



Living Lab Biobased Brazil
Education Research Innovation

Living as the Dutch

*A practical guide for Brazilian Interns
in the Netherlands in 2022*

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- The prices were updated by Rayane Bezerra in 2023/1.

All information in this guide is subject to change and was based on available documents in July 2022.

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Public Transport

On your daily life, public transport will not be your main mean of transportation, but the train system in the Netherlands is very efficient and taking a bus once in a while can be useful.

Understanding how to get around

- [9292](#) is the app to go if you need to organize a route by public transport in the netherlands. It combines all types of transports and provides up-to-date travel advice and prices.
- If you are travelling by train, it is useful to check your route before-hand in the [NS](#) app. In it you can see train times, stops and platforms.

Paying for your trip

- You can pay for buses directly with your debit/credit card. This option, however, will be more expensive than paying with an OV-chipkaart
- For trains you can either buy the tickets online in [ns.com.nl](#) in advance or use your OV-chipkaart. Both options will cost the same. You can also buy the ticket at the station and print it, this however will cost you more, as they charge a printing fee.
- You can also subscribe to one of NS's travel products on their website : [ns.nl](#). For this, you need a personal OV-chipkaart. There are subscriptions that allow you to travel with a discount off-peak hours (check NS's website to see what are those), for free on weekends or for free on weekdays. This subscription is only valid for train services and if you have a personal OV. It is important to state that it will not grant you the same advantages for travelling by bus, tram or subway.

The OV-chipkaart

There are two types of OVs, the anonymous one (or the blue card) and the personal one.

The [anonymous OV](#) can be bought at the train stations and allowis you to use someone else's discount to travel and travel without the need of buying a ticket in advance in all kinds of public transport. It is required to top up the card with travel credits before using. You can do that online with a credit card or at the machines in train stations.

The [personal OV](#) is a travel card in your name that is linked to your bank account. To get one you need to have a Dutch bank account (or an account that allows you to pay with iDeal – see more in Bank Account). Your trips and travel products will be charged directly in your bank account and you can use your OV in all public transport, without the need of acquiring a ticket beforehand.

The personal OV also allows you to rent OV-fiets, which are pay-per-use bikes and to park your bike inside the train stations.

Bike

Your main mean of transportation in the Netherlands will most likely be a bike. There are a few options when it comes to getting yourself one :

Buying a new bike

You can find many bikeshops in all Dutch cities and you will probably be able to buy one new city bike for about 100-150 euros. In the end of your internship you can probably sell it and get a part of your money back. There are even some stores that sell you the bike with the guarantee they will buy it back when you leave.

Buying a second-hand bike

The Netherlands are known for the thrift shops and you can certainly buy a second hand bike in one of those second-hand shops. This option is cheaper, as you can probably find one for less than 50 euros. You should keep in mind though that those are not new bikes and in most cases they will demand repairs, that will cost you both money and time.

You can also find second-hand bikes being sold online, in facebook groups and in websites as [marktplaats.nl](https://www.marktplaats.nl).

Renting a bike

Renting a bike is also an option and there are a few companies that offer you that service. One of the most famous is [Swapfiets](https://www.swapfiets.nl). There you can rent a bike from 21,90 euros per month (2 euros more if you want a basket) and they take care of all repairs that might be necessary.

Bank Account

You will probably have to open a Dutch bank account in order to get paid and also to be able to subscribe to certain services, such as recurring mobile bundle and NS travel products, due to the iDeal system. The main banks in the Netherlands are Rabobank, ING and ABN Amaro. It may also be useful to have a bank account in a digital bank like Revolut (also offers iDeal) or N26.

iDeal

« With [iDEAL](#) you can make online payments in a reliable, secure and easy way. Payments are done using the mobile banking app or the online banking environment of your own bank. iDEAL is a direct online transfer from your bank account to the bank account of an entrepreneur. »

This system is widely used in the Netherlands and only Dutch banks offer it, so it is important that you have one bank account that is compatible with it.

Opening a bank account

In order to open a bank account you will need your BSN or citizen number, that you will get from your municipality once you have registered yourself. The time it takes for you to get it varies from city to city, in some cases you can get it the same day, in others it can take up to 12 weeks. If your municipality takes longer to provide you with your BSN, you can consider opening an account with Revolut, since they offer iDeal and don't require a BSN for you to have an account.

Most banks have special packages for students, with no bank costs, make sure to check for it before opening the account.

Transferring money from Brazil

It is important to consider that it will probably take a while before you get your first payment, due to the bureaucracy, so you will need to bring some money from Brazil. You may also need to transfer yourself money from Brazil during your stay to add to your income. This can be done via several apps and websites, like Western Union and Wise. With [Wise](#) you can also open a bank account in Euros in which you can directly transfer money from Brazil to yourself at a low rate.

Internet and Mobile Data

There are two main companies providing internet services in the Netherlands for short term contracts (less than one year) : [Lebara](#) and [Lycamobile](#). You can buy pre-paid SIM cards for both on some Albert Heijns (the main supermarket chain in the Netherlands) and specialised stores. You can check where those SIMs are sold on their websites.

After you have a SIM card, you may also want to subscribe to a post-paid plan, that allows you to get cheaper internet. You can check the conditions for [Lebara SIM Only plans here](#). When adhering to those plans make sure the plan you are signing is a month contract with automatical renewal, and not a 2 year contract. You must also remember to cancel it one month in advance before you leave the Netherlands.

The most frequent bundles are 5GB and 10 GB and considering that you have wifi at work and at home, it is usually enough. Remember to check if your plan allows you to use internet all over Europe, in case you travel.

Housing

Housing can be a real challenge, especially if you have little time before your internship starts. Thus, you should take advantage of as many resources as you can and start looking for a place to stay with as much advance as possible.

Renting a room in a student house in relatively big cities in the Netherlands can cost between 400 and 550 euros per month - in these cases you will usually share common spaces (bathroom, kitchen, living room) with other people. If you wish have your own studio, be prepared to pay more - up to 800 euros a month. You can also look for student rooms in organized student residences, but it is usually hard to find a vacancy. All this values are relative to the scenario in 2023.

It is common for the landlords to ask for a security deposit when you sign your contract - if everything goes well you will get this back at the end of your contract term.

Where to look for a room

Some websites are really helpful in the search for a Dutch home:

- <https://kamernet.nl/en> - Kamernet is a tool for searching for rooms or apartments. You can pay a monthly subscription to be allowed to chat directly with the landlords.
- <https://www.pararius.nl/huurwoningen/> - Pararius is also a good search tool for bedrooms and apartments.
- <https://www.xior.nl/en> - Xior is a company that runs student residences. You can check whether they own one (and have available rooms) in your destination.
- <https://www.room.nl/en/home> - ROOM also offers student housing in big cities in the Netherlands.
- Facebook groups - There are many facebook groups where people place ads for vacant rooms. Search for the name of your destination plus "rooms" or "huur" (rent in Dutch) to find the most relevant groups for you.

Scams

Be aware of scammers, especially in Facebook Groups. Never transfer money to accounts outside of the Netherlands and always try to get a visit at the place, physically. Current interns or other people at the University you will be attending can usually help you with that and attend the visit, to make sure the place is real and matches all descriptions. Always try to make the agreements in written form and keep in mind that rent contract in the Netherlands are usually written in Dutch.

Relevant Apps and Tips

Wheather

The wheather in the Netherlands is really unprecidatable and unstable, so checking the wheather forecast before leaving the house is always very handy. Furthermore, because of the instability, some apps are not really good at predicting the wheather in the Netherlands, so it is always advisable to use [Bueinradar](#).

Public transport

The best tool to check how to get around in the Netherlands is the app [9292](#), that provides up-to-date travel advice integrating all kinds of public transport.

The [NS app](#) provides travel advice for journeys on trains around the Netherlands.

Supermarket

Albert Heijn is the most famous supermarket chain in the Netherlands. You will also find many Jumbo, Aldi and Lidl units around the country. You can check the prices and sales on Albert Heijn [through this website](#). In your first month you will spend more money because you need all the basics, but the following months around 45 euros you will need for groceries.

Travel

Travelling inside the Netherlands and to Belgium by train is really easy, but if you want to go further away you may need to use different types of transport. If you want to travel outside of the Netherlands by train, you should use the [NS-International](#) website.

[Flixbus](#) is the main provider of bus travel in Europe and is usually a budget friendly option.

Travelling by plane involves getting to a city where there is an airport first. In the Netherlands, the main airports are located in Eindhoven, Amsterdam, Rotterdam-Den Haag and Maastricht. Low cost companies such as [Ryanair](#), [WizAir](#), [EasyJet](#) and [Transavia](#) operate from all of them. All of those airports are accessible by public transport (bus/train).

Discounts

Students can have discounts in some purchases using tools like [studentbeans.com](#). Register yourself with your student email and login to see what kinds of benefits you may have.

Another way to get discounts is to make na ESN card. It costs 10 euros and can give you relevant discounts on the gym, on travel and other activities. Check what are the benefits at [their website](#).

Shopping

Apart from the many second hand shops, there are stores in the Netherlands that offer useful articles at a great price, like [Action](#).