

HOLLAND – SPRING TULIPS CYCLE CRUISES **BOOK EARLY FOR 2020** 8-days / 7-nights Easy to moderate **PREMIUM PLUS, PREMIUM** or **STANDARD PLUS** from Amsterdam



Holland in springtime is awash with the colours and fragrances of fresh flowers, especially the millions upon millions of brightly coloured tulips. Between April and early May these special cycling cruises focus very much on the tulips with rides past row after row of flowers in bloom and a visit to the world-famous 32-hectare Keukenhof Park, perhaps the most beautiful spring garden in the world.

Accommodation is aboard specially converted canal barges. We offer several barges of different standards on various routes taking in the best of the springtime flowers as well as those other Dutch icons, windmills and dikes. The cycling is mostly flat and generally easy to moderate with usually between 25 to 50 kilometres over 5 to 6 hours of cycling per day. Most barges have 10 to 14 cabins, each with private bathroom facilities. Barges have spacious lounge and dining areas for relaxing after the day's ride.

Bike & Barge cruising combines two popular ways of exploring the waterways, towns and villages of Europe, cycling and river cruising. The holiday allows partners of different abilities and interests to holiday together (trips are just as interesting for leisure cyclists OR cycling enthusiasts), you unpack once and come 'home' each night to a wonderful meal and a comfortable cabin with your own bathroom. Some barges may also offer upgrade cabins for an extra cost. Well-maintained multi-gear bikes are provided (you can bring your own if you prefer). E-bikes are available upon request on most departures at extra cost and these do need to be reserved well in advance.

Cost from: **PREMIUM PLUS barges: \$2230 - \$2505 per person twin share**

Departures: 28th March, 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th April, 2nd May, 2020

PREMIUM barges: \$2020 - \$2495 per person twin share

Departures: 28th March, 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th April, 2nd May, 2020

STANDARD PLUS barges: From \$1795 per person twin share

Departures: 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th April, 2nd May, 2020

Includes: 7 nights' accommodation aboard your barge in twin-bed cabin with en-suite, breakfast daily, picnic lunches on cycling days, 3-course dinners on most nights, multi-gear hybrid bike hire, experienced English-speaking cycle tour guides, entry to Keukenhof.

Not included: Drinks on board; other entrance fees (museums, castles, breweries, cheese farm etc.); arrival / departure transfers to and from the boat; items of a personal nature; gratuities. On some barges you have one night free to have dinner at your own arrangements, please ask when booking.

We offer these as a Bike & Barge *guided* cycling tour however, you can decide each day if you want to cycle with the group and guide, cycle independently, or not ride at all if you prefer to stay with the boat. Non-cycling passengers are welcome on these departures; note that whilst there may be some sightseeing activities or evening guided walks, there are no sightseeing provisions for non-cyclists on cycling days.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations



Typical suggested itinerary: *the day to day itinerary may vary depending on the boat, departure date and cycling ability of the group. All itineraries are subject to change depending weather, waterway traffic or at the direction of the captain or cycle tour guide. Cycling distances shown are approximate.*

Day 1 Saturday: Amsterdam

cycling @ 15km

Plan to arrive on time in the afternoon, settle into your cabin and relax with a cup of coffee or tea. You will meet your cycling tour guide, the skipper and crew and of course your fellow passengers. Around 2pm we leave Amsterdam. Once we are out of the city environs we have a short warm-up ride on our bicycles, followed by dinner and a meeting with the barge crew and guides to plan the week ahead.

Day 2 Sunday: Haarlem – Keukenhof – Leiden

cycling @ 40km

We cycle a wonderful route through the oldest tulip fields of Holland, the highlight being a visit to the magnificent Keukenhof Gardens, the most beautiful tulip bulb park in the world. Keukenhof offers visitors an overwhelming blaze of spring colours, with seven million flowering tulips as well as hyacinth, narcissi, crocuses, blossoming trees, azaleas, rhododendrons and more, set amongst a magnificent 80 acres of traditional and modern landscape architecture. After our visit to the park, we cycle on to Leiden, a charming historic city, home to the Netherlands' oldest university, birthplace of Rembrandt van Rijn. In the evening there may be a city walk.

Day 3 Monday: Leiden – Kudelstaart

cycling @ 45km

We cycle through the polder landscape of the Haarlemmermeer, once the biggest lake in Holland. We cross through the *green heart* of Holland, an area with many cycle paths, lakes, small rivers and farms, complete with typical black and white Holstein cattle. We finish in Kudelstaart, a small town on the Westeinderplassen, or 'West End' lakes, home to dozens of tiny islands and some 50 marinas along the shoreline.

Day 4 Tuesday: Flower auction – Zaanse Schans – Wormerveer

cycling @ 45km

An early morning visit to the flower auction in Aalsmeer.* Every day Bloemenveiling Aalsmeer sets the world price for flowers and plants shipped in from all over the world (including Australia, Israel, Ethiopia and Colombia) and sold using the auction clock – large and small batches of flowers are dealt with in fractions of seconds. From the gallery we see the crates of flowers, experience the hustle and bustle of auction and marvel at the astonishing logistics, as the flowers sold are exported back out of Holland to destinations worldwide.

We return to the barge for breakfast and a cruise, then the cycling takes us from Nieuwe Meer along the River Amstel, then after a short ferry ride into the farmlands again to the Zaanse Schans, a unique display of original houses and windmills from the river Zaan area. It is dominated by colourful windmills, the oldest built in 1673, for grinding mustard, spices, paint and oil, and to power sawmills. Visit a clock museum, an old-fashioned grocery store and houses with period furniture, a traditional clog maker and a cheese farm. Our overnight mooring is in Wormerveer, once known for its mills which pressed oils and processed cocoa.

Day 5 Wednesday: Wormerveer – Alkmaar

cycling @ 45km

From Wormerveer we cycle through beautiful sand dunes and, weather permitting, there may be time for an invigorating swim in the North Sea during our lunch break. The barge moors overnight in the famous 'cheese town' of Alkmaar, a lively historic market town with many shops and some 400 heritage sites, known the world over for its traditional Dutch cheese market. Canals and the harbour dominate the townscape.

Day 6 Thursday: Alkmaar – Purmerend

cycling @ 35km

We cycle into the polder landscape of the Beemster and Purmer, sea defences from the early 17th Century. We pass a well-ordered landscape of fields, roads, canals, dykes, farming settlements and small villages laid out according to classical Dutch Renaissance planning principles. Windmills, pumps, channels and drains and much ingenuity were vital in reclaiming the land here and there are many interesting engineering features to be seen as we visit the big water mills at the Rijk.

Day 7 Friday: Purmerend – Amsterdam

cycling @ 20 / 35km

Purmerend is at the edge of so-called 'Waterland', much of which is situated below sea level. We can visit the villages of Zunderdorp and Ransdorp. Those who prefer a more challenging ride can go via Edam and Volendam and as time permits cross Gouwzee Lake to see the traditional fisherman's village of Marken with its wooden houses. We arrive in Amsterdam with time in the afternoon to explore the many cafes, bars and shops.

Day 8 Saturday: Amsterdam.

Tour ends after breakfast.

** Please note not all tulip tours visit the flower auction at Aalsmeer, so if this visit is important to you please let our reservations staff know when making a booking.*

Here is a selection of some of the barges we can offer on this route for 2020:

PREMIUM PLUS BARGES

Premium Plus boats have more spacious cabins with twin beds. Cabins may have extras such as hair dryers, safe, televisions and air-conditioning. Furnishings and fixtures are up-to-date and to a high standard, and the common areas such as lounge, dining and sundeck are spacious and well-equipped.

Non-cycling passengers may prefer a Premium Plus boat as there is more room to relax during the day.



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PREMIUM BARGES

Very comfortable often traditional styled barge. Cabins offer comfortable twin, lower level beds (no bunks) and a small but very functional bathroom with a shower, sink and toilet. The barges have generally modern fitouts with simple but tasteful furnishings. The common areas inside and out are spacious and pleasant often with places where you can sit to enjoy the cruising:



STANDARD PLUS BARGES

Standard Plus cabins are usually furnished with split level beds (one bed is higher and may require a climb on a small ladder or step-up, but the beds are not directly above/below each other). There may also be some bunk cabins (as pictured). These barges are cheerful and comfortable, well-lit and airy with a small shower/toilet. Some triple cabins with a double and single bed may be available on some barges.



Outdoor Travel offers Bike & Barge cycling cruises in France, Holland, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Austria, Romania or Hungary. **Bike & Boat** holidays are available in Italy, Croatia, Greece, Turkey and Vietnam. We also offer inn-to-inn guided or self-guided cycling tours, in many destinations in Europe, including France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, England and Scotland. Luxury, all-inclusive hotel barge cruises, with bikes provided for guest use, are available in Holland during tulip season, as well as many regions of France, and in Italy, England and Scotland.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more details and reservations:

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