

# Bike and Barge Netherlands & Belgium: Amsterdam - Bruges

## MS Gandalf

### Characteristics:

*Operator:* Boat-Bike Tours

*Participants:* up to 22

*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)
- once a week 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:

During this fascinating 8 day, 7 night tour you will discover the best of what Holland and Belgium has to offer.

You will visit the world famous cities of Amsterdam, Utrecht, Antwerp, Ghent and Bruges and will have the opportunity to cycle through the beautiful - and flat - Dutch countryside of Zeeland and the western Flanders region of Belgium. Along the way you will cycle through many charming villages, will visit a number of local attractions and will get to enjoy life on board your floating hotel for the week - the MS Gandalf. Highlights include a visit to a real Dutch cheese farm, the famous 19 Dutch windmills in Kinderdijk and the world famous cities of Antwerp, Ghent and Bruges in the western Flanders region of Belgium. You will 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 cycling through many picturesque villages each day, you will:

- Have the opportunity to discover Amsterdam
- Explore the city of Antwerp
- 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 Gandalf which caters for a maximum of 22 guests. The MS Gandalf has been a very popular ship for boat and bike tours for many years and is sure not to disappoint.

#### MS Gandalf

The small and comfortable passenger barge MS Gandalf caters for a maximum of 22 guests and has been on this beautiful and very beloved tour for a number of years. The barge has 10 twin cabins (ca. 8 M<sup>2</sup>) - with ensuite shower and toilet, 2 low beds and central heating; all cabins portholes can be opened. The salon, which doubles as your restaurant area, is similar to a comfortable living room and is for common at all times. There are two sun decks on the approx. 45 metre-long ship that have sitting areas with tables and chairs and storage room for the bikes. The MS Gandalf is also equipped with a double-roof of solar panels, with the electrical systems of the barge running for the greater part of the time on green energy! This is not only environmentally friendly, but also comfortable for guests as the ship rarely needs to use a generator to produce electricity meaning the nights are still and quiet on board. The popular barge has been sailing in Holland and Belgium for many years. Skipper Hans Petrus and his experienced crew offer you an exceptional vacation on board!

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

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

Embarkation and check-in where the crew will welcome you on board is at 1pm. At around 2pm the MS Gandalf 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

Your first full day of cycling will see you pedal along a beautiful route to Schoonhoven - nicknamed Zilverstad ("Silver City") - a city renowned for its talented silver smiths since the 17th century. Continuing 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 - all of 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 Gandalf will sail to Tholen where you 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 once again meeting up with the MS Gandalf you will finish off 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 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.)

Today's tour will see you cycle out of Antwerp on one of the best stretches of cycle path on the tour 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.)

Today you will continue to follow the river Schelde to Ghent where the MS Gandalf will moor for the night at the 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. Whatever you do don't miss the opportunity to visit the medieval center of the city.

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'. 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.

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 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

Bruges Disembarkation after breakfast until 10am: 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.

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 Belgium & Holland: From Bruges to Amsterdam | MS Gandalf

Day 1 (Sat): Embarkation: Bruges

Arrival and embarkation in Bruges. The MS Gandalf 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.

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

Your cycle tour starts early today after the MS Gandalf sails out 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 enjoy the best of what this historical city has to offer during an afternoon stroll. The town centre features a maze of 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 Gandalf 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. During this section of the Schelde the speed of the barge will depend on 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 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 has held strategic importance for the Romans, Vikings, Spanish and Napoleon. 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.

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

The MS Gandalf 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 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 low Alblasterwaard 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 Gandalf 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 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 10am: 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).

\*\* 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).

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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

brakes and pannier bag. Other bikes (e.g. E-Bikes, children's bikes, "tag-a-longs") and child's seats (rear) are available after prior request (at time of booking) and after confirmation. Bicycle rental is optional, but - due to the very limited space on deck - guests can bring their own bikes only in exceptional cases, but only after they have been previously registered and confirmed. However, the crew or tour operator are in no way responsible for any damage, loss or theft of such bicycles. In the Netherlands and Belgium bikers 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-belgium-am-1.html>