

HOLLAND & BELGIUM

8-days / 7-nights from Amsterdam to Brussels or return - easy to moderate *STANDARD* cruise



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 tranquillity 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 always a popular inclusion. The final destination for this cruise is a small town a short train ride from the city of Brussels which is the capital of Belgium and the location of the European Parliament. Standing in Market Square in Brussels with its dramatic medieval 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.

Bike & Barge cruises combine 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 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 timers or groups of friends.

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

Cost: AU\$1105 per person twin share.
Single cabin supplement \$295 (as available)

Departs: 26 May; 2 June; 7, 14 July; 4, 11, 18, 25 August 2012

Included in tour: 7-nights accommodation onboard in twin share (bunk) cabins, full board (breakfast, picnic lunch & 3-courses dinner each day from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 8), coffee and tea on board, services of an experienced cycling guide, multi-geared bicycle hire with pannier, route map & tour information (we suggest you bring or 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 on-board), transfers to the barge in Amsterdam and from the barge in Mechelen (the barge will usually 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 @ 15km

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

Sunday: Amsterdam to Vianen - Cycling @ 35km

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

Monday: Vianen to Hertogenbosch - Cycling @ 40km

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

Tuesday: Hertogenbosch - Willemstad - Cycling @ 45km

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 @ 40km

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 @ 40km

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 (a 20-minute train trip) 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 we return to Mechelen by train for a final farewell dinner onboard, staying overnight on the barge.

Saturday:

Tour ends after breakfast at 9:00am



Well-maintained multi-gear 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 to visit areas of interest, beer or food tasting, a castle or a coffee stop. 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.

Other Bike & Barge cruises from **Outdoor Travel** are available in France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Croatia, Greece & Turkey and also in Vietnam – 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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