



# reading

## BOOKS ABOUT THE NETHERLANDS

From *The Diary of Anne Frank* to entertaining histories to stylistically bold novels, the Netherlands has a rich and diverse literary tradition. Delve into some of these literary works as you prepare to visit their homeland.

Bodian, Miriam. *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation: Conversos and Community in Early Modern Amsterdam* (1997)

The story of the Portuguese Jews (many of them conversos or new Christians) who, after their expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula, came to Amsterdam and helped kickstart the Dutch Golden Age.

Chevalier, Tracy. *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (1999)

Popular historical novel set in 17th century Delft and inspired by Johannes Vermeer's legendary portrait entitled, *Girl with a Pearl Earring*. It's a fictional account of the relationship between Vermeer, the model, and the painting.

Coates, Ben. *Why the Dutch Are Different: A Journey Into the Hidden Heart of the Netherlands* (2015)

An Englishman in love with the Netherlands provides entertaining insights into the Dutch national character and history.

Frank, Anne. *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1947)

One of the world's most widely read and influential books, this diary of a teenage girl in hiding from the Nazis has changed the lives of countless readers. Anne Frank's story has become, for many, emblematic of the wider tragedy of the Holocaust.

Koch, Herman. *The Dinner* (2009)

A stylish and controversial novel, this international best-seller focuses on the reaction of two privileged couples to a violent crime committed by their teenage sons.

Koker, David. *At the Edge of the Abyss: A Concentration Camp Diary, 1943-1944* (2012)

Written on scraps of paper, Koker's diary records the powerful, sometimes poetical, observations of a young Dutch Jewish writer and his experiences in a concentration camp. David Koker died in Poland in 1944.

Matton, Sylvie. *Rembrandt's Whore* (2001)

This novel, written in the voice of Hendrickje Stoffels, Rembrandt's servant, mistress, and muse, provides an intimate account of Dutch society and morality during the 17th century.

Mulisch, Harry. *The Assault* (1982)

Mulisch, a survivor of the Holocaust, was one of the greats of Dutch postwar literature. Based on actual events, *The Assault* is a story of Dutch collaboration and German savagery during World War Two, and the efforts of a man to understand the incident that led to the murder of his family.



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Multatuli. *Max Havelaar: Or the Coffee Auctions of the Dutch Trading Company* (1860)

This 1860 novel created a political storm with its outraged exposé of Dutch greed in colonial Indonesia. It is considered a masterpiece of Dutch writing and satire. Multatuli was the penname of Eduard Douwes Dekker who had a long career as a colonial official in what was then known as the Dutch East Indies.

Pressler, Mirjam. *Treasures from the Attic: The Extraordinary Story of Anne Frank's Family* (2009)

A vivid, detailed account of Anne Frank's family based on a treasure trove of letters, photos, and documents found in the attic of Anne's aunt.

Reve, Gerald. *The Evenings* (1947)

Reve's bitter comedy skewers suburban emptiness and bourgeoisie life in post-war Amsterdam. Written just two years after the end of the Nazi occupation, it outraged critics for its complete disinterest in the war and the Holocaust but was also recognized as a work of genius.

Schama, Simon. *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (1987)

Written by one of the world's most gifted and important historians, this is a remarkable guided tour of Dutch culture – from home and family life to national identity – during its 17th-century Golden Age.

Shorto, Russell. *Amsterdam: A History of the World's Most Liberal City* (2013)

An entertaining portrait of Amsterdam – from its unpromising beginnings to its multicultural present – which argues that the city's liberalism goes far deeper than simply a modern tolerance for sex and soft drugs.