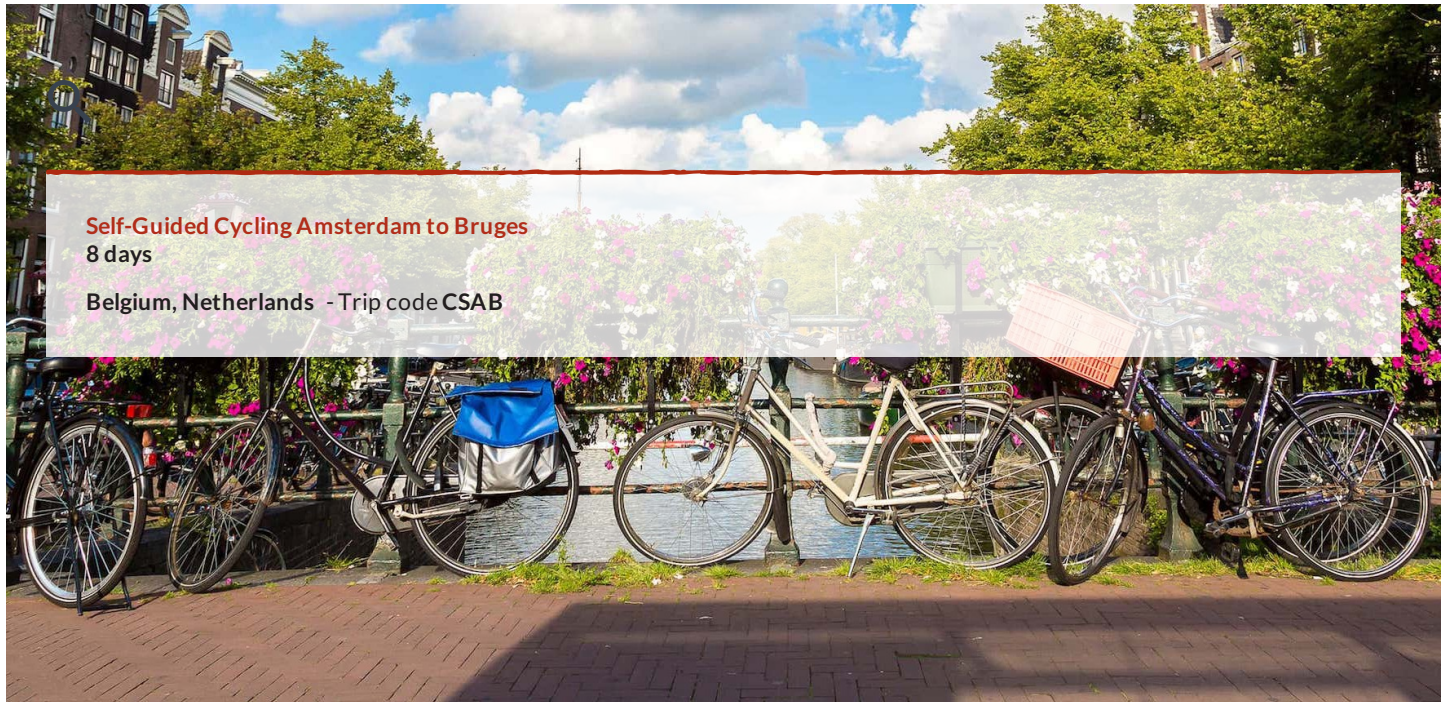


EXPLORE!



Self-Guided Cycling Amsterdam to Bruges

8 days

Belgium, Netherlands - Trip code CSAB

Self-Guided Cycling Amsterdam to Bruges

On this self-guided cycle trip through the Low Countries you ride on dedicated cycle paths from the Netherlands to Belgium. Starting in Amsterdam you cycle through some of the most picturesque towns in the Netherlands and Flanders including Gouda, Willemstad and Damme, before ending in historic Bruges.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Rewarding cycling** - through polder lands, across Zeeland and into Belgium
- ★ **Bruges** - Perhaps the most beautiful of all Flemish cities
- ★ **Picturesque and historic towns** - Explore towns that are remarkably well-preserved and evocative of centuries past
- ★ **Sense of achievement** - Cycle between two iconic cities

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

CYCLING GRADE:

Moderate

Medium length rides suitable for cyclists who are used to undulating routes with occasional energetic climbs. Mainly on trails and quiet roads and you should have a reasonable level of fitness.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Holiday starts in Amsterdam

Your bicycle holiday starts in Amsterdam, famous for its gorgeous 400-year-old canal district; museums (the new Rijksmuseum, Van Gogh, Anne Frank etc); street artists and performers on Dam, Leidseplein and Rembrandtplein. This city is brimming with things to see and do and you couldn't wish for a more dynamic beginning to your holiday. Try to arrive early so you have time to admire the elegant tree-lined canals and tall narrow townhouses and warehouses dating from the 17th century (World Heritage Site).



Accommodation: Westcord Art Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Cycle through the 'green heart' of Holland to Gouda

This morning after breakfast you will collect your bike. We start with the longest ride of the week. After staying the night in bustling Amsterdam, you cycle into the peace and quiet of the 'Groene Hart' or Green Heart of the Netherlands - a pleasant rural area of low-lying polders with peat meadows and grazing cattle. It's a flat, open, spacious landscape where church spires and windmills touch the horizon and clouds are reflected in lakes and canals. The ride ends in Gouda. For centuries, people flocked from far and wide to buy horses, cows, meat, turf, seed, cheese etc. at weekly and annual markets in Gouda. We recommend an evening stroll around the old part of town to soak up the yesteryear atmosphere and marvel at the large and attractive market square boasting a wonderful fifteenth century town hall as well as a 'weighing house' ('waag').

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 80 kilometres.



Accommodation: Best Western Plus Gouda (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Ride past the famous windmills of Kinderdijk to the ancient town of Dordrecht

This morning we hit the trail once again and head firstly for the village of Kinderdijk where nineteen majestic windmills present a unique spectacle. In the age of wind power they were used to drain excess water out of the low-lying polder up into the River Lek. Pedalling on, you will reach one of the oldest towns in Holland - Dordrecht, completely surrounded by water. The area around the marina is a true gem and this oldest part of town has over a thousand historical buildings and three nostalgic canals.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 52 kilometres.



Accommodation: Hotel Bellevue Groothoofd (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Cycle through the Biesbosch wetlands to the fortified town of Willemstad

The result of a major flood in 1421, Biesbosch is one of the few remaining wetland habitats in Europe where the ecosystem has adapted both to saltwater coming in from the sea through tidal creeks, and to freshwater coming down in the rivers. It's an ever-changing labyrinth of creeks and rivulets encompassing countless little islands of willow woods and reeds, a paradise for birds. You round off the day in Willemstad, a fortified town shaped like a seven-point star. There is choice between 39 or 54 km today.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 39 or 54 kilometres.



Accommodation: Hotel Het Wapen Van Willemstad (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Ride across Zeeland to Schuddebeurs

Today you will enter Zeeland, a province of the Netherlands marked by light, wind, water and lots of space. It is made up of many islands, therefore bridges and ferries will be carrying you across the waters as you drift down towards Belgium. Picture-postcard towns with ancient houses and cobbled streets are lined up for the coming days. Traverse a patchwork landscape of vast polders, idyllic countryside, rolling dunes and golden sand flats

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 50 kilometres



Accommodation: Hampshire Hostellerie Schuddebeurs (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Cycle to Middelburg - the historic capital of Zeeland

A wander down the narrow streets of Zierikzee is an absolute delight. Quaint little old houses take you back in time to the town's glory days when ships set sail to sell salt, wool, fish, grain and red dye as far afield as the Baltic and the Mediterranean. Your route continues to the charming village of Veere. From 1541 everything that was exported to Holland from Scotland (mainly wool) came ashore in and was distributed from Veere. This contract brought the town not only prosperity but also a very lively Scottish expat community that stayed for 300 years. Walk in their footsteps as you take a tour of the sights. Cruising further south, you will discover the nostalgic splendour of the city of Middelburg, capital of Zeeland. In the 16th and 17th centuries it was one of the most important centres of trade in the Netherlands. In April, May, June and September the distance is 53km due to a ferry not running. When the ferry is running the distance can be shortened to 43km.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 53 kilometres



Accommodation: Hotel Aan de Dam (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Cycle through Zeelandic Flanders to Bruges

After a hearty breakfast, cycle to Vlissingen and hop on a ferry to Zeelandic Flanders with its winding country roads, pollard willows, wet meadows and scattered villages. Having crossed the border into Belgium, you will reach the charming little town of Damme on the banks of the romantic Damse Vaart. From here, it's only a short stretch to Bruges, known as the pearl of Flanders! It's a truly enchanting town that has been welcoming tourists for about 150 years. With most of its medieval architecture intact, it remains exceptionally well preserved and can really give you a sense of times gone by when it was at the centre of the European wool and cloth trade.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 59 kilometres



Accommodation: Hotel Velotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Holiday ends in Bruges

After breakfast, the organised part of your holiday comes to an end.

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

Cycling information

□

General cycling information

On this tour we cycle 324 km over six days (an average of 54 km per day). We travel mainly on quiet backroads (busier near the major towns) and dedicated cycle paths on flat terrain with occasional inclines. The route takes you across several islands with bridges and ferries. We have graded the route as moderate.

Bike included

24 gear Batavus or Gazelle hybrid bike. E-Bike available at additional cost.

Bike information

Your included bike is a 24 gear Batavus or Gazelle hybrid bike and will be the correct frame size for your height. Female and male frames are allocated accordingly when booking unless you specifically request otherwise. Each bike is fitted with one lateral pannier bag (20 litres) and a handlebar bag with map holder (not available for ebikes). A water bottle holder is included as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them (and tools to fit them). A lock, pump, and puncture repair kit with tyre levers is included. All you need to bring is your own helmet or you can hire when booking).

Electric bikes (e-bikes) and road bikes are available for an additional cost for the duration of the holiday. Please contact us for more details or to request your e-bike or road bike.

Cycling grade

Moderate



Why book this trip

Unlike many other operators, we include the hire of your bike in the overall cost of the holiday: you don't need to bring your own or pay extra to hire one locally. We also provide a pump, lock, spare inner tube and tyre levers. All you need bring is your own helmet.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7



Transport

Bicycle



Accommodation

7 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

Belgium

Climate

Due to its location, Belgium has a typical sea-climate where it's not too hot nor too cold at any time. In the summer the average temperatures are between 15 - 25C and rainfall is common year round, although June - September are the driest months.

Time difference to GMT

+1

Religion

Catholicism

Language

Dutch

Netherlands

Climate

Due to its location, the Netherlands has a typical marine climate. It's not too cold during the winter and not too hot during the summer. In the summer the average temperatures are between 17 - 20C and rainfall is common year round, although dryer between April and September.

Time difference to GMT

+1

Religion

Christianity

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Day 1 - Depending on your arrival time in Amsterdam perhaps do a city tour or visit one of the many museums.

Day 2 - Stop off at Gouda museum or the City Hall.

Day 6 - Arriving into Middelburg this afternoon it is worth visiting Zeeuws museum.

Day 7 - After spending time exploring the historic centre of Bruges and chocolate tasting at one of the many cafes, you may like to visit De Halve Maan Brewery.

Clothing

Bring cycling gear such as quick drying cycle tops, padded cycle shorts and cycle gloves. The wind can be strong in this part of Europe so you should bring a warmer jacket/fleece. A waterproof cycle jacket is recommended in case of rain. A light windproof jacket is always useful.

Footwear

If you are not bringing cycle shoes then try to bring stiff-soled shoes as these are better for cycling - transmitting your energy into the pedals more efficiently. This becomes more relevant and recommended the more demanding the grade and distances to cover. SPD cycle shoes are not well suited to tours that combine sightseeing with cycling. Comfortable shoes, trainers, sandals or flip flops are useful when not on the bike.

Luggage: On tour

Bring one main piece of baggage as per your airline luggage allowance, maximum 20 kg per person. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage if using public transport so don't overload yourself. Luggage transfers between hotels are normally arranged by the hoteliers. Mark your bags clearly and leave them at the place and time arranged with them. When travelling on public transport you should always take your luggage with you.

Luggage transfer

Included between each hotel.

Equipment

On all Explore cycle holidays we strongly recommend you bring along and wear your cycle helmet. In case of an accident resulting in personal injury, certain insurance policies are invalidated in cases where a helmet was not being worn. Cycle glasses to protect against dust, pollen and the sun, padded cycle gloves and a water bottle or water delivery system (e.g. camelback or platypus) are also useful. You may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort. Other items to consider bringing are a sunhat and sun cream, torch, earplugs and insect repellent. If a handle bar bag or pannier is not provided (check bike details) then you may like to bring a small rucksack to wear while cycling. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage.

Country Information

Belgium

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£12

Dinner price

£18

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Euro

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Pounds Sterling and US Dollars can only be changed in larger airports with a Bureau de Change. Please change currency into Euros prior to arriving in Belgium.

Where To Exchange

Bureau de Change can only be found in major cities and large airports.

ATM Availability

In cities and most major towns

Travellers Cheques

Travellers Cheques are no longer commonly accepted and can only be changed in larger airports with a Bureau de Change.

Netherlands

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Dinner price

£18

Water price

£1.2

Foreign Exchange

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Pounds Sterling and US Dollars can be changed in banks and exchange offices.

Where To Exchange

It's possible to exchange in banks, post offices and exchange offices throughout the country. Many hotels also offer this facility.

ATM Availability

Available in all cities and large towns.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bicycle

Recommended airport

Amsterdam, Bruges

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

Standard - Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Arrival and departure information

For the start of your trip you will need to fly to Amsterdam with a return flight from Ostend-Bruges. Alternatively you can arrange return flights to Amsterdam and take a train at the end of the trip back from Bruges to Amsterdam. A third option from the UK is to travel by Eurostar.

Essential Information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa and Passport Information

Netherlands: Visas are not required by British passports holders, endorsed 'British Citizen'. If you hold another type of British nationality, you should check entry requirements. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

Belgium: Visas are not required by British passports holders, endorsed 'British Citizen'. If you hold another type of British nationality, you should check entry requirements. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

Find out more about [Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions](#) before you book.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom. Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Belgium

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory. Tetanus recommended. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Netherlands

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory. Tetanus recommended. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.
