

Holland country of tulips

Do you know Holland? No, not Holland in Michigan. Holland in Europe.

The little country also called the Netherlands. The one where the Flying Dutchman is coming from. The land of windmills, wooden shoes and traditional clothing. With a different opinion about drugs and crime. Of the continuous fight against the sea. Of controversial political decisions. But most of all: of tulips.



Being bright business men we knew immediately when we saw it: it is gold. This is what we want. It is what we take from.....Turkey. Let's be honest: one of the well known Dutch high lights isn't really our own. Being keen trade men we got the flower from the Turks (or should we confess: we 'stole' it from them).

The rest is history. We sailed the seven seas and at the end of the 18th century the tulip was spread out all over the world. Also in your country! Nowadays at least 3000 varieties exist. Blooming up to 7 days getting a tulip means someone wants to tell you something. Getting this beautiful flower can mean: love, passion or romance. And getting it from a stranger: a declaration of love (so guys beware to whom you give this flower).

During the Golden century trading tulips was a golden business. Tulips became so highly-prized, that prices went sky high and markets crashed. Our national economy broke down. The lesson NOT learned from this we experience today. Tulips made men greedy, houses too.....

Other than tulips we have much more flowers. In fact we, being a very small country, are very big in the trade of flowers. We are world's leader (!): we control at least 30% of the world market. Aalsmeer is our biggest flower auction site. With its nearly 1 million square meter building it is bigger than the country of Monaco. It is one of world's biggest trade buildings. Every day over 45.000 transactions take place meaning trade of 10 to 20 million flowers. Most of them (70%) grow in our own county (in glass warehouses). The rest, grown in Ethiopia, Turkey, Israel and Rwanda, are flown in on a daily basis to be traded. Know one golden rule of flower trade: within 48 hours a flower is shipped and traded from grower to shop. All over the world!

During summer time the flowers grown at open fields are gone. At least most of them. But fortunately we know our country so we are always able to find some fields. Also the yellow fields of coli flowers are very beautiful, growing in the province of Groningen. Nowadays nearly 100% is used to produce bio fuels.

On special request ProHolland motor vacations (www.proholland.com) offers a visit to a flower auction building. Netherlands second biggest at Bleiswijk. We start our visit at 6.00 o'clock to see the way the trade men handle the sales-clock. A special system of selling and bidding (it is a kind of an auction). After this visit a "boeketterij": a workshop where bouquets are made. Want to try?

Want to know more about the Netherlands or our motor vacations: please send us an e-mail.