

Bike and Barge Netherlands & Belgium: Amsterdam - Bruges

MS Magnifique

Characteristics:

Operator: Boat-Bike Tours

Participants: up to 35

Tourtype: guided

Children: no

Regions: Amsterdam, Antwerp, Bruges, Flanders, Ghent, Lake Yssel, North Brabant, North Holland, North Sea, South Holland, Utrecht, Zeeland

Countries: Belgium, Netherlands

Benefits:

- Tour and accommodation on board in the booked category , 8 days/7 nights (Saturday-Saturday) from/to Amsterdam or Bruges
- Full board
- 7x breakfast, 6x picnic lunch during bike tours, 6x three course dinner (dinner in Bruges, Antwerp respectively is not included)
- Use of bed linen and towels (change of towels daily possible)
- daily short cleaning of the cabin
- Welcoming drink and speech 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 will cycle the daily bike tour and can be reached by individual travellers on his/her cell phone
- daily fully guided bike tours
- Printed instructions and detailed maps for daily bike tours, 1 set per cabin
- Daily coffee and tea between 3 and 4 PM



Additional costs:

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

Tour description:

Experience the charm of a bygone era on this exciting 8 day, 7 night tour where you will discover the best of what Holland and Belgium has to offer.

During the day you will cycle to world famous destinations such as Amsterdam, Utrecht, Antwerp, Ghent and Bruges, while at night you will relax in the comfort of your floating hotel the premium barge MS Magnifique. The cycling on this tour is through the beautiful - and flat - Dutch countryside of Zeeland and the western Flanders region of Belgium. Attractions along the way include many charming villages, a visit to a real Dutch cheese farm, the 19 famous Dutch windmills in Kinderdijk and the world famous cities of Antwerp, Ghent and Bruges in the western Flanders region of Belgium. You will cycle through and discover the Dutch province of Zeeland, which is essentially one big river delta of the Rhine, Meuse and Scheldt Rivers famous for its fantastic beaches, water sport activities and Delta works and the Flanders region of Belgium famous for its medieval towns and a reputation for superb food and drink. As well as being able to discover many picturesque villages each day - both on your bicycle and on foot - you will:

- Have the opportunity to discover Amsterdam
- Visit Antwerp, a city famous for its vibrant nightlife
- Get the opportunity to explore Ghent
- Visit the UNESCO World Heritage-listed historical centre of Bruges

Your home away from home for the duration of the Amsterdam to Bruges tour is the premium barge MS Magnifique which has a capacity of 32-35 guests. One of the most luxurious barges cruising Dutch and Belgian waterways, the MS Magnifique, following a major 14 metre extension in 2012/13, now boasts 11 twin cabins, four premium twins, two single cabins and a beautiful large salon with restaurant, bar and lounge area.

MS Magnifique

The MS Magnifique is 63 meters long, accommodates approx. 32-35 guests, sails under the Dutch flag and management and was completely modernized in 2010 and extended by 14 metres during the winter of 2012/13. The lower deck has 17 cabins: 11 twin cabins (approx. 11 M², 2 single beds next to each other), 4 premium twins (approx. 14 M², 2 single beds next to each other, small sitting area), 2 single cabins (approx. 8 M²). All cabins have portholes (all portholes are fixed for safety reasons), shower and toilet, individually regulated air conditioning, flat screen TV (satellite); if requested, an extra bed is available in some twin cabins (above one of the other beds). On the upper deck there is a tastefully furnished salon with restaurant, bar, lounge with wide screen TV, large windows, Wi-Fi (with limited data use). Two partly covered teak wooden sun decks with chairs and tables and cycle shed (front deck), and with a whirlpool/jacuzzi and barbecue on the aft deck.

Tour Details Holland & Belgium: From Amsterdam to Bruges | MS Magnifique

Day 1 (Sat): Embarkation: Amsterdam | Amsterdam - Vianen

Embarkation and check-in where the crew will welcome you on board is at 1 PM. At around 2 PM the MS Magnifique will depart from Amsterdam for Vianen, a small fortified village on the Lek River. After the distribution of bicycles, you can enjoy a short first test bike ride through the surrounding area (approx. 5-15 km/3-9 mi.).

Day 2 (Sun): Vianen - Schoonhoven - Kinderdijk (Approx. 56 km/34 mi.) | Kinderdijk - Dordrecht

Today you will cycle along a beautiful route to Schoonhoven - nicknamed Zilverstad ("Silver City") - a city renowned for its talented silver smiths since the 17th century. Later in the day as you cycle through the Alblasserwaard region you will reach Kinderdijk, a village famous for its impressive row of 19 large windmills. All 19 windmills have a UNESCO cultural heritage listing and are a definite highlight - you will have the opportunity to visit one so don't forget to bring your camera! From nearby Alblasserdam you will take the "Waterbus", a fast ferry, that will take and your bike you in approx. 10 minutes to Dordrecht, one of the oldest towns in Holland.

Day 3 (Mon): Dordrecht - Tholen | Tholen - Kreekrak lock (Approx. 43 km/26 mi.) | Kreekrak lock - Antwerp

As you enjoy your breakfast the MS Magnifique will sail to Tholen where you will start your day's cycling. Attractions today include the beautiful "Wouwse Plantage" forest, the fortress town of Bergen op Zoom and the impressive Kreekrak lock. In the afternoon you will once again board the MS Magnifique which will sail to the port city of Antwerp which is situated on the river Schelde. Antwerp is famous for handling up to 80% of the world's rough diamonds and is a city with a long list of attractions including: the City Hall, one of several majestic buildings constructed during the Renaissance period, the historical City Square Grote Market, the Onze-

Lieve-Vrouwe Cathedral and the medieval Steen Castle. After dinner visit the beautiful old city center.

Day 4 (Tue): Antwerp - Temse - St. Amands/Dendermonde (Approx. 42-56 km**/25-34 mi.)

This morning you will cycle out of Antwerp along a picturesque section of the Schelde River to either St. Amands or Dendermonde - depending on the tides - your home for the night. There is only one way to describe the landscape around the Schelde and that is "magnificent". It is without doubt one of the natural highlights of the tour.

Day 5 (Wed): St. Amands/Dendermonde - Ghent (Approx. 53-40 km**/32-24 mi.)

Today you will continue to follow the river Schelde to Ghent where the MS Magnifique will moor for the night at a lock in the suburb of Merelbeke. Ghent is a lively university city that boasts a rich history. Since Roman times Ghent's position at the junction of Leie and Schelde Rivers has ensured that it has been a successful trading port. In total the city features an Opera House, 18 museums, more than 100 churches and over 400 historical buildings. Major attractions are St. Bavo Cathedral where a number of masterpieces of medieval art including the world famous 'Adoration of the Mystic Lamb' by Jan van Eyck are kept and the 91-metre-tall belfry of Ghent, one of three medieval towers that overlook the old city centre.

Day 6 (Thu): Ghent - Bruges (Approx. 45 km/28 mi.)

Today you will cycle from Ghent through the beautiful Flemish countryside of western Flanders to Bruges, widely described as the 'Venice of the North' and arguably the most beautiful of all the Flemish cities. Bruges attracts more than two million visitors every year who come to see the picturesque medieval town center of the UNESCO World Heritage-listed historic city and a long list of historic attractions. An outstanding example of a medieval historic settlement, Bruges has managed to maintain its historic fabric as it has evolved over the centuries, with the result that today the city's original Gothic buildings form an integral part of the town's identity. 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. Dinner tonight will be in town in a restaurant of your choice (recommendations available on board).

Day 7 (Fri): Tour around Bruges to the North Sea (Approx. 50 km/30 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. Here if you want you can swim in the sea along an inviting 12 kilometre sandy beach, visit any one of numerous cafés and see the 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 10 AM: End of your trip.

** Both possibilities are being offered - the guest can choose.

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

When a guest does not want to cycle one day, he or she 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 9:30 AM.

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

Tour descriptions and detailed cycling 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 Belgium & Holland: From Bruges to Amsterdam | MS Magnifique

Day 1 (Sat): Embarkation: Bruges

Arrival and embarkation in Bruges. The MS Magnifique awaits you in the Bruges harbour. Embarkation and check-in where the crew will welcome you on board is from early in the afternoon. You will have plenty of time to discover the UNESCO World Heritage-listed historical city of Bruges, aptly named the "Pearl of Flanders", during the afternoon and in the evening. While you are there make sure you 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 2 (Sun): Bruges - Ghent (Approx. 40 km/24 mi.)

Your cycle tour starts early today on the outskirts of Bruges following the distribution of bicycles after breakfast. You will start your first day of cycling by pedalling towards Ghent through the beautiful Flemish landscape along the Ghent canal. On arrival in Ghent make sure you make the effort to discover the best of what this historical city has to offer during an afternoon stroll. Ghent's town centre 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 Magnifique will dock for the night at the Merelbeke lock, in a suburb of Ghent and approx. 15 cycling minutes to the city centre.

Day 3 (Mon): Ghent - Dendermonde/St. Amands (Approx. 40-53 km**/24-32 mi.)

After breakfast in Ghent you will cycle downstream through a diverse landscape along the tidal Schelde River to Dendermonde located at the junction of Dender and Schelde Rivers. There is only one way to describe the landscape along the Schelde and that is "magnificent". It is without doubt one of the natural highlights of the tour. During this section of the Schelde the speed of the MS Magnifique will be determined by the height of the tide. You will travel from Dendermonde to St. Amands by either bike or barge depending on the tides. Your floating hotel will be docked for the night in St. Amands.

Day 4 (Tue): St. Amands/Dendermonde - Antwerp (Approx. 45 km/28 mi.)

Today we will follow the Schelde River further downstream through the Temse region to Antwerp. Over the centuries the Schelde River has held strategic importance for the Romans, Vikings, Spanish and Napoleon... today it is a beautiful waterway just perfect for bike and barge holidays! Antwerp, your destination for the day, is a harbour city famous for handling up to 80% of the world's rough diamonds and as the birthplace of the famous painter Sir Peter Paul Rubens. 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 Market, the Onze-Lieve-Vrouwe Cathedral and the medieval Steen Castle. Dinner will be in town in a restaurant of your choice (recommendations available on board).

Day 5 (Wed): Antwerp - Kreekrak locks | Kreekrak locks - Tholen - Willemstad - Dordrecht (Approx. 25-45 km**/15-28 mi.)

The MS Magnifique will sail this morning along the Schelde-Rhine Canal and over the huge Kreekrak lock system to Tholen, a former fishing village in the Dutch province of Zeeland. From Tholen you will have the opportunity to see the impressive Volkerak lock system, the fortified town of Willemstad and then you will cycle on to Dordrecht, one of the oldest cities in the Netherlands and your destination for the day. The skipper will discuss with you in the morning which parts of the tour will be covered by barge or by bicycle.

Day 6 (Thu): Dordrecht - Kinderdijk | Kinderdijk - Schoonhoven - Vianen (Approx. 25-50 km**/16-32 mi.)

Today you will start your tour with the "Waterbus", a fast ferry that will take you and your bike in just 10 minutes to Alblasserdam. After just a few minutes of cycling you will reach Kinderdijk, a village famous for its impressive row of 19 UNESCO cultural heritage-listed windmills - one of which you can visit (don't forget your camera!). The windmills were constructed in the 18th century to pump water out of the low Alblasserwaard polder (a polder is a low-lying tract of land enclosed by embankments). You will then continue to cycle via Schoonhoven to Vianen, a small fortified town on the river Lek (where you will be moored for the evening and where you can explore at your leisure after dinner).

Day 7 (Fri): Vianen - Breukelen | Breukelen - Amsterdam (Approx. 35 km/21 mi.)

During breakfast the MS Magnifique will cruise to Breukelen where you disembark to start your final day of cycling. Ride along the Vecht River in an area famous for its beautiful mansions, small castles, impressive houses and their large gardens. After cycling through the villages of Nieuwersluis, Loenen and Vreeland you will arrive at Nigtevecht where you can visit a traditional cheese farm. Continue cycling through the historical town of Muiden and on to Amsterdam where you will meet the barge for the final time in the Amsterdam harbour.

Day 8 (Sat): Disembarkation: Amsterdam

Disembarkation after breakfast until 10 AM: End of your trip. If you want, you can explore Amsterdam or one of its numerous museums, do some shopping or go on a canal tour (not included).

** Both possibilities are being offered - the guest can choose.

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

When a guest does not want to cycle one day, he or she 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.

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BICYCLES:

The bicycles on board are mostly unisex touring bicycles with normal mount (ladies model), 7 gears, hand brake and/or pedal brake and a pannier bag. Other bikes (e.g. E-Bikes, children's bikes, "slip streamers") and child's seats (rear) are only available after prior request (by booking) and confirmation. Bike rent is optional. Guests are also allowed to bring their own bicycles (at no extra cost). However, the crew or tour operators are in no way responsible for any damage, loss or theft of such bicycles. In the Netherlands and Belgium cyclists are not obligated by law to wear a bike helmet. There are some bike helmets available on board (for free).

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). 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-berge-netherlands-belgium-am-2.html>