Cycling Safaris

Top of Amsterdam Group tour 2017

Guide cycles with group | 270 - 350 km | 8 days / 7 nights

Not until the 17th Century large parts of the area north of Amsterdam were recovered from the sea reclaimed through the use of hundreds of windmills. It's here that you will find the typical Dutch landscape of polders, mills, harbours, & tulips.

The route brings you over small dykes and country roads. Many of the windmills are still in working order. You can get a feel for the old Dutch atmosphere in Enkhuizen, Hoorn, Edam and Volendam: traditional costumes, sailing ships & long johns on the clotheslines. On day 4 you'll sail to Texel, an island with thousands sheep and a magnificent nature reserve.



Back on the mainland the route brings you to Holland's most beautiful dune area. These are also the only kilometers you will be cycling above sea level!

Alkmaar will also provide a good picture of ancient times. It is the capital of Dutch cheese with its own cheese market and weigh-house for cheese. In Zaanse Schans, a lovely little hamlet on the banks of the river Zaan, the mills, houses, shops and traditional Dutch crafts bring the past to life.

Highlights

- ➢ Isle of Texel
- Zuiderzeemuseum
- Fishing villages
- Forest, dune and beach



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1

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Itinerary:			
Day 1 Saturday	Amsterdam, embarkation at 4pm, short round trip 20 km		
Day 2 Sunday	Amsterdam - Volendam 45 km, sailing to Hoorn		
Day 3 Monday	Hoorn - Enkhuizen 30 km Visit the Zuiderzee Museum		
Day 4 Tuesday	Enkhuizen - Medemblik 35 km, sailing to Texel		
Day 5 Wednesday	Texel, round trip 40/50/65 km		
Day 6 Thursday	Texel, sailing to Den Helder,		
	Den Helder – Alkmaar 58 km		
Day 7 Friday	Alkmaar-Zaanse Schans-Amsterdam 55 km		
Day 8 Saturday	Amsterdam, debarkation before 10 am		

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 Saturday: Amsterdam, embarkation at 4 pm, round tour from the boat, 20 km

Amsterdam is a city to be explored on foot and we recommend the following places of interest: the rings of canals, the Jordaan area, with its many pubs, outdoor cafés and quaint shops, Vondelpark with its open air concerts, Leidseplein, Rembrandtsplein, the antique shops in the Spiegel district, Museum Square with the Rijksmuseum (National Museum), Stedelijk Museum (Museum of Modern Art) and the Van Gogh Museum.



Other typical features of Amsterdam are its numerous 'hofjes' (almshouses), the floating flower market, and the hundreds of houseboats lining the canals. Amsterdam is inextricably related to the diamond-cutting industry, which has brought much fame to the city since the 17th century.

The palace on Dam Square is sometimes called the eighth Wonder of the World as it was built on 13,650 piles.

Did you know that:

- o There are 222 trams, 277 buses, 106 underground trains and eight ferries in Amsterdam?
- There are 600,000 bicycles in Amsterdam?
- There are 165 canals and 1,281 bridges in Amsterdam?
- o There are 2,500 houseboats in Amsterdam?

Back on board, after the bike ride, the programme for the next day and the rest of the week will be explained to you at dinner time.

Day 2 Sunday: Amsterdam-Volendam, 45 km, sailing to Hoorn

We leave Amsterdam, which is still very quiet at this hour. A ferry takes you to the Amsterdam Noord quarter and soon you will be cycling through the rural area of Waterland. In this soggy peat land the houses and villages are hardly above the level of the water.

The former isle of Marken is visited. It was not until 1957 that this island was connected to the mainland by a dike and it has retained its own particular character.



The houses here were built on man-made little mounds, called 'werven', to escape the regular inundations. When there was no more room on these mounds people started building houses on piles, which made them stand 2.5 m. above street level. The Marker Museum shows you how people used to live and work here. The inhabitants are the only ones allowed to use their cars, so Marken can only be visited on foot or on bike.

The route continues to the historic village of Monnickendam. There was a flourishing seafaring trade with the Baltic countries (Scandinavia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) and Suriname, as there used to be an direct waterway between the Zuiderzee (the Southern Sea) and the North Sea. When this waterway was closed down, in the 15th century, the importance of Monnickendam declined. However, in the 17th century a barge-canal was dug between Monnickendam and Amsterdam and trading between these cities grew. For a long time past Monnickendam has been renown for its eal smoking. Up to this day eal and other fish is smoked in the harbours.

We continue our way along the Gouwzee dike to Volendam, today's destination. Originally Volendam was a small fishing community. Practically all its inhabitants used to wear their distinctive and picturesque traditional costumes. Volendam started as a settlement when Edam (to be visited tomorrow) dug its new, shorter waterway to the Zuiderzee in the 14th century. The old harbour became superfluous, a new dike was built and soon farmers and fishermen settled down. In the second half of the 15th century a new village came into being: Volendam.

From Volendam we sail in northerly direction towards the city of Hoorn. During the evening walk we will have the opportunity to get a good look at this beautiful city with its rich past. In addition to Amsterdam, Edam, Monnickendam, Enkhuizen and Medemblik Hoorn was a major harbour in the 17th century. From here ships sailed for the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia), America, Scandinavia and the Mediterranean. The most impressive gable is the one on the former town hall, Statenpoort, which now houses an interesting museum with paintings and exhibits concerning the V.O.C. (United East Indian Company). The V.O.C. was a very powerful, almost monopolistic trading company in the 17th century.

Day 3 Monday: Hoorn – Enkhuizen 30 km, visit Zuiderzeemuseum

We continue on the dike with a wonderful view over the Markermeer on our right and West-Frisian villages on our lefthand side. The recently built dike from Enkhuizen to Lelystad (in the Noordoostpolder) appears on the horizon. This was meant to be a polder dike for a huge new polder: the Markerwaard. However, the plans were never executed: with time perception changed. The environment and fresh water supply became more important. So today the dike is there, but no polder...

The trip for today ends in Enkhuizen, a town which came into existence when two adjoining villages amalgamated. In the Golden Age Enkhuizen had grown so much that its harbour was well-known internationally and the beautiful gables, town hall and richly decorated churches all date from these flourishing times. Here too, you can easily find many Renaissance and Baroque monuments. At the end of the 17th century the decline set in, as a result of the wars with England and the growing importance of Amsterdam as a sea trading city. When the Zuiderzee was closed off in 1932 (by the Afsluitdijk) the herring fishing industry also came to an end. The construction of a railway line to Amsterdam, at the end of the 19th century, caused a slight revival for this little town.





Zuiderzee Museum

In Enkuizen we can visit the Zuiderzeemuseum. This museum, which consists of an indoor and outdoor part, shows you the history of everyday life around the Zuiderzee until the middle of the 20th century. Among other things expositions can be visited here on the reclamation of the Zuiderzee, whale fishing and the rich history of the United East Indian Company. In the open air museum most emphasis is placed on the period between 1880 and 1932. The distinctive smell of fresh tar, smoked fish and peat-heated stoves is all present in the alleys between the 130 buildings.

Day 4 Tuesday: Enkhuizen – Medemblik, 35 km sailing to Texel

The cycling tour starts on the IJsselmeer dike and is then left behind to go through a nature reserve and some typical West-Frisian villages. Then Medemblik comes in sight, the oldest city of West-Friesland (1289), with an illustrious past and with Radboud castle, dating from the 13th century. Once a booming seaport it is now, since the construction of the North Holland Canal, only important as a yacht basin. The flower mill in this town is still in operation. At Medemblik we get on board and sail to the isle of Texel.





We sail across the Ijsselmeer and cross the Afsluitdijk (Enclosure Dam). This dike, connecting North-Holland with Friesland, is about 30 kilometres in length and was the first large civil engineering enterprise against the sea. The dike was completed in 1932 and the Zuiderzee (Southern Sea) changed into the IJsselmeer (IJssel Lake), the largest fresh water lake in the Netherlands.

Day 5 Wednesday: Texel, round trip 40/50/66 km

The isle of Texel, which is one municipality, is the largest of the Dutch Waddeneilanden (Wadden islands). The average length of Texel is 20 km and the average width 8 km.

The first inhabitants of Texel may date from the Middle Stone Age (8,000-4,500 BC). Texel is highly appreciated by birdwatchers. In springtime about 80 different types of birds breed her, mainly in the dune areas, but all in all about 300 different species have been perceived on Texel.

As early as in the 16th and 17th century the Texel sheep's cheese was well-known abroad. This was not only the usual white cheese but in particular a special, green cheese. The cheese was green as a result of the juice of boiled sheep droppings, which was stirred through the milk. However, because of hygienic reasons this was forbidden by the Dutch Food Inspection Department in 1930.



Isle of Texel

Oude Schild

A tour around this island with its numerous cycle tracks is well worth the effort. The largest village on the island is Den Burg, which has a rural character with its circles of roads around the old church. You will find most of the shops on the island in this village. The local museum gives a good impression of island life and is housed in a building dating from 1599. De Koog, one of the oldest villages, is the principal bathing resort and is only a stone's throw from the widest beach on the island. De Cocksdorp, the northernmost village, is entered through a tunnel of interlocking tree branches, which gives it a unique character. If you cycle to the most extreme northerly tip of the island you may be able to see Vlieland, the next island making up the chain of Wadden islands. On the way up north you can pay a visit to the Slufter, a nature reserve open to the sea and the rhythm of the tides.

The villages of Den Hoorn, Oosterend and De Waal have escaped modern architectural influences and are all officially protected. In Den Hoorn some of the old 'Commandeurs' dwellings have been preserved. These were the houses belonging to the captains of the whaling ships that sailed from Texel. Texel's oldest church is situated in Oosterend. In an old barn in De Waal there is a farm museum called the Wagenmuseum (cart museum). De Waal already existed in the 12th century and was on the coast until 1613. Then the polder Waalenburg was drained and since then De Waal has been in the centre of the island. Oudeschild used to be the main port of entry for Texel, but in 1962 a ferry connection was established to the southernmost tip of the island ('t Horntje). Nowadays only fishing boats, sailing boats and boats working on marine engineering projects, use the picturesque harbour of Oude Schild.

Here too, the maritime museum is housed in two old granaries and next to this museum you can find the Juttersmuseum (beachcombers' museum) in a shed originally used for storing sea ware. If the weather is fine you might like to combine a cycling tour of the island with a nice rest on one of the wide, clean and very peaceful beaches.

Day 6 Thursday: Texel sailing to Den Helder- Alkmaar 58 km

The ship takes us back to the mainland, where you disembark in the city of Den Helder, the Dutch naval port, situated at the mouth of the Noord-Hollandskanaal. This canal was built in order to allow ships to safely enter Amsterdam harbour, thus avoiding the shallow parts of the Zuiderzee. Later on the North Sea Canal was built, allowing even the largest seagoing ships to enter Amsterdam. Den Helder was established around 1500 and is a fishing town as well as a naval base. Ships going to the North Sea and the Waddenzee leave from here.



Today's route takes you through the dunes. South of Callantsoog you pass by the unique nature reserve Het Zwanenwater (The Swans' Water), with its lakes and boggy hollows in the dunes. The name is a reminder of the 17th century, when swans were bred here. Today swans are rare, but some 100 other birds have their residence here.

A little further you cycle on the Hondsbossche Zeewering (Hondsbossche Sea Dike), with a spectacular view of the North Sea. This area used to have dunes, but in 1421 they were swept away in what is known as the St Elisabeth's flood, together with the village of Hondsbosse. The 5 km long basalt dike has replaced the dunes and now keeps the sea at bay.

Near Schoorl you enter the area of the Schoorlse Duinen (Schoorl Dunes), stretching out to Bergen where you will find the highest dunes in the country. During the last century many pine trees were planted here so now it is a rather woody region.

Bergen is an artists' village which attracts many painters, writers and architects.

Our destination for today is Alkmaar, also called the City of Cheese. Its weigh house was the first in the country and it is here that the weighing and trading of cheese used to take place. Near the weigh house many outdoor cafés can be found. Like Amsterdam Alkmaar houses a great many 'hofjes' or almshouses: typical 17th century enclosed courtyards with little houses inhabited by single women and usually supported by the church. A little less than 400 heritage sites, canals and the harbour dominate the townscape.

Day 7 Friday: Alkmaar – Zaanse Schans – Amsterdam 55 km

After leaving Alkmaar the stage takes you through the 'droogmakerij' land with the 17th century towns of Schermerhorn, Graft and De Rijp. A 'droogmakerij' is a specific type of polder: a (part of a) lake around which first a dike was built and which was then reclaimed or impoldered. Within the enclosure of the dikes the water level can be regulated, like in other polders. The general term 'polder' is used for any type of land partly or totally surrounded by a dike in which the water level is regulated.



Cheese Market

In Schermerhorn three windmills 'in series' (a 'Molendriegang') can be seen. One of the three, a working 17th century mill, is a museum and shows the system whereby a series of stepped mills, each one a little higher, could pump water to a height of four metres from the polder into the canal behind the dike. Graft and De Rijp are two proud, typical 17th century villages that enjoyed great prosperity at the heyday of the fishing and whaling industries. Jan Adriaansz Leeghwater the well-known polder engineer was born in De Rijp.

If you have not spent too much time at the Alkmaar cheese market you may have time to pay a visit to the Zaanse Schans, a unique hamlet where people live and work, with original houses and windmills from the river Zaan area. Traditionally this was a region where foodstuffs such as edible oil, nuts, rice and grain products were imported and processed. The Zaanse Schans mainly came into being in the sixties and seventies of the 20th century.

The original sites of these historical premises hampered the development of the area, which is why they were moved here. At the beginning of the 18th century the area boasted more than 600 windmills! Nowadays nearly all of them have been replaced by



motor-driven pumps. The hamlet is dominated by three operating windmills, the oldest built in 1673, for grinding mustard, spices, paint and oil and for sawing wood into planks. As you walk through the village you will see a clock museum, an old-fashioned grocery store, a house with period furniture, a clog maker and a cheese farm.

The last stretch of the trip takes us through't Twiske (the Twiske) Leisure Park. Since the beginning of the Christian era the peat region around the Zaan had been used for cattle grazing. In the peat land ditches were dug to help draining the land. The dried peat was used as fuel. Small and larger meadows were thus created over the centuries, which made it

almost impossible to keep cattle. In 1938 it was therefore decided to impolder the Twiske region. Many unemployed people from the surroundings were deployed to this task. In 1956 all activity was brought to an end. The southern part of the area had been drained and the little river called Twiske had all but disappeared. A few years later a lot of sand from underneath the peat and clay layers was used for the construction of a motorway leading into Amsterdam. An artificial lake was the result. This was very convenient as there was a growing demand for recreational areas near the big cities. The water surface was enlarged to 200 hectares, the river Twiske was dug out again, and the Twiske area was laid out for various sorts of leisure.

Once we are back at the boat in Amsterdam it is time to take leave of our bikes. In the afternoon there is still some time to go into town and after dinner you may want to finish off your trip by going on a city walk or taking a trip on one of Amsterdam's canal boats.

Day 8 Saturday, Amsterdam, end of tour after breakfast.

ACCOMMODATION/BARGES

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 were 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 Waddenzee, 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



Wending – Category comfort

The "Wending" is a former freight barge that started a new life in the early nineties as a luxury passenger motor barge. Since then the "Wending" is a familiar fixture on several routes in the Netherlands and Belgium.

Capacity: max. 28 people/ On the Bike & Barge tours: max. 25 people

Cabins: The "Wending" has 8 double and 2 triple cabins. The beds in the cabins are side by side. In the triple cabin one bed is placed over the other two.

All cabins with private bathroom and central heating.

Day Stay: The "Wending" has a roomy and cosy salon, equipped with a complete music installation and TV. After a strenuous bike ride it is a great place to relax. 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.

Do not expect a cruise ship with its passive luxury. The Bike & Barge Holidays are for people who really enjoy the physical activity of cycling and who value sociability more than wholesale luxury.

DATES AND PRICES 2017

Category Barge	Comfort Plus Cabins Zwaan	Comfort Cabins <i>Liza Marleen</i>	Comfort Cabins <i>Wending/Anna Antal</i>	Standard Plus Cabins Anna Antal
2-berth cabin	€1100	€1055	€1000	€850
		€1115 (large cabin)		
Single cabin	€1595	€1200	€1200 (Wending only)	€1100
Triple cabin	€1070	€995	€945 (Wending only)	

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

Zwaan Departure Dates

June 10, 17 July 8, 22

Liza Marleen Departure Date

July 1

Wending Departure Dates

May 6, 13, 20, 27 June 3 July 22 August 5, 19 September 2

Anna Antal Departure Dates

July 15, 29 August 12

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)
- Guide cycling with the group
- Multi-lingual guide
- Ferry fares on the route
- Route information & road book (1 per room)
- Entrance to Kuekenof

Please note that all charges on the boat must be settled in cash (euro) at the end of the tour.
(*) If you have special meal requirements (eg vegetarian) please let us know on booking In the case of a **glutenfree diet** there is an additional charge of €50.00 per week

Reduction children (bike hire not included):

0-2*: free of charge 3-11*: 30% reduction if child is travelling together with at least 1 one full-paying person

Additional Costs/Optional Extras

- E-bikes are available at a supplement of €65
- Entrance fees to museums approx € 15
- Helmets available on request at time of booking $\in 10$ (can <u>not</u> be rented on board)
- Bike maps (2x): \notin 20 (to be ordered when booking; can <u>not</u> be rented on board)
- Bicycle Insurance \notin 15 per bicycle / \notin 40 per e-bike (can only be ordered at time of booking)
- ▶ Bike trailer € 85/trailer bike €50 / bike seat € 15 /child bike: € 50

Amsterdam to Bruges

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 or you can chose to cycle by yourself.

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 4 PM.

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 (as well as children's bikes, trailers, child seats e.g.).



The bikes are equipped with:

- Pannier bags
- 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.

Cyclists, of course, have to observe traffic rules and regulations. The most important rule is to remember that you are not alone on your bike and that you are sharing the road with your group and other road users. Your guide on board will tell you all you need to know about the traffic rules and regulations.

Bike Insurance:

Bicycle insurance is available for €15 per hybrid 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.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Arrival to tour start

It is very easy to get from Schiphol airport to the ship. The distance is approx. 20 km. At Schiphol airport you can take the train to Central Station Amsterdam. These trains leave very regularly (approx. every 8 min.). It takes approx. 15 minutes by train from the airport into Amsterdam and the train ticket Schiphol-Amsterdam is approx \notin 5 per single journey. From Amsterdam Central Station it is a 10 minute walk to the place where the ship is docked. A taxi from Schiphol to Amsterdam takes about 30 minutes. It costs about \notin 35.

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 multilingual.

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 ComfortLuxe 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 herewith some suggestions:-

Amsterdam -

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