

Good to know!

A helpful guide for getting around
Nijmegen/ the Netherlands

With special thanks to CognAC

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Setting up a bank account

In the Netherlands, a credit card is a rarely payment method, we use debit cards here (also called 'pin', a verb which translates to 'paying by card'). Also for housing, dealing with health insurance and getting a paycheck, you need a Dutch bank account. There are three large banks listed below, because of ease of access (you'll have to make an appointment to get it all settled) and the ready availability of information in English. Check with your current bank whether you can set up an account beforehand, though in most cases you will just have to make an appointment for it when you get here (this because of the needed BSN which you only get after you register at a Dutch municipality).

Banks:

- Rabobank (very visibly settled at the Keizer Karelplein)
- ABN AMRO (also has a main office at Keizer Karelplein)
- ING

What will you need:

- **Identification**
A passport or national identity card. Depending on your country of origin a driver's license may or may not be sufficient.
- **Housing registration**
A proof of where you are currently registered as a citizen. This can be a signed rental contract, recent utility bill, a tenancy agreement or something similar. It differs per bank how quickly they'll accept something as proof that you're registered, often for students it is enough (and required) to bring a certificate/registration from university (the Radboud University in this regard).
- **BSN (Dutch: BurgerServiceNummer), 'Citizen Registration Number'**
Every resident of the Netherlands has a unique citizen registration number (sometimes called 'citizen service number' in English). You'll find this generally on your residence permit or registration with the Foreign Police.
You get your BSN by registering at the municipality where your residency lies.

What you will do:

1. **(Register at a Dutch municipality)**
In almost all cases you will need a BSN before you can set up a bank account. You get this after you are registered at the Dutch municipality which you reside in.
2. **Choose a bank**
Look at the websites of the sites above and choose whichever suits your fancy. They're all trusted banks and the differences in the services they provide are minor.
3. **Make an appointment**
No one's going to do it for you, you'll have to make an appointment as soon as you can when you arrive. This can be done via phone or by just visiting the banks. You can google their location and otherwise they're also in the 'Internationals - list of Dutch stores' file and colored on the custom map ('Internationals - customized map of Nijmegen').
4. **Get accustomed**
Ask plenty of questions during your appointment and afterwards log in and just see where everything is and what everything does. It's important to have your finances in order, and it's your responsibility to make sure it is.

Doctors and Dentists

About Doctors and Dentists

In the Netherlands most healthcare will be given by a **general practitioner (GP)** or family doctor (Dutch: *huisarts*). You are free to contact any GP, but they have to be within a 15 minute travel from the place that you live. This is needed to ensure that emergency care can be given in time. It is common to register at one GP for your entire stay, but you are able to switch to another GP. Always do this in consultation with your current GP. It is wise to register at a GP as soon as possible, as if you are not registered they might not be able to help you directly. We advise to do this within the first 2 weeks of being in the Netherlands. Doctors as well as Dentists can have a waiting queue for registration, and you might need to try a few before you can register.

GP's handle most illnesses

Most healthcare is supplied by GP's. They are qualified to treat regular illnesses, and only in special cases they will send you to specialists. They can prescribe medication which you can then get from a pharmacy (Dutch: *apotheek*). Most medicine from a pharmacy can't even be bought without prescription. You might need to register at the pharmacy as well.

GGD

The GGD is a governmental institution that you can go to for getting vaccinations, do a STD (Dutch: SOA) test or ask for help with addiction or violence problems. If you encounter any of these problems you can just go to your GP which will only send you to the GGD if really needed.

Optician (Dutch: *opticien*)

Just like dental care, the care for your eyes usually does not go via your GP. To get new glasses, lenses or get your eyes tested you can simply go to an Optician in the neighborhood (no restrictions regarding traveling time or something). Every shop that displays glasses is essentially an optician. You can almost always get your eyes checked for free, even without purchasing glasses or contact lenses. If you just need something as little as lens solution you can also buy it there.

Pay first, declare later

Most healthcare is covered by your insurance. If you want to know exactly what is, and what isn't covered you need to check your individual insurance, but costs made at the GP or GGD are always covered. Costs made at dentists and opticians most of the time are not however. If you go to the GP or any other care that is covered always bring a proof of insurance (probably a card), and cash money. You most of the times have to pay in advance and then declare the costs later at your insurance company. To be able to do this you need a proof of payment which you need to ask for when you pay the GP.

How to contact

Almost all care is by appointment, except for opticians where you can simply walk in. Appointments can be made via a website, which unfortunately are in Dutch most of the time, but also by phone. The Radboud University has a webpage about finding a doctor and dentist. [Here](#) you can find their recommendations to find a GP and Dentist. This information can get outdated. A GP can be found using [this](#) or [this](#) site. Here you need to enter the postal code (postcode) of the place where you live, for example: 6525HP. Then it will display the possible GP's.

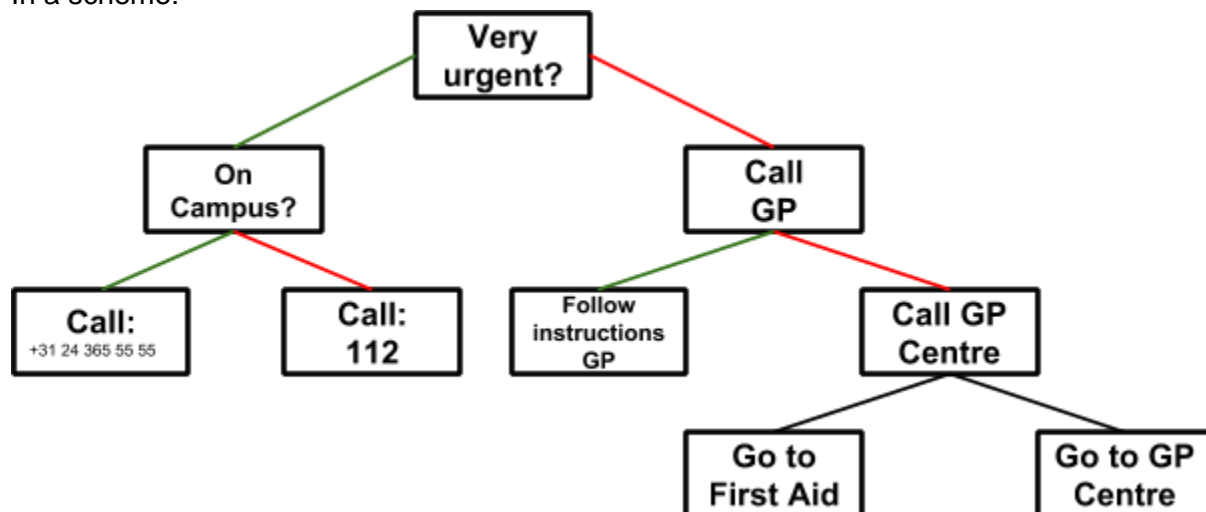
A Dentist can be found [here](#) the same way that the previous two sites work. The green check marks means that they accept patients. The orange one means that they accept patients under certain conditions, and the red marks mean that they don't accept patients at the moment.

Most GP's and Dentists have their own site, on which you can always find a phone number to contact them. You probably have to search for that yourself, and get through a lot of Dutch text.

Emergencies

In the case of an emergency the emergency number in the Netherlands is 112. When on campus you can also call: +31 24 365 55 55. If the case is not life threatening but urgent, you can go to the First Aid (Dutch: *eerste hulp*) or the general practice center (Dutch: *huisartsenpost*) (this is outside the working times of your own GP). The first aid is the place where you can go when you need urgent help, but don't need an ambulance. The general practice center is a place where there is always a GP available, and you can go to if your GP is not available and you need urgent help.

In a scheme:



Green = Answered or yes as an answer?

Red = Did you get no answer or a no?

Based on instructions

About Dutch Healthcare

Quite some internationals have a feeling that the Dutch doctors under-medicate their patients. We do indeed use much less antibiotics in comparison to other countries. It does however prove to be very useful, as many diseases go away with just some rest. Furthermore, overusing antibiotics accelerates the process of bacteria becoming resistant, which will make antibiotics less effective with each use. So don't be surprised that they will sometimes tell you to just wait it out.

Insurances

The Dutch government is like an extra parent. In the Netherlands every citizen or international student needs to have a **health** and **liability** insurance (Dutch: *verzekering*). A **health insurance** covers the cost that you make when you make use of the healthcare system, and a **personal liability insurance** covers costs that arise if someone suffers damage through a mistake or accident caused by you. In this document you will find a guide to getting these insurances set up.

How Insurances in the Netherlands work

In the Netherlands the government has made it mandatory to have health and liability insurance, but they aren't the ones that provide this. As with other things like the railway network there are private companies that in the end provide the service. This results in many different healthcare providers (Dutch: *zorgaanbieders*). They all provide slightly different insurances with a little price difference. In the case of a **health insurance** you have a basic insurance (Dutch: *basisverzekering*) and an supplementary insurance (Dutch: *aanvullende verzekering*). The basic insurance covers the healthcare that the government thinks is necessary, and the supplementary insurance covers other care as well. You as a temporary student most likely won't have to deal with this, but it is good to know how the system works.

Health Insurance

You might or might not have a private health insurance at your home country as well. Then you might ask, can't I just use that one? Sometimes this indeed works. It depends however if this insurance covers your temporary stay in the Netherlands. If it does, you don't need to get another type of insurance. To know if your insurance covers it you can contact the company that insures you.

If you live in one of the countries of the EU\EEA or Switzerland it doesn't even matter if you are privately insured, because you can apply for the **EU Health Insurance Card** free of charge in your own country if you are not privately insured. This card provides you with the same health insurance rights and benefits as Dutch citizens.

If you are not applicable for the EU Health Insurance Card and do not have private health insurance, you need to get a health insurance that covers your stay in the Netherlands. The easiest and cheapest way is to obtain an **International Insurance Passport for Students (IPS)**. More about this in the section **International Insurance Passport for Students**. Another option would be to get a Dutch health insurance. The price of such an insurance would be €100-110,- per month (Jup, that's a huge amount of money for students), depending on dentist cost insurance etc. So I would really recommend to get the IPS.

Personal Liability Insurance

A personal liability insurance (Dutch: *aansprakelijkheidsverzekering* or AVP) covers almost all damage for which you, as a private individual, can be held liable, regardless of how the incident in question occurred. Damage caused by motor vehicles, e.g. through a collision, is not covered by the AVP. For this, you must take out third-party insurance (**WA-verzekering**).

As with health insurance, the insurance in your home country can cover personal liability in the Netherlands. If it does, you are all set.

If not, you need to get a liability insurance. This is already included in **IPS**, so if you plan on getting this, you don't have to get your own liability insurance. A liability insurance is far cheaper than a health insurance. Based on some comparisons at the Dutch site www.consumentenbond.nl/aansprakelijkheidsverzekering. If your health insurance covers your stay in the Netherlands, or you have the **EU Health Insurance Card** it would be most beneficial to get a liability insurance.

WA-verzekering

A WA-verzekering is a liability insurance that you as international student will probably never need. It is an insurance that you only need if you own a motorcycle. This includes cars, motorcycles, and even motorized bicycles. You probably won't use those and thus don't need it.

International Insurance Passport for Students

An International Insurance Passport for Students (IPS) is intended for foreign students coming to the Netherlands for a temporary stay. This insurance covers medical expenses, emergency dental expenses, extraordinary costs, legal aid, accidents, liability, baggage cover, and household goods in the event of physical injury.

Students from all countries pay € 36.50 per month. The policy fee is € 3.50 per application/renewal. When you buy the IPS insurance through the IPS website before your departure date, travel insurance will also be included. You have to pay the premium before your trip abroad commences or no later than 10 days after your arrival in the Netherlands.

In Short:

1. EU/EEA or Switzerland with covering personal liability insurance
Get EU Health Insurance Card
2. EU/EEA or Switzerland without covering personal liability insurance
Get **EU Health Insurance Card** and Personal Liability Insurance
3. Other with covering Healthcare insurance and covering personal liability insurance
You're all set!
4. Other with covering Healthcare insurance, without covering personal liability insurance
Get Personal Liability Insurance
5. Other without covering Healthcare insurance
Get International Insurance Passport for Students

Driver's license

If you can use your foreign drivers license in the Netherlands depends on the time of your stay and the country where you received your license. If you are planning to stay in the Netherlands for more than 6 months you will have to convert your license to a Dutch license.

Traffic rules and customs in your country might differ from the ones in the Netherlands. So it might be wise to contact a local driving school if you want to make sure that you can drive with your foreign driver's license or want to know more about the possibilities for driving lessons. A good one that also has experience with international students is [NOVA](#). If still in doubt whether or not to get driving lessons they also offer first lessons free of any commitment.



Public transport

Depending on where you're from, Dutch public transport might be nearly identical or anything but relative to your country of origin. In a nutshell the Dutch public transport works as follows:

1. You have an **OV chip card** (how to get one will be described below).
2. You put money on it. You need at least €20,- **on your card** to travel by train or €4,- to travel by bus.
3. You scan your card (**check-in**) at an OV-gate/pole for the train or in the bus and when you arrive at your destination you scan your card again (**check-out**).

That's it. Now to elaborate on somethings down below:

OV-chip card

Comes in two varieties, a **personal OV-chip card** (the yellow one, which has your name and picture on it and is connected to your (Dutch) bank account) and an **anonymous OV-chip card** (the blue one, no information/picture of you on it, but also no need for a (Dutch) bank account).



The only difference as an international student (something else for Dutch students because they get free public transport for a couple of years) is that with a **personal OV-chip card** it's tied in with your bank account meaning it's easier to put money on it or even let it automatically top up if the value on it drops below a specified point.

Price

Personal: €7,50

Anonymous: €7,50

Note! A newly bought card **does not have any money** on it yet!

Where to get it

Personal: via the site of the OV-chip card, [here](#).

Anonymous: at a ticket machine or store, all in Nijmegen are located [here](#). (Including ticket machines at Nijmegen Central Station.)

Planning your travel

I advise the 9292ov app to download on your phone, or to check [online](#). It's an app that combines both train, metro and bus travel. I would advise to use the app.

If you're only looking for train travel, look on the site of the [NS](#) (Dutch: *Nationale Spoorwegen*, 'National railway').

Just input where you start from (you can input any Dutch address, it will calculate the time

needed to walk to the appropriate stop/station for you) and where you need to go. That's it. Below I'll list some handy addresses to know.

Locations

On campus

Spinozagebouw (Spinoza building):
Erasmusgebouw (Erasmus building):
RSC (Radboud Sport Centre):
Huygensgebouw (Huygens building):

Bus stops

Spinozagebouw/Tandheelkunde, Nijmegen
Erasmusgebouw, Nijmegen
Erasmusgebouw, Nijmegen
Huygensgebouw, Nijmegen

Train Stations

Nijmegen Centraal (Nijmegen Central Station): Centraal Station, Nijmegen
Nijmegen Centraal (Nijmegen Central Station): Nijmegen (also possible)
Nijmegen Heyendaal: Nijmegen Heyendaal
Nijmegen Lent: Nijmegen Lent
Nijmegen Dukenburg: Nijmegen Dukenburg
Nijmegen Goffert: Nijmegen Goffert

Train

First thing to know, we have multiple operators of the rail network in the Netherlands. You will almost solely come across **NS** as provider if you travel throughout the country, but we also have **Arriva** here in Nijmegen for a few tracks.

The only thing to note is that you check-in at the right pole/gate. Not easy to miss, **Arriva** are the red poles/gates, the trains are red/white too. **NS** is yellow and their trains are predominantly yellow with blue. For the colourblind: the names of the companies are also mentioned everywhere and on everything.

To make it easier: unless other specified you'll basically always travel by **NS** (the yellow ones). One track to take note of is Nijmegen Central Station -> Nijmegen Heyendaal, which uses **Arriva**, the red ones.

Step-by-step

1. Plan your trip (9292ov app/site, NS app/site)
2. Go to appropriate station
3. Put money on your OV-chip card if needed (either by use of coins or debit card).
You need at least €20,- on your OV-chip card to be able to check-in for the train!
4. Check-in with appropriate company (basically always the yellow NS gate unless other specified)
5. Wait at the appropriate track
6. Once the train arrives stand at the sides of the door and wait till everyone has left the train before stepping on
7. Once at destination, leave train and check-out at the gates/poles (again, basically always the yellow NS)

Metro

Very similar to the train, only difference is that you won't need to think of providers. Nijmegen has no metro so unless you take a trip to Amsterdam/Rotterdam chances are you won't see one.

Bus

There are also multiple bus providers in The Netherlands, but pay no mind to it, it means basically nothing. The only thing to take note of is the number on the bus and what destination is written on it. You check-in and check-out for a busride in the bus itself.

Step-by-step

1. Plan your trip (9292ov app/site)
2. Make sure enough money's on your card. (Put more on it at machines available at train stations)
You need at least €4,- on your OV-chip card to be able to check-in for the bus!
3. Be on time, although Dutch busses can be 2-5min late sporadically, they never wait if they are and won't stop if no one's standing at the bus stop after departure time. Dutch busses don't leave early, so no stress about that.
4. There's most often a yellow differently-textured tile at the head of a bus stop indicating where one should wait, stand there at least a minute'ish before the bus' arrival time.
5. Once the bus arrives, walk to the front of the bus, the back is for those leaving the bus or people in wheelchairs/people with kids wagons.
6. Where you enter is a check-in pole, hold your OV-card against it for a sec (you'll hear a beep) and pick a seat.
7. The screen at the front of the bus keeps track of what bus stop is coming up next. You'll also often hear it announced. Push a 'stop' button if the next stop is your stop.
8. Don't forget to check-out and leave at the door in the back (oftentimes there are two check-out poles there)

That's basically it!

A short list of busses that go from Nijmegen Central Station (CS) to the campus:

(Line number - destination)

- 10 - Nijmegen CS
- 11 - Beuningen Aalsterveld
- 12 - Druten Busstation (final stop on campus is Erasmusgebouw!)
- 13 - Wijchen
- 14 - Nijmegen Brakkenstein (final stop on campus is Erasmusgebouw!)
- 15 - Wijchen
- 300 - Nijmegen via Bemmelen

A short list of busses that go from the campus to Nijmegen Central Station:

- 10 - Nijmegen CS
- 11 - Nijmegen CS
- 12 - Druten Busstation
- 13 - Lent Thermion
- 14 - Arnhem CS
- 15 - Lent Thermion
- 300 - Nijmegen via Bemmelen

Registering at local municipality

At this point we assume you have got your Visa and/or Residence Permit all figured out, how else would you get here? If you have not yet fixed your Visa and/or Residence Permit business or you have never even heard of any such business, quickly check [this link](#). (note: In the last case, you are probably pretty much screwed at this late stage.)

We Dutch like our rules and procedures, so no exception for the municipality of Nijmegen. The central government of the Netherlands wants to keep track of who lives where at a given time, therefore each (temporary) citizen, foreign or native, must enlist at the municipality he or she lives in. That means you, as a foreign student not going on a holiday here, needs to do that exact same thing as well. This will help you in many ways you will not think about straight away. For example, when you are enlisted at the local municipality (in your case Nijmegen), you will find that stuff like: opening a bank account, getting a telecom (phone) connection and basically anything with a legal base (contracts, permits, etc.), becomes possible. This is because anything legally based in the Netherlands requires a Burger Service Nummer (roughly translates to Citizen Registry Number) to link the business discussed in these official papers to you. It is also used within communication between you and the Dutch Government. Besides, **you are obligated to register**; so, there is no point arguing. Get it done as quickly as possible!

The registering itself is done at the City Hall (Dutch: *gemeentehuis*), which is given a pretty name here in Nijmegen: “de Stadswinkel” (translates into CityStore). **Registering can only be done by making an (online) appointment at ‘de Stadswinkel’**. So naturally, it is paramount you get this appointment scheduled within the first week of your arrival here. If everything went okay within the university’ International Office register, you should have received an email containing a link/instruction through which you could set up an appointment at ‘de Stadswinkel’ for your local administration. If you did not, reach out to the Radboud University’ International Office!

Before we get to the actual physical appointment, it is important you have **two** documents at your disposal; for they are needed in the local administration process. You will need:

- A valid passport or ID (**Note: YOU CANNOT USE A COPY OF EITHER ONE, THE REAL DEAL IS NEEDED!**).

And, to show you actually live in Nijmegen:

- Your signed room or housing contract.

Now you have got your appointment all set up, you need to physically get there. So, their contact information might come in handy:

De Stadswinkel
Mariënborg 30
6511 PS Nijmegen
Tel.: +31 24 329 90 00
Email: informatiebalie@nijmegen.nl

Showing up on time is advisable, we are usually quite strict if it comes to appointment times. If you show up 10 minutes late, there is a high chance your spot is gone! So be there 5-10 minutes in advance to not get screwed by the system!

Voilà, if everything went right you are now all set up as a true citizen of the wonderful city of Nijmegen! One thing to remember, you must unsubscribe once you leave our little wet country again. This process is slightly different from when you entered it:

“At the end of your stay in Nijmegen, you must cancel your registration at De Stadswinkel in writing. You have to enclose a copy of your passport or ID, mention your last address in the Netherlands, your permanent address in your home country and the date of departure. Please send an email to antwoordservice.burgerzaken@nijmegen.nl”

A second thing to keep in mind, if you ever move out of the municipality of Nijmegen and for example move to Amsterdam you have to unregister in Nijmegen and re-enter the whole process described above in the municipality of Amsterdam (or city of choice). Note here that multiple cities and villages can be part of a municipality, for example Beuningen and Weurt are also part of the municipality of Nijmegen. But still if you were to move from Nijmegen to Beuningen or Weurt, you would also have to notify ‘de Stadswinkel’ of your moving endeavour. Remember Google is your best friend if you have to find out which municipality which city or village belongs to.

If this guide was unsuccessful in answering any questions you might have in relation to local registration and official affairs like visas and permits, do not hesitate to reach out to the International Office! Trust us when we say, you will sleep easier when you have all these kinds of questions answered and sorted out before you begin your adventure here; after all reasoning with border patrol officers and customs is nobody’s hobby.

Useful official links:

- [Visa and Residence Permits \(MVV\) through the Radboud University](#)
- [The Radboud University’ FAQ guide to Visa and Residence Permits](#)
- [Radboud University’ guide to local administration at de Stadswinkel](#)

Typical Dutch words

Borrel

A drink somewhere where alcohol is served. Locations can range from a pub in Nijmegen proper to the lounge-cantine on campus (the 'Noordkantine' in the Huygens building). Oftentimes the goal for a 'borrel' is not to get wasted (although yes it happens regularly, and there are borrels that actually have that as primary goal) but to have a drink out with some friends and have a chat.

Gezellig

A word that hardly translates to English. Its semantics is a combination of word meanings like 'cosy', 'nice atmosphere' and 'positive vibe' that can be used to describe homes, pictures, music, borrels. A word that describes a certain positive/cosy vibe or atmosphere the person uttering the word is experiencing from a certain visual/auditory/tactile or otherwise stimulating experience.'

Cantus

Short version: enormous amounts of beer and an extraordinary amount of loud 'singing'.
Long version: Activity most often organized by student associations. Involves figurative rivers of beer flowing into participants whilst singing (traditional) songs. There are strict rules and certain functions a few people embody. There are a lot of Latin names (cantus is Latin for 'singing') because few things describe a student association better than the words 'posh' and 'drunk'. A senior (often called 'praeses' meaning 'president', as most often the president of the committee organizing the cantus is senior) leads the cantus. This 'leading' boils down to the senior dishing out 'punishments' (most often very creative ways of consuming beer) to those who disrupt the order of things. You'll find that disrupting the order is oftentimes not an unconscious act. As participant you'll be sitting at a table with others, having a booklet with songs in one hand and beer in the other. Drink beer, sing songs, laugh at the ridiculous things that happen around you. That's basically it.

Stroopwafel

The one Dutch treat that's actually universally seen as delicious, it's sticky syrup put in between of two thin waffles. I've often heard that the main reason foreigners consider coming back to The Netherlands a second time is the possibility to eat more stroopwafels. You can buy them at supermarkets, but the real good stuff is sold at stroopwafel-stands you can find at markets or often at events.

Polder

The Netherlands lies for 80% below sea level, and over the years we've (re)claimed enormous amounts of land from the seas. Low lying swaths of land that were reclaimed from a body of water protected by dykes is what we call a polder. Oftentimes it is associated with farmland or agriculture, as often the reclaimed land is used as a place for cows to graze on. There are some 3000 polders in The Netherlands, which has also led to some saying about the Dutch, for example the English saying "God created the world but the Dutch created Holland."

Kijkavond

Getting a place to live here in NL can be quite a drag. One of the ways you can get one is by sending a mail/message to students who have a vacant spot in their home which they get to fill. If they like you (amongst often the 70-100 responses they get) you'll be invited to a 'kijkavond', which very roughly translates to 'look around evening'. It depends on the student home how they fill in the content of the evening, but the rough concept is that a few applicants (which can range from 5 to more than 15) come over one evening to have a chat to see who would fit best in the vacant place and home. If this sound like a horrible way to get to know people, putting multiple desperate people looking for a decent room together in a competitive vibe to see who's 'the best/funniest/nicest/cleanest', that's because it is. Horrible for everyone who plays a part in it, sadly for many there's no way around going to (sometimes many) kijkavonden to get a half decent room in Nijmegen.

Hoi/Hai/Hallo/Ha/Joe/Ey/Hey/Goeiedag/...

The Dutch have a myriad of ways to says basically: hello. The word used by greeting is oftentimes not that important, almost all of the above are identical in semantics, it's only when you go towards 'goededag' (good day), 'goedemorgen' (good morning), 'goedemiddag' (good afternoon), 'goedeavond' (good evening) that mistakes can be made. Keep it simple and that's just fine. Formality is not really a thing here, because 'doe maar normaal, dan doe je al gek genoeg' ('just act normal, you'll be strange enough already'), everyone's equal in essence. To greet someone oftentimes a simple gesture of recognition combined with any of the above is fine. It can be a nod of the head or raising an open hand towards the other.

Lekker

How to explain this one? 'Lekker' can be translated best to 'tasty', but we use it for so much more than just food. Just to give some examples:

- that girl has a 'lekker' body -> wouldn't mind getting some with that..
- the food was super 'lekker' mom! -> that was delicious!
- so 'lekker' to take a shower after exercising -> love to take a shower after doing some sports.
- I don't want to get up and get food from the fridge, I'm sitting way too 'lekker' - I'm super comfy here.
- Clear to say the word's usage ranges from the mundane to the indecent. Basically, connecting 'lekker' to a person often hinges on the sexual (it's more nuanced but let's leave it at that). Using it to describe food is always fine if you enjoyed it.

Indrinken

Before heading out for a night of heavy partying, we students like to go over to someone's place and start consuming (large) amounts of alcohol there. This is called "indrinken", which translates to "Premature Drinking". Note that this is something students tend to do, not older generations! It is done for several reasons:

- It's a lot cheaper than getting wasted at a bar/pub: yup we students are cheapass.
- It's gezellig! You actually get to talk to people you are heading out with later (which is a lot harder in a club/bar with loud music pumping).
- This is where you usually get to play "drankspellen" (Drinking games)! (Toepen, Kingsen, Bussen, 31'en, etc. Ask your mentors!)
- You can arrive at a club/bar/café pleasantly drunk, which some people think improves the atmosphere and tends to get more people dancing.

Disclaimer: indrinken varies for everyone: some people do it to get extremely wasted, while others do it to join up and have a fun time during which you can talk to each other, play cards, play drinking games, beer pong, etc.

Of course you can also always visit an 'indrink' session, or borrel, or party etc., with friends if you do not want to drink alcohol!