

Zeeland at a glance

English



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Introduction

The Netherlands is divided into twelve provinces, Zeeland is one of them. Zeeland is situated on the North Sea coast in the extreme southwest of the country and is intersected by the Oosterschelde and the Westerschelde. The southern border of Zeeland also borders the Netherlands with Belgium.

Literally, the name 'Zeeland' means sea and land. Approximately a third of the province consists of water and two thirds of land. The history of Zeeland will always be linked to water, which in times is considered either friend or foe, depending on the circumstances.

Nature and recreation

Whichever route leading into Zeeland, the open, panoramic scenery is impressive. The character of the countryside is largely determined by farms. Cities, villages and industry take up most of the space but an increasing proportion of the province is intended for nature reserves. All in all, the province is very popular





with cyclists and walkers, whether residents or tourists. Bridle paths and roller blade routes tempt people to try various relaxing activities. Naturally, Zeeland is with all its water, a paradise for water sports enthusiasts. Not only can sailors and surfers indulge themselves on the open coastal waters, but rowing and canoeing are also possible on the streams of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen and the water courses of Walcheren. The underwater world of the Oosterschelde and the Grevelingen attracts a great many divers from within and outside the Netherlands. Moreover, Zeeland's 600-km-long coast makes it easy to find a quiet spot on the beach or water, even on busy days.

Economy

Tourism will always be an important source of income for many of the residents of Zeeland, but the majority of jobs are to be found in industry and service sectors. Significant industrial areas have arisen along the southern bank of the Kanaalzone and on the northern side around Vlissingen-Oost because of its ideal location on the deep open water of the Westerschelde. The (chemical) industry provides jobs and storage and transshipment companies as well as transport companies benefit from growing port activities. A study is carried out to examine the feasibility of realising a container terminal in the Vlissingen-Oost dock area. Given the amount of water in the province, fishery also occupies an important place. The reputation of Zeeland's mussels and oysters stretches far abroad. Now that the sector is facing increasing difficulties due to all sorts of European enactments, other possibilities are being examined such as the cultivation of fish, samphire and sea lavender. In short: aquaculture. European developments do not make things any



easier for those involved in agriculture. On the other hand, European subsidies ensure that many initiatives can be supported financially and therefore keep rural life and work attractive.

Culture and welfare

Zeeland has a rich history. The historic buildings which rich traders had built in the 16th and 17th centuries, give city centres such as Middelburg, Zierikzee and Veere a distinguished appearance to this very day. Zeeland is not only proud of its cities, but its regional products, such as oysters, lobsters and mussels, wine produced from fruit and farm cheese made from cow's, sheep's and goat's milk, are becoming increasingly popular too.

Various annual festivals of international allure give Zeeland a more and more prominent position on the map. The Liberation Day Festival, the Street Festival, Film by the Sea in Vlissingen and the Late Summer Festival, which organises performances at numerous places in the province, are real crowd-pullers. Local



jazz festivals and classical music events are also well-known.

Also, there are many museums for those interested in the (cultural) history of Zeeland.

Since the establishment of the Roosevelt Academy in Middelburg in September 2004, Zeeland is able to offer courses at levels varying from professional to university education. The various libraries in Zeeland provide a helping hand in learning and reading.



The elderly residents in Zeeland are provided with the care they need enabling them to stay in their own homes as long as possible. If necessary, the three regional hospitals and various care institutions help making life in Zeeland as enjoyable as possible up to an old age.

Infrastructure and transport

Zeeland is easily accessible by road. From Noord-Brabant, the A 58 provides a fast route to Goes, Middelburg and Vlissingen. Since the completion of

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the Westerschelde Tunnel in 2003, Zeeuws-Vlaanderen can be reached from Zuid-Beveland day and night. The route over the Zeeland Bridge or the Oosterschelde Barrier can be taken if you wish to travel in northern direction. The Randstad is quickly reached via the various dams which have been formed by the Delta works.



The train from Bergen op Zoom to Vlissingen is the only way to reach Zeeland by rail. Wherever possible, buses provide transport between the cities and villages. The smaller rural centres can be reached by means of various forms of public transport on prior request.

Water

Water has always had an enormous influence on Zeeland. Various catastrophes have left their mark on the province. The disastrous floods of 1953, in which 1,836 people and many thousands of cattle lost their lives, led to the implementation of the Delta works. Although the original intention was to close off all the



inlets, ultimately a flood barrier for the Oosterschelde was opted for. In this way, a unique brackish tidal area could be preserved and the mussel and oyster culture was saved accordingly.

How the Delta works came about and how the structural tours de force were used in building, can be seen during a visit to Waterland Neeltje Jans at the Oosterschelde Barrier.

Although the Delta works have made Zeeland safe and provided it with good road connections, the disadvantages are also apparent. In good weather, algae flourish in the lakes sealed off by the dams. Because less water flows in and out with each tide, more and more of the salt marshes and mud flats are bound to disappear. Fortunately, inhabitants of Zeeland are resourceful and inventive, especially involving water issues.

A meeting between land and water is
always exciting. So is meeting Zeeland.



COLOFON:

Province of Zeeland
Abdij 6, 4330 LA Middelburg,
the Netherlands
Tel 00 31(0)118-631011
www.zeeland.nl

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- Jaap Wolterbeek
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