

Cycling Safaris

Top of Amsterdam

Group tour 2025

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

Arrival day on Thursday



It was only in the 17th Century that large parts of the area north of Amsterdam were recovered from the sea and 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 us along small dykes and country roads, lined with windmills that 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. We sail to Texel, an island with thousands of sheep and a magnificent nature reserve. Our route brings us to Holland's most beautiful dune area, the only kilometers where we 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 back to life.

Highlights

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



Itinerary:

Day 1 Thursday	Amsterdam, embarkation at 4pm, short round trip 15 km
Day 2 Friday	Amsterdam - Volendam 45 km, sailing to Hoorn
Day 3 Saturday	Hoorn - Enkhuizen 45 km, Visit the Zuiderzee Museum
Day 4 Sunday	Enkhuizen - Medemblik 35 km, sailing to Texel
Day 5 Monday	Texel, round trip 35/48/62 km
Day 6 Tuesday	Texel, sailing to Den Helder - Alkmaar 60 km
Day 7 Wednesday	Alkmaar-Zaansé Schans-Amsterdam 60 km
Day 8 Thursday	Amsterdam, debarkation before 10 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 Thursday: Amsterdam, **embarkation between 3 and 4 pm**, round trip from the boat, 15 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.

We start the tour with a short bike ride after which a programme for the next day and the rest of the week will be explained to you at dinner time.



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

We leave Amsterdam during the stillness of a Sunday morning. A ferry takes us to the Amsterdam Noord quarter where we cycle through the rural area of Waterland. In this soggy peat land the houses and villages are hardly above the level of the water. We visit the former isle of Marken where it was only in 1957 that this island was connected to the mainland by a dike and it has retained its own particular character.



The route continues to the historic village of Monnickendam and along the Gouwzee dike to our night's destination, Volendam. Practically all its inhabitants used to wear their own 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 the village of Volendam came into being.

From Volendam we sail 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, 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 Saturday: Hoorn – Enkhuizen 45 km, visit Zuiderzeemuseum

We continue on the dike with a wonderful view over the Markermeer on our right and West-Frisian villages on our left-hand side. The trip for today ends in Enkhuizen, a town which came into existence when two adjoining villages amalgamated.



In Enkhuizen 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 the 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 Sunday: Enkhuizen – Medemblik, 35 km sailing to Texel

The cycling tour starts on the IJsselmeer dike, continuing through a nature reserve and some typical West-Frisian villages. 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 Monday: Texel, round trip 35 / 48 / 62 km

The isle of Texel 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 bird-watchers. In springtime about 80 different types of birds breed here, 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, thankfully because of hygienic reasons this was forbidden by the Dutch Food Inspection Department in 1930!



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 here along with a local museum which 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 seaside resort, 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 giving 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.

Day 6 Tuesday: Texel sailing to Den Helder – Alkmaar 60 km

The ship takes us back to the mainland, where you disembark in the city of Den Helder.

Today's route takes us 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 reside here.

A little further we 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.



Our destination 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 Wednesday: Alkmaar – Zaanse Schans – Amsterdam 60 km

After leaving Alkmaar the stage takes us through the 'droogmakerij' land with the 17th century towns of Schermerhorn, Graft and De Rijp.

If you have not spent too much time at the Alkmaar cheese market we 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. 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 Twiske Leisure Park on our way back to Amsterdam and 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 Thursday, Amsterdam

End of tour after breakfast. Disembarkation before 10am near Central Station.

DATES AND PRICE 2025

Barge Liza Marleen

May 8

€1500 per person sharing in twin cabin

€1730 per person sharing superior twin cabin, 15m²

€1370 per person sharing superior triple cabin, 15m²

€2240 single use cabin

Barge Anna van Aemstel

June 12, 19

€1500 per person sharing twin cabin

€1370 per person sharing triple cabin

€2240 single use cabin

WHAT THE TOUR PRICE INCLUDES

- 7 nights on board (incl. bed linen, towels and soap)
- Route information/road book (1 set per cabin)
- Breakfast & Dinner on board
- Picnic Lunch packages when on the road
- Coffee and tea on board
- Tour guide who cycles with the group
- Minimum of 3 city walks with tour guide
- Free Wi-Fi (limited availability in lounge and on deck)
- Ferry fares on the route
- GPS tracks (on request)
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Please note that all charges on the boat must be settled in cash (euro) at the end of the tour.

Not included/optional extras

€125 21 speed touring bike with water bottle cage, lock and a small pannier bag, bike insurance incl.

€240 Electric - bike with water bottle cage, lock and a small pannier bag, bike insurance incl.

- Entrance fees to museums; approx €25 per tour
- Gluten free / celiac meals : €100 supplement – Needs to be booked in advance.
When ordered upon arrival, the additional charge is €150

Note: We can no longer provide vegan meals. The space in the kitchens on our ships is too limited (for storage and preparation) to properly prepare these meals.

Reduction for Children (if travelling with at least on full paying person in their cabin)

0 – 2 free of charge

3 – 11 30% discount

Discount does not apply to bike / seat / trailer rental

ACCOMMODATION / BARGES

Our motorized passenger vessels are about 35 - 45 metres in length and 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 which you can slide 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.

Category Comfort Plus: 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.

The "Liza Marleen" has 8 double cabins and 2 triple cabins (Capacity: max 22 people)

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. There is air conditioning and windows cannot open, Wi-Fi on board



Anna van Aemstel- Category StandardPlus/Comfort

The Anna van Aemstel has been newly renovated in 2025. The barge has a roomy and cosy saloon, equipped with a complete music installation. After a strenuous bike ride it is a great place to relax. An extensive range of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks is available for the "après de velo". Outside there is a sun deck/a deck for the bicycles. The crew consists of a skipper, a cook and a sailor/hostess. There is limited WiFi on board.

Cabin plan

- 10 Twin cabins, beds can be placed together
- 2 Triple cabins (with upper bunk)

All cabins are provided with:

- private bathroom,
- central heating,
- 220 voltage,
- soap,
- air conditioning, windows that open

Hair dryers are available on board. There is limited storage space in the cabin. We recommend 1 suitcase per person. You can slide the suitcase under the bed.



BIKES AND CYCLING

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

Hybrid bikes are an additional €125

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

E- bikes are an additional €240

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.



Bike Insurance:

Bicycle insurance is included in the bike rental price.

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.

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

ARRIVAL INFORMATION

You are expected on our barge on Thursday between 3pm and 4pm. You can recognise the barge by the banner with Cycletours 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).**

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.



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,-.

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

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 € 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 € 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 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 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 - www.hotels.nl/amsterdam/avenue/

Prinsengracht Hotel - www.prinsengrachthotel.nl/index.php