

The Netherlands: information on your destination

- *Documents to take*

Passport (or an identity card if you come from a European country within the Schengen treaty). You must be 18 years old to pilot a boat.

- *Highway code*

Minimum age 18 years old, wearing a seat belt is compulsory at the front and rear, children under 12 years old have to ride in the back seat, speed limits: motorway: 80 or 120 km/h - other roads: 80 km/h - in town: 50km/h.

- *Opening hours*

Shops open from Monday to Friday from 9 am to 5.30/6 pm, some shops close between 12 and 1.30 pm - on Saturday between 9 am and 4/5 pm. All shops close one day or a half day per week and they indicate it on a board. Most of them open on Thursday and Friday evening. - The supermarkets are open from Monday to Saturday from 8 am to 5/8 pm.

- *Phone*

Phone cards or payphones (cards available from stations, specialist shops or post offices). For Holland dial: +31.

- *In case of emergency*

Fire Brigade: 112 - Police:112 - International emergency number: 112.

- *Fishing*

A fishing card is obligatory: fish-pass on sale at the post office, about €10. In Loosdrecht, you can purchase a day ticket for the Loosdrechtse Plassen (2€).

• *Advice for navigation*

The Vecht and the lock at Loosdrecht are open from the 1st April to 1st November. When you take the boat, the staff will give you full instructions on how to go through them and will give you a Log book and an 'Almanac' (in Dutch) containing detailed information. When you go through certain bridges, the 'Bridgeman' will present you for a clog on the end of a pole. Locks cost about €5, but there aren't many of them.

When a bridge is controlled by lights, but you can pass underneath without the bridge opening, you can ignore the lights. If you are the first boat to pass this bridge, you should sound your horn to alert the bridge-keeper, who will action the lights, first of all a green light then a red one (in preparation of the opening) then two green lights, which mean you can go through. Opening hours are different depending on the various itineraries. You will find them in the description of your cruise.

When calculating the height of your boat, do not forget the items that might also be on the roof, (such as bikes) and allow a security margin never less than 20cms. Crossing the town of Utrecht (Oudegracht) isn't allowed with the Flying Bridge Pénichettes®, these have to by-pass the town using the Rijn Kanaal. Any damage caused due to the non-compliance of this instruction will be charged to the captain of the boat.

The waterway police controls regularly the speed limits, especially in areas, where the speed limit is at 5 kph. The captain of the boat is personally responsible to pay the fine for any violation of the rules, even if he didn't steer the boat himself. By signing the hire contract, the captain obligates to respect the navigation rules and to pay for every penalty.

• *Reading a Dutch map*

The lifting bridges are indicated by the letters BB (for moving bridge in Dutch), followed by numbers. For example: BBH17.5 - 22.5W 96 H = height; 17.5 = height available, in decimetres, beneath the lifting section of the bridge; 22.5 = height available, in decimetres, beneath the fixed section of the bridge; W = width available, 96 = width available, in decimetres, under the bridge. The locks are shown with their name, followed by SLUIS and other information. For example: Mijndensesluis en BB D 19 W 70L 500 Mijndensesluis.

Mijnden lock; en BB = and lifting bridge; D = least depth of water; 19 = depth in decimetres; W = width of the opening bridge; 70 = width in decimetres; L = length of the lock; 500 = length in decimetres.