



# Why the Dutch are Different: A Journey into the Hidden Heart of the Netherlands

By Ben Coates

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## Why the Dutch are Different: A Journey into the Hidden Heart of the Netherlands By Ben Coates

Stranded at Schiphol airport, Ben Coates called up a friendly Dutch girl he'd met some months earlier. He stayed for dinner. Actually, he stayed for good.

In the first book to consider the hidden heart and history of the Netherlands from a modern perspective, the author explores the length and breadth of his adopted homeland and discovers why one of the world's smallest countries is also so significant and so fascinating. It is a self-made country, the Dutch national character shaped by the ongoing battle to keep the water out from the love of dairy and beer to the attitude to nature and the famous tolerance.

Ben Coates investigates what makes the Dutch the Dutch, why the Netherlands is much more than Holland and why the color orange is so important. Along the way he reveals why they are the world's tallest people and have the best carnival outside Brazil.

He learns why Amsterdam's brothels are going out of business, who really killed Anne Frank, and how the Dutch manage to be richer than almost everyone else despite working far less.

He also discovers a country which is changing fast, with the Dutch now questioning many of the liberal policies which made their nation famous.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

A book as quietly appealing as its subject and full of fascinating details. Coates is entirely convincing in his affectionate portrait. **Prospect**

Vivid and informative. Coates intertwines the nation's journey to its modern iteration with his own adaptation to the Dutch lifestyle. An accomplished debut. **Geographical**

One of the few books on our near-neighbour, Coates gets under the skin of a nation renowned for its liberalism. **The Bookseller**

In *Why the Dutch are Different*, a torch beam of scrutiny plays across the country's past and its lesser known foibles. Author Ben Coates has produced an insightful gem. **Scotsman - Books of the Year**

I thoroughly recommend this book. *Why the Dutch are Different* provides the answers to all the questions I had but didn't dare ask about the Netherlands. I eagerly sat up late into the night reading, laughing often and enjoying the ride into my adopted homeland. **DutchNews**

Fascinating. Thoroughly researched and well thought out, *Why the Dutch are Different* takes us on a journey that goes beyond red-lit windows and Anne Frank to the true depths of the country. Ben Coates's day-to-day life sits effortlessly alongside deeper dives into history and folklore. A friendly read that strikes the right balance between teaching and entertaining. **The Bookbag**

A striking portrait of the Netherlands in the 21st century, offering a refreshing and long overdue update of the way the Dutch national character is described. **Edinburgh Book Review**

#### About the Author

Ben Coates was born in Britain in 1982, lives in Rotterdam with his Dutch wife, and now works for an international charity. During his career he has been a political advisor, corporate speechwriter, lobbyist and aid worker. He has written articles for numerous publications including the *Guardian*, *Financial Times* and *Huffington Post*. [ben-coates.com](http://ben-coates.com)

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