

## Bike and Barge Belgium: Bruges - Brussels

### MS Quo Vadis

#### Characteristics:

*Operator:* Boat-Bike Tours

*Participants:* up to 24

*Tourtype:* guided

*Children:* no

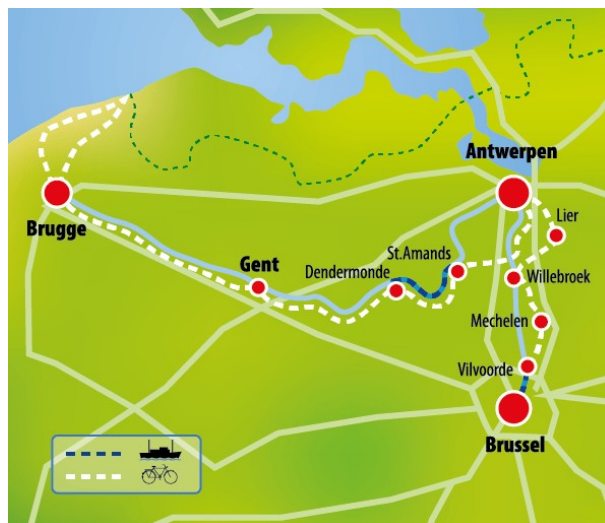
*Regions:* Antwerp, Bruges, Brussels, Flanders, Ghent, North Sea, Ostend, West Flanders

*Countries:* Belgium



#### Benefits:

- Tour and accommodation on board in the booked category 8 days/7 nights (Saturday-Saturday) from/to Bruges or Brussels
- Full board
- 7x breakfast, 6x lunch or picnic lunch during bike tours, coffee or tea in the afternoon, 7x three course dinner
- Use of bed linen and towels (change of towels daily possible)
- daily short cleaning of the cabin
- Welcome drink, presentation of barge + crew and briefing on the first evening
- Tour leader (multilingual) with daily briefings of the bike tours, some short city tours (free), during the day the tour leader is cycling the daily bike tour and reachable on his cell phone for individual cyclists
- daily complete guided bike tours
- Printed instructions and detailed maps for daily bike tours, 1 set per cabin



#### Additional costs:

- All other costs: on request (bikehire, cabin categories, additional nights, transfers and so on)

#### Tour description:

The Bruges to Brussels bike and barge tour on board the MS Quo Vadis is an absolute cycling classic that takes you through an enchanting river landscape bookended by these two iconic Belgian cities. During this eight day, seven night tour you will not only get the opportunity to discover the enchanting river/canal system of Belgium, but will also get to visit and explore the world famous cities of Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent, Mechelen and Bruges.

Along the way you will cycle through small traditional Belgian villages, will visit a number of famous local landmarks and, importantly, will have the opportunity to immerse yourself in Belgium's well-deserved reputation for superb food and drink. Major attractions of the tour include:

- The city of Brussels
- Antwerp, a city famous for its vibrant nightlife
- The opportunity to explore Ghent
- The UNESCO World Heritage-listed historical centre of Bruges
- Mechelen, a small and picturesque city

On a daily basis you will cycle along old tow paths next to small canals and rivers and via quiet country lanes to ancient villages steeped in history. Enjoy a coffee or one of the many village beers in an authentic Belgian pub where the locals approvingly raise their glass, especially when you arrive by bike. Your home away from home for the duration of the Bruges to Brussels tour is the floating hotel MS Quo Vadis, a comfortably furnished and appointed barge that will make you feel right at home. The MS Quo Vadis is equipped with 12 spacious outside cabins with private shower/WC, two single beds that can be pushed together and air conditioning (windows cannot be opened). The ship, which caters for a maximum of 24 guests, offers a gorgeous open salon with corner seats, a restaurant, a small bar and a sundeck with umbrellas. The captain and the owner Rendert Jan and his crew will look after you the most pleasant way.

#### MS Quo Vadis

Your home away from home for the duration of the Bruges to Brussels tour is the floating hotel MS Quo Vadis, a comfortably furnished and appointed barge that will make you feel right at home. MS Quo Vadis was put into service in April 2006 and is equipped with 12 spacious outside cabins with private shower/WC, two single beds that can be pushed together and air conditioning (windows cannot be opened). The ship, which caters for a maximum of 24 guests, offers a gorgeous open salon with corner seats, a restaurant, a small bar and a sundeck with umbrellas. Your tasty dinner will be freshly prepared daily (organic food are generally used, and often freshly homemade bread is served). There is also a guitar and piano on board so you can enjoy your own live music at night. The captain and his crew are looking forward to meeting you.

#### Tour Details Across Flanders: From Bruges to Brussels | MS Quo Vadis

##### Day 1 (Sat): Embarkation: Bruges

Individual arrival in Bruges. The MS Quo Vadis awaits you in the Bruges harbour. Embarkation and check-in where the crew will welcome you on board is from 3 to 5pm. Before or after boarding take the opportunity to explore this lovely city of art, widely described as the "Venice of the North". You can enjoy the ambience of the UNESCO World Heritage-listed historical centre during a leisurely walk, take in the hustle and bustle of the Grote Markt square (Great Market square), visit one of Bruges many museums or simply enjoy the stunning beauty and culture of this unforgettable city from the comfort of a sidewalk café.

##### Day 2 (Sun): Bruges | Roundtrip around Bruges to the North Sea coast (Approx. 55 km/33 mi.)

Your first day of cycling will take you through Damme, the birthplace of the impudent Middle Ages trickster Till Eulenspiegel, to the seaside resort of Blankenberge. Visit any one of numerous cafés and, if you want to cool down, enjoy a swim in the North Sea. After approx. 2 hours you will cycle back to Bruges and the MS Quo Vadis.

##### Day 3 (Mon): Bruges - Moerebrugge | Moerebrugge - Oostende - Ghent (Approx. 40 km/24 mi.)

While you enjoy breakfast the barge MS Quo Vadis will sail to Moerebrugge where you will start your day's cycling. With the historical city of Ghent your destination today you will cycle via Oostende along the Ghent-Oostende-canal through the beautiful Flemish landscape. The town centre of Ghent features lovely illuminated streets that are a must to explore, while the architectural richness in the historical centre of the city has to be seen to be believed (during the Middle Ages Ghent was the 2nd largest European city after Paris). The MS Quo Vadis will dock for the night at the Merelbeke lock, a suburb of Ghent and approx. 15 cycling minutes to the city centre.

##### Day 4 (Tue): Ghent - Dendermonde (Approx. 48 km/29 mi.) | Dendermonde - St. Amands

After breakfast in Ghent you will cycle through a diverse landscape to Dendermonde which is located at the mouth of the Dender River where it flows into the Schelde River. Here you can enjoy some time off your bicycle with a coffee or a cup of tea at the beautiful Flemish Grote Market square. In the evening shipping to Sint Amands one of the most beautiful and winding parts of the route on the river Schelde.

Day 5 (Wed): St. Amands - Temse - Antwerp (Approx. 42 km/25 mi.)

Your cycle route for the day starts in St. Amands and takes you over the Brussels-Rupel canal and on to an historical brick factory situated between Boom and Niel where bricks have been manufactured since the Middle Ages. After cycling through the countryside to Rupelmonde and later Hemiksem you will finally reach Antwerp, your destination for the night. Antwerp is a harbour city situated on the river Schelde famous for handling up to 80% of the world's rough diamonds. There are many highlights in the city to discover including: the City Hall, one of several majestic buildings constructed during the Renaissance period, the historical City Square Grote Markt, the Onze-Lieve-Vrouwe Cathedral and the medieval Steen Castle.

Day 6 (Thu): Antwerp - Lier -Willebroek (Approx. 45 km/27 mi.)

After breakfast you will cycle through the leafy suburbs of Antwerp and past typical Belgian villas that feature beautiful trees, manicured gardens and picturesque facades to Lier. From here you cycle along the small river Nete and on to Willebroek where the MS Quo Vadis is waiting for you once again. When there is enough interest a beer tasting will be held on board (to be paid on board).

Day 7 (Fri): Willebroek - Mechelen - Vilvoorde (Approx. 40 km/24 mi.) | Vilvoorde - Brussels

While the barge sets sail along the Willebroek canal, your final day's cycling will see you pass through the picturesque countryside via Mechelen to Vilvoorde. Mechelen is a remarkable city that boasts more than 300 buildings that are historically listed. Of these 8 are churches - all on less than 3 square kilometres of land! From Vilvoorde you will board the MS Quo Vadis for the trip to Brussels, where you can walk through the historical city centre, visit the Grote Markt square (Great Market square), arguably Europe's most beautiful medieval square lined with guild houses or marvel at the Gothic town hall.

Day 8 (Sat): Disembarkation: Brussels

Disembarkation after breakfast till 09:30 AM: End of your trip.

All distances are "approximate distances" of recommended bike tours.

When a guest does not want to cycle one day, he can skip the bike tour and relax on board while cruising to the next town.

Program and details barring changes, a.o. as a result of nautical, technical or meteorological reasons.

On the arrival day it is possible to load your luggage on board from 9:30am.

A guide will guide the bike tour daily, however it is also possible to ride the bike tour individually (self-guided).

Tour descriptions and maps are available on board for anyone interested in taking the self-guided option.

The guide can be reached on his/her mobile phone in cases of emergency or technical breakdown of the bicycle.

Tour Details Across Flanders: From Brussels to Bruges | MS Quo Vadis

Day 1 (Sat): Embarkation: Brussels

Individual arrival in Brussels. The MS Quo Vadis awaits you in the Brussels harbour. Embarkation and check-in where the crew will welcome you on board is from 3 to 5pm. Take some time to explore the capital of Belgium: walk through the historical city centre, visit the Grote Markt square (Great Market square), arguably Europe's most beautiful medieval square lined with guild houses, marvel at the Gothic town hall or visit the Royal Palace! The highlight of the palace, many will agree, is the Mirror Room which is adorned from floor to ceiling with mirrors and 11 luminous chandeliers

Day 2 (Sun): Brussels - Vilvoorde | Vilvoorde - Mechelen - Willebroek (Approx. 40 km/24 mi.)

During breakfast the barge MS Quo Vadis will sail to Vilvoorde where, following the distribution of bicycles, your first day of cycling will see you travel to Mechelen a remarkable city that boasts more than 300 buildings that are historically listed. Of these 8 are churches - all on less than 3 square kilometres of land! Cycle on from Mechelen past picturesque villages and large country estates to Willebroek where the MS Quo Vadis, your floating hotel for the night, will be waiting with a warm shower and a delicious meal. When there is enough interest a beer tasting will be held on board (to be paid on board).

Day 3 (Mon): Willebroek - Antwerp (Approx. 50 km/30 mi.)

Today you will cycle from Willebroek via Lier to Antwerp. Antwerp is a harbour city situated on the river Schelde famous for handling up to 80% of the world's rough diamonds. Lively Antwerp is a hidden gem. Its medieval streets, Renaissance monuments and vibrant nightlife are a magnet for tourists from around the world. Highlights to be discovered include: the City Hall, one of several majestic buildings constructed during the Renaissance period, the historical City Square Grote Markt, the Onze-Lieve-Vrouwe Cathedral and the medieval

Steen Castle.

Day 4 (Tue): Antwerp - St. Amands / Dendermonde (Approx. 50 km/30 mi.) | St. Amands - Dendermonde

The bicycle tour today will take you upstream along the Schelde River to Hemiksem and on to Rupelmonde where the Schelde joins the Rupel River. After following the Rupel for a few kilometres you will reach the village of Niel and later the Walenhoek Nature Reserve. Along the way you will have the opportunity to visit an historical brick factory situated between Boom and Niel where bricks have been manufactured since the Middle Ages. Your destination for the day is the beautiful city of Dendermonde. A "must" to end the day's cycling is a short stop for a drink at Dendermonde's beautiful Flemish market square Grote Markt (Great Market square).

Day 5 (Wed): Dendermonde - Ghent (Approx. 48 km/29 mi.)

Today you will cycle to the beautiful city of Ghent, where the MS Quo Vadis will be moored in the suburb of Merelbeke which is approx. a 15 minute cycle from the city centre. You will enjoy being able to explore the pedestrian area in Ghent's town centre, partly by bike and partly on foot. Ghent features lovely illuminated streets that are a must to explore, while the architectural richness in the historical centre of the city has to be seen to be believed (during the Middle Ages Ghent was the 2nd largest European city after Paris).

Day 6 (Thu): Ghent - Vinderhout - Bruges (Approx. 40 km/24 mi.)

Part of the day's cycling will be along the Ghent-Oostende-canal to Oostende through the beautiful Flemish landscape to Bruges, a lovely art city and Belgium's most perfectly preserved medieval town. Widely described as the "Venice of the North", Bruges attracts more than two million visitors every year who come for the ambience of the UNESCO World Heritage-listed historical centre. While you are here you can visit one of Bruges many museums or simply take in the stunning beauty and culture of this unforgettable city from the comfort of a sidewalk café.

Day 7 (Fri): Tour around Bruges to the North Sea (Approx. 55 km/33 mi.)

Your final day of cycling takes you along a quiet canal and past beautiful poplar trees through an attractive polder landscape (a polder is a low-lying tract of land enclosed by embankments) dotted with small farm houses to the North Sea coast via the small city of Damme. Here you will have the opportunity to get your feet wet along an inviting 12 kilometre sandy beach, visit any one of numerous cafés and see the attractive dune landscape of "Het Zwin" (a unique nature reserve). On the return ride to Bruges you will cycle along a small picturesque canal.

Day 8 (Sat): Disembarkation: Bruges

Disembarkation after breakfast until 9:30am: End of your trip.

All distances are "approximate distances" of recommended bike tours.

When a guest does not want to cycle one day, he can skip the bike tour and relax on board while cruising to the next town.

Program and details barring changes, a.o. as a result of nautical, technical or meteorological reasons.

On the arrival day it is possible to load your luggage on board from 9:30am.

A guide will guide the bike tour daily, however it is also possible to ride the bike tour individually (self-guided).

Tour descriptions and maps are available on board for anyone interested in taking the self-guided option.

The guide can be reached on his/her mobile phone in cases of emergency or technical breakdown of the bicycle.

#### BICYCLES:

The bicycles on board are mostly unisex touring bicycles of the German brand VSF with normal mount (ladies model), 7 gears, hand brake and pedal brake and pannier bag. There are 5 electrical bikes with backpedal brakes only (only on request). Other bikes (e.g. children's bikes) and child's saddles (rear) are on these tours only available after prior request (by booking) and confirmation and a very limited number possible. Bike rent is optional. Because of the limited space on deck there is a max. of 2 own bikes per departure; only on request available after prior request (by booking) and confirmation. However, the crew or tour operator are in no way responsible for any damage, loss or theft of such bicycles. In the Netherlands bikers are not obligated by law to wear a bike helmet. There are no bike helmets available on board.

Passenger car parking options:

Brussels: Guarded parking areas at station Gare Du Nord approx. EUR 15 per day (subject to change). No reservation possible. Transfer by taxi from Gare Du Nord to ship berth approx. EUR 15.

Bruges: Guarded parking areas at the main station (Stationsplein), approx. EUR 4 per day (subject to change).

No reservation possible. Transfer by taxi from Stationsplein to ship berth approx. EUR 11.

Return transfer by train from Bruges to Brussels approx. EUR 18 per person.

**Important remarks:**

Basically, we reserve the right to make changes of routing and programme. If there is low or high water and a route cannot be shipped, the captain reserves the right to change the route in view of your safety (this cannot be accepted as a reason for free withdrawal).

Languages on board: German, English - Cycle tours: All distances are "approximate distances" of recommended bike tours. When a guest does not want to cycle one day, she/he can skip the bike tour and relax on board while cruising to the next harbour. The bike tours are guided or individual, at your own pace, without a tour guide, but with detailed bicycle maps and directions. You can choose. Nearly all cycle tours can be classified as being easy. - Luggage: We recommend rainwear, bicycle helmet, sunhat and sneakers. - Diet: (i.e.: lactosefree, glutenfree) Possible on request and for an extra charge. Must be booked at least 14 days prior to departure. - Travel documents: EU-nationals need a valid passport.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The General Conditions (travel conditions) of Boat Bike Tours apply to cycling cruises, as well as to confirmation and cancellation of such tours. In principle, children are very welcome on board. However, before booking, we advise you to satisfy yourself that your child is able to manage a cycle trip of ca. 55 km. Of course you may stay one or more days longer on board (children under the age of 18 years must be under supervision). Child discount on request. The interior of the ship is a non-smoking zone: smoking is only allowed on the sun deck. As a safety measure, a statutory smoking ban applies in all cabins; this means that all cabins and rooms on board are non-smoking areas.

<http://www.boat-and-bike.com/tour/bike-and-barge-belgium-bruges-brussel-1.html>