

This charming tour gives you a truly special Dutch experience. VGT's owner, Emma, along with a local Dutch guide, will personally take you on this vacation that you will surely remember for a lifetime. Along the way, you will visit the captivating, visually stunning Keukenhof Tulip Exhibition Center, where many new and exotic bulbs are on display; the historic cities of Delft, Leiden and The Hague; and the uniquely Dutch, rural polder landscape with many windmills, lakes, baby lambs, charming unspoiled villages, and beautiful "Cape Cod-like" sand dunes. We stay two nights each at wonderful three and four-star hotels (the first on the ocean, close to the blooming fields of daffodils, hyacinths and tulips, the second in the historic center of Delft and the last hotel on a picturesque lake). After finishing a pleasurable day of biking along safe, flat bicycle paths and small roads, you will enjoy five dinners of superb three or four-courses (the Dutch really know how to cook!). If you get tired during the day, or if you buy a few souvenirs along the way, we always have the support van following close behind. Tours are 7 days and 6 nights in length, with two nights each in three and four-star hotels in Noordwijk, Delft and Noorden. The tour is limited to 14 people!

Included

- 6 nights lodging in three and four-star hotels with private facilities
- 5 dinners and 6 breakfasts
- **24-speed bicycle**
- Entrance to the Keukenhof
- Outstanding, personalized leadership by VGT's owner and local Dutch guide
- **Support van**
- Daily route directions
- Baggage handling
- All taxes and gratuities for the hotel and restaurant portions of the tour

Daily Itinerary

Day 1: Noordwijkerhout Roundtrip

We'll meet at 11:00 AM in the arrival hall of the central station in Leiden, a short train ride from Amsterdam. After lunch and a brief orientation meeting we'll stroll through **Leiden's** beautiful city center. We'll "follow in the footsteps of **Rembrandt**" and visit the "**Pilgrim's Church**", where the American forefathers prayed before departing to Delftshaven, from where they sailed to Plymouth in Massachusetts. In the late afternoon we'll transfer to our charming, 4-star hotel in Noordwijkerhout, close to Holland's famous tulip fields and bordering the beautiful dunes. After fitting your bike we'll have an optional warm-up ride through the glorious tulip fields just inland from our sea front hotel. Tonight you will hear about the program for the next day and the routine for the rest of the week while enjoying your first scrumptious Dutch dinner in the restaurant of our hotel.



Day 2: Noordwijkerhout – Keukenhof - Vogelenzang – Noordwijkerhout – 22 miles (35 km)

In the morning we'll "beat the crowds" as we make an early visit to the **Keukenhof**, the world's most spectacular flower garden with over 6 million bulbs, fantastically arranged amid fascinating outdoor sculptures, ponds and fountains. Originally this was the 15th century kitchen garden of the Countess Jacoba van Beieren. You'll certainly want to photograph this **sensational display of color**. After our Keukenhof visit, we'll cycle north to **Vogelenzang** for lunch. We'll guide you through the prosperous villages here where we'll admire many blooming private gardens and impressive Dutch villas before we return to our beach hotel. Dinner is again in our hotel tonight.

Day 3: Noordwijk – The Hague – Delft – 28 miles (45 km)

We'll depart Noordwijk and take a bike path through more of Holland's most lovely sand dunes (rolling hills!). We'll pass through **Katwijk**, a lovely former fishing village and continue on to the Wassenaarse Slag. Here we'll leave the dunes and cycle past the elegant estates of **Wassenaar**. We'll follow a winding bike path through lovely woods and finally arrive in front of **King Willem Alexander's** private mansion. From here we'll bike on to the center of The Hague where we'll admire many handsome buildings of the **Dutch Government** and the official palace of the king. We will have a hearty Dutch pancake lunch before biking the twelve-kilometer distance from The Hague to **Delft**, where you'll stay right in the center of town. Just before we reach our hotel we will have a chance to visit a **Delft pottery factory** where the world-renowned "**Delft Blue**" china is created. Our dinner tonight is in one of Delft's finest restaurants.

Day 4: Delft Roundtrip – 20 miles (optional ride) (32 km)

In the morning you are free to visit the historic center of Delft by foot. You might like to visit the New Church (completed in 1380) where **William of Orange** is buried, or climb the steps to the bell tower where you'll have a wonderful view over the red tiled roofs of Delft. You can also browse the numerous shops and boutiques Delft has to offer. For lunch, if you are brave enough, you could try the famous "new herring" at a **six-hundred-year-old fish stand** near the magnificent town hall. In the afternoon you may join us on an optional bike ride through charming Dutch countryside to Schipluiden, a quaint little village southwest of Delft, and then continue on to the **Nieuwe Waterweg**. This is the major connection between Rotterdam, the world's number one harbor, and the North Sea. From the terrace of a Waterweg Restaurant you'll have a marvelous view on an exciting parade of barges, riverboats and huge ocean cargo ships. Dinner is on your own tonight in one of Delft's many fine restaurants.

Day 5: Delft – Noorden – 36 miles (58 km)

Our longest biking day will take us through the **Westland**, the fertile area full of greenhouses where delicious tomatoes, cucumbers and peppers that Holland is famous for are grown. We'll continue through this abundant green area of Holland along the tiny **River Rotte**, which has recently become a nature and wildlife reservation. We'll cruise by classic windmills and many cows, sheep and lambs grazing peacefully on our way. Later we'll cycle through the "mecca of the flower growing industry" and arrive in our private hotel, with its well-known gourmet restaurant, beautifully situated on an idyllic lake in **Noorden**. You might rent a quiet electro boat this afternoon and visit the conservation area on the other side of the lake, which is also a bird and wild flower preserve, unique in all of Holland.

Day 6: Noorden Roundtrip – 28 miles (45 km)

Today we'll follow the bucolic Jaagpad route through the surroundings of Noorden that the Dutch call the "**Green Heart of Holland**" and we'll enjoy some of the best biking possible in the Netherlands. We'll follow a curvy, picturesque little peat river, the **Meije**, a photographer's paradise with charming small farms and meadows filled with wildflowers all along its banks. We'll be biking along typical Dutch canals, passing by deep polders and beautiful lakes. Dutch farmers, who dug the peat to burn as fuel centuries ago, artificially created these lakes. We'll stop for lunch before we bike back to the relaxing terrace of our hotel; then toast your Dutch biking accomplishments with a good Heineken or, we have to admit, a superb Belgian Palm Beer! Our farewell dinner again will be in the candlelit restaurant of our hotel, where the food is lovingly prepared and beautifully presented especially for this occasion.

Day 7: Early morning group transfer to Schiphol Airport for your flight home or the next leg of your European vacation. We recommend getting a flight that leaves after 11 a.m., however if you need to schedule an earlier flight, that is okay and we will arrange an appropriate transfer for you.

Starting Point

11:00 a.m. in front of the cafe in the arrival hall of Leiden Centrum Railroad Station, a short 17 minutes away from Schiphol Airport (35 minutes from Amsterdam). Trains leave every half-hour. For last minute train schedules visit the website of the Dutch Railways, www.ns.nl.

Ending Point

The tour concludes the morning of day 7 after breakfast with group transfer by taxi to Schiphol Airport. From the hotel to the airport is about 40 minutes by van, making it possible to catch a return flight to the US after 11:00 AM. (Earlier flights are also possible) We will ask everyone the time of their flights, and book 1-2 taxis accordingly.

Cycling

Daily cycling distances are 22-36 miles on flat terrain and on mostly separate bike paths. Level of Difficulty is easy. Remember that the van is usually very close by and you can join the "lonely driver" if you need a break from riding!

Bicycles

24-speed hybrid Specialized bikes are included on the tour. Bicycles come equipped with: grip shifters, handlebar bag, bell, cage and water bottle, optional toe clips, optional rear view mirror and rear pannier. It is also possible to replace our pedals with your own "clip on" pedals. Helmets are not included; **please bring your own helmet!** We do have a few helmets available for rent for \$20 for the week. If you wish to rent one, please let us know ahead of time. Very good quality 5-speed Dutch tandem bikes, suitable for the terrain, are available on a limited basis for \$250.00 per tour.

Not included

- Airfare
- Alcoholic and bar beverages
- One dinner
- 6 lunches
- Independent sightseeing
- Transportation other than scheduled VGT transfers