

BELGIUM – BRUSSELS TO BRUGES OR RETURN

8-days / 7-night easy to moderate **PREMIUM PLUS** or **PREMIUM** guided cycling cruise



Belgium has some of Europe's finest and best-preserved historical cities and a great reputation for its beer. It offers beautiful, mostly flat cycling through the polder, channel and dyke landscape of rural Flanders. Brussels is both the capital of Belgium and capital of the European Union and there is much to see here. Bruges, Antwerp and Ghent are some of the most beautiful cities in Europe. Well-maintained multi-gear bikes are provided (or you can bring your own if you prefer) with cycling along mostly sealed pathways and quiet country roads with chances to stop for photographs or a coffee, and time to explore each day's destination.

Premium and **Premium Plus** barges feature comfortably furnished cabins, each with its own bathroom and with lower twin beds (no bunks). There is a stylish open saloon area with a bar and seating, a dining area and space on the sundeck to relax during cruising. The Premium Plus barges have a limited number of larger upgrade twin cabins (at extra cost). These are popular so **early booking is essential**.

These cycling cruises combine easy to moderate cycling with river or canal cruising. They allow partners of different abilities and interests to holiday together – trips are just as interesting for leisure cyclists OR enthusiasts. For those who prefer a more relaxed cycling pace, E-bikes are available for hire at extra cost. Unpack once and come 'home' each night to a wonderful meal and a comfortable cabin with your own bathroom. Each day choose whether to join the guided cycle tour, cycle independently and re-join the group at the barge at the end of the day, or stay on-board to relax and enjoy the cruise. Bike & Barge cruises are rapidly becoming the thing to do in Europe appealing to the more active mature traveller. They are ideal for first timers or small groups.

Premium Plus cost from **\$2155** per person twin share. Single cabin supplement from \$675
Premium Twin Cabin supplement from \$340 per person

Premium Plus dates: Brussels to Bruges: 29th June, 2019

Premium cost from **\$1730** per person twin share. Single cabin supplement from \$540

Premium dates: Bruges to Brussels: 4th, 18th May, 1st, 15th June, 2019
Brussels to Bruges: 11th, 25th May, 8th, 22nd June, 2019

Includes: 7 nights' twin-share cabin accommodation with private shower/toilet; cabin cleaning; 7 buffet breakfasts, 6 picnic lunches, 6 dinners (or 7 dinners on-board Premium barge); hire of multi-gear touring bicycle with pannier; services of an English-speaking cycle guide.

Not included: Transfers to/from barge mooring points, 1 dinner in Antwerp (Premium Plus barges), entrance fees, ferry tickets, drinks, personal expenses, gratuities, insurance. Surcharges may apply for dietary requests, please ask when booking. E-Bikes on request, at extra cost. We recommend you bring your own bike helmet.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations



Suggested itinerary:

Day 1 Saturday: Arrive in Brussels

Plan to arrive in the afternoon to board the barge in the port of Brussels. We suggest you allow time to explore the old town with its Gothic town hall, the beautiful guild houses, the market square and the "Männeken Pis".

Day 2 Sunday: Brussels - Vilvoorde - Mechelen - Willebroek

Cycling @ 40km

During breakfast we cruise to Vilvoorde where we start our cycling to Mechelen, a town with more than 300 listed buildings and historical monuments. While the barge is negotiating the Willebroek Channel, we cycle through a rural green, slightly undulating landscape through villages and country estates to Willebroek.

Day 3 Monday: Willebroek - Antwerp

Cycling @ 45 - 50km

From Willebroek we cycle via Lier to Antwerp, the world's centre of diamond-processing. Antwerp has a beautiful centre with its richly decorated town hall in the Renaissance style, the historic Grote Markt, the huge Liebfrauen Cathedral and medieval Steen Castle with its torture museum and city views from the ramparts. If travelling onboard Premium Plus barge, for dinner this evening choose from one of Antwerp's many restaurants.

Day 4 Tuesday: Antwerp - St-Amands - Dendermonde

Cycling @ 40 - 55km

We follow the River Schelde to Hemiksen and to Rupelmonde. Here, where the River Rupel flows into the Schelde, we pass a once prosperous brick making centre active since the Middle Ages. We cross the Brussels-Rupel Channel into Saint Amands, then cycle along the River Schelde to reach Dendermonde.

Day 5 Wednesday: Dendermonde - Ghent

Cycling @ 40 - 50km

Today there is time to explore the historic city of Ghent. During the Middle Ages Ghent was the second largest city in Europe after Paris and there are many preserved buildings and monuments in the historical city centre.

Day 6 Thursday: Ghent - Vinderhoute - Bruges

Cycling @ 40 - 45km

In the morning we leave for Vinderhoute following the Gent - Oostende Channel across the wide Flemish plain to the city of Bruges. Bruges, known as "the Venice of the North" is a popular tourist destination with many shops, squares and cafes, art galleries and museums. The old town and Grachten (small canals) are listed by UNESCO for their cultural heritage. There is plenty of time to explore here, including the town square, the Grote Markt (the big market place) and the many windmills along the main canal near our mooring point.

Day 7 Friday: Bruges to the North Sea

Cycling @ 50 - 55km

The last cycling day takes us along a quiet, poplar-lined canal and through the polder landscape to the small city of Damme and on to the North Sea coast. Here we have time to explore the sand dunes and beaches – ideal for swimming – and plenty of shops, cafes and restaurants to try the 'fish and chips with mayonnaise' or mussels. We cycle back to Bruges in the afternoon.

Day 8 Saturday: Tour ends in Bruges, after breakfast.

The cycling and cruising itinerary and mooring points may be subject to change at the discretion of the captain / tour guide. Cycling distances are approximate. The itinerary operates in reverse on alternate dates.

Outdoor Travel offer Bike & Barge or Bike & Boat cruises in France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Austria, Scotland, Hungary, Romania, Croatia, Greece, Turkey and in Vietnam. Inn-to-inn guided or self-guided cycling tours are available throughout most countries in Europe and also in Japan, South Africa and New Zealand.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more details and reservations:

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