



New Netherland Institute
Exploring America's Dutch Heritage

DISSING THE DUTCH ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE AND WAR

By Peter Douglas

"In the English language, when something goes wrong, they put the word Dutch in front of it."

(Charel van Dam, marketing manager of the Netherlands Board of Tourism and Conventions in New York.)

"Prejudice, not being founded on reason, cannot be removed by argument."

Samuel Johnson (1709-84)

Friends now, for many years during the 17th century the Dutch and the English were enemies. Both nations were establishing their global empires and both sought maritime superiority for economic reasons, especially control of the trade routes from the spice islands of the East Indies. Because of this commercial and colonial rivalry, they fought three wars between 1652 and 1674. But it was not only war at sea—it was also a war of words. For the English and Dutch alike, this enmity found a natural outlet in popular expressions that appeared in each country's vocabulary to insult the other's supposed national foibles, mannerisms, and characteristics. Since the early 17th century, "Dutch" has been an epithet of inferiority and disparagement for English speakers, though with the gradual diminishing of relevance, vigor, and comprehension.

Below you can sample the rich collection of pejorative labels that the English pinned on the Dutch over the years, some of the many expressions employing the adjective "Dutch" and its variations. While some are quite new and lustily coarse, others are linguistic relics that remind us of the old rivalry, when the English marked as "Dutch" anything they didn't like or considered unwholesomely foreign. Many of the "Dutch" phases illustrate a

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fertile prejudicial attitude stemming from this ancient strife and aversion. Many are humorous, some are crude.

Labels depend on a stereotype, and there's nothing like a war (or three) to bring these out. For the English in the 17th century the Dutch were characterized and caricatured as a bunch of stolid, tightfisted, cowardly, bad-tempered drunks. All these associations were applied to the Dutch as a sort of self-conscious national propaganda permeating the language. Yet for all the caustic words, judging from many of the examples, there's an inescapable touch of rich humor too, though always at the expense of the Dutch of course. "Dutch" was used as a description of almost anything that was the opposite of what it ought to be. To be "Dutch" was to be inferior, opposite, irregular, contrary, inadequate, cowardly, deceitful, strange, fake, awkward, outlandish, false, debased, and generally contrary to the English idea of normal.

The "Dutch" expressions here date from all five centuries. While this derogatory use of the word is usually thought of as dating back to the 17th century, only a few are actually recorded in print from the time of the Anglo-Dutch wars, most being from the 18th century or later, showing how long a traditional enmity can last, kept alive in the language by generations unacquainted with actual hostility. The usage has drifted into modern times, though here it seems that the phrases that are not just clichés are more strained than spontaneous, said or written by those with a tongue-in-cheek attitude and self-consciously aware of the fad while most likely not understanding it in its historical context.

There is some evidence that this attitude towards the Dutch originated earlier than the Anglo-Dutch wars, and in Shakespeare we find the Dutch being amusingly criticized for having terrible food and deplorable drinking habits. The audience would have understood the references. The following words are spoken by Sir John Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*:

"And in the height of this bath, when I was more than half stewed in grease, like a Dutch dish, to be thrown into the Thames..."

And in the play *Edward III*, printed anonymously in 1596, King John says:

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“But, on the other side, to think what friends
King Edward hath retain’d in Netherland,
Among those ever-bibbing Epicures,
Those frothy Dutch men, puffed with double beer,
That drink and swill in every place they come,
Doth not a little aggravate mine ire.”

Later expressions borrowed from earlier ones, and in any case many are certainly older than the date of their first known recording. Examples from the time of the wars include “Dutch reckoning” and “Dutch widow.” Some “Dutch” expressions are only familiar in the UK, others only in the US, and some very localized. It was not just the English who looked down on the Dutch. On the subject of the words “Dutch” and “Dutchy,” the following was written in the US in 1873: “These are words which, with many in America, have stood as symbols of everything slow, clumsy, awkward, and ungraceful.” In the US, the use of “Dutch” may have been facilitated through confusion with “Deutsch,” immigrant Germans making obvious targets for verbal abuse by Americans of a couple of generations standing.

We should note that there are many “Dutch” expressions that are not (or are not obviously) pejorative. They could reflect something that originated in the Low Countries, or was the style there—that is, “Dutch” as innocently descriptive, used as a mere geographical reference and containing no “moral” implications or criticism. In other words, sometimes something “Dutch” is just Dutch! It is not the intention of this essay to examine these, of which there is a large number. The primary interest here is the use of “Dutch” as an adjective of disparagement and ridicule, and here the focus will remain except where a straightforward phrase might harbor a veiled insult towards the Dutch, which it often does to varying degrees. A few examples of these “innocent” phrases are: “Dutch clover,” “Dutch barn,” “Dutch bob,” “Dutch cut,” “Dutch door” (non-derisory in one sense anyway—a door divided horizontally so that the and upper parts can move independently, but see below), and “Dutch bond” (a style of bricklaying).

A “Dutch oven” is, on the face of it, not a derogatory use of “Dutch” as this usually refers to a heavy cooking pot with a tight-fitting lid, but is also a brick oven where the cooking is done by the pre-heated walls, and a metal shield for roasting before an open fire. It may well be purely descriptive of

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its origin, though there is a thought that it derives from the idea of an economical (i.e. cheap) inferior version of a real oven, and hence the adjective could contain something of that familiar sneer against the Dutch. Given the number of disparaging instances of “Dutch,” even in apparently non-controversial usage there is a natural tendency to assume that the intention may be to deride the Dutch and so to anticipate, or even seek, such a purpose. See also “Dutch oven” below.

Similarly a “Dutch hoe” (a scuffle hoe) is one that is pushed forward instead of being drawn back, and so here the use of “Dutch” may indicate its different nature as well as its country of origin. In such an instance the Dutch source of something unusual would tend to further the use of this national adjective in its application to the faintly bizarre. A “Dutch wheelbarrow” is when you hold someone’s feet so that they “run” on their hands. This is hardly an insulting use of “Dutch,” but the “oppositeness” of this game does seem to merit this adjective in its other use. A similar example is “Dutch tilt,” for which see below. Even though a “Dutch auction” (still used in the Netherlands to sell flowers and other produce) is not necessarily pejorative, by offering goods at gradually decreasing prices it is the reverse of the “normal” auction process, and thus seems to qualify as “Dutch,” connoting a measure of perverseness, or just of difference. Also, an auction that starts off with inflated prices may well be a subtle unkind comment on the Dutch. A “Dutch sale” is one that’s made at a low price after the goods were offered for a high price.

The “Dutch disease” is nothing like “the French disease.” The expression comes from the world of economics. It is the adverse effect on a country’s other industries that occurs when one industry (such as that following the discovery of a natural resource), substantially expands its exports, causing a real appreciation of the country’s currency, making manufactured goods less competitive with other nations, increasing imports, and decreasing exports. While not critical of the Dutch (it acquired that name after the effects of natural gas discoveries in the Netherlands in the 1960s, so the phrase is really just geographical), with so many deprecating expressions referring to the Dutch (and also the use of the word “disease”), it is perhaps difficult to avoid the suspicion that the adjective is used with at least some awareness of what calling something “Dutch” so often means. Putting the phrase in quotation marks often softens the suggestion of disparagement.

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So we can see that, while straightforward or not uncomplimentary, there often lingers in some simple and innocuous “Dutch” expressions the suggestion (or the suspicion) of something unusual, different, or non-traditional.

Unsurprisingly, a couple of themes stand out in the phrases to be examined. Strong nautical associations remain clear, as would be expected with two sea-faring nations butting heads: “Dutch pennant,” “Dutch cape,” “Dutchman’s anchor,” and “Dutchman’s hurricane.” Also the supposed great fondness of the Dutch for alcohol is reflected in several of the expressions, such as: “Dutch courage,” “Dutch cheer,” “Dutch drink,” “Dutch feast,” “Dutch gleek,” “Dutch headache,” “Dutch bargain,” “Dutch lunch,” “Dutch milk,” and “Dutchman’s draught.”

Until the last thirty-odd years, until the translation and publication of the colonial documents of New Netherland, the dissemination of such information, and the related growth of New Netherlandic studies, the true Dutch history of the USA has been little known or appreciated, stifled by the competing colonial adventures of the English. With this protracted low profile in mind, it may be surprising that the descriptor “Dutch” has for so long been so widely applied and was so readily absorbed into the language. On the other hand it is no surprise at all because the stock Dutchman perceived in these expressions is the same sort of ludicrous and comical Knickerbocker caricature who emerged from the satirical writings of Washington Irving in the early 19th century and was popularly taken for a true portrait of the Dutch in New York. Whatever the origins of these pejorative “Dutch” expressions, in the USA the deathless image of this cartoon Dutch burgher can only have helped their currency and prolonged their demise.

Even though the origin of many of these “Dutch” terms (or that of the mindset that created them) comes from a historical conflict and is lost behind more than three centuries of attenuation, in terms of contemporary sensitivities and “political correctness” their use still might be considered objectionable. While they have weakened enough to become little more than linguistic curios, they do perpetuate unfair and unflattering stereotypes, especially when removed from their meaningful historical

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origins and come without explanations. A great many of these expressions seem to be fading unassisted from popular usage, so much so that their meaning is murky enough to require clarification. A few are embedded in the language (such as “to go Dutch”) and have retained their prevalence, though, for the most part, any direct or recognized association with the Dutch and the Netherlands has largely evaporated. On the constructive side, those who still use such phrases are probably only vaguely aware of the original negative convention that they barely now evoke.

While so many of these older expressions are withering away, an examination of present-day sources reveals an impressive collection of “Dutch”-type phrases that are plainly artificial neologisms. That these are modern is made clear by the fact that so many are crude and offensive and refer to a broad range of robust or unconventional sexual activity along with lively and imaginative references to the often farcical side of natural bodily functions. Such phrases owe their existence to the practice of simply latching on to the long-acknowledged and notorious linguistic habit of tacking on the adjective “Dutch,” probably not so much to purposely disrespect the poor Dutch but to inject some easy irony and wit into an otherwise tired or banal description.

What is intriguing here is that in the contemporary world of profanity and licentiousness, the deprecatory addition of the word “Dutch” appears to be (in some fringe quarters at least) a recurring if not exactly natural development. The trend is based, with explicit self-awareness, on the familiar established expressions, coining new ones that are, however, essentially synthetic, often strained, and quite divorced from any true Dutch association, even most of the familiar negatives ones. Whether a phrase is crude or commonplace, contemporary or historical, the technique, evidently ongoing, has always been fundamentally *ironic*—negating something naturally positive, enjoyable, or attractive by making it “Dutch,” (Dutch *courage*, Dutch *feast*, Dutch *generosity*).

I should note here that in the interest of good taste and having no wish to offend the sensitive reader, I have not included any of these truly bawdy expressions. You will find, though, a few that are earthy and colorful, included to ensure a proper and useful appreciation of the flavor and

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general practice. Those who wish to pursue this field of enquiry are referred to www.urbandictionary.com. Here is the list.

DUTCH: Incomprehensible rubbish, nonsense. See also **DOUBLE DUTCH**.

DUTCH: Bad temper, irascibility. "To get one's Dutch up" is to get angry, to lose one's temper.

DUTCH (BEAT THE): This came to be replaced by such expressions as "beat the band" and "beat all," that is, to cause great surprise. "To beat the Dutch" has a double significance; on the one hand, from the early literal meaning, it conveyed something strange, baffling, surprising, or inexplicable, as in "Doesn't that beat the Dutch!" or "It beats the Dutch how..." If "beating the Dutch" was remarkable, then this is actually a compliment to that nation. On the other hand, if the expression is used ironically it is not complimentary, the presumed implication then being that the Dutch are an easy foe to vanquish.

American usage goes back to the 18th century. One story goes that because the Dutch dealt in good wares at fair prices, whoever would do better than these merchants would thus have to "beat the Dutch." From the early literal meaning the phrase is said to have come to denote surprise or wonderment. Another says that the expression came into vogue following the supposed "bargain" that the Dutch got when they acquired Manhattan from the Indians for what has been popularly considered to be a good deal, so it would be hard to "beat the Dutch," supposedly proven experts in such negotiations. It's a grudging compliment at best, along with a faint whiff of disapproval. There is too a theory that "the Dutch" here is a euphemistic stand-in for the "the Devil."

DUTCH (DO A): "To do a Dutch" is to run away or desert. Also it is a synonym for the **DUTCH ACT** (to commit suicide). Also "to Dutch oneself out." See also **DUTCH (TO)**.

DUTCH (DOUBLE): "Double Dutch" is an expression that dates from the late 19th century and was known earlier as "High Dutch." It means unintelligible language, double talk, gibberish, or something that sounds like it, and by inference, something stupid. The reference is to the

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incomprehensibility to foreigners of the Dutch language, though there is the often-found confusion between “Dutch” and “Deutsch” that may in part explain why the English hostile stereotyping of the Dutch persisted. Beginning in the 16th century there was a distinction between the terms “High Dutch” (German) and “Low Dutch” (Dutch). The deep commercial and colonial hostility meant that the English term came to refer only to the Dutch. “High Dutch” was thus a slur on the Germans rather than the Dutch, though the distinction may not have been apparent to many speakers. Even years later in America, if something was very confusing or difficult, it was known as “High Dutch” or “Double Dutch.” An alternative nationality is “It’s all Greek to me.” The French didn’t have the same hot feelings about the Dutch as did the English; they take aim at other nations: “C’est du chinois pour moi,” (Chinese), and “C’est de l’hébreu pour moi,” (Hebrew).

Also, “Double Dutch” is a game in which one person jumps rope with two ropes and one or more people jumping simultaneously, or the jumping of two ropes rotating in opposite directions simultaneously. “Double Dutch” rope jumping was probably invented by New York City (not Dutch) children in the 19th century. And anyone who’s ever seen the complex “Double Dutch” rope jumping will understand.

DUTCH (GET DUTCH WITH): To have an argument with.

DUTCH (GO DUTCH): “To go Dutch” is the same as a **DUTCH TREAT**, to pay one’s own way. For the Italians (especially in the south) it’s the citizens of Rome who are apparently responsible for this, for their expression is “fare (pagare) alla romana.”

DUTCH (HIGH): See **DOUBLE DUTCH**.

DUTCH (IN): In a difficult, often embarrassing, situation or condition, to be in trouble or disfavor. To be “in Dutch” with someone is to be in trouble, disgrace, or disfavor, as in, “If we don’t get back before dinner I’ll be in Dutch with my boyfriend.” It also can mean under suspicion, in prison, and pregnant.

DUTCH (TALK DUTCH): “To talk Dutch” is to speak nonsense or gibberish.

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DUTCH (TO): “To Dutch something” is to ruin it, to ruin another’s business, social standing, enjoyment etc. To cause another to fail.

DUTCH (TO): To run away, desert. Also “To do a Dutch.”

DUTCH ACT: “To do the Dutch act” was to commit suicide, or to desert. See also **DUTCH CURE**.

DUTCH ALMANAC: Gibberish.

DUTCH ALPS: Small breasts.

DUTCH ANGLE: See **DUTCH TILT**

DUTCH ANSWER: An answer to a question that, while correct in a way, is completely useless to the person asking the question, needlessly forcing them to rephrase it. “What are your plans for tonight?” “I plan to breathe.” “Well that’s a useless Dutch answer!”

DUTCH BACKGAMMON: A variation of the standard game in which it is better to roll low rather than high numbers with the dice.

DUTCH BARGAIN: An uneven, one-sided bargain, or no bargain at all. Also, a bargain concluded by drinking.

DUTCH BATH: A sponge bath, i.e. not a proper bath.

DUTCH BED: An unmade or slovenly bed.

DUTCH BICYCLE: A woman who is sexually cautious and prudent. The opposite of “She’s the town bicycle, everyone gets a ride.” It’s the “Dutch” that creates the sense of the opposite.

DUTCH BIKE: A spoonerism for “butch dyke.” See also **DUTCH BICYCLE**.

DUTCH BLESSING: A scolding.

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DUTCH BOOK: In a bookmaking operation, a horse race in which the odds are such that the astute bettor can bet on any horse and win. Also called a "Dutch lock." A gambling scheme or a set of odds and bets that guarantees a profit, no matter what the outcome of the gamble, so that the bookie will lose. Also a bookie, usually a small-time operator who is so dumb that he keeps losing money. "To Dutch a book" is to mess up so badly that the bookie will always lose no matter which horse wins. In economics the phrase usually refers to a sequence of trades that would leave one party worse off and another better off.

DUTCH BORROWER: A person who takes your things and never returns them.

DUTCH BOTTOMED: Empty. Such was a Dutchman's love of drinking that his glass was always empty.

DUTCH BREAKFAST: Something that falls short of being very good while remaining perfectly adequate.

DUTCH BRASS: Low brass. Brass low in zinc content

DUTCH BRIDE: A high-class inflatable sex doll.

DUTCH BUILD: Squat, thickset in describing a person.

DUTCH BUTTOCKED: A reference to the view of a woman from the rear, originally from a breed of cattle with large hindquarters. The contemporary association is the supposedly legendary large, pear-shaped rump of Dutch women stemming from an excess of bicycle riding and dairy products.

DUTCH BY INJECTION: Said of a woman living with a foreigner.

DUTCH CAPE: See **DUTCHMAN'S CAPE**.

DUTCH CHEER: Liquor.

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DUTCH CHEESE: Apart from the obvious, it's also a humorous reference to a bald person, based on the similarity of appearance of a Dutch cheese to a hairless pate.

DUTCH COMFORT / CONSOLATION: Cold comfort, i.e. things could be a lot worse.

DUTCH CONCERT: Badly played music, or a great noise, uproar, pandemonium, or cacophony, like that of a party of drunken Dutchmen singing and quarreling, or with each person or musician singing or playing a different tune at the same time. Using "Dutch" here also strongly suggests the accompaniment of a generous consumption of alcohol. Also called a "Dutch medley."

DUTCH CONSOLATION: See DUTCH COMFORT.

DUTCH COUGH: A fart.

DUTCH COURAGE: False or temporary bravery induced by alcohol, and the drink itself. Also called "Geneva courage," from Dutch "jenever," gin. (Unsurprisingly, some English words associated with drink come from Dutch: brandy, gin, booze.) You can even find a word for "Dutch courage" in a Dutch dictionary: "jenevermoed." Another name for this is DUTCH GUTS. To quote from Edmund Waller's poem *Instructions to a Painter* (1665):

"The Dutch their wine, and all their brandy lose,
Disarm'd of that from which their courage grows."

DUTCH COUSINS: 1. Close friends. 2. Two or more people whose only relation to each other is that they have slept with the same person.

DUTCH CROSSING: Crossing (the street) at a slant.

DUTCH CURE: Suicide. See also DUTCH ROUTE.

DUTCH CURSE: Weeds.

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DUTCH DAUB: Mediocre painting.

DUTCH DAY OFF: When you take a day off and end up doing household chores. Coined because the Dutch are thought to get great satisfaction from such domestic duties.

DUTCH DEFENSE: Retreat or surrender (no defense at all). It is also a legal defense where the defendant seeks clemency by deceitfully betraying others.

DUTCH DISTEMPER: The same as “jail fever” (typhus) due to the supposedly disproportionately large number of Dutch (or Germans) once in the prison population.

DUTCH DOOR: Slang for a bisexual person, i.e. one who “swings both ways.” A real “Dutch door” is like a stable door, one that is horizontally divided so that the bottom half can stay shut while the top half is open. The sexual use is more droll than deprecatory, though that element may be present.

DUTCH DRINK: To empty a glass in one gulp. See also **DUTCHMAN'S DRAUGHT**.

DUTCH DUMPLINGS: Buttocks. A homosexual expression from the mid to late 20th century.

DUTCH EAR: To have “a Dutch ear” is to have the ability or fortitude to enjoy (or tolerate) terrible singing or music.

DUTCH EXIT: To fart just before leaving a table, car, elevator, or room and leaving the stink with others.

DUTCH FEAST: One where the host gets drunk before the guests (or before they arrive). The assumption is that he has monopolized the alcohol.

DUTCH FINGER: 1. Feeling a moral superiority towards others. 2. Pointing your index finger at someone during an argument.

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DUTCH FIT: A fit of rage.

DUTCH FOIL: See DUTCH LEAF.

DUTCH FUCK: Lighting someone else's cigarette with one's own. Always expecting negative associations where the Dutch are concerned, this expression may imply Dutch penny-pinching (too cheap to use a match) as well as lack of bedroom skills.

DUTCH FUSTIAN: Nonsense. "Fustian" has been used in English for a kind of cloth since the 13th century, but it didn't acquire the meaning of pretentious and affected speech or writing until at least three centuries later. One of the earliest known uses of this sense occurs in Marlowe's play *Doctor Faustus*: "God forgive me, he speaks Dutch fustian."

DUTCH GENEROSITY: Stinginess.

DUTCH GIFT: A gift consisting of something that you like so that you can have some benefit from it yourself. A sexy nightdress or a box of chocolates for your girlfriend, both to be enjoyed through sharing.

DUTCH GIRL: A lesbian, so called because of the association of the watery Netherlands with dykes.

DUTCH GLEEK: Boozing. Gleek is an old card game. The expression implies that the game that the Dutch enjoyed most of all was drinking.

DUTCH GLOVE: Something that looks good on the surface but is in fact a bad thing. This is also the name of a beautiful flower with a bad smell.

DUTCH GOGGLES: Something for making ugly women look beautiful. Not actual spectacles but a form of self-delusion induced by copious drinking (which may also provide some "Dutch courage").

DUTCH GOLD: This is not gold at all but an alloy of copper and zinc (brass), worthless in itself but used as a substitute for gold leaf. A cheap imitation of gold. See also DUTCH LEAF.

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DUTCH GROCERY: An ill-kept grocery store.

DUTCH GUTS: The same as **DUTCH COURAGE**.

DUTCH HAVE TAKEN HOLLAND (THE): A statement of the obvious. The expression is used sarcastically upon the recounting of some stale news as if it were fresh and exciting. Another expression is "Queen Anne is dead."

DUTCH HEADACHE: A hangover.

DUTCH HUNK: A man who thinks he's hot but isn't.

DUTCH HUSBAND: A bed bolster, a long usually rectangular body pillow placed alongside the body while sleeping so that one leg can be draped over its length. Also a poor bed companion. See also **DUTCH WIFE**.

DUTCH IT (TO): To double-cross.

DUTCH KISS: To have sex. It is also a stolen or furtive kiss.

DUTCH KNUCKLES: See **DUTCH PUNCH**.

DUTCH LEAF: Brass, an alloy of copper and zinc, in the form of thin sheets, used as an imitation of gold leaf. Also called **DUTCH FOIL**, **DUTCH GOLD**, **DUTCH METAL**.

DUTCH LEAVE: The same as French leave, to be AWOL, to desert, to take time off without permission. Also **DO A DUTCH**.

DUTCH LIGHTNING: An act of arson on one's own property to bring about an insurance claim.

DUTCH LOCK: See **DUTCH BOOK**.

DUTCH LOTTERY: A scam where the mark is told that they have won a large sum of money in a foreign lottery. On contacting the lottery operator, the mark is asked to provide details of bank accounts and confirmation of their identity. Once they show interest in collecting their winnings, the

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lottery operators will ask for money in advance to pay administration costs. Also, it's a lottery where the ticket price corresponds with the value of the prize. Perhaps not a derogatory use of the adjective in the sense of many such phrases, but so named as many of these scams originate in the Netherlands. However, with so many uncomplimentary "Dutch" phrases some mud is bound to stick anyway.

DUTCH LOVE: There is an expression "Hotter than Dutch love," said to mean very hot weather or a passionate relationship. On the face of it, this would seem to be a flattering comment on the Dutch. However, if we take it to be ironic, as most of these expressions are, then the Dutch are, as usual, ill served. The ironic use means that the comparison is actually expressing the opposite of the literal meaning, and Dutch love isn't really so hot at all. And yet the usage and context of this phrase often suggests that the writer or speaker often misses the irony, and the Dutch end up with a rare compliment.

DUTCH LUCK: 1. Bad luck. 2. Undeserved good fortune.

DUTCH LUNCH: Drinking beer for lunch. Also a "Dutch treat" lunch.

DUTCH MEDICINE: This is patent medicine, and thus of questionable efficacy.

DUTCH MEDLEY: The same as a **DUTCH CONCERT**.

DUTCH METAL: See **DUTCH GOLD**.

DUTCH MILES: The unknown distance between a place and your destination, when the navigator is clearly lost but still pretends to be on course.

DUTCH MILK: Beer.

DUTCH MOMENT: When you blush due to being caught doing something embarrassing.

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DUTCH NICKEL: A hug or a quick kiss. The expression probably relates to the proverbial Dutch reluctance to part with cash, for a hug doesn't cost a thing.

DUTCH NIGHTINGALE: A frog. A humorous and disparaging comparison of these creatures' songs, along with the traditional dig at the Dutch, implying that they can't sing. In the 17th and 18th centuries it was not the French but the Dutch who were called frogs for an obvious reason: both the Dutch and frogs are at home in a waterlogged terrain.

DUTCH OVEN: In addition to the useful and innocent kitchen article (though we have seen above how this might still be scornful towards the Dutch), this is also a term for when one farts in bed and pushes one's partner's head under the covers to enjoy the atmosphere.

DUTCH PALATE: Coarse taste.

DUTCH PARLIAMENT: Another term for a **DUTCH ROW**.

DUTCH PARTY: One where the guests bring their own drink and snacks. A reference to the supposedly legendary stinginess of the Dutch. See also **DUTCH TREAT**.

DUTCH PENNANT: A frayed, dangling, or untidy rope (in the nautical sense). Also called an "Irish pennant."

DUTCH PINK: Blood (a boxing term).

DUTCH PRAISE: Condemnation, or what seems to praise but really condemns.

DUTCH PUMP: A sailor's punishment in which he is put overboard and must tread (pump) water or drown.

DUTCH PUNCH: A punch thrown on behalf of a friend or another who is unwilling or unable to do it themselves. Also called **DUTCH KNUCKLES**.

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DUTCH QUARTER: A kick in the backside. No quarter at all, in the sense of clemency towards a defeated enemy or merciful treatment of an opponent.

DUTCH RECKONING: An un-itemized bill. A verbal or lump account, without particulars, and often higher than if itemized. Also, sometimes, a bill that is raised if it is disputed. Also, pure guesswork. Among 19th century sailors, a bad day's work, and to be in the wrong.

DUTCH RIDE: Dragged by a rope.

DUTCH RIDER: Someone who is too cheap to drive his own vehicle.

DUTCH ROD: A firearm of inferior quality, especially a Luger.

DUTCH ROLL: A dynamic instability problem in an aircraft in flight. A combination of yawing, slipping, and rolling in an oscillating pattern. There's nothing obviously Dutch about this, but it is a maneuver that's viewed negatively as it quickly induces nausea in passengers. This is also a kind of movement that Dutch figure skaters have been known to make, and some think that the name for the aeronautical maneuver comes from that.

DUTCH ROSE: The mark made when a careless carpenter misses a clean hit on a nail and dents the wood.

DUTCH ROUTE: Suicide. "To go the Dutch route" is to kill yourself.

DUTCH ROW: A faked altercation. A spurious argument creating more sound than substance. Also a **DUTCH PARLIAMENT**.

DUTCH RUB: A painful rubbing of a person's scalp with the knuckles, their head under your arm. A mild juvenile torture. (Another youthful torture with a "national" name is a "Chinese burn," i.e. gripping a person's forearm and rotating the hands in opposite directions.)

DUTCH SEA WALL: A lesbian, or a butch woman (a comic reference to a dyke).

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DUTCH SEA WIFE: See DUTCH WIFE.

DUTCH STEAK: Hamburger.

DUTCH STRAIGHT: In poker, not a real straight but one that is comprised of all even cards, as in 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, or all odd cards, as in 3, 5, 7, 9, Jack.

DUTCH TALK: Gibberish.

DUTCH TALENT: 1. That which is not done in true nautical and shipshape fashion. 2. More the result of brawn than brain.

DUTCH TILT: From the world of cinematography we have a “Dutch tilt,” sometimes called a “Dutch angle.” This is not necessarily a derogatory use of “Dutch,” except insofar as, again, it refers to something different, unusual, weird, and (literally) not straightforward. In films, this is a shot composed with a canted frame, that is, with the camera angle deviating from the normal horizontal or vertical axis, for dramatic effect, and thereby conveying uneasiness or tension. One pleasingly nautical but uncorroborated suggestion for this phrase’s origin is that it comes from when coastal barges were commonly used in trade around and across the English Channel. The Dutch barges had keels and the English ones didn’t, so when moored at low tide, the Dutch barges would lean over. This seems most spurious. Another word for this is “Dutching.”

DUTCH TREAT: A meal, amusement etc. at which each person pays for himself, that is, a false treat, not a treat at all. Miserliness was one of the attributes the English gave the Dutch. Also: TO GO DUTCH. Variations include “Dutch date,” “Dutch lunch,” “Dutch supper,” and “Dutch party.” The phrase has long since lost its original sting, and today to pay your own way is common among many who date and it is not necessarily frowned upon. One theory has “Dutch treat” originating in the early 20th century, but it continues the long-standing associations.

Ray Oldenburg proposed an explanation of the origin of this in his book *The Great Good Place*, where he is discussing the German immigrants to Milwaukee. His theory removes the obloquy against the Dutch entirely,

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though those who used the phrase “Dutch treat” may still have harbored negative thoughts about the parsimonious Germans. Oldenburg writes:

“The Yankees had the dangerous habit of buying rounds or treating. Treating may have posed a threat to the frugal German’s pocketbook, but more than that, it threatened order. It undermined control over alcoholic intake, for among those buying rounds for one another it is the fastest drinker who sets the pace. All others are pressed to drink at a rate exceeding their personal inclinations. Against this habit, the Germans would establish the “Dutch [Deutsch] treat” or the habit of each paying for his own beer and ordering at a pace controlled by the individual drinker.”

DUTCH TURNPIKE: A cheap roadway over marshy ground made with logs and small tree trunks. This use of “Dutch” may simply be an innocuous adjective to describe the origin of this sort of passageway in the low-lying countryside of the Netherlands. On the other hand it drips with irony, sounding like the sort of amused, superior, and disparaging attitude we find in references to Dutch things.

DUTCH UNCLE: Not a real uncle but someone who has close enough standing to speak plainly and severely without too fine a regard for the listener’s feelings. To be spoken to “like a Dutch uncle” is to be scolded, to receive a stern lecture or comments given with unsparing severity and frankness. However, the admonishment or education is given with sincerity and often with benevolent intent, as though from an elder relative, or “uncle.” Originating in the early 1800s, this expression presumably alludes to the solemn sternness attributed to the Dutch, though some have speculated that it may allude to qualities attributed to the “Deutsch” (Germans).

DUTCH WALLET: Said of a person who is parsimonious, niggardly, tight with money. “He never buys a round, he is (or has) a real Dutch wallet.”

DUTCH WIDOW: A prostitute. See also **DUTCH WIFE**.

DUTCH WIFE: There are various definitions for this one, though related. One meaning is a prostitute. Another is an open-frame constructed of cane or bamboo, originally used in the Dutch East Indies and other hot countries

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to rest the limbs in bed. Also a bolster or body length pillow used for the same purpose, or be held or placed between the legs to soak up sweat and increase air flow on hot and humid nights. The phrase has obvious comic sexual overtones for a man who didn't take a native wife. It was called a "Dutch wife" because it was fat and just lay between your legs unmoving and, as with a "Dutch husband," it might refer to an inadequate flesh and blood bed companion. Also, to English sailors, it was a wooden board with a hole in it. These days, in Japan and probably elsewhere too, today's natural derivative is a rubber sex doll, a "datchi waifu" in Japanese. Also called a "Dutch Sea Wife." A "Dutch wife" is also a hot water bottle. See also DUTCH BRIDE, DUTCH HUSBAND.

DUTCHED: Cancelled, deceived.

DUTCHMAN: A device for hiding or counteracting structural defects. A nautical term for a poorly made patch concealed by paint or some other disguise.

DUTCHMAN: "I'M A DUTCHMAN IF I DO." A strong refusal. A Dutchman was all that was hateful, so when someone said he would rather be a Dutchman than do what was asked, he used the strongest terms of refusal.

DUTCHMAN: "IF NOT, I'M A DUTCHMAN." This means, "I will do it or call myself a Dutchman." Calling oneself a Dutchman was something undesirable.

DUTCHMAN: "WELL I'M / I'LL BE A DUTCHMAN / A DUTCHMAN'S UNCLE." An exclamation of strong incredulity.

DUTCHMAN: "DRUNK AS A DUTCHMAN." This is a once popular simile with the usual alcoholic Dutch connotations.

DUTCHMAN'S ANCHOR: Something important that was left behind. Supposedly from the apocryphal tale of a Dutch sea captain who explained after he had lost his ship that he had a good anchor but had left it at home. This is reminiscent of the English phrase, "Right, and I have a good bow up at the castle," said somewhat sarcastically to someone who promises to undertake something without the means to accomplish it, or who has been

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careless and forgetful. (On the topic of things left behind, note too, “Yes, and I have a good doublet in France,” an expression of disbelief.)

DUTCHMAN’S BREECHES: A small patch of blue sky visible among the clouds—small enough, perhaps, to make a pair of breeches for a Dutchman. This is perhaps a strained derogatory reference to the Dutch, suggesting that the blue gaps in a stormy sky are like a generously patched pair of trousers as worn by Dutchmen. One theory has this derived from the 19th-century music hall Dutchman, who was a figure of fun in his baggy patched pants. It is also the name of a white woodland plant, *Dicentra Cucullaria*, whose flower is shaped like a little pair of baggy trousers.

DUTCHMAN’S CAPE: A mirage; land that a sailor imagines seeing on the horizon. Also **DUTCH CAPE**.

DUTCHMAN’S DRAUGHT / DRINK: A big swig, a draught that empties the vessel. One of the many allusions to the Dutchman’s reputed fondness for heavy drinking.

DUTCHMAN’S FART: A sea-urchin. A derogatory though rather obscure joke. A sea-urchin has a lot of very sharp spines.

DUTCHMAN’S HURRICANE: Calm at sea. (There is also an “Irish hurricane,” meaning the same thing, with drizzle.)

Lest the Dutch get some sort of complex over all this abuse, they should realize that they are not alone. Even in peacetime we remain devoted to our national slurs, some of which might be considered faintly humorous unless you happen to be of the nationality being degraded. Along with the “Dutch” epithet we have all the Polish jokes, of course, and the use of “Chinese” to convey confusion and incomprehensibility as well as exoticism, as in “a Chinese fire drill,” “a Chinese puzzle,” and “Chinese whispers.”

For the English, the Irish join the Dutch as a favorite target of ethnic insult, with the Irish appearing as backward or pugnacious. Thus we have something being “a bit Irish,” meaning unusual or illogical. “To get one’s Irish up” refers to the Irishman’s allegedly quick temper and

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combativeness. Then there's "Irish bull" (an amusingly illogical statement), "Irish confetti" (stones or bricks used as missiles), "Irish dividend" (a fictitious profit), "Irish clubhouse" (jail or a police station), "Irish screwdriver" (hammer), and "Irish wheelbarrow" (ambulance). The pattern is familiar.

A more recent parallel to the "Dutch" tag, again a product of warfare, though certainly without a shred of the humor, can be seen in the shrill and visceral antagonism that went both ways between the USA and Japan during World War II. In cartoons, songs, writings, and films, the US depicted the Japanese as apes, dogs, snakes, rats, cockroaches, and other vermin. It's easier to hate and fight a dehumanized or a ridiculous enemy. Emerging from race hatred, prejudice, and national stereotyping as well as the strong sentiments following Pearl Harbor and the revelation of the horrific treatment of US and UK POWs, such distortion opens a gulf (or just widens it) between "us" and "them" to create a psychological distancing that makes killing much easier. The Dutch-English hostilities hardly reached this rabid and pernicious level (but then nor did the provocation) but it's just a matter of degree.

As the Dutch would say: "*In liefde en oorlog is alles geoorloofd.*" All is fair in love and war.