

Bike and Barge Tour Netherlands & Belgium: Amsterdam - Bruges

MS Zwaantje

Characteristics:

Operator: Boat-Bike Tours

Participants: up to 24

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 (1x dinner in Antwerp excluded)
- Use of bed linen and towels (change of towels daily possible)
- daily cleaning service of the cabin
- Welcome drink, presentation of barge and crew and briefing on the first evening
- Tour leader (multilingual) for fully guided cycling tours, daily briefings of the bike tours
- Printed instructions and detailed maps for individual daily bike tours, 1 set/cabin
- Daily coffee and tea till 4 PM



Additional costs:

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

Tour description:

There is simply no better way to discover the charm and the best of what Belgium and Holland has to offer than on this exciting 8 days, 7 nights tour on board the barge MS Zwaantje - a newcomer to bike and barge holidays.

During the day you will cycle to world famous destinations such as Bruges, Ghent, Antwerp, Utrecht and Amsterdam, while at night you will relax in the comfort of your floating hotel. 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:

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

The MS Zwaantje ("Little Swan") is a fully converted passenger barge under Dutch flag and management with a length of 40 meters (131 ft.) that can accommodate 24 passengers.

MS Zwaantje

The MS Zwaantje ("Little Swan") is a fully converted passenger barge under Dutch flag and management with a length of 40 meters (131 ft.) that can accommodate 24 passengers. On lower deck the barge has 12 sleeping cabins: 10 twin cabins with two single beds each and two cabins with a double (French) bed. All cabins have a small en-suite bathroom with toilet, shower and wash basin, a fixed window (both double cabins have larger windows that also open) and individual air conditioning. On the main deck you will find the nice and cozy salon with airco and large panoramic windows, a restaurant area, lounge corner and a small bar. Depending on the quality of the network connection (mobile internet, limited data amount the salon offers free Wi-Fi. The barge has a very spacious sun deck (90 square meters/860 square ft.) with chairs and tables and a beautiful view, where you can relax or join the skipper in the wheel house. Bicycles will be stored in a separate area on the sun deck. Since September 2014, the MS Zwaantje has new owners and operators: Martijn van Tatenhove and Marjorie Kersten, who are experienced as operators of a passenger barge for more than thirteen years. Martijn is your captain on board; he grew up in a family in the hotel and restaurant business and is also a licensed chef. Marjorie graduated in Tourism at the Breda High School and has been working in public relations. The sympathetic and very motivated couple have slightly restyled the interior of the MS Zwaantje in winter 2014-2015 and have created a warm and cozy atmosphere.

Tour details Netherlands & Belgium: From Amsterdam to Bruges | MS Zwaantje

Day 1 (Sat): Arrival and embarkation: Amsterdam | Amsterdam - Vianen | (Approx. 5-15 km/3- 9 miles)
Embarkation and check-in on 1 PM. Around 2 PM the ship leaves Amsterdam and sails to Vianen, a small fortified town on the river Lek. From here a short bike roundtrip to get used to your bicycle (5-15 km/3-9 mi).

Day 2 (Sun): Vianen - Schoonhoven - Kinderdijk (Approx. 56 km/34 miles) | 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 - Willemstad | Willemstad - Tholen (Approx. 43-50 km**/26-30 miles)
During breakfast the ship cruises to Willemstad, an old fortified town on the Haringvliet. From there by bike along the impressive complex of locks 'de Volkerak' to Tholen, which once was an island in the middle of the large Zeeland streams, where many people fished for their living. Now Tholen is connected to the mainland. Nevertheless it is still a picturesque town with many reminders of its turbulent past.

Day 4 (Tue): Tholen - Kreekrak lock (Approx. 35 km/21 miles) | Kreekrak locks - Antwerp
After breakfast a bike tour through a forest area, "the Wouwe Plantage", towards the south to the impressive Kreekraksluis (lock). The ship is docked at the end of the dam and from here it will sail through the impressive port of Antwerp to the city. Antwerp is not only known as diamond city, but also as

native city of painter Rubens. You will find some of his paintings in the "Onze Lieve Vrouwe (our lady) Cathedral". Dinner on your own (not included) in the nearby old city centre. On request you will receive some restaurant recommendations on board.

Day 5 (Wed): Antwerp - Temse - St. Amands/Dendermonde (Approx. 42 -56 km**/25-34 miles)

After breakfast you cycle out of the port to the Zeeschelde. You follow this beautiful but capricious tidal river upstream to Dendermonde. There is a beautiful bike path along the river, and the landscape around the Schelde is magnificent. After a stopover in Temse you will cycle all the way to Dendermonde, a friendly little town along the river. If necessary, night in St. Amands.

Day 6 (Thu): St. Amands/Dendermonde - Ghent (Approx. 53-40 km**/32-24 miles)

By bike from St. Amands or cruise with the barge to Dendermonde. From Dendermonde the bike tour follows again the river Schelde in the direction of Ghent. Ghent is a lively university city, again one with a rich past. In the afternoon you have the opportunity to discover the city some more, or to shop in the lively centre. The city was founded in Roman times, where the rivers Leie and Schelde converge. The convenient location has over the years brought much prosperity, culminating in the late 13th, early 14th century. The textile industry brought great wealth. In the city, many old patrician preserved. The Cloth Hall (1425) came cloth merchants together. The main church St. Bavo Cathedral, which is built in different ages and in different styles. In the cathedral are some masterpieces of medieval art, which "Adoration of the Mystic Lamb" by Jan van Eyck is the most famous. The ship will be docked at the lock in Merelbeke, a suburb of Ghent.

Day 7 (Fri): Ghent - Bruges (Approx. 45 km/28 miles)

Our last bike tour starts just outside the city and goes through the pleasant country side of Western Flanders to Bruges. Bruges, also called "Venice of the North", is maybe the most beautiful of all Flemish cities. Its old centre, which dates from the middle Ages, is almost completely intact. Bruges was at that time a metropolis and centre of commerce and art. You can still see this glory at the beautiful buildings. But Bruges is also a nice town for shopping or going out.

Day 8 (Sat): Disembarkation: Bruges

After breakfast: end of the tour and disembarkation till 10:00 AM.

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

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

When a guest don't want to cycle one day, he can skip the bike tour and relax on board while cruising to the next harbor.

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

On the arrival day is it possible to put your luggage already on board as from 10 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 Zwaantje

Day 1 (Sat): Arrival and embarkation: Bruges

Arrival and embarkation early afternoon in the beautiful city of Bruges, also called "Pearl of Flanders". The crew will welcome you. You will have plenty of time to discover the beautiful historical city of Bruges. Afternoon and evening with city tour in Bruges.

Day 2 (Sun): Bruges - Ghent (Approx. 45 km/28 miles)

Today, your day starts on the water and the barge will leave Bruges early. Just outside, your first bike tour to Ghent through the flat land of West-Flanders will start. Your destination today is the historical centre of Ghent. Enjoy the beautiful parts of Ghent during an afternoon stroll. The barge is docked in Merelbeke (a small suburb of Ghent).

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

Today, the barge will sail over the river Schelde to Dendermonde, a nice town on the conjunction of the rivers Dender and Schelde. The bike tour leads along one of the most beautiful parts of the Schelde, a tidal river. You will follow this beautiful tidal river downstream. The departure time will be set by the skipper and is depending

on high or low tide. The tide has affect on the speed of the barge. By bike or by barge from Dendermonde to St. Amands. Night in St. Amands.

Day 4 (Tue): St. Amands - Temse - Antwerp (Approx. 42 km/25 miles)

Today we will follow the Schelde further downstream over Temse to Antwerp. There is a beautiful cycling track along the river and the scenery is magnificent. Harbor city Antwerp whit it's beautiful inner city is well known as diamond city and the city where the famous painter Rubens was born. Dinner in town in a restaurant of your choice (not included). On request, you will receive some restaurant recommendations on board.

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

The barge will sail over the Schelde-Rhine Canal, over the huge Kreekrak locks to Tholen, a former fishing village amidst the large streams of the province of Zeeland. From Tholen you will cycle along the impressive large Volkerak locks to the fortified town of Willemstad, then further to end in Dordrecht, one of the oldest cities of the Netherlands. Today, the skipper will discuss with you which part of the tour will be covered by bicycle.

Day 6 (Thu): Dordrecht - Kinderdijk | Kinderdijk - Schoonhoven - Vianen (Approx. 50 km/30 miles)

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, the most famous windmills in the Netherlands with 19 windmills in line (don't forget your camera!). The windmills were constructed in the 18th century to pump water out of the low Alblasserwaard polder. You can visit one of the windmills. Then bike tour via silver city Schoonhoven to Vianen, a small fortified town on the river Lek. In the evening you can explore this town.

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

First the ship cruises to Breukelen, where you disembark and your cycling tour starts. Ride along the small Vecht river: this area is well known for its beautiful mansions, small castles and beautiful houses with large gardens and parks. Over the small villages of Nieuwersluis, Loenen and Vreeland to 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

After breakfast: end of the tour and disembarkation till 10:00 AM. If you wish, you can visit Amsterdam or one of its numerous museums, do some shopping or make 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 don't want to cycle one day, he can skip the bike tour and relax on board while cruising to the next harbor.

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

On the arrival day is it possible to put your luggage already on board as from 10 AM.

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BICYCLES:

The bicycles on board are 21-speed touring bicycles with hand brakes and a pannier bag. A limited number of e-bikes (electrically assisted bicycle) are available on request (early booking is strongly recommended). Other bikes (e.g. children's bikes, tandems, etc.) are not available in this area and cannot be ordered for these tours. Due to limited space on deck guests can't bring their own bicycles or E-bikes. Only in exceptional cases when you need a special bike or tandem. Please let us know well in advance when you would like to bring your own special bicycle/tandem. This is only possible after reconfirmation by us. Neither crew nor tour operator are liable/ responsible for any damage, loss or theft of own bicycles. In the Netherlands and Belgium bikers are not obligated by law to wear a bike helmet. We recommend you to bring your own (well fitting) helmet. There is a very limited number (only standard size) bike helmets available on board.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:



The General Conditions (travel conditions) of Boat Bike Tours bv 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.

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