

Holland & Belgium Viking River Cruise

By

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Europe River Cruise Expert

Overview

- Journey through the inland waterways of the Low Countries—Holland and Belgium.
- Enjoy an overnight stay in vibrant Amsterdam.
- Sail through a vast network of canals and rivers, stopping in key cities to soak up Dutch, German and Flemish culture.
- Witness feats of Dutch engineering.
- See modern Rotterdam and the windmills of Kinderdijk, and visit Antwerp, Europe's diamond capital.
- In the spring, visit Keukenhof Gardens in bright bloom.

Map From Viking River Cruises



Day 1 Amsterdam, The Netherlands

- Arrive in Amsterdam, then transfer to your ship.*
- After boarding, the afternoon is yours to relax or explore the city on your own.
- If your arrival schedule permits, you may wish to visit the Rijksmuseum, or the van Gogh Museum next door.
- (Dinner)
- * Ground transfers are included with Viking Air purchase.

Day 2 Amsterdam

- Cruise Amsterdam's charming canals this morning, passing under pretty bridges and enjoying streets lined with gabled houses of centuries past.
- This afternoon, visit the picturesque Keukenhof Gardens, the world's largest floral park. Admire the stunning beauty at both indoor and outdoor exhibits containing millions of vibrant blooms including tulips, hyacinths, crocuses and daffodils.*
- Or join an optional excursion—perhaps a visit to one of Amsterdam's world-class museums to explore the Dutch Golden Age,
- or uncover the city's fascinating Jewish history. Your Viking Program Director can help you plan your afternoon.
- (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)
- *Keukenhof Gardens is available on select departures during Tulip season in March through early May.

Day 2 Shore Excursions

- Amsterdam Canal Cruise—included
- Keukenhof Gardens—included
- Jewish Amsterdam--Uncover Amsterdam's fascinating Jewish history during visits to several important landmarks.
- Amsterdam's Golden Age--Peruse the work of the Dutch Masters, cruise Amsterdam's charming waterways and visit a patrician museum.
- Cheeses of Edam & Beemster--Discover Holland's love affair with cheese and make your own during a workshop at a working farm.
- Keukenhof Gardens & Historic Haarlem--Walk the footpaths of renowned Keukenhof Gardens and the streets of charming Haarlem

Canal Cruise



Photo Hank Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com

The Famous Gabled Roofs

Photo Hank Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com



Rijksmuseum



Photo Hank Schrader
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Skinny Bridge, Amsterdam



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Keukenhof Gardens



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Keukenhof Gardens





Keukenhof Gardens

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Day 3 Hoorn, The Netherlands

- Early this morning, sail across the IJsselmeer (once known as the Zuiderzee) to the ancient shipping village of Hoorn.
- After breakfast, enjoy a guided walk through the Hoorn's cobbled streets; see age-old cheese warehouses and the town's main square, which dates back to Hoorn's heyday.
- Enjoy a warm welcome during a home visit to a local family and get acquainted with daily life.
- Alternatively, you may choose to join a cycling excursion through the Dutch countryside to see the country's famed windmills.
- Depart after dinner and cruise through the night.
- (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Day 3 Shore Excursions

- Hoorn Walking Tour & Local Performance—included
- Dutch Countryside & Home Visit by E-bike--Enjoy a hosted visit at a Dutch residence and pedal along dikes, through quiet villages and past flower fields.
- Bulb Growers Visit--Tiptoe through the tulips during an in-depth visit to the bulb fields and greenhouses of a Dutch farm.

Day 4 Dordrecht & Rotterdam, The Netherlands

- This morning, enjoy a scenic cruise along the Lek River as you sail into Dordrecht.
- An important merchant city during the late Middle Ages, Dordrecht is brimming with historic sights.
- During a walking tour, see the inner-city harbors, the Grote Kerk (Great Church) and the 13th-century Augustine monastery known as “Het Hof.”
- This afternoon, your ship departs for Rotterdam. Here, you will enjoy time to explore the modern face of Holland. The city has been extensively rebuilt after the destruction suffered during World War II, and some of its architecture is quite innovative.
- Alternatively, you may choose to join a full-day excursion that combines Dordrecht and Delft, rejoining your ship later this afternoon.
- This evening, your ship will set sail for a scenic dinner cruise around the harbor. Admire the twinkling lights of the cosmopolitan skyline of Europe’s largest port.
- (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Day 4 Shore Excursions

- Historic Dordrecht—included
- Historic Gouda & Stroopwafel--Try your hand at making Holland's famous *stropwafel* during a culinary workshop and enjoy your own creation.
- Historic Dordrecht & Delft--Explore the cities of Dordrecht and Delft, then learn about the history and production of Royal Delft pottery.
- Dutch Innovation & Greenhouse Agriculture--Peek into Holland's agricultural world and learn how this small nation leads the way in sustainable production.

Day 5 Kinderdijk, The Netherlands

- Arrive this morning in Kinderdijk and disembark for a tour of this ingenious 18th-century community.
- Learn why the windmills were built and see how they work to help control flooding, then tour a working windmill to see its pumping mechanism and living quarters at this UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Enjoy scenic afternoon cruising along the Lek and Waal Rivers and dinner on board your ship.
- (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Day 5 Shore Excursions

- Kinderdijk Windmills—included
- Kinderdijk Windmills by Bicycle--Cycle through the grasslands of Kinderdijk and see the 19 historic windmills, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Kinderdijk by Vintage Barge--Go beyond the usual visitor experience on a Viking exclusive boat tour and visit the oldest Kinderdijk windmill.
- Kinderdijk Windmills & Dutch Cheese Making--See the picturesque Dutch countryside as you explore The Netherlands' world-famous cheeses and windmills.
- Rotterdam on Foot--Explore historic sites in the heart of Rotterdam and enjoy a tasting of local favorites during a walking tour.

Kinderdijk

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Kinderdijk

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Day 6 Wesel, Germany

- Awake in Wesel and disembark for a walking tour of the city. Completely destroyed during World War II, Wesel fell under a barrage of heavy bombing by the Allied forces in 1945; during your tour, you will learn about the city's rise from the ashes.
- This afternoon, you may choose to visit Xanten Archaeological Park—one of the largest open-air museums in the world—or head to Essen and the UNESCO-listed Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex, recognized as one of Europe's most important industrial heritage sites.
- This evening, set sail for Nijmegen.
- (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Day 6 Shore Excursions

- Historic Wesel on Foot—included
- Xanan During the Time of Rome--Glimpse life during a time when Rome ruled the Western world during a visit to the Archaeological Park of Xanten.
- Münster, Westphalia's Historic Capital--Discover the rich architectural heritage of the city known for its historic treaty of 1648

Day 7 Nijmegen, The Netherlands

- After breakfast, take a walk through the cobblestone streets of Nijmegen and see several historic landmarks in The Netherlands' oldest city.
- Or, you may choose to step back in time during an optional tour as you discover more about Operation Market Garden: the planned attack by the Allied forces in late summer 1944 portrayed in the epic war movie *A Bridge Too Far*. The National Liberation Museum brings the events of WWII to life through a series of exhibits, interactive presentations and original films.
- Alternatively, you can spend a full day exploring the life and works of van Gogh before rejoining your ship in Venlo.
- (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Day 7 Shore Excursions

- Nijmegen by Foot—included
- Life & Works of van Gogh--Walk in the footsteps of renowned painter Vincent van Gogh during a visit to the village of Nuenen.
- Dutch Beer Culture--Enjoy a behind-the-scenes look at the brewing process during a visit and beer tasting at Brouwerij de Hemel.
- Nijmegen & World War II--Discover Nijmegen's role in World War II and learn about the liberation of the city.

Nijmegen Cobblestone Street



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Nijmegen Town Hall & Grote Markt



Photo Anne Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com

Nijmegen Grote Markt Tunnel Entrance



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Nijmegen St. Stephens Church



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Cheese Store Nijmegen



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Day 8 Maastricht, The Netherlands

- Disembark your ship and enjoy a walking tour around historic Maastricht.
- Stroll the narrow cobblestone streets of the Old Town and see the Gothic-style Sint Janskerk church and the Romanesque Basilica of St. Servatius.
- This afternoon, enjoy free time at your leisure to explore or join an optional excursion to Aachen to see Charlemagne's chapel, a UNESCO Site.
- Or pay your respects at the American Military Cemetery of Margraten, the final resting place of 8,000 American soldiers who gave their lives to liberate Europe from the Nazis.
- (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Day 8 Shore Excursions

- Streets & Squares of Maastrich—included
- Charlemange Cathedral & Treasury--Explore the rich medieval heritage and architectural beauty of Aachen's iconic cathedral and treasury.
- Netherlands American Cemetery & Memorial--Pay your respects to the thousands of US service members who gave their lives during a solemn cemetery visit.
- Pie-Making Workshop--Learn the secrets to making a beloved local treat, then create your own during a hands-on workshop.

Day 9 Antwerp, Belgium

- Arrive in Antwerp this morning and enjoy a walking tour of the historic quarter. See the Cathedral of Our Lady with its three monumental altarpieces painted by Peter Paul Rubens and the Grote Markt (Grand Square) surrounded by the Renaissance Town Hall and its majestic guild halls.
- This afternoon, spend time at your leisure exploring more of charming Antwerp.
- Alternatively, you may enjoy an optional excursion to sample Belgium's delightful cuisine.
- This evening, enjoy dinner on board your ship or step ashore and dine at one of Antwerp's many restaurants on your own as we remain docked overnight.
- (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Day 9 Shore Excursions

- Antwerp Walking Tour—included
- Romi Goldmunz and Antwerp's Most Famous Industry--Immerse yourself in the rich heritage of Antwerp's vibrant Jewish *shtetl*, or community.
- Flavors of Antwerp--Savor some of Antwerp's traditional treats and learn what inspired their distinct creation.
- Antwerp by Bicycle--Explore historic Antwerp by bicycle and visit the Gothic Cathedral of Our Lady.

Antwerp, Belgium Castle

Photo Anne Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com



Antwerp, Belgium Town Hall in the Grote Markt



Photo Anne Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com

Barbo statue. According to the legend, a terrible giant, called Druoon Antigoon, lived on the banks of the river Scheldt. He demand tolls, when refused he cut off the hands of offending sailors. A Roman soldier, Silvius Brabo, killed the giant and by cutting his hand off, he ended his reign of terror.



Antwerp, Belgium Guild Houses

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Antwerp Belgium Waffles (Optional)



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Antwerp, Belgium Chocolate Shop



Photo Anne Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com

Antwerp, Belgium Chocolate Display



Day 10 Antwerp, Belgium

- After breakfast, disembark and proceed to the airport for your return flight.*
- Perhaps see more of Belgium on a 2-night city stay in the capital, Brussels.
- Or enjoy a 3-night extension in the fairy-tale medieval city of Bruges, with visits to Ghent, Bruges and Flanders Fields.

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