



## Amsterdam - Bruges

Holland – Belgium Bike and Barge Tour

Two famous cities in Belgium and the Netherlands are the first and last stops on this fascinating Bike and Boat holiday. You will enjoy **Bruges**, one of the most beautiful, historic cities of Belgium, and **Amsterdam**, the architecturally and culturally wonderful capital of the Netherlands. Our tour will also take you to the delightful cities of **Gouda** and **Dordrecht**, and the renowned 19 windmills of Kinderdijk. You'll notice subtle differences between the green Dutch polder landscape with water aplenty, quiet roads, and villages, the old island world of Zeeland with fields, creeks, winding dikes, and dams, and the picturesque but drier countryside between the Flemish cities of **Ghent** and **Bruges** in Belgium. These two Belgian cities experienced their golden age long before the emergence of the Dutch as a mercantile powerhouse. This is clearly evident in the architecture and paintings of the Flemish school. The mighty rivers in this part of the Netherlands and Belgium are prominent features along the route and you'll be impressed by the Netherlands' own world wonder, the **Delta Works**, which bear witness to Holland's ongoing battle against the sea.

### Included in the Tour Price

- 7 nights on board the ship (sheets, blankets, and towels)
- 7 breakfasts, 6 packed lunches, and 7 dinners
- Coffee and tea on board
- **24-speed bicycle**, incl. **helmet**, pannier bags, lock, water bottle, & **bike insurance**
- Tour guide (multilingual)
- 3 City Walks
- Route information and GPS-tracks
- Ferry fares on route
- **Reservation costs**



## Daily Itinerary

### DAY 1 Thursday: Amsterdam - Ouderkerk a/d Amstel – Oude Wetering – 6 miles (10 km)

When you arrive on board the ship in Amsterdam between 12:30 and 1:30 p.m. you can put your luggage away in your cabin and then enjoy a cup of coffee or tea. It's also a good moment to become acquainted with the guide, skipper, and crew - and of course your fellow passengers. At 2 p.m. we will leave Amsterdam cruising on the **river Amstel** to Ouderkerk a/d Amstel. After dinner we will cycle our first kilometers through the polder Ronde Hoep to **Oude Wetering**. During dinner aboard the ship, the program for the next day and the global planning of the week will be discussed.



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### DAY 2 Friday: Oude Wetering – Gouda – 28 miles (45 km)

From Oude Wetering we will continue on country roads, along canals and rivers to the cheese town, **Gouda**. You will have time in the late afternoon to admire the stained glass windows in the St. John's Church or to enjoy one of the sidewalk cafés in Gouda's famous main square. In the square you'll find the beautiful Town Hall, one of the few remaining examples of Gothic architecture in Holland. Every hour you'll hear the city hall's chimes and can watch the puppet show depicting the moment city rights were given to Gouda back in 1272 by Earl Floris V. After dinner we'll take another walk through the city.



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### DAY 3 Saturday: Gouda – Alblasserdam - Dordrecht – 24 miles (39 km)

Today we 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 we will cross the river by ferry to **Kinderdijk**, where Holland's largest number (19) of historical windmills is found. Kinderdijk is now listed as an UNESCO's World Heritage site. You'll visit a working windmill that's now a small museum. It's well worth the climb up the narrow steps to the top.



After the Kinderdijk, we will tour through the Alblasserwaardpolder, then take a ferry which will bring us to the banks of the river Beneden-Merwede in **Dordrecht**. Dordrecht is one of the oldest cities in Holland, which lies at the intersection of three busy waterways.

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**DAY 4 Sunday: Dordrecht – Willemstad – Zierikzee – 33 miles (54 km)**

The ship sails during breakfast to the delta region of Holland's large rivers. The many small waterways here used to have an open connection with the sea, but after the flood of 1953, large civil engineering works were carried out as a part of the Delta Plan so that dams closed off most tidal inlets. Revised plans have produced a number of dams and bridges in a second line of defence. You will find yourself surrounded by concrete that is built to last for 200 years. In Willemstad, an old fortified town, we will start our cycle tour and ride over the Volkerakbrug (with one of the busiest locks in the world) to the former island of Goeree-Overvlakkee.



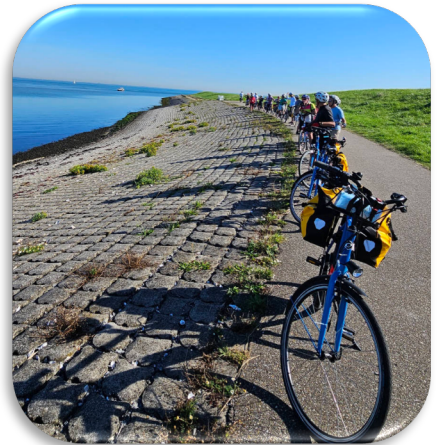
Our destination today is Zierikzee, a beautiful town and the center of the "mussel culture." The blue mussels from this area are a renowned delicacy. Just before reaching our destination we will visit the 'Watersnoodmuseum'. This museum tells the tragic events of 1953 and is built in recently renewed caissons, once used for the last closure gap.

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**DAY 5 Monday: Zierikzee – Middelburg – 31 miles (51 km)**

Today we will encounter one of the Wonders of the World as we bike across the great dam that was built after the devastating flooding of Zeeland in 1953. Now all the islands of Zeeland are connected by dams, but each has retained its own character.

Cycling on quiet country roads, we will head for Middelburg, a small city with another lovely town center and the capital of the province of Zeeland. Before Middelburg we will visit the picturesque port town of Veere.



## **DAY 6 Tuesday: Middelburg – Sas van Gent – Ghent – 28 miles (45 km)**

We will travel to the Dutch-Belgian border in Sas van Gent, the former gateway to the harbor of Ghent, through an area with small villages, creeks, bending embankments, and beautiful panoramas. In case you choose the shorter cycle route, we will embark here.

During our journey we'll witness the lively maritime traffic in the canal from Ghent to Terneuzen, with impressive industrial buildings along the shores. After a short journey of 1.5 hours, we will arrive in Ghent.

From the pier, we'll take the tram to the medieval center of this beautiful city. We will spend the night in this town, a major trading center during the Middle Ages and still one of Flanders' most important cities today. The city center has many well-preserved patrician mansions and architecturally delightful civic and commercial buildings.



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## **DAY 7 Wednesday: Ghent – Bruges – 28 miles (45 km)**

Today we will cycle straight through the beautiful center of Ghent on a peaceful route. We'll pedal past the Leie Bridge and enter the tranquil countryside of **East Flanders**. Traveling down winding roads and through patches of woodland, we head to **Bruges**. The final section of the route will take us along the towpath next to the canal running from Ghent to Oostende. In the afternoon and evening you can enjoy the heart of the fascinating city of Bruges.



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## **DAY 8 Thursday: Tour Ends**

Our tour concludes after breakfast. The barge will be moored near the Buiten Katelijnevest in Bruges. We ask you to depart before 10:00 a.m.

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### **Difficulty and Daily Mileage**

This tour is rated "easy" for its flat terrain and low mileage. All distances are approximate. The above planned itinerary is subject to change due to changing wind, weather conditions, and other unforeseen circumstances (such as mooring requirements).

## Departure Point Amsterdam

The barge embarks from the Oosterdok (next to the science center Nemo) near the Central Railway Station in Amsterdam. Departure time on thursday is between 12:30 and 1:30 p.m. If you want you can bring your luggage in advance, from 12 noon onwards.

Amsterdam is connected to the Schiphol Airport (12 miles / 20 km). From Schiphol Airport trains leave every 15 minutes from 6:00 AM to midnight to Amsterdam central.

A map, detailed instructions, and the name of your boat will be provided after final payment is received.

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## Documents

If you are a non-EU national wishing to visit or travel within the EU, you will need a passport:

- **valid for at least 6 months** after the date you intend to leave the EU country you are visiting,

In the past, many U.S. and Canadian travelers did not need to worry about getting a visa before they went abroad. However, a major change to European travel for Americans is being implemented by the European Union (EU) soon (**starting around the middle of 2025**) that will require you to get a visa to visit 30 European countries.

The European Union (EU) is introducing a new electronic system called the European Travel Information and Authorization System (**ETIAS**) to bolster security, curb illegal immigration, and safeguard public health within the Schengen Area. ETIAS will serve as a pre-screening mechanism for travelers from countries that are currently exempt from visa requirements.

To get an ETIAS, you will need to complete an online application form (to be launched by the European Union). For more information click on [Europe travel](#)

- Do not forget your travel, health and/or car insurance documents.
  - Registration of documents is compulsory at check-in in hotels.
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## The Bicycles

A well maintained, comfortable 24-speed hybrid bicycle is available free of charge for each participant. Men and women's models are available in sizes appropriate to your height. The bikes come with **helmets**, grip shifters, hand brakes, carrier bag, lock, repair kit, water bottle holders, water bottle, and **bike insurance**. If you prefer to bring your own bike you're welcome to do so at a discount. Electric bikes can be rented for this tour at a surcharge and need to be reserved at least 2 weeks in advance.

We advise you only to rent an electric bike if you have first tried one at home. They're heavier than regular bikes and therefore can be difficult to maneuver.

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## Meals

The cook prepares all meals: a substantial breakfast and a three-course dinner of very good quality. A packed lunch may be prepared after breakfast. Tea and coffee will be ready when you arrive on board in the afternoon. There's a bar on board with reasonably-priced beer, wine, and soft drinks. **If you have special meal requirements, please mention this when booking.** In the case of a vegan, lactose-free and gluten-free diet there is an additional charge of €100 per week per diet.

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## The Barge

Our motorized passenger vessels, about 60 meters in length, are former river vessels especially converted for this kind of holiday. The barges all comply with the strict safety regulations of the Dutch Shipping Inspection Authorities. On board you'll find a cozy 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's limited storage space in the cabin so we recommend 1 suitcase per person. You can slide the suitcase under your bed. Bike & barge vacations are for people who really enjoy the physical activity of cycling and who value sociability more than wholesale luxury.

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## Travel Guidance

The skipper and his mate are responsible for the smooth running of the barge.

An experienced, multilingual guide will indicate points of interest along the way, accompanies the group when biking, and can assist in case of flat tires or breakdowns. Route instructions are available if you prefer to ride on your own, but please let us know this ahead of time.

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## WiFi

WiFi is available unlimited and free to use. Please be aware that it is a mobile network and might be slower than a landline network you may have at home. As such, if stable internet is critical you may want to purchase your own bundle before leaving home.

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## Insurance

The bicycle insurance included with this tour covers damage and theft but NOT deliberate negligence such as riding over curbstones, or theft due to negligence. We highly recommend that you purchase trip cancellation insurance.

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## **Not Included in the Tour Price**

- Airfare
- Drinks from bar on board or when cycling
- Admission fees to the various museums or places of interest (about €25)
- Trip cancellation insurance