

## Bike and Barge Netherlands: Amsterdam - Bruges

### MS Magnifique II

#### 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:

On this tour not only will you get the opportunity to explore the beautiful and diverse Dutch countryside of Zeeland and the western Flanders region of Belgium, but will you will get to do it on the brand new barge MS

Magnifique II. Purpose built especially for bike and barge touring, the MS Magnifique II takes cycle touring holidays to a whole new level of comfort... it really is a cycling holiday experience not to be missed.

During this 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 luxury floating hotel, the barge MS Magnifique II. Attractions along the way include many charming and historic cities and villages, a visit to a real Dutch cheese farm, 19 famous Dutch windmills in Kinderdijk and medieval cities such as Antwerp, Ghent and Bruges. You will cycle through and discover the Dutch province of Zeeland, 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 reputation for superb food and drink. As well as being able to cycle through many picturesque villages each day and see the natural beauty of the region 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

Without doubt one of the "extra" highlights of this particular tour is your floating luxury hotel, the barge MS Magnifique II, constructed in a classical barge style and operated by the owner of the very successful and much-loved barge MS Magnifique. Newly completed for the 2016 season, the MS Magnifique II caters for up to 35 guests in a range of cabins from 14 twin cabins through to 4 beautiful suites with large panoramic windows on the upper deck. Given the fact that the barge was purpose-built for cycle touring, you are guaranteed an amazing week of first class accommodation, delicious meals and, of course, cycling.

#### MS Magnifique II

The luxurious MS Magnifique II was constructed between March 2015 and February 2016. The 63 metre-long barge can accommodate 35 guests and sails under the Dutch flag and management. The lower deck has 14 cabins, 12 of which are twin cabins (approx. 11 M<sup>2</sup>, 2 single beds next to each other), one is a premium twin (approx. 13 M<sup>2</sup>, 2 single beds next to each other, small sitting area) and 1 single cabin (approx. 8 M<sup>2</sup>); the upper deck has 4 beautiful suites with large panoramic windows (approx. 14 M<sup>2</sup>, 2 single beds next to each other, small sitting area). The cabins on the lower deck have portholes (all portholes are fixed for safety reasons), upper deck suites have a 2 metre wide window (one of which can be opened). All cabins have en-suite facilities (shower and toilet), individually regulated air conditioning, a flat screen satellite TV; 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 a restaurant, bar, a lounge with a wide screen TV, large windows and Wi-Fi (limited use of data). There is a partly covered teak wooden sun deck with chairs and table on the aft deck for the use by guests and a cycle shed (front deck).

#### Tour Details Holland & Flanders: From Amsterdam to Bruges | MS Magnifique II

##### 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 II will depart from Amsterdam for Vianen, a small fortified town on the river Lek. 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

After breakfast you will cycle along a picturesque route to Schoonhoven - nicknamed Zilverstad ("Silver City") - a city renowned for its talented silver smiths since the 17th century. Along the way as you pass through the Alblasserwaard region of Holland you will come 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 and an important town for shipping.

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

As you enjoy your breakfast the MS Magnifique II will sail to Tholen where you will start your day's cycling. Attractions along the way include the beautiful "Wouwse Plantage" forest, the fortress town of Bergen op Zoom and the impressive Kreekrak lock. After re-boarding the MS Magnifique II you 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 you can 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 alongside the picturesque tidal Schelde River to either St. Amands or Dendermonde - depending on 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 II 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 ensured its success as a 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 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 historical center. An outstanding example of a medieval settlement from the Middle Ages, Bruges has managed to maintain its historical 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. Dinner will be in a restaurant of your choice (not incl. - restaurant recommendations on board).

Day 7 (Fri): Tour around Bruges to the North Sea (Approx. 50 km/30 mi.)

Tour around Bruges to the North Sea, (ca. 50 km/30 miles). 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 9:30am.

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 Holland & Flanders: From Bruges to Amsterdam | MS Magnifique II

Day 1 (Sat): Embarkation: Bruges

The MS Magnifique II awaits you in the Bruges harbour where the crew will welcome you on board 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 today as the MS Magnifique II sails out of Bruges early in the morning. Following the distribution of bicycles out of town you will start your first day of cycling by pedalling towards Ghent through the beautiful Flemish landscape. On arrival in Ghent enjoy the best of what this beautiful 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 of 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 II will dock for the night at Merelbeke, a suburb of Ghent.

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. 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 II 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. This part of the route is along a most beautiful and twisting section of the Schelde that boasts magnificent scenery. 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. (Dinner is not incl. - restaurant 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 II 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 cycle along the impressive Volkerak lock system, will see the fortified town of Willemstad and will then 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 part 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 Alblasterdam. 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 Alblasterwaard polder (a polder is a low-lying tract of land enclosed by embankments). You will then continue to cycle via Schoonhoven - renowned since the 17th century for its talented silversmiths - to Vianen, a small fortified town on the river Lek where you will spend the evening.

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

During breakfast the MS Magnifique II will cruise to Breukelen where you will 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 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.

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

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.

#### 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", tandems) and child's saddles (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 cyclists are not obligated by law to wear a bike helmet. Bike helmets are not available on board.

#### 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.

<https://www.boat-and-bike.com/tour/bike-and-barge-netherlands-amsterdam.html>