

## Traveling Out Of The Netherlands

Being a member state of the European Union, in addition to the Visa exemption for Taiwan, traveling to other countries in the EU and UK is easy. I am sure that we are well aware of the fact that countries within the EU enjoy no boarder control and the hassles of Visas and regulations. Moreover, it is a once in a lifetime opportunity for most exchange students to be in Europe, so why not make the most out of the time and explore other countries in the continent? This article explores the various methods of traveling out of The Netherlands when you wish to take a break in another European country.

### Train

The Dutch railway service, 'NS Hispeed / International' makes direct links to neighboring countries such as Germany, Belgium and France. Tickets can be booked online (<http://www.ns.nl/>) or be purchased at the train stations. However, these international trains only pass through main train stations such as Rotterdam Centraal and Amsterdam Centraal. In addition, there is another French international train known as 'Thalys' that makes frequent connections to Paris, Brussels, and Cologne. With this many number of trains to choose from, traveling to and from neighboring countries is very convenient. Just as an example, a one-way ticket from The Netherlands to Paris can be as low as €35.00 and the travel time is less than 4 hours. One point that travelers should be aware of is the pricing of tickets. That is, prices increase as the departure date approaches. In order to obtain cheap tickets, early reservations must be made. If you only book the week before departure, a ticket can easily be double its normal price!



## Airplane

Many low-cost airlines serve flights to other European countries and the UK from The Netherlands. Like trains, purchasing tickets early can get you the best deals available. Late reservations can result in exploding prices that are two to three times its normal rate. There are three main low-cost carriers in The Netherlands, namely, 'Ryanair' (<http://www.ryanair.com/en>), 'Wizz Air' (<http://wizzair.com/?language=EN>) and 'Easy Jet' (<http://www.easyjet.com>). Some of these airlines serve different locations in Europe. For example, Wizz Air mostly serves Eastern-European countries, whilst Ryanair is famous for other European destinations. All these airlines have one thing in common: they only provide services at 'smaller' airports usually located an hour or more outside a main city. Hence, even though tickets may be cheap, one should also take into consideration the cost of traveling from the airport to the city when budgeting your trip. Wizz Air and Ryanair have their service point located at 'Eindhoven Airport' in The Netherlands. The English Easy Jet is more high class, and has established its service point at Schiphol Airport (Amsterdam). The quickest way to these airports from Rotterdam is a bit over an hour by train. For Schiphol, there is a direct train from Rotterdam Centraal. However, for those who depart from Eindhoven, the airport is located 30 minutes away by Bus 401 from Eindhoven train station. Thus, make sure that you have enough time to get to the airport because you wouldn't want to miss your flight!



## Bus

Ever heard of traveling on wheels around Europe? This is possible with the borderless frontiers that countries in Europe enjoy. The massive 'Eurolines' (<http://www.eurolines.com/>) organization operates international routes within

Europe and Morocco. Euroline buses make over 500 destinations in more than 25 countries. Traveling by bus out of The Netherlands is the cheapest compared to other options mentioned in this article (even with late reservations). Travel time is the only disadvantage to traveling by bus. In my opinion, traveling to neighboring countries such as Belgium and France is acceptable by bus as it only takes 2 and 6 hours respectively. However, longer distance traveling to countries such as Czech may take up to more than 24 hours. I definitely wouldn't recommend this option unless you really are determined to be in a bus for that long!



## Car

The more obvious option to travel in Europe, but frequently overlooked, is by car. Cars can be rented as long as you have a valid driver's license. The cost will depend on the number of days rented, the type of car rented, the distance traveled, and of course, the gas. Contradictory to what we think, renting a car is not very expensive. If there are enough people to share the cost, then traveling by car can actually be cheaper. In addition, one could also be free and not constricted to the destination and stops that other transports make.