

# No Tip-Toeing, Please

“(K)nee deep through the flowers we will stray...” suggests the song *Tip-Toe Through the Tulips* - however you would be advised to stay on the paths while visiting Keukenhof in Lisse.

Aside from the fact that you are forbidden to walk through the flower beds, wandering along the paths created among the flower beds is by far the best way to admire the full glory of the millions of flowers on display each year.

For first-time visitors, as well as the regulars, the amazement that so many different, yet similar flowers exist is sure to express itself in exclamations of “oohs” and “aahs”, not to mention countless photographs. Whether this is in admiration of the artistically laid-out flowerbeds throughout the gardens, the fields surrounding them in a blanket of rainbow colours, or the exhibition halls in which intricate, artistic flower arrangements are displayed, Keukenhof is never visited in vain. Though the success of outdoor events generally depends on good weather, at Keukenhof, even in inclement weather, there is enough to see and enjoy.

## Reasons to Return

On March 18, Keukenhof will once more open its gates to welcome visitors from around the world to admire the wonders of nature as well as the art of bulb cultivation. Each year, Keukenhof has something new to see, to wonder at. China was the country of choice in 2008 in commemoration of the Olympics, and last year's theme 'USA, Amsterdam - New York, 400' commemorated the landing of Henry Hudson from the Dutch East India Company on what is now Manhattan. As part of this show, the Statue of Liberty was laid out in a mosaic using more than 50,000 bulbs. In full bloom, the artistry was truly amazing. The theme in 2010 is 'From Russia with Love' which will be reflected in the décor throughout the gardens, such as Russian wildlife in the children's areas, a dacha and typical Russian dolls (Matroeskas) as well as Russian landscapes.

The mosaic of choice for this year will be the famous Saint Basil's Cathedral which was planted in October of 2009 and awaits its moment of glory. The mosaic, which has been created from almost 65,000 flower bulbs, will include the towers of St. Basil's Cathedral on Moscow's Red Square

and will measure 21 by 12 metres. Besides the flowers on display, Keukenhof provides something new to enjoy every year. Throughout the period in which it is open, the Pavilions offer differing displays of specific flowers - such as the world's largest Lily display from May 6-16 in the Willem Alexander Pavilion, or the display of thousands of Amaryllis, Fresas and Tulips in the Orange Nassau Pavilion from March 19-23. Not to be missed is the exhibit of thousands of orchids in the Beatrix Pavilion during the whole period (March 18 - May 16). The artists who will contribute their skills to these permanent as well as temporary displays will also incorporate the theme for this year, 'From Russia with Love'.





For a break from viewing the flowers there are plenty of opportunities to enjoy refreshments - and don't be surprised if you inadvertently come across wandering musicians, or displays of Russian ballet, or the traditional National Costume Festival, for these too are an integral part of the Keukenhof experience.

#### **A Glorious Past**

Keukenhof - literally translated; kitchen garden - celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2009 and is recognised today as one of the highlights of a visit to the Netherlands. Founded on the grounds of a 15-century estate, its guests today are still greeted by hosts and hostesses in period dress. The idea of displaying the glories of the Dutch spring flowers was that of a group of prominent bulb growers and exporters in 1949. In that year, the more than 200,000 visitors surprised even the organisers. Today, with more than 93 exhibitors (in 1949 there were 40) and more than 825,000 annual visitors, the 32 hectare-park with 15 kilometres of paths continues to draw young and old alike, 'green thumb' or not!

#### ***“Keukenhof: new every year, different each day”***

Keukenhof is open from March 18 through May 16 from 8 A.M. - 7:30 P.M. daily (box office closes at 6 P.M.). For more information on opening times, prices and the agenda of activities please visit [www.keukenhof.nl](http://www.keukenhof.nl).