

Bike and Barge Netherlands & Belgium: Amsterdam - Bruges

MS Fluvius

Characteristics:

Operator: Boat-Bike Tours

Participants: up to 36

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, 7x three course dinner)
- 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:

The Amsterdam to Bruges bike and barge cycle tour is an exciting and diverse holiday experience that highlights some of the most beautiful cities of Holland and Belgium. On a daily basis you will cycle through a

variety of flat landscapes through charming villages and historic cities while cruising along the impressive waterways of Zeeland, the River Schelde and the picturesque Vecht and Lek Rivers. The tour is perfect for families who want to cycle together and enjoy barge life or, for that matter, anyone wanting to enjoy a delightful week of cycling to a long list of historic destinations.

During the course of the 8 day, 7 night tour you will visit the world famous cities of Amsterdam, Utrecht, Antwerp, Ghent and Bruges - each in their own right are destinations of significance with a long list of sights and attractions to discover. Along the way you will cycle through the beautiful Dutch landscape of Zeeland, will visit a real Dutch cheese farm and 19 Dutch windmills in Kinderdijk and will discover the western Flanders region of Belgium. The province of Zeeland is essentially one big river delta of the Rhine, Meuse and Scheldt Rivers famous for its fantastic beaches, water sport activities and Delta works, while the Flanders region of Belgium boasts a number of world famous medieval towns and has a well-deserved reputation for superb food and drink. As well as cycling through many picturesque villages each day, you will:

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

For the duration of the tour you will live and travel on board your floating hotel, the barge MS Fluvius. The former cargo barge was totally rebuilt and extended in 2003 and is now a luxury river cruise barge that caters for up to 38 guests in 18 luxury twin and two single cabins.

MS Fluvius:

The small and comfortable river cruiser MS Fluvius has been a popular choice for guests for a number of years now on the Amsterdam to Bruges cycle tour. On board this cosy ship, which caters for a maximum of 36 guests, are a total of 19 cabins (approx. 10 M² = 108 square feet) all with shower and toilet, 2 low beds, air-conditioning that is individually adjustable and a ventilation system. There are 3 cabins on the upper deck (supplement) and 16 cabins on the lower deck. All cabins have a window (all windows are fixed). The salon with bar is a large room for common use and has a semi-separate restaurant area. On the large and partially roofed sun deck of the ca. 70 Metre-long ship are sitting places (tables and chairs) and storage room for the bikes. The ship, which sails under the Dutch flag, has been a very popular small river cruise ship for Boat & Bike Tours for many years in Holland, Belgium and Germany.

Tour Details Netherlands & Belgium: From Amsterdam to Bruges | MS Fluvius

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 Fluvius will leave Amsterdam and will sail to Vianen, a small fortified town on the river Lek, where you will spend the night. Here the bicycles will be distributed and you can enjoy a short bike ride (5-15 km/3-9 mi.).

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

After breakfast you will cycle a beautiful route to Schoonhoven - nicknamed Zilverstad (Silver City) - a city renowned for its talented silver smiths since the 17th century. As you continue to cycle along the Lek River you will pass through the Alblasserwaard region to Kinderdijk, a village famous for its impressive row of 19 large windmills - one of which you can visit - which have a UNESCO cultural heritage listing. 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

During breakfast the MS Fluvius will sail to Tholen where you will start your day's cycling by visiting the "Wouwse Plantage" forest. Other attractions on the day are the fortress town of Bergen op Zoom and the impressive Kreekrak lock. After once again meeting up with the MS Fluvius you will finish your day by sailing 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 has many attractions that include: 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.)

Today's tour will see you cycle out of Antwerp on a beautiful cycle path along the picturesque tidal Schelde

River to either St. Amands or Dendermonde, 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.)

This morning you will either start cycling from St. Amands or will sail to Dendermonde where you will start cycling. From Dendermonde you continue to follow the river Schelde in the direction of Ghent where the MS Fluvius will moor for the night at a lock in Merelbeke, a suburb of Ghent. Ghent is a lively university city that boasts a rich history. The city's position at the junction of Leie and Schelde Rivers has meant that it has been a major trading port since Roman times. In total the city features an Opera House, 18 museums, more than 100 churches and over 400 historical buildings. A major attraction is 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.

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

Today you will pedal from Ghent through the beautiful Flemish countryside of western Flanders to Bruges, widely described as the 'Venice of the North'. The city attracts more than two million visitors every year who come for the ambience of the UNESCO World Heritage-listed historic center. An outstanding example of a medieval 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 constructions 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.

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 you will have the opportunity to swim in the sea 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 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 & Netherlands: From Bruges to Amsterdam | MS Fluvius

Day 1 (Sat): Embarkation: Bruges

The MS Fluvius 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 beautiful historical city of Bruges, aptly named the "Pearl of Flanders", during the afternoon and in the evening.

Day 2 (Sun): Bruges - Ghent (Approx. 40 km/24 mi.)

Your cycle tour starts today as the MS Fluvius sails out of Bruges early in the morning. Following the distribution of bicycles out of town after breakfast you will start pedalling towards Ghent through the beautiful Flemish landscape along the Ghent canal. On arrival in Ghent enjoy the best of what this beautiful city has to offer during an afternoon stroll. 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 Fluvius 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 which is located at the junction of Dender and Schelde Rivers. The skipper will discuss with guests the departure time of today's tour which may vary depending on whether it is high or low tide and the subsequent speed of the barge. 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 and the small village of Baasrode to Antwerp. This part of the route is along a most beautiful and twisting section of the Schelde which over the centuries held strategic importance for the Romans, Vikings, Spanish and Napoleon. Antwerp, your destination for the day, is a harbour city situated on the river Schelde 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.

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

The MS Fluvius 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 cycle along the impressive Volkerak lock system to the fortified town of Willemstad and then on to Dordrecht, one of the oldest cities of 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 Alblisserdam. 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 Alblisserwaard 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 spend the evening. Since the 17th century Schoonhoven - nicknamed Silver City - has been renowned for its talented silversmiths.

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

During breakfast the MS Fluvius will cruise to Breukelen where you disembark and start your final day of cycling. Ride along the Vecht River in an area famous for its beautiful mansions, small castles and beautiful houses with large gardens and parks. After cycling through the villages of Nieuwersluis, Loenen and Vreeland you 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 wish, you can explore Amsterdam or one of its numerous museums, do some shopping or go on a canal tour (not included).

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