian students in Amsterdam. Study hard, but also play hard. After all, you're in one of the most exciting cities in Europe!

2. GET CONNECTED

2.1 Using your existing mobile phone in Holland

If you already have a GSM compatible phone and your phone is *unlocked*, you are good to go. What you need to do is just to get a Dutch SIM card. See section 2.3 for more info about the provider options.

If your phone is locked by your provider (contract) or has a region lock, you will need to get it unlocked first at a mobile store (Note! this will void the warranty). Otherwise, you may choose to get a new phone altogether.

2.2 Buying a new mobile phone

Is your phone not Dutch-SIM compatible? Or is it as old as a brick? Why not get a new phone? You have 2 options when buying a new phone in Holland; a prepaid plan (losse toestellen) or a phone contract.

- **Losse Toestellen:** buy an unlocked phone without any subscription. You will need to get a prepaid SIM card separately.



- **Phone Contract:** if you're planning to stay for a year or longer, contract may be a better deal because you will pay less for the phone (some can even be free). Your option ranges between 1, 2 or even 3 years contract. The only downside is that your phone will be locked by the provider and you can't change your subscription till the contract ends.

2.3 Choosing a service provider

Now that you have a mobile phone, choosing a provider is your next challenge. Just a heads-up, this is not an easy feat to do! More often than not, you would want to try a few on your own before you can decide a favorite. Up to this moment, even the committee members are still debating which provider is better (*i.e. call rate, value-for-money, signal coverage, internet speed, internet quota, well you know the drill*).

Popular choices you may want to check out: **KPN** (*Dutch national operator, best coverage, most expensive rates*); **T-mobile** (*attractive phone contracts, good coverage*); **Vodafone** (*good coverage better than T-mobile, but surcharge for 4G*) or **Lebara** (*cheapest rate & free sim, poor coverage*).

Since May 2017, there is no roaming fee anymore if you want to go outside Netherlands. Therefore, it is save to have Dutch mobile provider without having to buy roaming package.

3. GET AROUND

3.1 OV-Chipkaart: a must have

Buying a ticket every time you board a train, metro, tram or bus is very inconvenient so we highly recommend you to get an OV-chipkaart. For a one-time fee of **€7.50**, you can get the reloadable e-card. Checking in and out of the



public transport has never been easier!

There are 2 types of OV-chipkaart, anonymous and personal. ***You won't be able to apply for the personal one when you just arrived*** because it requires a Dutch bank account. Get the anonymous one first (*you can sell it later when you apply for the personal one, or keep it for your guests*).

The main difference between anonymous and personal OV is that you can add subscriptions to the later, more about it on 3.2. Also, the personal OV allows auto-reload and it'll have your handsome/pretty face printed on it. ;)

3.2 Popular subscriptions

- **GVB Only Abonnement**

This provides you with unlimited travel throughout Amsterdam for 1 month on all GVB trams, day and night buses and metros: no fussing with zones and star amounts. **Price: €90/m.**

- **GVB Zone Abonnement**

This provides you with unlimited travel in a chosen zone in Amsterdam for 1 month on all GVB trams, day and night buses and metros. The available zones are: *Centrum 5700, Noord 5711, Coentunnel 5712, West 5713, Zuid 5714, Oost 5715 and Zuidoost 5725*. **Price: €45/m.**



- **NS Weekend Vrij**

Unlimited journey across the Netherlands by NS trains on weekends (*Fri 18:25 to Mon 06:35*). On weekdays, 40% discount during off-peak hours (08:55-16:05 and 18:25-06:35). **Price: €32/m → BEST OPTIONS!**



- **NS Dal Voordeel**

40% discount on NS trains during off-peak hours (*see above*) on weekdays, all day during weekends and holiday. Price: **€50/m.**

- **NS Dal Vrij**

Unlimited journey by NS trains on weekdays during off-peak hours (*see above*), as well as all day during weekends and holiday. Price: **€99/m → BEST OPTIONS if you living outside Amsterdam area and wants to do commuting.**

3.3 Other recommendations

- **NS Groepretour ticket (Group Ticket)**

When travelling with a minimum of 4 people to the same destination (*your starting point also needs to be the same*), you can instead get the NS groepretour ticket. The more the people in the group (max. 10), the cheaper will the two-way ticket for each person be! Starting from **€13.75** per person for a group of 4 people, to a mere **€7** per person for a group of 10 people. **This saves you a lot of money!** (*To give you an idea, a return journey Amsterdam-Den Haag-Amsterdam costs €22.40*) We recommend you to join this Facebook group to arrange a groupretour with others with similar destination: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/665446850230280/> Pay attention to the rules and regulations attached in the pinned post of the group, it explains all the details starting from how to purchase tickets and basic regulations. More information can be found in <https://www.ns.nl/producten/en/losse-kaartjes/p/ns-groepsretour>.

- **Dagkaart actie**

Sometimes, the supermarket chains (e.g. AH, HEMA, Blokker, etc.) sell this awesome promo ticket for a limited period. Each dagkaart from different supermarket chains work differently and is priced differently (usually ranges between **€15-18**), but the main idea is that it'll be **an unlimited ride for a day on select railway operator(s)**. Be sure to check this link regularly to find the latest deal in town: http://www.treinreiziger.nl/tags/ns_dagkaart_actie.



3.4 Your transportation options

- **Train**

For domestic travel within Amsterdam or within the Netherlands, you need to buy your ticket before boarding the train via the NS ticket machine. You can also use your OV provided you have enough balance (*min. €20 balance when checking in for anonymous OV, various min. balance for different personal OV product*). Check-in and check-out are performed on the platform or the gates at the station. For printed e-ticket (e.g. groepretour ticket), just bring the ticket with you on the train and present it when asked during ticket control. **Price: journey-based → check it out at** <http://www.ns.nl/en/travel-information>.



QUICK NOTES:

- Download **9292 apps** or go to **9292.nl** to see the route, time, and price of your journey, if you want to travel with all kinds of public transportation such as metro, tram, bus, train and ferry.
- Download **NS Reisplanner Xtra apps** for complete information about train, includes the route, time, price, delayed, working tracks, etc.

- **Metro**

Connects the centre of Amsterdam to the suburbs. Check-in and check-out are performed on the platform or at the station gates. Tickets can be purchased on GVB machines at the metro station. **Price: GVB 1-huur €2.90 / GVB daag-kaart (24 hours) €7.50 / journey-based (OV).**

- **Tram**

16 lines crisscross the city. Single journey ticket (1 hour ticket) is available from the driver. Check-in and check-out are performed on the tram (*card reader is near the door*). **Price: GVB 1-huur €2.90 / GVB daag-kaart (24 hours) €7.50 / journey-based (OV).**



- **Bus**

When waiting for bus at the halte, get ready to raise your hand to make sure that the driver sees you and stops. Otherwise, they will just drive pass the stop. Single journey ticket is available from the driver. Check-in and check-out are performed on the bus itself (*card reader is near the door*). **Price: GVB 1-huur €2.90 / GVB daag-kaart (24 hours) €7.50 / journey-based (OV).**

- **Night buses**

Tram, metro and bus only operate until around 00:30. Afterwards, to get around you will need to use the night bus service. The night bus ticket can be rather expensive at **€4.50** and is valid for 90-min journey (including transfers). You can use your OV to check-in/check-out as long if your OV still have amount of money or pay with pin-card on board.

QUICK NOTES:

- The GVB 24-huur ticket is **€7.50**. This ticket provides unlimited travel on all GVB transports (*except night busses*) for 24 hours from the first check-in performed.

- **Ferries**

Free ferry service connects Amsterdam Centraal with Amsterdam Noord across the IJ.

- **Taxi**

Dutch taxis are required to have number plates with black number on a blue background. Taxi-like vehicles without such plates are illegal to carry passengers, so beware. We recommend you to call for a taxi rather than trying to hail one in the street. Call Taxicentrale Amsterdam (TCA) at 020 777 7777.

3.5 Bicycle, the Dutch way

Dutch loves bikes, so much so that they are everywhere. In Amsterdam, there are literally more bikes than there are people. If you want to save cash and at



the same time partake in the local culture, you must get your hands on one ASAP (choose second-hand for an even cheaper alternative).

Always lock your bikes securely to something stationary (e.g. railing, steel rod, street signs, etc.). **The lock, chain or cable must go through the wheels and the bike frame.** This will minimize the risk of it being stolen. Also,



don't leave your bike in prohibited areas else it may be taken by the AFAC (Amsterdam Fiets Afhandel Centrale) → see: <https://www.amsterdam.nl/parkeren-verkeer/fiets/>. One last thing, make sure to turn on the lights when going in the evening to avoid fine.

4. GET WELL-FED

Can't be bothered to cook? Don't worry, there are many – and not so expensive – alternatives that you can indulge yourself with! We always opt for the typical Doner Kebab meal in terms of price and portion size. Here, you will also find the famous Kapsalon where you won't find in any other Kebab stores within the EU. For a big portion, it'll cost you about €5 and the smaller portion about €4. But be warned, Dutch portion sizes are huge. If you're not a big eater, then go for the smaller portion first – or you can always buy the bigger portion and share it with someone else. Although it is undoubtedly tasty, you might not want to eat this everyday.

Your university campus probably also provides you with a cheaper menu than eating out at restaurants. But if you're looking for something light, have a go at one of the snack bars such as FEBO and Smullers. They sell snacks ranging from burgers, croquette, and all those fried-goodies. Prices are cheap, ranging from €1 to €3 again, it's an unhealthy choice suitable for when you want to walk the streets of Amsterdam while filling up your appetite.



Here are several cheap-eats (fast food) restaurants:

- **Asian Kitchen (Chinese cuisine):** Vijzelstraat 5-A, 1017 HD Amsterdam.
- **Warung Sranang Makmur (Surinamese-Indonesian cuisine):** Wijttenbachstraat 14, 1093 JB Amsterdam.
- **Happy Italy (Italian cuisine):** Zuidelijke Wandelweg 78, 1079 RP Amsterdam → Best value for money, big portion.
- **Wok To Walk (fast food stir-fried Asian cuisine):** Kolksteeg 8; Warmoesstraat 85; Damstraat 44; Leidsestraat 96; (yes, it's literally everywhere).
- **Wok To Go (different from Wok To Walk, but similar cuisine type):** Damstraat 22; Nieuwendijk 1; Leidsestraat 96; Warmoesstraat 85; (yup, Wok To Go & Wok To Walk = competitors much?)
- **SUBWAY (you probably already know this renowned sandwich hub franchise!):** Nieuwendijk 222; Rokin 20; Prinsengracht 13; Reguliersbreestraat 27; (it's mostly around the city center, so head downtown!).
- **McDonald's: EXPENSIVE PRICE ALERT!** When you're used to a typical €3 (~ Rp 45k) combo meal in Indo, then an €8 combo meal will most definitely *not* suit you. Trust us when we say, *McDonald's here is not worth it*. Burger King provides a much cheaper alternative for combo meal! **However**, if you just need something light, the small beefburger/cheesburger that similar like back in Indonesian Mcd's can be obtained with only **€1-€1.5** (cheaper than burger in FEBO or Smullers).
- **Burger King:** Nieuwendijk 218; Damrak 92-93; Leidseplein 7; Reguliersbreestraat 15-17; Stationsplein 5 (but be warned: restaurants in Centraal Station are usually more expensive by €1 to €2!). Try to get the **King deals** (burger, fries, drink), which are combo menus that you can get for **€3-€4**.
- **KFC:** Damrak 87 88; Eerste Van Swindenstraat 371; Admiraal Helfrichstraat 6A.



5. GET STOCKED UP

5.1 Supermarket

For all your grocery needs, these supermarket chains will be your best buddies: **Albert Heijn** (top end, good range of items but pricey), **Jumbo** (good range of items, slightly cheaper alternative), **Dirk van den Broek** (cheapest price), **Aldi** (other very low cost store) and a few less popular ones. You can also buy some pre-made, ready-to-microwave meals from these supermarket chains if you're staying late on campus and want to grab something to eat.

Common words in the food packaging for the health conscious

Nutritional Value	Voedingswaarde
Intake Reference	Referentie Innamen (R.I)
Carbohydrate (of which) sugar	Koolhydraten (waarvan) suikers
Fat (of which) Saturated Mono Unsaturated Poly Unsaturated	Vet (waarvan) verzadigde enkelvoudig onverzadigde (e.o.v) meervoudig onverzadigde (m.o.v)
(Dietary) Fibers	(Voedings)vezels
Protein	Eiwitten
Salt	Zout
Average	Gemiddelde
Serving size	Portie

Important must-knows before you go on your first grocery shopping:

- You can pay cash or use Dutch debit cards (called PIN / pinnen). Normally, they don't accept credit card.
- **No free plastic bags!** Bring one with you from home, or be prepared to purchase one flimsy plastic bag for 25 cent



- Bottle deposits (*statiegeld*). If you buy glass beer bottles or large plastic water/soft drink bottles, you will pay a refundable deposit of **€0.10 – 0.25**. Take the empty bottles to the special machines at any supermarket and you will get a refund receipt which you can use at the cashier during checkout.
- Bottle Color matters!
 - When buying water bottle, always pick the **BLUE** color one (*will usually say “zonder koolzuur” or “koolzuurvrij”*). Avoid red/green unless you want sparkling (soda/fizzy) water!
 - When buying milk, always pick the **BLUE** color one as well. Red is karnemelk (*buttermilk which taste tart/sour*), green is yoghurt and yellow is vla (*custard*).



5.2 Specialty Stores

There are, of course, some things that you won't be able to find at the supermarket. Fret not, many other retail stores sell specific product range. To find a store near you, use Google Map (it will also show their opening hours / *openingsteijden*, how convenient!)

- Drug stores / Pharmacy: **Kruidvat & Etos**
- Stationary & other basic necessities: **HEMA**
- Bookstores: **The American Book Center**
- Furniture / décor: **IKEA**
- Be sure to check out **Action** and **Blokker**, too!
 - **Action** is a low-budget, non-food retail outlet
 - **Blokker** is similar to Action but is more pricey

5.3 Alternative Marketplaces

Looking for some place less fancy but definitely easier on the wallet? Or do you simply miss all the *pasar's* that you used to frequent in Indonesia?



Amsterdam has that one covered. From street markets to *koopavond*, these will be places where you can exploit your bargaining skill to the max. As always, use Google Map to navigate there.

Street Markets

- Albert Cuyp (*Mon-Sat 9.30 a.m. – 5 p.m.*)
Arguably the most famous street market in Amsterdam. But, because this is such a tourist magnet, the price is also much higher.
- Dappermarkt (*Mon-Sat 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.*)
Popular among the locals. Cheap clothes, foods and other general goods can be found here.

Flea Markets

- IJ-Hallen (*Once a month, see <http://ijhallen.nl/>*)
The biggest flea market in Europe where you can go treasure hunting for antiques, second-hand goods and many more at bargained prices. There is an entry price of €4.
- Waterlooplein (*Mon-Fri 9 a.m. – 5.30 p.m. & Sat 8.30 a.m. – 5.30 p.m.*)
This is the place to go for all kinds of stuffs including vintage items, bicycle parts, shoes, toys, electronics, basically whatever you want is most likely here.

6. GET SETTLED

6.1 Housing

- **University Housing Services (highly recommended):** This is the most hassle-free option you will have because your university will arrange everything for you. Also, you are most likely to get a place (if you register early) because universities have ‘reserved’ units allocated only for their students. The only downside is that you will have to pay



an admin fee to the university (usually €400-500). *Contact your universities/schools directly for more info about this service.*

- **Student Housing Agencies:** You can sign up with these agencies (DUWO, De Key, Ymere) but **be warned, waiting list can be very long** (up to 6-12 months!). If you are interested, you can sign up for a student accommodation at <https://www.studentenwoningweb.nl/>
- **Private Housing:** Another option that you have is to look for a private housing. You have countless option here: either look for a room in a shared flat/apartment/house, teaming up with others to rent a whole apartment/house, using third party rental agencies, etc. There is always a risk of scam involved. Some suggestions we can give you is to ***never send any payment if you haven't seen the room in person, meet the owner and sign the contract***. Avoid offers from people claiming to have gone abroad and requesting advance payment.
 - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1564984430439192/>
 - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/woningamsterdam/>
 - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/123961611034584/>
 - www.kamertje.nl
 - www.kamernet.nl
- **Temporary / Short-term Stay:** If you are desperate and need a place to stay ASAP, these are a few options you have. Of course the price will be very much higher than the student housing because most of these rooms will be charged on daily/weekly basis.
 - **Hotel Casa 400** www.hotelcasa400.com
 - **The Student Hotel** www.thestudenthotel.com
 - **Stayokay** www.stayokay.com
 - **The Flying Pig** www.theflyingpig.com
 - **Christian Youth Hostels** www.shelter.nl

6.2 Registration

Anyone planning to stay in the Netherlands are required to register with the municipality (*gemeente*). After registration, you will receive a **BSN number**,



which is **required for many important things** (e.g. opening a bank account, taking insurance, looking for a job, etc.).

If you arrive within the orientation days/weeks of your respective universities, usually, a representative from the *gemeente* will be present. You can submit all the documents then and there. That's it! All you need to do is just for the formal letter to be sent to your address.

If you arrive before/after the scheduled orientation days of your universities, unfortunately you will have to arrange for a registration yourself. In order to register with the *gemeente*, you need to come to the town hall where you stay in. Around Amsterdam, there are Diemen and Amstelveen that has different municipality with Amsterdam (although sometime you can't really distinguish where is the border of each area). The common steps for registration are:

- 1) Make appointment with the *gemeente* office. You can do it through the website of the *gemeente* or directly come in to the *gemeente* office. The waiting period is various, between 1-21 days.
- 2) Come to the office according to the appointment, then take a queue number.
- 3) Submitting documents, such as:
 - a. Copy of Passport.
 - b. Housing Contract / Guarantee Letter if you live with family.
 - c. Copy of Passport and Residence Permit Primary Occupant if you live with family or relatives.
 - d. Agreement and Living Guarantee form (received it in the *gemeente*) if you live with family or relative.
 - e. Legalized Birth Certificate.
 - f. Marriage Certificate and Birth Certificate of children if you come with family
- 4) Next, the BSN will be sent to your post address accordingly to your housing contract or guarantee form.



For those staying in Amsterdam, you can call the district office at 14020 between 8 a.m – 6 p.m on working days. Alternatively, you can ask your international office for more information.

6.3 Opening a bank account

There are 3 main Dutch banks in Amsterdam: **ABN AMRO**, **ING Bank** and **Rabobank**. Again, if you arrive during the orientation days, a representative from one of these banks will be present and you can initiate your bank account application then.

If you choose to open a bank account on your own, you will need to have the following documents: a valid ID (passport/verblijfstitel), BSN number (see 5.2), and proof of address (e.g. rental contract). Important to note is the difference between ABN AMRO and ING wherein ING does not require you to have your BSN number upon initiation whereas ABN AMRO does. You will find this useful to know when wanting to open an account, because you would want to go for the easier, less tedious option – that is, opening a student account in ING.

Nonetheless, regardless of when and how you apply for a bank account, ***be prepared for a very tedious process***. They will send your debit card and your pin separately by post! The debit card will be sent to your home, but you will need to collect the letter containing your PIN from a specified branch. Afterwards, if you apply for online banking, they will send the username and temporary password on another separate letter. In all, the process can take a week or even more.

6.4 Working while studying

Your student visa entitled you to work up to a maximum of 10 hours per week or full-time during the summer months (June, July & August). However,



the company which employs you must apply for a TWV / work permit on your behalf (some companies may be reluctant because of this). Furthermore, as soon as you get a job, you will need to take on Dutch basic healthcare insurance. Below are some sites where you can look for part-time jobs:

- www.undutchables.nl
- international.monsterboard.nl
- www.studentenbaan.nl (in Dutch)

6.5 Places of worship

The Netherlands maintains a policy of freedom of religion. In fact, 42% of Dutch people are not affiliated to any religion. Still, the country is home to many religious groups and you won't have any problem finding a place of worship in Amsterdam. The list below shows several places of worship based on information from past students; you are of course free to look for another place on your own via Google Map.

- **Islam**
 - PPME Al Ikhlas (Indonesia)
<http://www.ppmealikhlashamsterdam.nl/>
 - Fatih Moskee (Turkish)
Rozengracht 150
 - Moskee Al Kabir (Morocan)
Weesperzijde 76
- **Roman Catholic**
 - Keluarga Katolik Indonesia (KKI)
<http://www.kkiamsterdam.nl/>
 - Onze Lieve Vrouwekerk
Keizersgracht 220 (English mass, Sun 6 p.m.)
 - De Krijtberg
Singel 448 (English mass, Sat 5.15 p.m.)
- **Protestant**
 - Gereja Kristen Indonesia Nederland (GKIN)
<http://www.gkin.org/main/>



- Hillsong Amsterdam
Rembrandtplein 11 (English service on Sun 10,12, 14, 16.30)
- Crossroads International Church
Startbaan 12, Amstelveen (English service on Sun 9.30, 11.30)
- **Buddhist**
 - Boeddhistisch Centrum Amsterdam Tiratna
Palmstraat 63
- **Hindu**
 - Hindoestaans Cultureel Centrum
Amsterweg 45

6.6 Must-have apps

- **9292** (*trip planner: check what to take, schedule, cost, transit, etc.*)
- **NS Reisplanner Xtra** (*trip planner similar like 9292 but train-exclusive*)
- **Google Map** (*navigation*)
- **Google Translate** (*kinda obvious, don't you think*)
- **Tuisbezorgd** (*delivery service, in case you're in no mood to cook*)
- **Het Weer in Nederland / Accuweather** (*weather forecast because weather in the Netherlands is soooo unpredictable*)
- **Whatsapp** (*No. 1 messenger service among Dutch*)
- **Mobile banking apps** (*depending on your bank*)
- **Pathé** (*check movie schedules & advance reservation*)

6.7 Important numbers

Now it's a good time to take out your phone to record some of these numbers down. Please take note that information numbers are generally not free-of-charge. Only numbers starting with 0800 are often free, for the rest you may be charged based on your provider local rate or even more (*i.e. business numbers starting with 0900, international companies starting with 088*)



- National Emergency Number (police, fire dept., ambulance, etc.)
112
- Police (general number)
0900 88 44
- Police (anonymous)
0800 70 00
- Fire Department
020 555 66 66
- 24-hour Medical Emergency
088 003 06 00 (Amsterdam)
020 456 2000 (Amstelveen)
- Lost and Found (tram, bus, metro)
0900 321 21
- Lost and Found (trains)
020 557 85 44

7. WEATHER AND CLIMATE

7.1 Get used to with Dutch climate

The Netherlands is located in the coast of North Sea and has a typically moderate marine climate. Since Holland is close to the sea it influences the weather – it's not too cold in the winter, but also not too hot during the Summer; in addition, there is still sufficient moisture in the air. The second effect of the coastal climate is that rain may fall throughout the year. Therefore, there is no exact rainy season or certain dry periods. Again, this would be caused by the location of the Netherlands, which is near the coast with lack of mountains. You must already know that 26% of Netherland's area is located under the sea level, right? ;)



A common knowledge in the Netherlands is that the season is always changing every 3 months (around the date of solstice and equinox):

1. 21st of March – 21st of June: Spring
2. 21st of June – 21st of September: Summer
3. 21st of September – 21st of December: Fall/Autumn
4. 21st of December – 21st of March: Winter

However, it is not necessarily always accurate since temperatures may vary depending on each season.

In other words, the weather in Holland is **unpredictable** which is the notable feature of the Dutch climate. Sometimes, the summer comes early in late March; while a hot sunny month of June may be followed by a wet, grey July-August. Snow may come late in February even though its presence may well be overdue. Furthermore, the air temperature in a daily basis is quite extreme. For example, during summer daylight you can get 26-30 degrees Celsius, but it may drop to approximately 16-22 degrees Celsius after sunset.

To prepare you for the Dutch weather and climate, we suggest you pay attention to the following information:

- Always prepare raincoats and/or umbrellas. Folded raincoats may be very useful and practical.
- Get yourself a waterproof and anti-slippery shoes. This might also be useful for winter.
- You may want to bring extra sweater or jumper that might warm you if you go out until late night.
- Prepare sunglasses in non-rainy days.
- In hot days, it is very convenient to wear short-pants and slippers/sandals outside. You're also allowed to wear it to class (if it's not a formal event).
- Most of Dutch housing don't have air conditioner instead of heater. The heater can be turned on only during wintertime. What about in the summer, you ask? If it's too hot for you, it's possible to get a



portable fan or portable air conditioner. It might help you to cool yourself down and to get a comfortable sleep at night.

- Always check weather reports before you plan a trip or even get out your house for the next day. In addition to two apps that was mentioned in section [6.6](#), we recommend you to also have one of these apps to prepare you for the unpredictability of Dutch weather:
 - **Buienalarm**
 - **Buienradar**
 - **Weer & Zo**
 - **Weer NL**

Source:

<http://www.holland.com/global/tourism/plan-your-holiday/weather.htm>

7.2 Preparations for winter

This special section is dedicated for us who are not used to the cold, cold winter. That being said, don't miss out on some important know-about's regarding winter in the Netherlands!

Important to know:

- Amsterdam's wind is pretty strong, so get windbreakers!
- People still bike in the winter nonetheless (that's why windbreakers are worth it).
- Get leathered gloves instead of cloth ones! Although there are gloves that are suited for finger-on-smartphone touch and sensitivity, it won't withstand the cold, dark winter (that's just an exaggeration, by the way).
- It occasionally snows in Amsterdam – when you ask locals they'll answer, "Sometimes it snows here, but it's very unpredictable."
- As we mentioned above, prepare yourself with waterproof and anti-slippery shoes. You will definitely be excited when the snow falls, but



it'll annoy you when the snow melts which makes the road wet and slippery.

- Storms may occur, so watch out for signals that may hint at such a thing.
- The Netherlands does not feature Uniqlo stores. The closest Uniqlo outlet is in Belgium and Germany – too bad you can't get heattech here. (You're lucky if you already bought one from home).

Where to buy winter jackets:

- **North Face (Singel 457):** They sell some legit winter jackets that'll guarantee your warmth when you're out in the winter weather. Get windbreakers here!
- **HEMA (anywhere around Amsterdam):** They sell some pretty affordable winter gloves in different kinds that you might like; their winter jackets, however, are not the best.
- Lookout for sales in ESPRIT, SUPERDRY H&M, ZARA, etc., by walking along Kalverstraat (a street in Amsterdam, that's near Dam Square).
- Lookout for cheap-used jackets in flea markets ([see 5.3](#)). It's not recommended if you don't like second-hand goods, but it can be an option if you're on a budget.

7.3 Daylight Saving Time and Sunrise-Sunset time.

Since we're living between latitudes 50° and 54° N, we're also experiencing daylight saving time, which is the practice of advancing clocks during summer months so that evening daylight lasts longer, while sacrificing normal sunrise times. It will occur by the end of October (reduce 1 hour to your clock) and the end of March (add one hour to your clock). However, don't worry if you think you'll forget to change your clock/watch – you will always be informed when it happens through television, calendar, radio, or any other information source. Your phone clock usually will be automatically changed by itself.



Moreover, you can also see the information by yourself in: <https://www.timeanddate.com/time/change/netherlands/amsterdam>.

What's the implication of living far from the equators? Between April-September, you will experience that the daylight is longer than the night, with the longest day happens in the summer solstice (21st of June) with the day-length could be around 16 hours and 44 minutes. However, it will be the other way around between October-March where the daylight will be shorter as the shortest day happens in the winter solstice (21st of December) with the day-length could be around 7 hours and 43 minutes. Therefore, be prepared that the sun will rise around 5-6 a.m. and will set after around 8-10 p.m. in summer, and it will rise after 7-8 a.m. and will set around 4-5 p.m. in winter. Don't let this geography phenomenon turns you crazy! ;)

8. GET ENTERTAINED

8.1 Museumkaart

This is a museum pass that will allow you to enter more than 400 museums all throughout Netherlands. It's valid for 1 year and costs €54.95 (excl. a one-time €4.95 admin fee). Perfect for the art lovers. More info: <https://www.museumkaart.nl/>.



8.2 Pathé Unlimited

Going to the cinema in Amsterdam can be very costly (price ranges between €8 – 15 depending on the venue, the film, 3D / IMAX). Luckily, Pathé offers membership subscriptions which allows us to watch unlimited amount of films starting from just €19 /month! All cinema enthusiasts should check this deal out: <https://www.pathe.nl/unlimited>.



8.3 Other student organizations

Other than PPI Amsterdam, you can also widen your horizon by joining other international student organizations such as:

- ISN Amsterdam <http://isn-amsterdam.nl/>
- ESN VU Amsterdam <http://esnvuamsterdam.nl/>
- ESN Hogeschool Inholland <http://www.esndiemen.nl/>
- INYS (Indonesian Nederland Youth Society) <http://www.inys.org/>

8.4 Public Holidays (marked with *) and Observances

- St. Nicholas Day (Sinterklaas) - Dec 5
- *Christmas (Kerstmis) – Dec 25
- *Boxing Day/Christmas Monday – Dec 26
- *New Year – Jan 1
- Good Friday – Mar 30 (some regard this as public holiday)
- *Easter Sunday & Monday – Apr 1 & 2 2018
- *Kings Day (Koningsdag) – Apr 27 2018
- Remembrance Day (Dodenherdenking) – May 4
- Liberation Day (Bevrijdingsdag)– May 5
- *Pentacost (Whit) Sunday & Monday – May 20 & 21 2018

8.5 Other Interesting Festivals

These are a few events that you should definitely not miss! (a list gathered from <https://www.ricksteves.com/europe/netherlands/festivals>, check it out!)

2017

- **Apr 22:** Flower Parade
- **Apr 27:** King's Day
- **Jul 29-Aug 6:** Amsterdam Gay Pride



- **Aug 11-12:** International Fireworks Festival
- **Aug 12:** Loveland Festival
- **Aug 17-19:** Jazz in the Canal
- **Aug 19-20:** Paraview Utrecht (at Maarssenbroek)
- **Aug 19-20:** Sieradenbeurs Utrecht
- **Aug 25-26:** Amsterdam International Art Fair (Amsterdam Art Fair)
- **August 29-Sep 03:** Amsterdam In-Water Boat Show
- **Sep 08-10:** Pasar Malam Assen (at Assen)
- **Sep 29-Oct 01:** Pasar Malam Enschede (at Enschede)
- **Oct 05-08:** Tasty Life Festival
- **Nov 02-05:** Crossing Border Festival
- **Nov 19:** Sinterklaas Procession, Amsterdam
- **Dec 5:** St. Nicholas' Eve (Sinterklaasavond, when Dutch children get their presents from Sinterklaas)

2018

- **Mid-January:** [National Tulip Day](#), Amsterdam (official start of tulip season; tulips fill Dam Square and are free for the picking in the afternoon)
- **March–May:** [Keukenhof flower show](#), near Lisse (huge gardens in bloom)
- **April 4–8:** [KunstRAI Art Amsterdam](#) (contemporary-art exhibition)
- **April 21:** [Bloemencorso](#) (25-mile flower parade from Noordwijk to Haarlem)
- **June:** [Holland Arts Festival](#), Amsterdam (concerts, theater, etc.)
- **June 14–24:** [Festival Classique](#), Scheveningen
- **June 15–17:** [Pinkpop](#), near Maastricht (rock festival)
- **June 22:** [Grachtenloop](#) run around canals, Haarlem
- **Late June (4 days):** [Amsterdam Roots Festival](#) (ethnic food, music, world culture)
- **Late June (1 day, likely Sunday):** [Parkpop](#) music festival, The Hague



9. GET FIT

Playing sport will not only keep you healthy, but it is also a great opportunity to meet new people and socialize. Join one (or more) of these sport clubs and get fit in the company of others!

9.1 Student Sports Clubs

This is a cheaper alternative for us students. The university sport centers usually offer training sessions (recreational and competitive) in the afternoon or evening. Sign up for a membership directly at the location.

- Sportcentrum VU (for VU students)
Uilenstede 11, Amstelveen
- Universum (discount for UvA and HvA students)
Science Park 306

9.2 Fitness Clubs

If it is not convenient for you to go to the university sport centers, you can always sign up for memberships in other gyms. Here are a few popular ones in Amsterdam.

- Fit For Free
This place offers fitness equipment and group classes at the cheapest rate in Amsterdam (€ 10.00 /m). Check the nearest location at www.fitforfree.nl
- Basic Fit
More flexible opening times, Mon-Fri 8 a.m. to 10.30 p.m. and Sat-Sun 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Check the nearest location at www.basic-fit.nl
- Fit2Fit
Discount for students! Check the nearest location at www.fit2fit.nl



9.3 Other Sports Venues

- Amsterdamse Bos
Outdoor activities including football, rowing, canoeing, pedal boat.
- Friday Night Skate
Join a group of skaters every Friday night to skate through Amsterdam. Starting point is at Vondelpark at 8 p.m. If it rains, it will be cancelled. For more info: www.fridaynightskate.com
- Swimming Pools
De Mirandabad (De Mirandalaan 9), Zuiderbad (Hobbemastraat 26) and Marnixbad (Marnixplein 1)
- (Ice)-Skating
Jaap Eden IJsbanen has an outdoor skating rink, indoor track and ice skating rink. For more info: www.jaapeden.nl
Alternatively, the pond in front of Rijkmuseum will turn into an outdoor ice skating rink during winter.
- Sport Centers (Sportcentrum)
These sports center offers various sports activities and facilities, ranging from basketball and badminton to futsal fields that can be rented. Among them are Sportcentrum De Pijp (Lizzy Ansinghstraat 88), Sportcentrum VU (Uilenstede 100), Sporthal Wethouder Verheij (Polderweg 300).

10. HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES

This part is a summary version of **“Introduction to the Dutch Health Care Services”** which would be a supplement for this handbook. Therefore, we suggest for readers to read the comprehensive version that can be downloaded separately in our website, ppiamsterdam.org.

In the Netherlands, the health care setting is a completely different system compared to what we have currently in Indonesia. For instance, health



insurance is compulsory by law, and there are a wide variety of private health insurance providers, which offer you distinctive benefits with competitive premiums. Another major difference is the leading role of general practitioner (GP) as the “gatekeeper” of the system. This way, except for some emergency cases, you will not be able to access health care services directly in the hospital without any referrals from the GP. This section will be divided in 3 parts.

10.1 Insurance

It is obligatory if you are living in the Netherlands to have a basic health insurance package. Usually you can get the student insurance at your arrival days in each of the university. The following are examples of insurance that might be suitable for student:

- **Student Insurance:**

- Best suit for: Bachelor/Master students without paid job, under 30 years old.
- Examples:
 - AON : € 472/year
 - IPS : € 443/year
- Benefits:
 - Appointments with general practitioners/huisarts, dentist, specialist care, physiotherapy, medication, psychotherapy, ambulances, etc.
- Payments: Mostly self-payment first to health care providers, then reimburse later by the insurance providers (except in several expatriates medical centers).
- Additional Services:
 - Travel insurance, baggage, repatriation, home contents, liability, accidents, legal aid.



- **Basic Dutch Health Insurance:**

- Best suit for: Bachelor/Master/PhD students with paid job, above 30 years old; PhD students employed by university/educational institution.
- Examples:
 - CZ, Zilveren Kruis, Menzis → open <https://www.independer.nl/> or <https://www.zorgwijzer.nl/> to see comparison.
 - Prices around €100/month + *eigen risico* €385/month.
- Benefits:
 - Appointments with general practitioners/huisarts, ambulance, stays at hospital, surgery, emergency treatment, dental care, blood test, pregnancy, maternity care, medicine prescriptions, etc.
- Payments: No direct payment to health care providers.
- Additional Services:
 - No additional services outside the health care services scope.

10.2 How to access the health care services?

First, you need to make sure that you are already officially insured. Then, you need to register yourself to the *huistart* or GP (General Practitioners) that is closely located to your housing area. You should register only to one GP. After being registered, you can make an appointment for the consultation by three ways in general depends on each GP: by coming directly to the practice, calling the practice, or making appointment online through the practice's website. The GP practice normally opens from Monday to Friday 8 AM - 5 PM. If your GP has this walk-in-hour time, you can just come to the clinic directly to consult with the doctor.

If you call the clinic to make the appointment, usually the doctor's' assistant will ask some questions to assess your medical conditions. **Please do not be surprised if the assistants, after hearing your answers, advise you not to come to the GP, but instead handle the condition by yourself first for several days.** It is part of the system efficiency that the Dutch GP will only see the

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patients with **necessary** medical complaints. For example, if you only complain that you have fever only for one day, it is likely that you will be asked to rest for two more days instead of visiting the GP.

Services payment: if you are insured by the Dutch health insurance, you do not need to pay after your consultation with the GP. However, if you have student insurance, usually you have to pay by yourself (you'll get the invoice by mail) before asking for reimbursement to the insurance company.

Medicine: another striking difference from the system in Indonesia is that the **Dutch GPs are seldom to prescribe medicines to their patients**, including antibiotics. For many cases, they tend to advise tell the patients to rest well and have a healthy lifestyle. If needed, patients are asked to buy medicines in the drugstore or pharmacy themselves. The most common medicine that usually suggested is Paracetamol, which is actually commonly known as Panadol, at it actually works to reduce pain and/or fever.

Dentistry services: in the Netherlands, **you have more flexibility in choosing dentistry services** since it is mainly your responsibility and on your own cost to pay for the services. For simpler treatment such as cleaning your teeth, you can go to oral hygienists. But, for more complex treatment, such as root canal care, you need to go to the dentists. You do not need to be registered in certain dentist, you can switch the dentists as you wish.

In case of emergency: If you are seriously ill, outside the 8 AM-5 PM period, you can call your GP in her or his emergency number or [the integrated GP post call center in Amsterdam](#) (**number: 088 00 30 600**). The operators will assess your conditions and direct you to a specific GP post in a hospital nearby your location for further help.

10.3 Tuberculosis test

As part of the immigration requirements, you need to undergo the Tuberculosis (TB) screening test once you arrive in Amsterdam. After you have completed your registration at the Municipality, you will receive a letter of invitation sent to your home address to attend the TB screening test. You

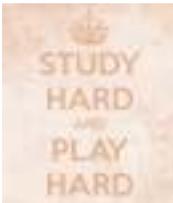


can do it at the **Municipal Health Services (Dutch: GGD) in Amsterdam** (Nieuwe Achtergracht 100, 1018 WT Amsterdam, within 5 minutes walk from **Weesperplein** metro station). Please bring your **passport and the letter of invitation** along with you when you visit the GGD.

If you plan to stay more than one year, you need to undergo the test for maximum **four times in every six months**. If you are in a good health and not suspected as TB patients, you will receive no notifications from the GGD. **So, in this case, no news is good news**. Meanwhile, if you are suspected to have TB, you will receive an immediate notification from the GGD for further treatment.

If you do not receive the invitation letter to repeat the test after six months, you can call the GGD Amsterdam directly (**number: 020 555 5911**) to make appointment for the test later. It also applies when you receive the invitation to do it on certain days or if you want to change the days, you can just call them.

11. GET READY



That rounds up all the tips and tricks that we can share with you at this moment. We hope that this survival guide will be a huge help in getting you ready for your new adventure. **PPI Amsterdam** wishes you the best of luck in your studies and we hope to see you during our upcoming events!

