

## HOLLAND – THE HIGHLIGHTS OF HOLLAND

8-days / 7-nights - easy to moderate **PREMIUM** cruise cycling cruise



This itinerary offers an attractive combination of famous traditional small towns and typical lush green rural countryside. Starting in the centre of Amsterdam we visit the *Green Heart* of Holland with its impressive lakes and woodlands. We discover historical centres such as Haarlem and Leiden and the famous cheese market towns of Alkmaar and Edam. We will see the sand dunes and beaches of the North Sea, fishing villages and the 17<sup>th</sup> century port of Hoorn.

Highlights will include the Zaanse Schans open air museum, a variety of much-loved traditional windmills, Schermerhorn, the landscapes of the Dutch painter Rembrandt and the banks of the famous River Amstel.

Duration: 8-days / 7-nights  
 Cost: From AU\$1295 per person twin share (single supplement as available)  
 Departs: 30th June, 14th July, 4th & 18th August, 2012.

### Included in tour:

- 7-nights accommodations on board of barge in double/twin share cabin with bunk beds & private bathroom
- Full board (breakfast, picnic lunch & 3-course dinner from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 8)
- Coffee and tea on board
- Services of experienced local cycling guide with a fully guided cruising, cycling and city walks program
- 7-speed bicycle hire with pannier, route map & tour information (we suggest you bring/buy your own helmet)

**Not included in tour:** personal expenses, entrance fees, drinks (other than coffee or tea), transfers to/from the barge in Amsterdam (the barge will be within walking distance of the train station)

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 non-cycling partners, leisure cyclist OR enthusiasts), you unpack once & come 'home' each night to a wonderful meal and a comfortable if simple 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, families or small groups. These mostly fully inclusive cruises offer the opportunity to explore beautiful countryside and historic cities sampling beer 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.

**Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations**

Well-maintained multi-gear bikes are provided (you 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, beer or cheese tasting, a castle or a coffee stop. The cycling is always fascinating and varied with free time to explore each day's destination.

**Suggested Bike & Barge itinerary:** The trip starts and ends in Amsterdam.

**Saturday: Depart Amsterdam** - cycling distance @ 20km.

After you join the barge in Amsterdam, we cruise through the locks to the centre of Amsterdam. There's a short cycle trip following the banks of the River Amstel ending in Uithoorn / Kudelstaart.

**Sunday: Uithoorn to Leiden** - cycling distance @ 55 km

Today we cross the real Green Heart of Holland on cycle paths past the areas of lakes called the Langeraarse Plassen and Braassemer Meer. The cycling finishes today in the university town of Leiden. In the evening a city walk through the historical centre of this, the birthplace of Rembrandt, with its numerous courtyards is highly recommended.

**Monday: Leiden to Haarlem** - cycling distance @ 50km

Today we ride to the seaside resort of Katwijk and then through the sand dune paths to Zandvoort. If weather permits, we can have some time on the beach. Rejoining paths used by fishermen's wives to go to the market we arrive in Haarlem. The small town centre is one of the best shopping towns in the Netherlands and there are lots of cafes, bars and restaurants where you can sit on the terraces overlooking the market place for a beer or coffee.

**Tuesday: Haarlem to Alkmaar** - cycling distance @ 50km

The first village we arrive at this morning is Spaarndam (the village of Hans Brinker). We cross the North Sea Canal by ferry and continue cycling through rural villages such as Nauerna and the museum of Zaanse Schans. We continue following the River Zaan and the Knollendammer Canal to Alkmaar, famous for its cheese markets.

**Wednesday: Alkmaar** – free day to explore or cycling distance @ 55km to the Sea Wall

Today the boat stays in Alkmaar so if you wish you can relax and enjoy some free time. There is a cycle ride to the unique wooded sand dune area near the villages of Bergen and Schoorl and to the Hondsbossche Zeewering (sea wall).

**Thursday: Alkmaar to Purmerend** - cycling distance @ 45km

We pass Oterleek and Avenhorn to arrive in the historical port town of Hoorn. We then follow the coastal road with splendid views over IJssel Lake. Our ride follows the Canal 'Beemsterringvaart' to Purmerend and on the way we visit the museum windmill in Schermerhorn.

**Friday: Purmerend via Edam to Amsterdam** - cycling distance @ 50km

This morning we cycle around in the picturesque village of Edam. Then we continue on to the fishing village of Volendam where we have time for a break to enjoy the atmosphere and the people in traditional costume. We cycle along IJssel Lake through Uitdam and Durgerdam and cross the River IJ by ferry before making our way to the centre of Amsterdam. In the evening you may wish to join the guide for a walk through the centre or to simply explore the city of Amsterdam and its many canals.

**Saturday:**

Tour ends after breakfast.

**Outdoor Travel** offers a wide range of Bike & Barge cruises in other areas of Holland and on the popular routes from Amsterdam to Bruges in Belgium or Bruges to Paris. There are several other routes in France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Croatia, Greece & Turkey and also in Vietnam.

Inn-to-inn cycling holidays – guided or self guided – are available throughout Europe. River and canal hotel barge or self-skipped cruiseboat hire – all with bikes available – are offered throughout Europe - ask for details:

**Contact Outdoor Travel for more details and reservations:**

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