

Tulips & Windmills

Discover Holland & Belgium

Admire the genius of the Dutch Masters at Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum. Explore Enkhuizen's seafaring heritage, Dutch World War II history and Antwerp's Renaissance splendor. See colorful tulips in bloom, and sample Belgian beers and chocolates. View well-preserved medieval buildings in Middelburg. Roam Keukenhof Gardens, the world's largest floral park. The best time to see the Low Countries is spring, and the best way to see them is on our 10-day voyage.



Day 1 — Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Embark your ship and settle into your stateroom. A city of charming canals, elegant gabled houses, splendid museums and abundant bicycles, the Dutch capital of Amsterdam is a delight to explore. Its patchwork of waterways forms about 90 islands connected by 1,500 bridges. The legacy of the Dutch Golden Age lives on in gilded manses and in the lush paintings of Rembrandt and other Dutch masters that adorn the Rijksmuseum, The Netherlands' grand repository of art and cultural history. Discovering Amsterdam is a pleasure best pursued on foot; visitors line the tranquil canals and linger over Dutch pancakes, or take a *stroopwafel* to go.

Day 2 — Amsterdam, The Netherlands

In Amsterdam, the bicycle is as much a cultural treasure as any museum. The city's flat terrain makes it ideal for getting around on two wheels. Bikes first pedaled onto the city's streets during the late 19th century; in the 1960s, the first bike-share program was invented here, founded by members of the anti-establishment Provo movement—short for “provocateur”—whose aim was to reduce air pollution created by cars. The program did not last, but the bicycle did, and cycle lanes were soon added to the street. Today, the city is home to hundreds of thousands of bikes.

Day 3 — Scenic Sailing: IJsselmeer

Journey across the IJsselmeer, once known as the Zuiderzee. This remarkable artificial body of water, one of the largest lakes in Western Europe, formed after the inland sea here was closed off from the North Sea by construction of the 20-mile-long Afsluitdijk dam in 1932. As you sail, you may see to the east the province of Flevoland, made up of three polders of land that were

reclaimed when the IJsselmeer formed. To the west, fertile Dutch farmland hugs the lake, despite the shores' proximity to the major metropolitan city of Amsterdam.

Day 4 — Arnhem, The Netherlands

A picturesque town nearly destroyed during World War II, Arnhem is graced with an array of beautiful parks and gardens. In 1443, Arnhem joined the Hanseatic League, the powerful merchant conglomerate that dominated Northern Europe's medieval trade world. During the 19th century, it evolved into a more leisurely town, renowned for its scenic landscapes. Today, Arnhem's Hoge Veluwe National Park is known for its natural beauty and diverse flora and fauna, as well as the Kröller-Müller Museum, which boasts the world's second-largest collection of works by Vincent van Gogh.

Day 5 — Kinderdijk, The Netherlands

Kinderdijk is a village community in the Alblasserwaard province. This corner of South Holland, part of the scenic Waal and Merwede regions, has long been shaped by Rhine Delta waters. Kinderdijk is most known for its 19 remarkably preserved 18th-century windmills. The charming hamlet is located amid low-lying polders, tracts of land reclaimed from the sea by the power of the windmills and enclosed by embankments, or dikes. This legendary place calls to mind the 1865 novel *Hans Brinker*, in which a heroic boy plugs his finger into a ruptured dike.

Day 6 — Antwerp, Belgium

A cosmopolitan city, Antwerp is one of the world's major seaports. Its unique atmosphere comes from the contrasts between old and new, commerce and art. The Old Town and the expansive Grote Markt are filled with narrow, winding streets and medieval guild houses. The Gothic Cathedral of Our Lady, Belgium's largest church, contains works by 17th-century painter Peter Paul Rubens; he lived in the city and is entombed in the Church of St. James. Antwerp is also renowned for diamonds and chocolate. Many diamond cutters can be found here alongside countless confectioners.

Day 7 — Middelburg, The Netherlands

The capital of Zeeland, Middelburg's historical significance can be seen in its well-preserved medieval buildings. The magnificent 15th-century Gothic-style Town Hall stands as a testament to Middelburg's past grandeur. The soaring abbey tower of Lange Jan offers panoramic views of the city, while the 800-year-old abbey complex showcases striking architecture. The city hosts various cultural events throughout the year, including the annual Middelburg Jazz Festival and the *Mosselfeesten* (Mussel Festival), where guests can enjoy a variety of Zeeland's delicious delicacy.

Day 8 — Zeeland, The Netherlands

The tranquil region of Zeeland is a fascinating blend of natural and human-made landscapes. Here, large swaths of land have been shaped by the tendrils of the delta where the Rhine, Meuse and Scheldt Rivers make their final sprint to the sea. Much of this land lies below sea level, protected from the tides of the North Sea by the vast Delta Works project and by the work of the classic windmills that grace the landscape. A number of islands dot this serene coastal region too. This archipelago of sorts gives this province its name: Zeeland, which means "sea land." From

September through April, restaurants in Zeeland offer oysters, farmed fresh from local waters. They are delicious served with a squeeze of lemon and paired with a crisp glass of wine.

Day 9 — Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Amsterdam is admired for its charming brick canal houses, with their distinctive stepped gables and forward slant. A stroll along the city's waterways showcases the beautiful architecture of these properties and their interesting features. The houses are traditionally narrow but deep and tend to tilt forward. The lean serves two purposes: it provides additional living space in a house's upper quarters; and, in conjunction with the hoist beam protruding from the peak of the roof, it allows heavy items to be lifted by pulley to top floors without breaking any windows.

*Note: Due to the opening schedule of Keukenhof Gardens, the Day 2 program may be exchanged with the Day 9 program and vice versa on select departures.

Day 10 — Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Tulips are synonymous with Amsterdam, and in spring, the city's surrounding landscapes are transformed into a sea of color. Holland's love affair with tulips began in the 16th century after the first bulbs were imported from the Ottoman Empire. By the Dutch Golden Age, tulips were inspiring artists and gracing the canvases of paintings, including Rembrandt's *Flora*. Every year, from March until May, colorful blooms adorn the city's outdoor spaces; notable buildings are dressed in a variety of floral designs; and the soft scent of tulips fills the air of pedestrian walkways. Bid farewell to your fellow guests and journey home. Or spend more time exploring, perhaps joining one of our extensions.

** One shore excursion included per port; all others available at an extra charge.*