

HOLLAND & BELGIUM - AMSTERDAM TO BRUGES or return

8-days / 7-nights - easy to moderate Bike & Barge *VALUE* cruises

Departs: Amsterdam to Bruges - Saturday 28th August & Bruges to Amsterdam – Saturday 2nd October

Cost: AU\$1495 per person twin share (single cabin supplement on request)

Includes: Breakfast, dinner on board (most nights), picnic lunch, cycling tour guide & bike hire

Highlights: Amsterdam, Utrecht, Gorinchem, Dordrecht, Willemstad, Bruinisse, Vlissingen, Ghent, Bruges

Bike & Barge cruises: Combine two popular ways of exploring Europe (cycling & river cruising), allowing partners of different abilities and interests to holiday together (trips are just as interesting for non-cycling partners, leisure cyclist OR cycling enthusiasts), you unpack once & come 'home' each night to a wonderful meal and a comfortable cabin with your own bathroom.

For 2010 we have secured a very limited number of berths on several unique hotel barges to cruise from the **Amsterdam to the beautiful city of Bruges in Belgium or return**. The Feniks cruises offer a high standard of meals and comfortable if simple twin or bunk-style cabin accommodation (all with ensuite bathrooms) plus the opportunity to explore this varied and interesting countryside, with visits to historic and cultural centres, sampling the beer and local produce that makes this part of Belgium and Holland famous. Each day you can join our cycle-guide on a bike-tour, go by yourself by bike and meet up with the group at the boat or stay on the boat to enjoy the cruise. In the evenings our guide will often offer a city-walk or a suggestion of other activities.

Well-maintained multi-geared bicycles with panniers are provided – comfortable, easy to ride and ideal for this route – and a fascinating and varied guided cycling program with free time to explore each day's destination.

The bike ride avoids the traffic wherever possible, taking small country roads, towpaths, paved forest trails and the occasion cobblestone road in cities and major towns. We will cycle through relatively flat country mostly along riverbanks or towpaths.



Suggested itinerary:

SATURDAY: AMSTERDAM – UTRECHT

Scenic ride along the river and city centre of Utrecht – cycling @ 20 km.

Plan to arrive at our hotel barge near the centre of Amsterdam (a walk or short tram/taxi ride from the central station) at about 2.00pm. We prepare sandwiches for your afternoon bike ride today. The barge will follow the Amsterdam-Rijn canal towards Utrecht. This is a major waterway connecting the capital with the Rhine. We will cycle to the little town of Breukelen on the scenic river Vecht, a place that traces its history back over 2000 years. We serve a welcome dinner on the barge. In the evening you can explore Utrecht by bus/foot or bike.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations



SUNDAY: UTRECHT – GORINCHEM

Dykes, rivers, villages, former defence line, castle – cycling @ 45 km.

We cruise towards the river Lek whilst you enjoy breakfast in the central part of The Netherlands. Here three major rivers meet and make their way towards the sea. We cycle in this river landscape from Vianen between two main rivers the Lek and Waal, and we follow the tributary stream, the Linge along winding roads and beautiful villages and river views. We can visit Leerdam with its glass museum and Vuren, where we take a ferryboat to Loevestein with its Dutch castle. Another ferryboat will take us to the town of Gorinchem, a former fortified town on the border of the province of Holland.

Late afternoon we rejoin the boat for a drink, some snacks or a warm bowl of home made soup. After dinner you can explore the town or relax.

MONDAY: GORINCHEM – DORDRECHT/WILLEMSTAD

Meadows and mills, gardens and rivers – cycling @ 45 km.

A typical Dutch landscape of meadows and fields, with countless ditches. Near Gorinchem are the famous rows of water pumping traditional windmills at Kinderdijk. There are 19 windmills and you can lengthen the ride to see as many as time allows. We continue by bike and ferryboat to the oldest town in Holland, Dordrecht with its wonderful and preserved town centre should not be missed. The ship will stay overnight in Dordrecht or will cruise to the fortified town of Willemstad.

TUESDAY: DORDRECHT/WILLEMSTAD – BRUINISSE

Islands of the delta – cycling @ 35 or 60 km.

Today we enter the south-western part of Holland, a world of islands in the delta of the main rivers. After the serious flooding in 1953 engineers designed a system of waterworks to protect the area between Rotterdam and Antwerp. The bike-ride will be following dams and dykes on this system across a wide, open landscape with arable land and small villages. The fishing village of Bruinisse will be the mooring place for the night.

An option to extend the cycling to 60km is a visit to the beautiful town of Zierikzee, a well-preserved former trading town at the other end of the island.

WEDNESDAY: BRUINISSE – VLISSINGEN

Islands and dams, the sea and old fishing ports – cycling @ 40 or 60 km.

A three or four-island tour today - first cruising, then cycling or for those who prefer a longer cycling route the whole distance.

Highlights today include:

1. The Oosterschelde Barrier, which protects the hinterland against storms. This is a dam, which is partly open, the tide and the sea life are preserved in the area but in case of emergency the hatches are closed. There is a road across the top of the dam.
2. The small town of Veere
3. The provincial capital of Middelburg (on route to Vlissingen or you can visit in the evening, by bike or train)
4. Vlissingen-centre; the seaside with its historic and maritime museums.

THURSDAY: VLISSINGEN – GHENT

Schelderiver, Flanders, medieval city of Ghent – cycling @ 40 km.

From Vlissingen we take a ferryboat towards the southern riverbank. The major seaway you cross here is the Westerschelde, which connects the port of Antwerp with the sea. Antwerp is in Belgium. And the port is the second biggest in Europe after Rotterdam.

Our barge will sail to Terneuzen on the northern end of the canal towards Ghent (Belgium) through a very quiet corner of Holland called Zeeuws Vlaanderen (e.g. the Zeeland or Dutch part of Flanders). We cycle on quiet country roads into Belgium and we spend the night in Ghent.

Ghent is very well known for its beautiful town centre, an ideal place to explore, go shopping or to see some of the city's highlights: St. Baafscathedral (with its painting of the Mystic Lamb); the Belfry or Gravensteen Castle.

FRIDAY: GHENT – BRUGES

A diversity of rural countryside and small towns between Ghent and Bruges – cycling @ 30 or 60 km.

A ride through the provinces of East and Western Flanders brings us to Bruges, the sister city of Ghent. The ride is very diverse, first through the very heart of the city and its suburbs, into quiet countryside, woodlands and in part along a canal. Ghent is a thriving university town, Bruges reminds us more of the Middle Ages and the centre is almost like an open-air museum. Bruges has many museums and places of interest for you to visit. The barge will be moored within walking distance of the city centre and in the evening perhaps join our guide for a city walk or take a coffee in the beautiful well-preserved square.

SATURDAY: BRUGES

Tour ends after breakfast.



Please note: the Feniks cruises offer a high standard of meals and comfortable if simple twin or bunk-style cabin accommodation (all with ensuite bathrooms). We also offer the program in reverse on alternative dates and may be subject to changes due to any unforeseen circumstances. Distances shown are approximate and may change if the cruise schedule so demands.

Another popular route on the Feniks is from Paris to Bruges – early bookings are essential on this two-week itinerary. Other Bike & Barge cruises are available from a variety of barges or boats in France, Germany, Holland, Croatia, Greece and Turkey. River and canal cruises are available throughout Europe, sailing holidays in Corsica, Tuscany or Sicily, Italy - ask for details

Contact the experienced staff at Outdoor Travel for more details and reservations:

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