

Cycling Safaris

Amsterdam ~ Gouda ~ Bruges 2018 Group tour

Guide cycles with group | 275 - 295 km | 8 days / 7 nights



Two countries, Holland and Belgium, united in one route. Combining the highlights of Holland's Golden Age and the heydays of the Flemish trade cities in the Middle Ages. And of course Holland's own worlds wonder: the Delta Works.

The Dutch 17th century Golden Age and the heyday of the Flemish trading cities of the Middle Ages are united in this route. Notice the big difference between the green polder landscape abounding in water, with its tranquil roads and villages and the old world of islands in Zeeland with its pastures, creeks, winding dikes and dams. On top of that the often so picturesque Flemish countryside between the Belgian cities of Gent and Bruges. The great rivers are a prominent feature in this part of the Netherlands and Belgium. Of course you will get to know our own, Dutch Wonder of the World: the Delta Works, evidence of the eternal battle against the waters of the sea.

Highlights

- ▶ Windmills Kinderdijk
- ▶ Delta Works
- ▶ Ghent / Bruges



Itinerary

Amsterdam to Bruges

Irish Cycling Safaris | Belfield Bike Shop, UCD, Dublin 4, Ireland

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1. Saturday Arrival at 2.00 pm - sailing to Ouderkerk. Cycling to Uithoorn 15 km
2. Sunday Uithoorn - Gouda, 45 km
3. Monday Gouda – Alblasterdam and ferry to Dordrecht, 39 km
4. Tuesday Dordrecht, sailing to Willemstad or Bruinisse, cycling to Zierikzee 54km
5. Wednesday Zierikzee – Delta Works - Middelburg - Vlissingen, 51 or 32 km
6. Thursday Vlissingen – Ghent, 45 km
7. Friday Ghent – Bruges, 45 km
8. Saturday Bruges, debarkation before 10.00 am near Central Station

All distances are approximate. The above planned itinerary is subject to change due to changing wind and weather conditions and other unforeseen circumstances having to do with mooring requirements, etc.

TOUR ITINERARY

Day 1 (Sat) Amsterdam Arrival

Embarking at 2 PM the latest - sailing to Oudewetering; to Uithoorn plus loop cycle 15 km

When you arrive on board the ship, you can put your luggage away in your cabin and then enjoy a cup of tea or coffee. During this coffee break there is plenty of opportunity to get to know your guide, the crew and your fellow passengers. During dinner aboard the ship, the program for the next day and the global planning of the week are discussed. After 2 PM the ship leaves for Ouderkerk a/d Amstel where you get on the bike to cycle one of Amsterdam inhabitants most beloved cycle routes, 'een rondje ronde Hoep'.

Day 2 Sunday: Uithoorn - Gouda, 45 km

From Uithoorn you will continue your tour over country roads along river banks and channels through the Green Heart to the city known for its cheese: Gouda. Who thinks of Gouda, not only thinks of cheese, pipes, 'stroopwafels' (treacle-waffle) and pottery, but also of stained-glass windows, a fairy-like town hall and atmospheric canals. Gouda is a beautiful Old-Dutch city with a mostly intact city centre. As on most days, after dinner you can take a walk through the city.

Day 3 Monday: Gouda - Alblasterdam and sailing to Dordrecht, 39 km

Today you will cycle along the Dutch IJssel, through the deepest lying polder of the Netherlands Krimpenerwaard and over narrow cycling paths to the river 'Lek'. Here you will cross the river by ferry to Kinderdijk, a unique and renowned monument where Holland's largest number of historical windmills is found. From the embankments of the river Lek, you will witness an amazing view of the 19 windmills, which are now listed as a UNESCO's World Heritage site. This is where you will take a break and visit the interior of a windmill. After a beautiful tour through the Alblasterwaardpolder you will arrive at the banks of the river 'Beneden-Merwede'.

Day 4 Tuesday: Dordrecht, sailing to Willemstad/Bruinisse and cycling to Zierikzee, 54km

During breakfast you will sail from Dordrecht to the Rhine-Meuse-Scheldt delta area where the greater Dutch rivers meet the sea. Years ago, an open connection existed with the sea due to the many tributaries in this area. After the disastrous flooding in 1953, the Deltaplan was developed and most tidal outlets were closed from the sea by dams. Most parts of Zeeland were, and still are, under sea level and in 1953 the embankments were too weak and too low, causing this area to be at risk for floodings once in every 80 years. Now, because of the flood barriers, that chance is reduced to less than once every 4000 years. Depending on the tide you can choose a shorter version by sailing to Bruinisse from where you can cycle to Zierikzee. Zierikzee is a beautiful town and the centre of the 'mussel culture'. The 'Zeeuwse mosselen' (blue mussels) are a renowned delicacy. Along the shores of the Oosterschelde you find the Watersnoodmuseum (Flooding museum) where you can discover what happened on that disastrous day in 1953.

Day 5 Wednesday: Zierikzee – Delta works – Middelburg – Vlissingen, 51 or 32 km

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This morning you cycle along the Oosterschelde towards the North Sea, to cross the Oosterschelddam. The enormous locks are built in this embankment and can be closed during storms and high tides protecting the south-west of the Netherlands against the sea.

This embankment was one of the last in a series of barriers against the sea. When cycling along the embankment, one will realize why this has been one of the most difficult and costly challenges to protect the country now and in the future and to let seawater into the widespread Delta area. It is precisely why the Deltaworks are referred to as the one of the Seven Wonders of the Modern World by the American Society of Civil Engineers.

After this dam you will paddle to Middelburg, but not without visiting the picturesque port town of Veere. Middelburg is the lively principal town of Zeeland with many old houses, churches, the beautiful town hall and a pleasant shopping. Also to be found in Middelburg is the Roosevelt Academy, a liberal arts college, located in the former late-gothic town hall on the market of Middelburg.

Day 6 Thursday: Middelburg – Sas van Gent, 48 km / sailing to Ghent

Today you have to cross the 'Westerschelde', the only estuary which isn't closed by a dam cause it's the gateway to the port of Antwerp. A short ferry trip brings you from Vlissingen to Breskens in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (Dutch-Flanders)! We are getting close to Belgium. On your daily cyclistroute you will cross the Dutch - Belgium border back and forth before you defniately cross the Dutch - Belgium border by boat to sail to Ghent.

Day 7 Friday: Ghent-Bruges, 45 km

This morning you will cycle through Ghent to the scenic countryside of Oost-Vlaanderen (East-Flanders). Characteristic for this area are the woods, fields, small villages and castles.

From the Aalterbrug (also for the shorter route) the last part of this route takes us over the former tow path along the canal of Oostende-Gent, the oldest canal of Belgium, to Bruges.

The impressive city of Bruges is the end destination of this bike and barge trip. This evening you can enjoy the medieval city of Bruges and many of you are likely to stay another day in this beautiful city.

Day 8 (Sat) Departure

Bruges, end of the tour after breakfast (debarkation before 10am)

ACCOMMODATION

Comfort de Luxe: The "Sailing Home" started cruising in 2001. This beautiful passenger ship can accommodate 26 overnight passengers. The interior of the salon and bar is decorated in a modern Victorian style and offers a lot of comfort. Wifi on board (free up to 100Mb)

Cabins:

The "Sailing Home" has 13 spacious and comfortable guest cabins for two (lower beds) and each cabin has a private bathroom. All cabins have central heating and air-conditioning.

The "Sailing Home" has two floors. On the top floor you will find the salon, a roomy lounge, a cosy bar and a sun deck.

Electricity: 220 V



Zwaan – Category comfort plus

Hotel boat Zwaan's chef prepares great meals, which are served in the living room or, weather permitting, on the sundeck.

Capacity: 14/18 persons Wifi: on board (only in the Netherlands)

Electricity: 220 V

Cabins: Seven cabins with private hot shower and toilet

2x Family-style room, 2/3 p with double bed + single bed

2x Friends-style room, 2/3 p with 3 single beds (one bunk)

2x Twins-style room, 2 p with two separate beds

1x Lovers Nest, 2 p with double bed





Category Comfort: The “**Liza Marleen**” is a luxury motor passenger barge, built in 1997-98 on the completely dismantled shell of a seafaring freight logger. Cabins are being fully renovated for the 2016 season. Capacity: max 22 people.

This robust barge is ideally suited for trips on the wider waterways, like the Dutch Waddensee, the IJsselmeer and the Zeeland Streams, but it can also be found cruising on the smaller inland waterways of the Netherlands and Belgium. The “Liza Marleen” has 8 double cabins and 2 triple cabins.

All cabins come with a private bathroom and central heating. The triple cabins have one double bed on top and one single bed underneath. The double cabins have two separate beds on top of each other. The “Liza Marleen” has a beautiful, spacious and tastefully decorated salon and plenty of room on deck. The dayroom has audio-equipment and TV. Electricity: 220 V

Anna Antal – Category StandardPlus/Comfort

The “Anna Antal” is a former barge which was converted into a luxury motor passenger ship in the winter of 1994-95.



Cabins: The Anna Antal has 9 cabins each with their own shower, washbasin, toilet and central heating. 5 x 2-berth cabins with low beds (Comfort) 4 x 2-berth cabins with bunk beds (StandardPlus).

Saloon: The Anna Antal is pleasant for a day’s stay and it has a cosy bar.

Our motorised passenger vessels, about 35 - 45 metres in length, are former river vessels especially converted for this kind of holiday. The barges all comply with the strict safety regulations laid down by the Dutch Shipping Inspection Authorities. On board you find a cosy dining room, a sun deck/a deck for the bicycles. All cabins are provided with running water (hot and cold), private shower and toilet, 220 voltage and central heating.

There is limited storage space in the cabin. We recommend 1 suitcase per person. You can slide the suitcase under the bed.

DATES AND PRICES 2018

Ship Zwaan (Category Comfort Plus)

12 May, 26 May, 9 June

2-berth cabin: €1165

2-berth cabin (larger): €1245

Single use: € 1650

Triple cabin: €1135

Ship Sailing Home (Category Comfort Deluxe)

23 June, 7 July, 21 July, 4 August, 18 August, 1 Sept, 15 Sept, 29 Sept, 13 Oct

2-berth cabin: €1165

Single use: € 1650

Ship Anna Antal (Category Standard Plus & Comfort)

19 May, 2 June, 16 June, 30 June, 14 July, 28 July, 25 August, 8 Sept, 22 Sept

2-berth Standard Plus cabin: €900

2-berth Comfort cabin: €1055

Single Standard Plus cabin €1160

Ship Lisa Marleen (Category Comfort)

5 May

2-berth cabin: €1145

Large 2 berth cabin €1245

Single use: € 1610

Triple cabin: €1055

WHAT THE TOUR PRICE INCLUDES

- 7 nights (including bed clothes and 2 towels)
- All meals (breakfast and dinner on board) and packed lunch when on the road
- Coffee and tea on board
- 24-speed bicycle (with pannier bags, lock, water bottle)
- Multi-lingual guide
- Ferry fares on the route
- Route information & road book (1 per room)

Please note that all charges on the boat must be settled in cash (euro) at the end of the tour.

Reduction children: (if child is travelling together with at least 1 one full-paying person)

0-2: free of charge (plus bike trailer cost)

3-11: - 30% on tour price.

Additional Costs/Optional Extras

- Entrance fees to museums – approx € 15
- Helmets available on request at time of booking – € 10 (cannot be rented on board)
- Bike maps (2x): €20 (to be ordered when booking; cannot be rented on board)
- Bicycle Insurance - € 15 per bicycle / e-bike - € 40 per bicycle
- Bike trailer € 85/trailer bike € 50 / bike seat € 15 / child bike: € 50
- E-Bike: €65
- Gluten free meals €50

If you are traveling on your own we will endeavor to find a room mate for you.

WHAT TO BRING

Specialized cycle clothing may be handy but not strictly necessary. What you do need (among other things) is the following:

- shorts/ long trousers/ track suit/ legging
- shirts/ sweater/ rain clothing
- Gloves (only when you book a tour in April. It can be chilly in the morning that time of year!)
- good shoes
- sunglasses/ cap/ swimming costume
- extra towel
- soap/ insect repellent

BIKES AND CYCLING

On these tours you cycle together as a group with the guide.

After arrival on board you will be allocated a bicycle suitable to your height. This bicycle (a Hybrid bike), is at your disposal during your trip until Friday at 4pm.

There is a good bicycle available for all participants from ages nine and up with 24 gears and handbrakes. All bikes are comfortable lightweight touring bikes.



The bikes are equipped with:

- Pannier bags
- Odometer
- Good lock
- Water bottle
- You will get a repair kit when biking on your own.

Before you make your first tour, the guide will give you instructions about the bike. Can we draw your attention to the fact that you will be held responsible for damage to, or theft of the bike, as long as the bike is not on board (The bike is a **Batabus Galivier** with a value of more than €600). Never leave it unattended. Always lock it and fasten it to a fixed object. You can insure this bike for a fee of €15.00, at the time of booking, or when you arrive on board on the arrival day (payment in cash required).

Should you use your own bike, please bring a good lock with you!

Holland is a cycling country - 16 million inhabitants all with bikes. The number of cyclists necessitates a cycling infrastructure: cycle paths (20.000 km), cycle routes (long and short distance), cycle bridges, cycle tunnels, cycle ferries and special signposts for cyclists.

E-bike

It is also possible to book an E-bike. Your bike has 24 gears, a detachable lithium-Ion battery, hand brakes, pannier bags, a good lock, water bottle and you can get a repair kit. We draw your attention to the fact that you will be held responsible for damage to or theft of the bike, as long as the bike is not on board. (the E-bike has a value of more than € 2000,-). Never leave it unattended. Always lock it and fasten it to a fixed object, and don't forget to remove the information panel from your steering wheel. You can insure this bike with Cycletours for € 40,- per bicycle! If you didn't arrange cycle insurance when booking you can do this on board (the first day). Payment in cash is required



Bike Insurance:

Bicycle insurance is available for €15 per bike. The participant is liable for damage or theft as long as the bike is not on board. The bicycle insurance covers the cost of the repair or replacement of bicycle parts in case of an accident. It also protects against theft of the bike while it was locked.

ARRIVAL INFORMATION

You are expected on our barge on Saturday at 2pm. You can recognise the barge by the banner with Cyclotours written on it. After arrival there's coffee and tea on board. Other drinks are also available on cash payment. If you want you can bring your luggage in advance, from 12 Noon onwards.

The mooring place of the barge in Amsterdam is Oosterdok
Zip-code 1011 VX (near the Science Center: 'Nemo', Oosterdok 2).



On foot

At Central Station take exit “centrum”, and then turn left, walk straight on 1,2 km/0.75 miles. Cross the bridge (only for cyclists and pedestrians). It takes about 10 to 15 minutes. Follow the red line on this map.

Train

There is a direct train that leaves 6 times per hour from Schiphol Airport to Amsterdam Central Station. It takes about 16 minutes. The price for a train ticket Schiphol-Amsterdam is € 4,00 per person for a single journey.

Taxi

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A taxi from Schiphol Amsterdam Airport to the barge in Amsterdam takes about 30 minutes. It costs about € 50 you can call the following company: Taxi Direct 0031 (0) 20 6333333 www.taxidirect.nl a taxi from the Central Train Station in Amsterdam to the barge takes about 5 minutes: Costs about € 10,-.

Car

If you arrive by car, we recommend you to arrive earlier to unload your luggage. You can find more information about parking possibilities at www.iamsterdam.com

GENERAL INFORMATION

Group

On board you will meet an international party of all age groups, men and women, singles, couples and families together with their children.

Travel Guidance

The crew on board your ship consists of: the skipper and his mate who are responsible for the smooth running of things on board and the cook who is in charge of the catering. A tour leader, who can assist in case of breakdowns, and who can be your guide to point out to you the things of interest along the way, accompanies the participants. He or she is multi-lingual.

Meals

In the morning a substantial cyclist's breakfast is on offer, and the evening meal consists of a dinner with tea and coffee to follow. The midday meal comprises sandwiches/fruit/ snack/drink, which you take with you from the boat after you have prepared this package yourself after breakfast. When you arrive back at the boat after the day's cycling a cup of tea or coffee with a biscuit will be waiting for you. The three-course dinner is different every day. There is a first course, main course and dessert (on the Comfort deluxe there is also an extra intermediate course). The meals on board are included in the price, as are coffee and tea. There is a bar on the boat with beer, soft drinks and wine at reasonable prices.

Hotels

If you are booking additional hotel accommodation 3* in Amsterdam and/or Bruges, herewith some suggestions:-

Amsterdam –

Hotel Avenue - www.hotels.nl/amsterdam/avenue/
Prinsengracht Hotel www.prinsengrachthotel.nl/index.php

Bruges –

Hotel Martins - www.splendia.com/pagehotel.php?hotelid=30399&lang=EN
Hotel Maraboe - www.maraboe.be/
Hans Memling Hotel - www.hansmemlinghotel.com/