



BIKE & BARGE HOLIDAYS IN EUROPE

2010

HOLLAND & BELGIUM

From Amsterdam to Brussels or return - easy to moderate cycling & sightseeing cruise

Duration: 8-days / 7-nights

Cost: AU\$1355 per person twin share (single supplement \$310 as available)

Departs: 29th May; 5th & 26th June; 3, 24th & 31st July; 21st & 28th August

Bike & Barge cruises combines two popular ways of exploring Europe (easy to moderate cycling with river, canal or island cruising). They allow partners of different abilities & interests to holiday together (trips are just as interesting for non-cycling partners, leisure cyclist OR enthusiasts), you unpack once & come 'home' each night to a wonderful meal and a comfortable cabin with your own bathroom. These cruises are rapidly becoming the thing to do in Europe appealing to the more active mature traveller. They are ideal for first timer or groups.

These mostly fully inclusive cruises offer the opportunity to explore beautiful countryside and historic cities sampling beers, wine and local produce in the company of like-minded cyclists. Tours are conducted in English - but passengers mostly include a mix of different nationalities including English or German speaking with French, Italian or Dutch as the other main languages - adding to the cultural enjoyment of bike and barge cruising.

Well-maintained multi-geared bikes are provided (passengers can bring their own if they prefer) with opportunities for guided cycling along a variety of waterway routes – mostly along flat, sealed pathways - but occasionally they break away into hillier country to visit areas of interest, wine or beer tasting, a castle or a coffee stop. More challenging routes are available in some destinations so please ask for our suggestions according to your ability and interests. The cycling is always fascinating and varied with free time to explore each day's destination. Extra time is usually available for those who want more cycling at the end of each day's stage.

One of our more popular Bike & Barge cruises this itinerary combines **Holland and Belgium** in eight days travelling through two distinct independent countries from capital to capital. On the first night the barge stays in Amsterdam so you have time to explore this fascinating and lively city. We then travel via the River Betuwe and the old fortified town of Willemstad to reach the rural tranquility of the islands of Zeeland. We cross the Belgian border and visit the Flemish port of Antwerp. Belgium is famous for its beer, so a visit to one of the breweries or speciality pubs on the route is included. The cruise ends in a small town near Brussels, the capital of Belgium but also the location of the European Parliament. Standing at the Market Square in Brussels with its dramatic mediaeval buildings surrounded by the startling modern glass towers of the new Europe, and comparing it to the Dam Square in the centre of Amsterdam, you realize these how these countries and these capitals are so close and yet so different.

Included in tour:

- 7 nights accommodations on board of barge in double/twin share cabin
- Full board (breakfast, picnic lunch & 3-courses dinner from dinner on day 1 to breakfast)
- Coffee and tea on board
- Services of experienced local cycling guide
- 7-speed bicycle hire with pannier, route map & tour information (we suggest you bring/buy your own helmet)
- Train ticket Mechelen - Brussels – Mechelen
- Several guided city walks & Beer tasting in Belgium

Not included in tour:

- Personal expenses, entrance fees, drinks (other than coffee or tea), transfers to the barge in Amsterdam and from the barge in Brussels (in both locations the barge will be within walking distance of the train station)

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations

Suggested itinerary (operates in reverse on some weeks and route may be subject to change as required):

Saturday: Arrive Amsterdam - Cycling distances ± 15 km

Plan to arrive today in the afternoon to meet the crew, check-in to your cabin and try out your bike. In the evening after a welcome dinner you may take a walk or perhaps a boat ride of the Amsterdam canals (not included).

Sunday: Amsterdam to Vianen - Cycling ± 35 km

We cruise out of the city to Breukelen and here we begin the cycling via Castle De Haar and Montfoort to Vianen where you rejoin the barge and stay overnight.

Monday: Vianen to Hertogenbosch - Cycling ± 40 km

Today we cruise to Tiel, crossing by ferry to the rural area between the Rivers Maas and Waal. Past many dikes and rich polderland we arrive in the town of Hertogenbosch, the charming capital of the province of Noord-Brabant

Tuesday: Hertogenbosch - Willemstad - Cycling ± 45 km

The day starts with a cruise on the River Maas. At Geertruidenberg we start the cycling along an interesting and varied route to the famous walled town of Willemstad

Wednesday: Willemstad to Antwerp - Cycling ± 40 km

In the morning after breakfast we cycle to the peninsula of Tholen in Zeeland. We rejoin the barge to cross the Belgian border to the port town of Antwerp where we have arranged beer tasting in a typical Belgian bar.

Thursday: Antwerp – Mechelen - Cycling ± 40 km

The morning is free for you to explore the great city of Antwerp. Then, in the afternoon we cycle across the Flemish countryside to the charming town of Mechelen and rejoin the barge.

Friday: Brussels - No cycling

To avoid the traffic we take the train to Brussels and your tour leader will propose a short city walk – with time enough to visit many of the highlights of the capital of Belgium. Remember to sample one of the many culinary specialties: mussels, french fries, chocolate, waffles and of course, the beer.

Late in the afternoon you'll return to Mechelen by train and, after a final farewell dinner onboard, we will stay overnight on the barge.

Saturday:

Tour ends after breakfast at 9:00am



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

Contact Outdoor Travel for more details and reservations:

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