

HeartCycle Bicycle Touring Club Bike and Barge Beautiful Belgium 2024

- Dates:** July 20 - July 27, 2024
- Coordinator:** Rita Kurelja
- Miles:** Approximately 140-200 miles, mostly FLAT.
- Rating:** Easy to Moderate. Shorter or longer options available most days.
- Riders:** 22
- Price:** \$2150 (double occupancy), deposit \$500 with registration. Balance due April 16, 2024. +\$800 single supplement, limit 1. Non-rider companion fee \$2050 to share a room.
- Cancellation:** Due to contract stipulations, canceling prior to January 10, 2024, \$100.00, January 10 to April 15, 2024, 100% of deposit unless your spot can be filled from the waitlist, then \$100.00. After April 16, 2024, no refund unless a replacement is secured from the waitlist. **Travel insurance is strongly recommended.**



OVERVIEW

Join HeartCycle and Euro Sail on this 8 day, 7 night tour as we cycle and sail through some of the most beautiful areas between Bruges and Amsterdam in the Flemish region of Belgium. This tour is limited to 22 participants (including the HeartCycle coordinator) as that is all the Le Mar, our floating barge hotel, will hold. Tour participants will be provided 3 meals daily on board the La Mar. A pack lunch will be provided each morning so we can eat as we cycle through the beautiful Dutch countryside. One dinner will be on your own in Antwerp. Special diet requests will result in an additional fee payable directly to the tour operator. All of the cabins have two single beds (not bunk beds) equipped with central air conditioning, windows that open, a bathroom with shower, a small safe, and hair dryer.

Bicycles appropriate for the mileage and terrain will be provided for each rider. These bikes will be comfortable, upright aluminum bikes. ***A very limited number (5) e-bikes will be available for an additional charge of 150 euro.***

The tour will begin in the beautiful historic Bruges whose city center is a World Heritage Site of UNESCO. For the next 7 days we will cycle to world famous destinations including Ghent, Antwerp, Dordrecht, Dordrecht, ending our tour in Amsterdam. Attractions along the way include many villages, a visit to a real Dutch cheese farm, The Red Star Line Museum in Antwerp, 19 famous Dutch windmills, and numerous walking tours.

While on this amazing tour we will be accompanied by two competent, professional, multilingual tour leaders, including Francien van der Lee who has participated as a leader on numerous HeartCycle Bike and Barge tours.

Below is the anticipated daily schedule. Due to numerous factors, including weather and tidal changes, adjustments to these rides may be necessary. Most days you will have an option for more or less mileage. This tour is perfect for the beginning/intermediate rider, comfortable on a bicycle saddle for 3-4 hours at a time. This area is very flat so hills won't be an issue but there is always the possibility of a headwind and rain is always a consideration any time of year.

ITENERARY

Day 1, Saturday July 20, 2024

Embarkation time in Bruges between 1 p.m. and 2 p.m.

The ship La Mar awaits us in the Bruges harbor. After a welcome meeting with the crew at 2 PM there is time for bicycle fitting and a short test-ride through the countryside around Bruges. After dinner, a guide will take us for a short walk through the center of town.



Day 2, July 21, 2024

Bruges – Ghent, 35 km/21 mi. or 57 km/36 mi.

On this first full day of cycling, we will be pedaling towards Ghent through the beautiful Flemish landscape along the Ghent canal. Exploring historical Ghent is not to be missed. This ride features lovely illuminated streets and an architectural richness that has to be seen to be believed. The ship will dock for the night in a suburb of Ghent approximately 30 cycling minutes from the city center. Before dinner, a small canal boat will take us for a guided tour through the historic city.

Day 3, July 22, 2024

Ghent – Dendermonde/St. Amands, 40 km/24 mi. or 53 km/32 mi.

A late morning start will allow time in Ghent then we will cycle downstream through a diverse landscape along the tidal Schelde River to Dendermonde located at the confluence of the Dender and Schelde rivers. There is only one way to describe the landscape along the Schelde and that is “magnificent”. It is without doubt one of the natural highlights of the tour. During this section of the Schelde the speed of the ship will be determined by the height of the tide. We will travel from Dendermonde to St. Amands by either bicycle or barge depending on the tides. Your floating hotel will be docked for the night in St. Amands.



Day 4, July 23, 2024

St. Amands – Temse – Antwerp, 32 km/19 mi. or 49 km/31 mi.

Today's ride will have us following the Schelde river downstream through the Temse region to the city of Antwerp. Over the centuries, the Schelde river has held strategic importance for the Romans, Vikings, Spanish, and Napoleon. Today it is a beautiful waterway just perfect for bike and barge holidays! Antwerp, our destination for the day, is a harbor city famous for handling up to 80% of the world's rough cut diamonds and is the birthplace of the famous painter Sir Peter Paul Rubens. Dinner is on your own.

Day 5, July 24, 2024.

Antwerp – Kreekrak locks | Kreekrak locks – Tholen, 36 km/23 mi. or 20 km/13 mi. |
Tholen – Willemstad – Dordrecht

The day will start with the ship sailing along the Schelde-Rhine Canal and over the huge Kreekrak lock system. Here your bicycle tour starts through the beautiful "Wouwse Plantage" forest to Tholen, Tholen was once an island in the middle of the large Zeeland streams where many people fished for their living. Today Tholen is connected to the mainland in various ways, but it is still a picturesque village with many relics of an eventful past. From Tholen we will join the ship again for a nice afternoon

sail to the city of Dordrecht. Halfway the ship will pass the impressive Volkerak lock system. Dordrecht, one of the oldest cities in the Netherlands, is your destination for the day. The guide will take us for an evening walk and tell us about the history of the Netherlands.



Day 6, July 25, 2024

Dordrecht – Kinderdijk | Kinderdijk – Schoonhoven – Vianen, 32 km/19 mi. or 57 km/36 mi.

Today we will start the tour with the “Waterbus”, a fast ferry that will take you and your bicycle in just 10 minutes to Alblasterdam. After a short cycle we reach Kinderdijk, a village famous for its impressive row of 19 UNESCO cultural heritage-listed windmills – one of which you can visit (don’t forget your camera!). We will then continue to cycle via Schoonhoven to Vianen, a small fortified town on the river Lek (Lower Rhine), where we will stay for the night and where you can explore at your leisure.

Day 7, July 26m 2024

Vianen – Breukelen | Breukelen – Amsterdam (36 km/23 mi. or 46 km/28 mi.

During breakfast the ship will cruise to Breukelen where we will disembark to start our final day of cycling. We will ride along the Vecht River in an area famous for its beautiful mansions, small castles, impressive houses, and their large gardens. After cycling through the villages of Nieuwersluis, Loenen and Vreeland, we will arrive at

Nigtevecht where you can visit a traditional cheese farm. We will then continue cycling through the historical town of Muiden and on to Amsterdam where we will meet the barge for the final time in the Amsterdam harbor.



Day 8, July 27m 2024

.Amsterdam

End of our tour: Disembarkation after another great Dutch breakfast until 9.30 a.m.

Note: The entrance fees for all of the museums, ferry fees and other activities listed in this tour description are covered in your registration. **Transportation to and from the barge “LaMar” is not included.**

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