

HOLLAND & BELGIUM – FROM AMSTERDAM TO BRUGES or reverse 8-days/7-nights – onboard a *STANDARD, STANDARD PLUS, PREMIUM* or *PREMIUM PLUS* barge



One of our most popular and much sought after Bike & Barge routes in Europe. We offer several barges of different standards on several routes between Amsterdam and Bruges. The cycling is mostly flat and generally easy to moderate and between 25 - 60km over 5 to 6 hours a day. It is possible on some days (at the discretion of the captain / tour guide) to cycle just part of the route or to stay aboard the barge to enjoy the cruising. Cycling in Belgium and Holland is great fun; there are lots of sealed cycle paths and the rural scenery is wonderful.

Departs: Selected Saturdays, Tuesdays & Thursdays from 18 April to 14 October 2027

Cost: From **\$2550** per person twin share (based on Standard barge, Low Season cost)
Single cabins available with a supplement on request.

Included: 7 nights' accommodation aboard your barge in twin-bed cabin with en-suite shower/toilet, breakfast daily, picnic lunch, 3-course dinners on most nights, bicycle hire with pannier and experienced cycle tour guides.

Not Included: Drinks on board, entrance fees to museums, castles, breweries, cheese farm or other attractions. On some barges you have one night free to have dinner at your own arrangements, please ask when booking.

Bike & Barge cruising combines two popular ways of exploring Europe, cycling and river cruising. It allows partners of different abilities and interests to holiday together (trips are just as interesting for leisure cyclists or enthusiasts). You unpack once and come 'home' each night to a wonderful meal and a comfortable cabin with your own bathroom. Non-cycling passengers are always welcome on these departures but note that whilst there may be guided walks in the evenings there are no sightseeing provisions for non-cyclists during the day.

The tour starts or finishes in cosmopolitan Amsterdam and we recommend you have extra nights to explore this fascinating city. We visit historical Flemish cities such as Antwerp, Ghent and Bruges. Along the route we may visit a Dutch cheese farm, where cheese is still produced by traditional methods, and the iconic Dutch windmills of Kinderdijk. We cycle to fortified towns such as Willemstad, situated on the wide expanses of Zeeland, and we may spend the night in Antwerp, birthplace of Rubens (whose paintings are in the Cathedral of Our Lady). Sightseeing in the old town centre of Ghent, with its impressive bell tower or perhaps visit the Saint Baafs' Cathedral to admire the famous triptych painting by Jan van Eyck. We begin or end the tour in Bruges, with its windmills, gardens and picturesque town centre, possibly the most beautiful of all historical Flemish cities.

Our experienced guides will ensure you see the many interesting places along the route. However, if you prefer to cycle independently, you can do so, meeting the barge at the next destination. The cycling is varied and fascinating with woodlands, open river valleys, small country towns, and historic cities. There is time for sightseeing, shopping or to relax onboard the barge. Well-maintained multi-geared bikes are provided. E-bikes are available upon request on most departures (at extra cost). These do need to be reserved well in advance.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on (03) 58750 1441 for details or reservations

Typical suggested itinerary - from Amsterdam to Bruges: *

Day 1: Amsterdam – Oude Wetering

cycling @ 10km

Plan to arrive at the mooring point, not far from the Central Railway Station, by mid-afternoon, board the ship, stow your luggage away in your cabin and then enjoy a cup of tea or coffee. The welcome briefing offers a chance to get to know your guides, the crew, the barge, your bike and cycling plan and your fellow passengers.

We sail through Amsterdam westwards to the huge Haarlemmermeerpolder which is roughly six metres below sea level. Along the way is a rich horticultural area of trees, flowers and plants destined for local markets and for export around the world. At the small village of Oude Wetering we take a warm-up ride and test out our bikes. This area is regarded locally as the '*Green Heart of Holland*' with its canals, farms and irrigated fields. Dinner is aboard the ship, followed by a briefing on the program for the next day.

Day 2: Oude Wetering – Gouda

cycling @ 45km

From Oude Wetering, we continue our cycling following country roads, river banks and channels through the typical rural scenes to the city of Gouda, a place known worldwide for its cheese. The city is also known for 'stroomwafels' (treacle-waffle), pottery, stained-glass windows, a magnificent town hall and many atmospheric canals. After dinner there is time for a stroll through the old city centre for a coffee or a beer.

Day 3: Gouda – Dordrecht

cycling @ 40km

We cycle along the Dutch IJssel and alongside one of the most important polders in the Netherlands, Krimpenerwaard. We follow narrow cycle paths to the River Lek and may visit Kinderdijk, a unique collection of nineteen UNESCO listed historic working windmills. As time allows we can explore here before continuing along the Alblasserwaardpolder and the Beneden-Merwede, where we take a fast ferry to meet the barge at Dordrecht.

Note, not all tours visit Kinderdijk. If this is important to you, please ask us for specific itinerary details.

Day 4: Dordrecht – Willemstad cycle to Kreekak, sail to Antwerp

cycling @ 55km

From Dordrecht we cruise to the delta of several great Dutch rivers. Years ago there was an open connection to the sea but after flooding in 1953, the Deltaplan was developed and most tidal rivers here were closed by dams. Here we ride past the Volkeraksluizen, one of the busiest locks in the world, then cycle over the 'Brabantse Wal', a long high ridge made of sand deposited in the Ice Age. We board the barge again at the huge Kreekrak lock and cruise to Antwerp. This is a fascinating journey along the river with its big sea going vessels. The entrance to the harbour of Antwerp is spectacular as you sail past the impressive new Havenhuis (Harbour House). The historical centre of Antwerp is worth a visit.

Day 5: Antwerp – Sint Amands

Cycling 40km

We cross the Scheldt River via the St. Anna pedestrian tunnel, featuring historic wooden escalators. Afterwards we cycle alongside the Scheldt passing Basel, one of the most beautiful villages of Belgium, and Rupelmonde, the birthplace of famous 16th century cartographer Gerardus Mercator. On the way to Sint Amands the route leads us along nature reserves and wetlands like Durme and Schausselbroek. Durme is particularly notable as one of the last fresh water marshes along this tidal part of the river and therefore has a unique flora and fauna. Sint Amands is a sleepy village nestled in a bend of the Scheldt.

Day 6: Sint Amands, sail to Dendermonde, cycle to Ghent

Cycling 45 km

We start with a leisurely sail to Dendermonde, where we can visit the beautiful market square with its impressive 14th century town hall and belfry. We cycle again alongside the Scheldt River to Berlare and Wetteren with its rose nurseries. This is the last village before Ghent, so it's a perfect place to stop and taste some Belgian beer. The city of Ghent has approximately 250,000 citizens. Ghent is a lively town and although proud of its rich past, the role of the city is by no means restricted to a museum-city. The city is a stunning mixture of medieval buildings, chic shopping areas with beautiful mansions, old workers districts from the early 20th century which now house hundreds of students, and busy squares where one can sit and enjoy warm summer nights until the early hours.

Day 7: Ghent – Bruges

cycling @ 45km

This morning we cycle through the heart of this bicycle-friendly city and out into the scenic countryside of Oost-Vlaanderen (East-Flanders) with its forest, cultivated fields, small villages and castles. Again, as conditions allow, we have a shorter cycling option for those who prefer rejoining the barge near Aalterbrug. Our last cycling day takes us along the tow path of the Oostende-Gent canal – the oldest canal in Belgium – into Bruges, nicknamed the '*Venice of the North*.' Bruges is one of the most interesting and impressive cities in Belgium. There is time to explore the medieval centre and many choose to stay another day or two in this beautiful city.

Day 8: Bruges

Tour ends after breakfast in central Bruges. Ask for details of extra nights of hotel accommodation. The city of Bruges is well connected by regular trains to Brussels or fast rail connections to Amsterdam or Paris.

Typical suggested itinerary - from Bruges to Amsterdam: *

Day 1: Arrive Bruges

cycling 15km

Plan to arrive at the barge by mid-afternoon (the canal is a short distance from the Railway Station) to board the ship, stow your luggage and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee. At the welcome briefing you can get to know your guides, the crew, the barge and cycling plan and other passengers before a bicycle fitting and short test ride through the countryside near Bruges. After dinner there is time to explore beautiful Bruges with its picturesque medieval town centre, one of the most interesting and impressive cities in Europe.

Day 2: Bruges – Ghent

cycling @ 35 or 60km

We breakfast as the barge departs Bruges, and we begin cycling just outside of the city across the flat land of West Flanders towards the historical centre of Ghent. Ghent, located at the confluence of the Rivers Leie and Schelde, gained influence and prosperity through trade in the 13th and 14th Centuries, and there are still many well-preserved houses and halls from this era. You may like to stop by St Baafs' Cathedral to admire Jan van Eyck's painting, 'The Adoration of the Lamb' – along with many other medieval masterpieces.

Day 3: Ghent – Dendermonde – St Amands

cycling @ 40 or 55km

While the barge sails on the River Schelde to Dendermonde, we cycle alongside this beautiful but capricious tidal river; we meet the barge in Dendermonde. Here you may choose to continue by bicycle or to relax aboard the barge as it sails to our mooring point, the small village of St-Amands.

Day 4: St Amands – Antwerp

cycling @ 35 or 50km

We ride along a beautiful cycling track beside the River Schelde, past tranquil lush green rural scenery to the city of Antwerp. Well-known as one of the world's leading centres of the diamond trade, Antwerp also boasts many lovely historical houses, market squares and cafes. It was the birthplace of the painter Rubens, and you can admire some of his work in the Cathedral of Our Lady in the city centre.

Day 5: Antwerp – Tholen – Dordrecht

cycling @ 20 or 35km

We stay aboard the barge as it sails the Schelde-Rhine Canal through the complex locks at Kreekrak, then cycle through the *Wouwe Plantage* forest to Tholen, a picturesque village which was once an island. From here we sail, past the impressive Volkerak locks, to Dordrecht, one of the oldest cities in the Netherlands.

Day 6: Dordrecht – Kinderdijk – Schoonhoven –Vreeswijk/Utrecht

cycling @ 35 or 60km

After a fast ferry ride to Alblasterdam, we ride to Kinderdijk, site of the most famous windmills in the Netherlands – nineteen UNESCO listed windmills all in a row, built in the 18th century to drain the Alblasterwaard polder. In the afternoon we continue to the 'silver city' of Schoonhoven, and to our destination for tonight, Vreeswijk, a charming historic village with a rich maritime past. In the evening, you can explore its cozy streets and canals.

Day 7: Vreeswijk/Utrecht – Breukelen – Amsterdam

cycling @ 35 or 45km

Over breakfast the barge cruises to Breukelen where we begin cycling along the River Vecht, known for its beautiful mansions, small castles and houses with parks and gardens. We pass several small and picturesque villages, and perhaps stop to see a traditional Dutch cheese farm. We arrive in Amsterdam in early afternoon, with plenty of time to explore the city's canals, laneways, or museums in the evening.

Day 8: Amsterdam

Tour ends after breakfast in central Amsterdam.

** These are sample or suggested itineraries only and may vary depending on the boat, departure date and abilities of the group. All itineraries are subject to change depending weather, tides, canal / river traffic, waterway traffic, technical conditions and other unforeseen circumstances. All cycling distances given are approximate.*



Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on (03) 5750 1441 for details or reservations

PREMIUM PLUS BARGES

Premium Plus boats have more spacious cabins with lower beds, some with doubles. Cabins may have extras such as hair dryers, televisions and air-conditioning. Furnishings and fixtures are up-to-date and to a high standard, and the common areas such as lounge, dining and sundeck are spacious and well-equipped. Non-cycling passengers may prefer a Premium Plus boat as there is more room to relax during the day. *Some Premium Plus barges may offer Upgrade cabins or Suites for a supplement – please ask when booking.*



PREMIUM BARGES

Cabins on Premium barges have comfortable twin, lower level beds (no bunks). The barges have generally modern fitouts with simple but tasteful furnishings. The common areas inside and out are spacious and pleasant.



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STANDARD OR STANDARD PLUS BARGES

Standard Plus cabins are generally furnished with split level beds (one bed is higher and may require a climb on a small ladder or step-up, beds may not be directly above/below each other as in a bunk cabin). These barges are cheerful and comfortable, well-lit and airy. Cabins have a small shower/toilet. Some triple cabins with a double and single bed may be available on some barges.

Standard barges are equipped with compact cabins, simply furnished, usually with bunk beds and windows or portholes allowing in light. Some Standard barges may have 2 or 3 Standard Plus cabins. Common areas such as lounge, sun-deck and dining room are designed for comfort and to encourage a sociable atmosphere.



Outdoor Travel offers Bike & Barge or Bike & Boat cruises to many areas of Europe including the Loire Valley & Burgundy or Provence in **France**, in **Germany** along the Rivers Saar, Moselle and Rhine, in **Italy** on the Venice Lagoon, Sicily or the Amalfi Coast, the popular River Danube in **Austria** or **Romania**, island hopping in **Greece**, **Turkey** or on the Dalmatian coast of **Croatia**. We also offer inn-to-inn guided or self-guided cycling holidays in many destinations in Europe & across the world including **South Africa**, **New Zealand**, **Vietnam** and **Japan**.



Contact Outdoor Travel direct for more details and reservations:

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