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**Utrecht** is a [province](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Provinces_of_the_Netherlands) of the [European](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Europe) country [Netherlands](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netherlands). It is located in the centre of this country and in terms of area the smallest of the twelve provinces.

Utrecht borders the [Eemmeer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eemmeer) in the north, the province of [Gelderland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gelderland) in the east, the river [Rhine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhine) in the south, the province of [South Holland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Holland) in the west and the province of [North Holland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Holland) in the northwest.

Main cities in this province are, apart from its capital which is also called [Utrecht](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utrecht_%28city%29), [Amersfoort](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amersfoort), [Houten](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Houten), [Nieuwegein](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nieuwegein), [Veenendaal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Veenendaal) and [Zeist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zeist).

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**Slot Zeist** is a castle in the Dutch town of Zeist. The castle is surrounded by an English

landscape garden.

In 1165 Sot Zeist was already mentioned. In 1536 "that huys to Seyst, vry eigen goed” was recognized by the States of Utrecht as Ridderhofstad.

Willem Adriaan van Nassau a grandson of Maurice of Orange, bought Slot Zeist in 1677 from the States of Utrecht and built the current slot designed by architect James Roman, who also designed Het Loo Palace in Apeldoorn. Primarily the Huguenot Daniel Marot designed the interior. The largely preserved wall and ceiling paintings are reminiscent of the French Baroque. The construction lasted from 1677 to 1686.

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**Pyramid van Austerlitz.** The Pyramid is in a central location of the Netherlands. In this place the French General Auguste de Marmont had set up camp (Camp d'Utrecht) in 1804 where in a few months time he was able to forge together a large, well-trained army of several battalions that could beat the British enemy with a possible repeat of the invasion of 1799. Satisfied with the military power of the new army and in order to fight the boredom of his soldiers De Marmont ordered his soldiers to build a monument of earth and sod in 1804, inspired by the pyramid of Giza. De Marmont himself had seen the Pyramid of Giza during the Egyptian campaign of Napoleon 1798. Even the exposed by erosion stepped surface was imitated. The construction lasted 27 days. The pyramid hill got a height of 36 meters and on top there was a 13 meters high wooden obelisk. The whole was called Mont Marmont either Marmontberg.

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**Zwerfsteneneiland Maarn is a** boulder island and a geological monument in the village of Maarn part of municipality Utrechtse Heuvelrug in the province of Utrecht. The island is located in a former sand quarry north of the Maarn Mountain, west of Maarn. Dutch Railways excavated sand since 1842 there. During the excavation they found beneath the surface hundreds of large boulders. These were perceived as undesirable and buried in the corner of the sandpit. In 1919 already at Maarn railway station a geological monument was placed. Natuurmonumenten (National Trust) made ​​ it possible for the boulders to be included in the geological monument. In 1995 about 750 stones were rediscovered and were placed in the Geological Park Maarn and in 1999 the geological monument was opened.

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**Sterkenburg Castle** is a Ridderhofstad from 1261 in the hamlet of Sterkenburg in the municipality Utrechtse Heuvelrug in the province of Utrecht.

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**Lock and weir complex in the river Rhine near Amerongen.** The weir near Amerongen maintains the water level in the river between Amerongen and Driel . If little water is supplied via the Rhine the dam is closed to avoid that the water level gets too low. This will ensure that sufficient water remains available for agriculture and that the waterway is deep enough for shipping. The weir is open in periods with excessive flow to allow the water to flow quickly towards the sea.

When the weir is closed ships have to use the lock which can been seen in the background.

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**Drakensteyn** is a small castle in the hamlet of [Lage Vuursche](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lage_Vuursche), in the municipality of [Baarn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baarn). It is owned by [Princess Beatrix of the Netherlands](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beatrix_of_the_Netherlands), our country's former Queen who abdicated in 2013. Princess Beatrix bought the castle in 1959, when she was the heir to the Dutch throne, and took up residence in 1963. After her marriage in 1966 she continued to live there with her husband, [Prince Claus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prince_Claus), and later with their three sons as well. After Princess Beatrix succeeded her mother Queen [Juliana](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queen_Juliana_of_the_Netherlands) as Queen of the Netherlands in 1980 the family moved to [The Hague](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hague) in 1981.On January 28, 2013, it was announced that Beatrix would take up residence at the castle after her son, [Willem-Alexander](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_Willem-Alexander_of_the_Netherlands), ascended to the Dutch throne on April 30, 2013. On February 2, 2014, Beatrix moved into the castle.

A house called Drakesteijn at this location was first mentioned in 1359, but the current building was constructed in the years 1640–1643. The royal connection aside, its most distinctive feature is its [octagonal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Octagon) shape. It is surrounded by a moat that can be crossed via a bridge. Its style can be described as [Classicist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classical_architecture).

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The **Koppelpoort** is a [medieval](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medieval) [gate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/City_gate) in the [Dutch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netherlands) town of [Amersfoort](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amersfoort). Completed around 1425, the gate combines land- and water gates, and is part of the second city wall of Amersfoort, which was constructed between 1380 and 1450.

The gate was attacked in 1427 during the siege of the city. This attack was repelled. The gate was opened and closed every day by the appointed *raddraaiers*, "wheel-turners". A minimum of twelve wheel-turners was collected morning and evening by several guards. It was an extremely dangerous task; if they did not begin walking simultaneously, then one could fall, dragging the rest along with often-fatal results. Before the gate could come down, it had to be raised, to pull out the iron pins that held it in place. Only then could it come down. While the gate was going down, walking in the wheel grew ever easier and faster, and many people stumbled and broke their limbs. The Koppelpoort was also never breached. The Koppelpoort was given its current appearance during the restoration by [Pierre Cuypers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre_Cuypers) in 1885 and 1886. Among other things, Cuypers removed a step between the two gates and replaced it with a slope. From 1969 to 1993 a puppet theatre was situated in the gate. The latest restoration was completed in 1996. It was carried out very cautiously, and with respect for the old building materials. For this the town of Amersfoort received the [Europa Nostra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Europa_Nostra) Award.

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**Center of the Netherlands**.The middle of the Our ​​Lady tower forms since the 19th century, the 'center' of the Netherlands, as used by the Land Registry. In the Netherlands, the location of a fixed point can be indicated by means of coordinates, the distance to the Y-axis (north to south) and the X-axis (east to west).

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**Rietveld Schröder House** ([Dutch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch_language): *Rietveld Schröderhuis*) (also known as the Schröder House) in [Utrecht](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utrecht_%28city%29) was built in 1924 by Dutch [architect](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Architect) [Gerrit Rietveld](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerrit_Rietveld) for Mrs. [Truus Schröder-Schräder](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truus_Schr%C3%B6der-Schr%C3%A4der) and her three children. She commissioned the house to be designed preferably without walls. Rietveld worked side by side with Schröder-Schräder to create the house. He sketched the first possible design for the building; Schroder-Schrader was not pleased. She envisioned a house that was free from association and could create a connection between the inside and outside. The house is one of the best known examples of [*De Stijl*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/De_Stijl)-architecture and arguably the only true *De Stijl* building. Mrs. Schröder lived in the house until her death in 1985. The house was restored by [Bertus Mulder](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Bertus_Mulder&action=edit&redlink=1) and is now a museum open for visits. It is a listed monument since 1976 and [UNESCO](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNESCO) [World Heritage Site](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Heritage_Site) since 2000.

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**Dom Church** ([Dutch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch_language): *Domkerk*) was the [cathedral](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cathedral) of the [bishopric](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diocese) of [Utrecht](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utrecht) during the [Middle Ages](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_Ages). Once the Netherlands’ largest church, dedicated to Saint Martin of Tours, it is one of the country's two pre-Reformation cathedrals, along with the cathedral in Middleburg, Province of Zeeland. It has been a [Protestant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestant) church since 1580. The building is the one church in the Netherlands that closely resembles the classic [Gothic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gothic_architecture) style as developed in [France](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France). All other Gothic churches in the Netherlands belong to one of the many regional variants. Unlike most of its French predecessors, the Dom Church has only one tower, the 112 m (368 ft.) high [**Dom Tower**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dom_Tower_of_Utrecht), which is the hallmark of the city.

The first chapel dedicated to Saint Martin in Utrecht was founded around 630 by Frankish clergy under the patronage of the [Merovingian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Merovingian) kings but was destroyed during an attack of the [Frisians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frisians) on Utrecht shortly thereafter. The site of this first chapel within Utrecht is unknown. [Saint Willibrord](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Willibrord) (died 739), the Apostle to the Frisians, established a second chapel devoted to Saint Martin on (or close to) the site of the current Dom. This church was destroyed by the Normans in the 9th century during one of their many raids on Utrecht [but was reconstructed by Bishop Balderik in the 10th century. During this period St. Martin's came to be the principal church (or minster) of Utrecht, see of the bishop. The church had its own small territorial close (known as an "immunity") and was led by a chapter of [Canons](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canon_%28priest%29), who generally belonged to the nobility.

The church was repeatedly destroyed by fires and then rebuilt. After a big fire in 1253, which ravaged much of Utrecht, leading Bishop Hendrik van Vianen initiated the construction of the current [Gothic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gothic_architecture) structure in 1254. The construction of the Gothic Dom was to continue well into the 16th century.

The still unfinished and insufficiently supported nave collapsed on 1 August 1674 during a massive regional storm that caused a tornado to develop in Utrecht. Major renovations were carried out in the early twentieth century with the aim of returning the Cathedral to its original state. However, the nave was never rebuilt.

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**Spakenburg** is a [Dutch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netherlands) village north of [Bunschoten](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bunschoten). Spakenburg is formally called [Bunschoten-Spakenburg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bunschoten-Spakenburg) since its merger with Bunschoten. The village lies south of the [IJsselmeer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IJsselmeer) in the municipality Bunschoten, [Utrecht](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utrecht_province). It is one of the few places left in the Netherlands where some women still wear local traditional clothes. In the 20th century, the two villages have grown quickly, and since about 1965 they form one single town, officially named Bunschoten.

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**Castle De Haar** is located near [Haarzuilens](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haarzuilens), in the province of [Utrecht](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utrecht_%28province%29) in the [Netherlands](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netherlands). The current buildings all built upon the original castle date from 1892 are the work of Dutch architect [P.J.H. Cuypers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre_Cuypers), in a Neo-Gothic restoration project funded by the [Rothschild family](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rothschild_family).

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**Mill Wijk bij Duurstede**. The silhouette of Wijk bij Duurstede was from about 1555 to 1817 defined by the famous Ruisdael mill ': A stone mill, which, like the Rhine and Lek was on the city wall to the Rijn Dijk. (Rhine Dike) The painter Jacob van Ruisdael (1628-1682) painted this mill around 1670 in full regalia against the background of storm clouds. The painting is now in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.

The mill Rhine and Lek is the only Dutch windmill built on a city gate.

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**De Waag Oudewater** is also called the witch venture because from the 16th until 18th century people accused of witchcraft were weighed there. The venture was built in 1482 as a property venture . Emperor Charles V gave Oudewater in 1545 as the only place in Europe the privilege of a fair weighing process. No one was ever sentenced to being a witch.

The number of people who actually presented themselves to show that they were not a witch was small. As Oudewater was a small town they were coming mostly from the immediate vicinity of Oudewater. In 1987 it was determined on the basis of available sources that from the period 1674-1743 only 13 individuals received a certificate showing with certainty that they could not be a witch because of their weight. At the time of the witch trials in the provinces of Holland and Utrecht in the last decades of the sixteenth century the Heksenwaag was not used. The government of Oudewater still executed weighing tests in a period in which that was refused elsewhere in the Netherlands. Judges refused to allow such tests of witchcraft accused wanted to perform to prove their innocence. Accusations of witchcraft were then rather as a libel then rather than to be considered seriously as a complaint. Since for each certificate had to be paid a possible economic motives played a role. Indeed, each weighing meant more revenue for the city of Oudewater.

Accusations of witchcraft were rather made as a reproach than to be taken seriously.

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May,2014 rev.ed.

Sources:

Tourist Offices in Province of Utrecht

Province of Utrecht Information

Information from towns and cities

nl.Wikipedia