Introduction

Dear Reader,

You're probably about to start your adventure in Wageningen. Maybe it’s your first time in the Netherlands, maybe even your first time in Europe. It’s always exciting, but also a bit scary to go abroad. Additionally, it can be challenging to find out how everything works in a foreign country. The goal of this survival guide is to make you feel at home and find your way in the Netherlands and Wageningen. In this survival guide you will find mostly practical matters, such as public transport in the Netherlands and housing in Wageningen. Hopefully this will make the start of your adventure easier and makes you feel comfortable in the Netherlands soon.

Have fun reading it!

Love,
ESN Wageningen
Board 2023-2024
# Table of Contents

- Introduction: 1
- Table of Contents: 2

## The Netherlands
- Weather: 4
- Biking: 4
- Public transport: 5
- Bank account: 6

## Wageningen
- Housing: 9
- Municipality: 10
- University: 10
  - Buildings: 10
  - Schedule: 11
  - Platforms/websites: 12
  - WUR Card: 14
- Study associations: 14
- Sport facilities WUR: 14
- Doctor: 16
- Erasmus Student Network Wageningen: 17
The Netherlands

When you come to the Netherlands, the first thing that might stand out is that everything is flat. Did you know that 26% of the Netherlands is below sea level? And that the highest “mountain” of the Netherlands is only 322 meters? So to protect the Netherlands from drowning, we have dunes and built dikes. Another thing that you might notice quickly, are all the bikes. Dutch people use their bikes all the time, to go to school, to go to the supermarket, to go out in nature for fun etc. There is not a lot of space in the Netherlands, in our small country about 17.6 million people live! The Netherlands is one of the most densely populated countries in Europe.

### Weather

The Netherlands has a temperate maritime climate. This means moderate winters and cool summers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Winter</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Autumn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average temperature</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(°C)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average precipitation</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prepare for average winter temperatures of 3°C and mean summer temperatures of 17°C. Make sure to bring your raincoat and umbrella, the mean annual precipitation in the Netherlands is about 800 mm! It can also freeze in winter, Dutch people hope it freezes enough so they can go ice skating outside. Although summer doesn’t seem very hot, in the last few summers there have been some heat waves, with temperatures above 30°C! Also, Dutch summers are supposed to be wet, nevertheless, also some summers in the past years have been very dry. Dutch people love checking ”Buienalarm” (Precipitation alarm). It’s an app which predicts the rain for the coming hours. Even Though sometimes it’s not that accurate, Dutch people still always check it and hope the app will be right.

### Biking

Dutch people really like to bike as means of transport, as it’s a very easy and convenient way to get around. The Netherlands is very flat and everything is close by. Some other advantages are that it’s relatively cheap, good for your health and faster than walking. Fun fact: On average, a Dutch person has about 1.3 bikes. So, there are more bikes than people in the Netherlands!
When you see Dutch people cycling, it seems very easy. However, when doing it for the first time it can be quite difficult and overwhelming with all the other cyclists and traffic around you. Here are some important Do’s and Don’ts for cycling in the Netherlands:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do’s</th>
<th>Don’ts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use lights when it’s dark! (white in the front, red in the back. If you don’t have this, you can get a fine!)</td>
<td>Don’t cycle on the sidewalk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycle on the right of the road/cycling path</td>
<td>Don’t ride under influence of alcohol or drugs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If there is one, cycle on the cycling path. Often red, otherwise there is a sign. If there is not, cycle on the right side of the road.</td>
<td>Don’t use your phone while cycling. (You can get a fine for this)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a bell to get past people</td>
<td>Don’t cycle with headphones. (Even though you see Dutch people do this, they are more experienced, but even then it’s dangerous!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make space (go to the right side) when someone rings the bell behind you.</td>
<td>Don’t cycle with more than two people next to each other! (and if you cycle with two, make space for cars etc. that want to pass you)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be aware of other traffic and traffic signs! Always double check if someone really waits for you and gives you priority.</td>
<td>Don’t cycle in the middle or left of the road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signal when you turn. Put your hand to the left if you go left, and right if you want to go to the right.</td>
<td>Don’t pass/overtake other bikers on the right side but on the left side!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a proper lock! (otherwise your bike will get stolen)</td>
<td>Don’t cross the street without looking if it’s safe to cross!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Public transport**

To look for train/bus connections the [9292](http://www.9292.nl) or [NS](http://www.ns.nl) app are essential. Both apps work well and show the best connections. NS is the biggest Dutch train company, besides, there is Arriva and a few others like Blauwnet. To be able to travel with public transport in the Netherlands, it is recommended to buy an OV chip card. Although you can buy separate tickets, this is more expensive than using your OV card. An OV card is €7.50 and you can either buy an anonymous
one or a personal one. However, for the personal one you need a Dutch phone number. Luckily you can get a Lebara sim card for free at ESN Wageningen.

Other options for traveling besides the OV card, are buying separate tickets or checking in with your payment card at the incheck pole (works for all public transport in The Netherlands). However, in the end, using an OV card will be the least expensive option.

On the personal OV card you can put certain seasonal discount passes. E.g. you can buy a subscription that you can travel for free or with a discount on weekends. If you travel a lot this is definitely worth it! Also with a personal OV you can add a subscription with which you can rent OV bikes. You can rent them at most train stations in the Netherlands, which is very convenient and they are also quite cheap!

The nice thing about OV cards is that you don’t have to book trains in advance, you can just go whenever you want, because the price is always the same.

On this OV card you can put money. When traveling you should check-in by scanning your OV card at the pole. For the bus they are at the entrance of the bus. For the train they are either on the platform of the train or at the entrance of the train station at the gates. Also check-out at the end of your journey, by scanning your OV card again or when you switch from train to bus or when you switch from train company! This is very important, when you go during your journey e.g. from a NS to an Arriva train, you first have to scan your OV card at a pole from the NS train company and then at a pole from the Arriva train! Often they are on the platforms of the trains.

On the NS website you can find a lot of information about public transport. Also you can find discounts here, sometimes there are e.g. deals for a trip to a certain city including a night in a hotel. Also, you can buy group tickets here. When you are with at least three people, you can travel for relatively cheap by buying a group ticket. With the more people you travel, the cheaper it gets!
Bank account

Before going to a bank and opening a Dutch bank account, it’s smart to think whether it’s worth it. In the Netherlands it is often the case that you can pay with a bankcard from another country or e.g. creditcard. Especially if you’re here for only one semester, it’s probably not worth it. If you stay longer, e.g. for your full bachelors or masters, you can consider it.

To be able to open a Dutch bank account you often need a BSN (Burgerservicenummer), which is a unique Dutch citizen registration number. You get this number when you sign up at the municipality of where you live (in this case Wageningen). On page 11 under “Municipality” it is explained how this works.

Good to know, for opening a Dutch bank account with ABN Amro you don’t need a BSN! ESN Wageningen has a partnership with ABN Amro, which makes this deal possible.

The biggest banks in the Netherlands are:

- ABN Amro
- Rabobank
- ING
- SNS
- ASN
- Triodos

Of these banks, ASN and Triodos are most sustainable. When you want to open a bank account you can just make an appointment online or by calling and go to the bank with your details on the day of the appointment. The details you need are:

- A BSN;
- Passport or identity card;
- proof of address (this can be a rental contract) and
- if you are not from the EU you also need a residence permit.

Once you have your bank account, you can easily pay online e.g. on Dutch webshops with iDeal. When the webshop asks for a payment method, just click iDeal and choose your bank. Simply login to your account and accept the payment. Also, Dutch people love Tikkies! Tikkie is an app where you can easily send a payment request, which the other person can easily pay with their own Dutch bank account. For example if you paid 20 euros for a friend in a restaurant and that person needs to pay you back, you can just send that person a Tikkie of €20,-. The only thing that person has to do is click on the link and accept the payment. Unfortunately the site of Tikkie is only in Dutch, but it’s not that difficult. You
can also simply find the app in the playstore directly.
Wageningen

Wageningen is a small town with about 40,000 inhabitants. Of these, about 10,000 are students! This means that although Wageningen is small, there are relatively a lot of students. So Wageningen is a real student city. There are many activities and events organized by and for students, so despite that it’s small, there is a lot to do! Also, Wageningen is maybe a bit hard to reach, but it’s in the middle of the country, so from here you can easily visit every part of the Netherlands. Wageningen is located next to the river Rhine, this resulted in very unique nature, the floodplains next to the river. You can go for a nice walk, run or in summer also for a picnic here. In summer also people swim in the Rhine, it can be quite dangerous so make sure to always go with multiple people and stay close to the shore, in between the cribs! There are also some nice forests around, for example on the Wageningse Berg and the Grebbeberg, with nice views!

Housing

Due to the high population density in the Netherlands, housing is a real big problem. Both for students and for starters. Therefore, it is important to start searching for a room on time. Often international students get priority, but even then it can be really hard. Our advice is to be not too picky, maybe even accept any room you can get (if it seems quite okay) and then you can always look for a better room from there. But at any time: Be careful of scammers!

There are a few ways to find a room:

First it is important to subscribe to room.nl. To subscribe you pay €35,- once. Here you can search for rooms and reply to rooms. Once you get an offer you can accept it or first have a look if the current owner agrees on that. All rooms in Wageningen on room.nl are from Idealis, which is the student housing provider in Wageningen. Here you can find more information about how to find a room. On this website you can also find more information about Room and Idealis.

Then there is the Roomswap platform from us (ESN Wageningen). On our website you can subscribe to the Roomswap platform. In that case you will be in a database to which you have access yourself as well. In this database you can find people who are going on exchange during the time you are in Wageningen. So you can either swap rooms, if that person is going to your town. Or you can just take over that persons room, if that person
agrees on this. On this platform you can contact other people by email and discuss how you want to arrange things.

This platform is mostly for exchange students, but it can also help to find a room for at least one semester.

Lastly, there are some Facebook groups where available rooms are posted. You can mostly reply to them by sending an email to the email address in the message. The biggest Facebook group is Wageningen Student Plaza. Besides available rooms, here also e.g. events, stuff for sale and surveys for studies are shared. Then there is Wageningen Room Sublets and Appartement/kamer te huur Wageningen- Ede-Bennekom. This link also provides some tips for housing in Wageningen. Again, be careful of scammers!

**Municipality**

Once you have a room in Wageningen (or surroundings) it is important to subscribe to the municipality of Wageningen. On the website of the municipality is explained how this works. After registration you will receive your Dutch Citizen Number (BSN) and often a welcome package!

**University**

**Buildings**

The university has a beautiful campus, which is very convenient, because all buildings are close to each other. The most important ones are:

- **Forum** (cafeterias, library, student service centre, laptopshop, study associations, study rooms etc.)
- **Orion** (cosy cafeteria/canteen, study rooms, reception etc.)
- **Aurora** (cafeterias, study rooms and places etc.)
- **Leeuwenborch** (library, study rooms, cafeteria, mainly for more social sciences)

The nice thing is that there are not specific buildings for certain studies and not separate faculties. So you see people from different studies and you can also easily take courses from
different studies. Often there is quite some overlap between different studies, so it’s nice to work together with people from different disciplines during group work.

**Schedule**

An academic year at the WUR consists of 6 periods. Period 1, 2, 5 and 6 consists of 8 weeks. Weeks 1-6 consist of lectures, groupwork, tutorials, and practicals. Week 7 is self study week, during this week there is nothing planned from your courses, you have the whole week to study for your exams, which are in week 8. Period 3 and 4 consist of 4 weeks, often you have classes the first 3 weeks and an exam in week 4.

In the picture above the whole schedule for the academic year 2023-2024 can be seen. As you can see, there are three resit options/ weeks; right after period 3, 5 and 6. No resits means one week off :) Furthermore there are two weeks of Christmas holidays and about 2...
months of summer holidays in July and August.

In the periods of 8 weeks you follow courses of in total 12 credits and in period 3 and 4 you follow courses of in total 6 credits. In the periods with 8 weeks, this is often a morning course and an afternoon course of both 6 credits. But it can also be e.g. 2 courses of 3 credits and 1 course of 6 credits. Or sometimes there are also courses that are full time the first 4 weeks of the period and then another course full time the second 4 weeks of the period. Another option is a course of more than 6 credits, sometimes there are courses of e.g. 9 or 12 credits.

Here you can find info about when to subscribe for courses, when holidays are etc.

Platforms/websites

WUR mail

You will get your own university mail. It will be like this: firstname.lastname@wur.nl. You can access it via outlook.com/owa.wur.nl. With this account you also have access to an Onedrive account, where you have quite some space to save documents. With this email you can email teachers and professors or for example other students. Also, always keep track of this email account, because teachers can also email you with important information and updates about courses.

Osiris

On Osiris you can find courses, enroll for courses, find your grades, your credits, proof of enrollment, student ID etc. You can find courses with filters, e.g. per period, morning or afternoon and e.g. you can look for specific chairgroups. If you’re doing your full bachelors or masters in Wageningen, it is important to make sure all your courses are in the Planapp. Via Osiris you can also access the Planapp. Here you can add all the courses you are planning to do. This is especially important for electives. The courses will probably be added automatically after subscription, but check this carefully. If you’re going to do courses abroad, you have to put it in the planapp manually.

Time edit

When you login with your WUR account on TimeEdit (so choose: student entry) you can choose to see your course schedule, book a room for groups or book a study place. When looking for your course schedule you can search for it by either filling in the course code, or filling in the right period and morning or afternoon etc. You can book a room for groups e.g.
for group work for your course or e.g. for a meeting with a committee. You can also just book a study place, then you only book one place in a room. You can do this when you want a silent place to do some self study. When you book a place or room, you can click on a date and time, and if you have a preference for a building you can also only search for a specific building. Then you see which room is still available at the time you want to book it.

**Brightspace**

On [Brightspace](#) you can find all specific information about your courses when you are logged in with your WUR account. You can click on a course and then find things such as: course contacts (teachers), a course guide, lecture slides and depending on the course a reader or practical/ tutorial guide. If needed you can also sign up for groups for group work here and hand in assignments/reports etc. If you have any questions about the course you can always contact the course coordinator, who’s details can be found under course contacts.

**Student service center (SSC)**

You can contact [student service center](#) or go to their desk in Forum for many kinds of problems. E.g. if you can’t enroll for courses, for questions about registration, tuition fees, study related problems etc.

**Laptop**

The WUR provides some services and discounts when it comes to laptops. E.g. when you want to buy a new one, repair yours or rent one. More information about how this works and what options there are can be found [here](#).
WUR Card

Coffee machine

You have finally arrived at campus, you are ready to study, but something is missing, your fuel, your coffee. No worries, we got your back. On campus there are a lot of coffee machines and they all pretty much work the same. You can get coffee by making use of your WUR card, which can be used as a wallet. In order to charge your WUR card, you will have to download the KUARIO app, which is available everywhere. Once the app is downloaded you can sign up with your WUR email, and finally charge your card. Pro tip, if you bring your own cup to the coffee machine, you get a 0.05 euro discount. Now you can enjoy your nice and warm cup of coffee and study at your fullest.

Printing

With your WUR card you can also print at the university. Here is explained how this works. Or upload your documents directly here to be able to print. After uploading the documents, scan your WUR card at the printer and find the documents on the printer, click print.

Study associations

Each study has their own study association. You can become a member to get discounts on books and join events for very cheap. A membership is often around the €10,- for a year. It’s a nice way to meet people from your studies outside of university, by doing some fun activities. Study associations organize all kinds of activities. Such as lunches and sport activities, but much more! You can also go to the board for study related questions or issues. The boards of the study associations all have their offices in the Forum building on the first floor, so you can just go there or email them if you have any questions. Here you can click on study associations and then find the one from your studies, and go to their website. On this website you can also find international student associations such as us, ESN Wageningen.

Sport facilities WUR

The university has a really nice sports complex, sports center De Bongerd. Here you can do many types of sports. How does it work? You can buy sportrights for a year, one semester or one month. Here is an overview of the different types, the prices and how to purchase them.
Once you purchase the sportrights, they will be uploaded on your WUR card automatically, so you don’t need or get a separate card for this. In the sports center there is also a nice pub, where you can have a drink and a snack together with your sport friends after your training. Many students gather here, so it’s always fun.

What can you do with the sportrights?

- **Join sport classes** given by trainers of the Bongerd itself. For this you have to sign up. You can login on: scb.wur.nl and then find all sport classes there and sign up by clicking on the one you want.

- **Become a member** of one of the student sport associations. There are more than 30 student sport associations. You can do anything from sailing and rowing, to lacrosse, climbing and ice skating. But also dancing, volleyball and boxing and much more. There are many different sport associations! [Here](http://example.com) you can find them all and find more information about them! In addition to the sportrights, you need to pay a membership fee. It depends on the association how much this is.

- **Join Internal competitions** of the student sport foundation Thymos. A few times per year they organize internal competitions throughout the periods. For this, you can just sign up with a random team and play matches against other teams. For this everyone of the team needs sportrights, but then it’s free to participate. They organize a soccer, indoor soccer, beach volleyball and knotsball competition. (Knotsball is a typical student sport, it’s a kind of indoor hockey, but then with a funny stick). [In this link](http://example.com) you can sign up and find more information.

They also organize other activities which you can join. For most you don’t need sportrights, however they can be more expensive when you don’t have sportrights.
When you get the sportrights, you will also receive a newsletter every month in your email from Thymos. Here you will also find information about their events and activities. Find more information about SWU Thymos on their website.

- Lastly, you can make use of some facilities yourself when you have sportrights. You can use the fitness hall, the tennis courts of the Bongerd (so not the ones of the tennisclub, unless you are a member), the squash courts, the beach volleyball field and the swimming pool. Most of these you have to reserve, you can do that with the same link as where you can sign up for sport classes. It’s free to reserve it! For the swimming pool, there are time slots for students, during these time slots you can go in the swimming pool with your student card for free. Also these time slots you can find on the same webpage as where you sign up for classes. There is a big pool, a leisure pool with a bubble bath, a slide and a sauna and steamcabin! For the fitness hall, you need to do an introduction training, for which you can also sign up with the link to sign up for sport classes. After this, you can go there as often as you want, by scanning your WUR card at the gate of the fitness hall.

Doctor

There are multiple medical centers in Wageningen. However, we recommend to go to the student medical center. This is located on campus and specially made for students. On their website is explained how to register, make appointments and you can find their opening hours. But also for example an explanation of the Dutch health care system.

In Wageningen there are different pharmacies where you can get medicines, however some you can only get with a prescription from your doctor. An example is Apotheek van Weringh, in the city center. Some simple medicines, such as paracetamol, you can also get e.g. in the supermarket or drugstore.
There is no hospital in Wageningen, but the closest hospital is in Ede, on the Wageningen side, so it’s not too far away. It’s called: Ziekenhuis Gelderse Vallei, here you can find more information.

**Erasmus Student Network Wageningen**

ESN stands for Erasmus student network. We are one of the biggest student organizations in Europe. ESN is located in 41 countries and has more than 500 local sections. We support and develop student exchange and we want to create a home away from home for both Dutch and international students. We mainly do this by organizing lots of different activities and events. We organize from parties and karaoke nights, to international kitchens and sport activities. Also we go on trips within the Netherlands, e.g. to Amsterdam and de Efteling, but also abroad to e.g. Prague and Oktoberfest. In addition to this, we have our own building where you can come by for example to chill, study, have coffee or play some table tennis. A few things we stand for are: students helping students, fun in friendship and respect and embracing cultural differences.

For only €10.50 you can become a member for a year. You can join anytime during the year, and your card is valid for a year from the day you buy it. You can also join our activities without being a member, however you get a discount on activities when you are a member! You also get discounts with our partners when being a member. You can find all partners on esncard.org but examples of international partners are: flixbus and hostelling international. In Wageningen you can get discounts e.g. at a bike repair shop and Loburg which is a nice café in the city center. Furthermore, you get a discount on our bike rental system, you can join a committee or club and join the buddy program!
The buddy program is a concept where you have 2 or 3 mentors who already study longer in Wageningen and 8 to 15 other students that are new in Wageningen. It is a diverse group of students from different cultures and countries. You can do fun activities together and ask your mentors any questions about the university, public transport or a nice town to visit in the Netherlands. It’s a really nice way to create great friendships!

You can find more information on our website. Here you can also subscribe to become a member and/or to join the buddy program! You can also follow us on Instagram and/or just come by our office and ask all your questions there!