



BIKE & BARGE HOLIDAYS IN EUROPE

2009

NORTHERN HOLLAND - FROM AMSTERDAM

Easy to moderate Bike & Barge cruise

Duration: 8-days / 7-nights
Cost: \$1980 per person twin share (Single cabin supplement \$955)
Departs: 21st June, 12th July, 2nd & 9th August 2009
Includes: Breakfast, packed lunch, dinner (except in Amsterdam), bed linen, tour guide & bike hire

Highlights:

- ***Alkmaar** - A traditional Dutch cheese market right in the center of Alkmaar
- ***Zuiderzee Museum** – Open-air museum village where inhabitants re-enact traditional Dutch life
- ***Zaansche schans** - see the making of the famous Dutch cheese and wooden shoes
- ***Ecomare** - Home of the Waddensee seals where you can get close to the marine wildlife
- ***Historical towns** - Amsterdam, Edam, Volendam, Hoorn, Enkhuizen, Alkmaar

We have secured a limited number of berths on a unique hotel barge to cruise from the Dutch capital Amsterdam to the north of Holland. This fully inclusive cruise offers a high standard of meals and ensuite cabin accommodation plus the opportunity to explore this beautiful countryside sampling beer, cheeses and other local produce that makes this part of Holland so famous. We provide well-maintained multi-gear bikes available on board with opportunities for guided cycling along the route. The cycling is fascinating and varied with free time to explore each day's destination.

Following the Dutch coastline through an ever-changing rural landscape – visiting the now reclaimed Southern Sea and the island of Texel. A chance to explore small fishing villages and beautiful panoramas visiting with picturesque historical Dutch towns.

Suggested itinerary:

Sunday – Arrive in Amsterdam 10 to 15 km

Meet in Amsterdam after lunch where our crew will welcome you aboard the barge with a coffee or tea. Introduction to the crew, explanation of the rules on board, information on the program. After the introduction there is a short tour through the rural area of Amsterdam North to get comfortable with your bike. In the evening after dinner your guide will take you for a walk through Amsterdam.

Amsterdam - Hoorn - Monday - 45 km

Today there is a medley of wonderful landscapes and small "South Sea" villages to explore. We will start in Amsterdam and follow the IJsselmeer coast through the wetlands to the former Island of Marken. In this village the inhabitants wear traditional clothes, living in traditional houses. We take the cycle onto the Marken express ferry to Volendam - a very popular town for tourists and cycle along the IJsselmeer coast to Edam, the origin of the famous Edammer cheese. From here we will travel to Hoorn - "The Horn" or southerly tip of South America was named after this home of some of the most famous Dutch Sailors.

Hoorn - Enkhuizen - Texel - Tuesday - 30 km

We have a full program today – we first cycle from the "Houten Hoofd" (Wooden Head) in Hoorn along the coast of the IJsselmeer to Enkhuizen, where you have an opportunity to visit the "Zuiderzee" (Southern Sea) museum and many other places of **interest** in Enkhuizen. The barge will be rejoined just outside the town and we cruise to the island of Texel. On the way we pass the locks of the Afsluitdijk. Sailing through the salt water of the Wadden Sea we reach the fishing village Oude Schild on the Island of Texel.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations

Texel - Wednesday – 45km or as much as you like

Today we spend the whole day on Texel. We will cycle completely round the island with those that are keen to do so or you are free to relax or to take rides on lesser distances. Places of interest that we visit on the island are the seal centre "Ecomare", the Nature Reserve "de Slufter", the beach by "de Koog" and the local distillery "het Juttertje".

In Oude Schild there is the Jutters museum with a collection of rarities that have been found on the beach or fished out of the sea by the fishermen.

Texel - Den Helder - Alkmaar - Thursday - 40 or 60 km

We depart from Oude Schild and cross over to Den Helder. This is a navy base and there is often a part of the Dutch fleet in the harbour including submarines, minesweepers and other warships.

We cruise following the North Holland canal to St Maartensvlotbrug where the bicycles are put ashore. Now we cycle through the dunes and, in spring, the tulip bulb fields. We pass through typical northern Dutch seaside resorts such as Schoorl, Bergen and Groet. We rejoin the barge in the town centre of Alkmaar. After dinner, our guide will organise a walk around this charming town, famous throughout the world for the cheese markets.

Alkmaar - Amsterdam - Friday - 45 or 15 km (28 or 9 miles)

Today is a real windmill day. After visiting the cheese market in Alkmaar, we cycle via Oterleek and Ursem along the Eilandpolder to Graft and de Rijk. Here we stop to visit the village. After that we cycle to the ferry at Spijkerboor and along the Knollendammervaart to Zaansche Schans. We take time to visit for this open-air museum with a lot to see. Perhaps we can see here too the Zaansche mustard mill in action, and take home with us a jar of mill-pressed mustard.

From here you start on our last cycle kilometres back to Amsterdam.

Amsterdam - Saturday

The city of Amsterdam is certainly well worth exploring and we have a free day here for just that. Why not take a boat tour around the canals, see the Van Gogh museum and the Rijks museum; or just savour the atmosphere of the squares, shopping streets and cafes. The city is very bike friendly or you can walk or take a tram or bus.

In the evening you can choose a restaurant to you liking out of the many good restaurant you can find near to our barge base in central Amsterdam.

Amsterdam - Sunday

Tour ends after breakfast.



Other Bike & Barge cruises are available in France, Germany, Croatia, Greece & Turkey – river and canal cruises are available throughout Europe – sailing holidays in Corsica, Tuscany or Sicily in Italy - ask for details

Contact Outdoor Travel direct for more details and reservations

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