

# Zeeland

Zeeland  
at a glance

# Provincie



## Introduction

Zeeland is one of the twelve provinces of the Netherlands. It is situated on the North Sea coast in the extreme southwest of the country and it is transected by the Ooster and Westerschelde. The southern border of Zeeland also forms the border between the Netherlands and Belgium.

Literally translated, the name 'Zeeland' means sea and land. The name speaks for itself. Approximately a third of the province consists of water and two thirds of land. The history of Zeeland will always be linked to the water, which, depending on the circumstances, is sometimes deemed a friend and sometimes a foe.

## Nature and recreation

Whichever route you take into Zeeland, the open, panoramic scenery is impressive. The character of the countryside is, to a large extent, determined by arable farms. Cities, villages and industry take up the requisite space but an increasing proportion of the province is devoted to 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 one to try various relaxing activities and, with all its water, Zeeland is, of course, 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 Zeeland Flanders 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.

Zeeland's 600-km-long coast means that it is 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 the service sectors. Significant industrial areas have arisen along the southern bank of the Westerschelde in the Kanaalzone and on the northern side around Vlissingen-Oost as a result of the ideal location on the deep open water of the Westerschelde.

The (chemical) industry provides jobs and the storage, transshipment and transport companies are benefiting from the growing port activities. A study is currently being carried out to examine the feasibility of a container terminal in the Vlissingen-Oost dock area.

Given the amount of water in the province, the fisheries also occupy an important place. The reputation of Zeeland's mussels and oysters stretches far abroad. Now that the sector is facing increasing difficulties as a result of all sorts of European legislation, other possibilities are being examined, such as the raising of fish and the cultivation of samphire and sea lavender, in short: aquaculture. European developments are not making things any easier for those involved in agriculture. On the other hand, European subsidies ensure that many initiatives can be supported financially and so keep rural life and work attractive.



## Culture and welfare

Zeeland has a rich history. The historic buildings which the wealthy traders built in the 16th and 17th centuries, give the centres of cities 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,

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sheep's and goat's milk, are also becoming increasingly popular. Various annual festivals of international allure are giving 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 also provide something for everybody.

There are many museums for those who want to know more about the (cultural) history of Zeeland.

Now that the Roosevelt Academy has arrived (September 2004), Zeeland is able to offer courses at levels varying from professional to university education, and the various libraries in Zeeland provide a helping hand in learning and reading.

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





## **Infrastructure and transport**

From all directions Zeeland is easily accessible by road. From the West the A 58 provides a fast route to Goes, Middelburg and Vlissingen. Since the completion of the Westerschelde Tunnel in 2003, Zeeland Flanders and Zuid-Beveland have a permanent connection. The route over the Zeeland Bridge or the Oosterschelde Barrier can be taken if you wish to travel in the north-south 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 residential nuclei 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 fresh water tidal area with a vibrant mussel and oyster culture could be preserved.



How the Delta works came about, and the structural tour de force of building them, can be seen at Waterland Neeltje Jans on the Oosterschelde Barrier. Although the Delta works have made Zeeland safe and provided it with good road connections, the disadvantages are now also becoming 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 mudflats are disappearing. But rest assured, Zeelanders would not be Zeelanders, and Dutchmen would not be Dutchmen, if they were not able to creatively solve these problems.

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A meeting between land and water is always exciting.  
And so is a meeting with Zeeland!

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