

HOW TO BE DUTCH

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The QUIZ



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Welcome to *How to Be Dutch, The Quiz*: the questions that SHOULD be on the Dutch citizenship exam. At least that's what I think as the American Netherlander, who's been here 20 years.

This book is a follow-up to *How to Be Orange: An Alternative Dutch Assimilation Course*. Because how can you have a citizenship course without an exam?

In *How to Be Orange*, you can find some of the questions from the actual online Dutch assimilation quiz, such as this one.

You are sitting with a colleague at a terrace. At the table next to you there are two men kissing and caressing each other. You are bothered by this. What do you do?

A – *You remain seated and act as if you are not offended*

B – *You tell the men that they should go sit somewhere else*

C – *You say loudly to your colleague what you think about homosexuality*

ANSWER = A

If you answered C, I suppose you can stop reading this book now. As for the other answers, I understand the idea behind them. But what gets me is the wording of the question: *You are bothered by*

the BOOK

this. Personally, I wouldn't be 'bothered by this.' But – to answer the question correctly – I have to pretend to be someone who's bothered by this, who is pretending NOT to be bothered by this.

And – according to the wording – the men are not just kissing. They are 'kissing and caressing.' If any couple would put on such a Public Display of Affection, I know plenty of Dutch people who would have NO problem saying, 'Get a room! *DOE NORMAAL!*'

The online assimilation exam also gives examples of how some famous Dutch people have scored.

- ✓ Jacques d'Ancona (TV journalist) 4.7
- ✓ Howard Komproe (comedian) 4.6
- ✓ Victoria Koblenko (soap actress) 4.0
- ✓ None of them achieved a passing grade of 5.5.

One year, the Dutch Assimilation Test appeared on TV. The winners were Chinese food delivery guys.

So welcome to my self-made quiz. It can't be any worse than the official one. If you're looking for an official guide to the Netherlands, this is not it. If you're looking for some odd Dutch quirks – in snarky quiz form – then this book is for you.

PREVIOUSLY...

Before we take the quiz, let's review the Dutch track record so far. It includes a lot of things that you may take for granted. In fact, wherever you are in the world, you can play a game I like to call: Look Around the Room and Point to What's Dutch.

From Dutch product names to Dutch artists to Dutch innovations, there's a lot that's hiding in plain sight:

**The artwork hanging
on your wall.**

**The long-life light
bulb in your hall.**

**Household soap
like Axe or Dove.**

**The band who sang
'Radar Love.'**

**The microscope,
the pendulum clock.**

**The first publicly
traded stock.**

**Carrots that are orange.
Wow, who knew?**

**And WiFi. Yes, that's
Dutch too.**

**Capitalism as we
know it today.**

**Marriage for couples
who are gay.**

**The first-ever Fair
Trade coffee.**

**Cassette tapes,
CDs, LEDs.**

**Kuipers, the bald
guy up in space.**

**DJ Tiesto,
dropping bass.**

**Lady Melisandre on
Game of Thrones.**

**(And Daario, the
guy slipping Khalisi
the bone.)**

**The first operational
submarine.**

**That awful Senseo
coffee machine.**

**Keeping New Orleans
safe from the sea.**

***The Voice*, that annoying
show on TV.**

**Dairy cows of the
Holstein breed.**

***Basic Instinct*,
Robocop, *Speed*.**

**Miffy the bunny, so
cute you could eat.
And even blackface
*Zwarte Piet.***

**Philips,
Shell, KLM.
Unilever,
DSM.**

**WeTransfer,
Heineken.
Anne Frank and
Van Halen.**

**MC Escher,
Hieronymus Bosch.
Rembrandt,
Vincent van Gogh.**

**Erasmus, Spinoza,
René Descartes.
Barney, world
champion in Darts.**

**The word *Yankee*, the
word *cookie*.
And Johan Cruyff, RIP.**

**But – if you boast for giving
the world so much –
Then you've not yet learned
how to be Dutch.**

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This book is a work of non-fiction, based on the life, experiences and recollections of the author. The author reserves the right to adapt or streamline details for the sake of privacy or expediency. Quotes, events and details are not a reliable source of journalistic accuracy; rather, they are subjective tools used to tell a story. The author has stated to the publisher that, while certain details may have been changed, the essential details are based on true experience. Portions of the text have appeared in stage shows at Boom Chicago Comedy Theater, as blog pieces on Dutchnews.nl, and in *The XPat Journal*. The author extends his gratitude for the help he received in developing the material.


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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations! If you've completed your Dutch citizenship course, it's time now for the quiz. And if you've *never* taken a Dutch citizenship course, it's also time for the quiz. If you don't score well enough, yes you'll have to leave the country. But don't worry! The questions are so subjective that even most Dutch people don't get them right. They'll be leaving the country with you.

Note: *How to Be Orange* was an attempt to contain only the most poignant first-hand accounts and avoid generalization. *How to Be Dutch* is a blatant attempt to take personal experiences and generalize the hell out of them. Are these questions the textbook truth? No. Are they the most recognizable examples I could think of? Yes. And hopefully the silliest as well.



And bear in mind, this quiz was written by an American. As an American, my knowledge of any foreign culture is invariably limited. Perhaps it's that American, egocentric, chest-thumping chauvinism that allows me to compare everything to my own myopic vision of what a country should be. It's the same eager crassness that finds itself in a historic Dutch brown café and complains that the beers are too small. And maybe it's my total lack of inhibition that allows me to flaunt my own ignorance, while being so very loud in criticizing a foreign culture. Then again, maybe when I go back to the United States, I'll have to think twice. The personal freedoms are hit-and-miss. The vacation days are nowhere near as generous. And there's a lot more time spent in stuck in traffic than biking. Maybe it's not surprising I ended up staying over here.