



## Highlights of Holland

**A tour that will take you along the old shores of the “zuidersa” visiting century old villages like Monnickendam, Hoorn and Enkhuizen that still breathe the history of a long gone by past. At the most Northern part of our tour we will cross the Waddensea to visit the Island of Texel. Magnificent beaches, a scenic lighthouse, nice little villages and a very relaxed atmosphere mark the Island. If you like beers, can have a taste of this excellent beer at the local brewery or like Nicola try a Beerenburg. Cycling through the Dunes that protect Holland from flooding while most parts of Holland are below sea level. Experiencing the beauty of the landscape while breathing the fresh air from the sea. There are too many highlights to mention that is why we would like to invite you to take part in this tour and share the experience of the “Dutch life attitude”.**

### **Amsterdam Sunday 15 km / 10 miles**

Arrival on board the Elodie in Amsterdam where the crew will welcome you with a nice cup of tea or coffee. Introduction to the crew, of the rules on board, and you'll get all the information on the full program too. After this we will make a short tour through the rural area of North Amsterdam, so that you can get comfortable with your bike and make any adjustments if required.

In the evening, after dinner, your guide will take you for a walk through Amsterdam.

### **Amsterdam – Marken - Volendam Monday 29,5 km / 18.5 miles**

Today we will experience a medley of wonderful landscapes and little “South Sea” villages. We start in Amsterdam, following the IJsselmeer coastline through wetlands to the former island of Marken. Here we'll see some of the inhabitants wearing traditional costumes and enjoying the beauty of their traditional houses. We'll take our bicycles on board the Marken express ferry to Volendam, a charming little touristic town.

### **Volendam – Hoorn – Enkhuizen Tuesday 53 km / 33 miles**

We depart Volendam by bike and follow the IJsselmeer coast to Edam, just a short distance from Volendam. The famous Edam cheese originated in this town. From here we continue following the coastline of the former South sea to Hoorn. “The Horn” in South America was named after this place, home to some of the most famous Dutch explorers, and you can still sense the rich maritime history in the town's beautiful harbour.

Leaving Hoorn our next stop will be Enkhuizen. Enkhuizen was one of the bases of the VOC (United East India company). Freight ships left for Indonesia and other exotic destinations from here, to purchase valuable trading products, thereby making the Dutch very prosperous in those days. The architecture of the old houses in Hoorn and Enkhuizen clearly reflects the wealth of its inhabitants in that period.



### **Enkhuizen Wednesday 0 km / 0 miles**

We spend the day in Enkhuizen to allow time for some exploring and/or some rest. In the morning you will have time to visit the Zuiderzee museum. This museum brings to life the stories of people who once lived on the shores of the Zuiderzee in a lively open air exhibition. See, hear, feel, taste and smell everyday life around the Zuiderzee, as it was before the Afsluitdijk (the great IJsselmeer Barrier Dam) turned the former inland sea into what we now know as the IJsselmeer, in 1932. The Zuiderzee Museum focuses on the history, current situation and future of the region. Themes such as water, crafts and communities take centre stage. These stories are visualized in the Outdoor Museum with its historic buildings, and in the Indoor Museum through thematic exhibitions. In Enkhuizen you will also have some time to rest or for a stroll through the old town.

### **Enkhuizen – Medemblik – Den Helder Thursday 51 km / 32 miles**

Comfortable cycle paths - just like on the rest of this tour - will bring us from Enkhuizen to Medemblik with its picturesque historic port and the amazing „Kasteel Radboud“ from 1282. From here we continue to Den Oever which marks the beginning of the large dam that closed off Holland’s interior from the open sea. This 32 km long dam was constructed between 1927 and 1933, as a response to frequent flooding and the desire to create more land. A tremendous achievement in those days - because it was built mainly by hand. The Elodie will be waiting for you here and together we’ll sail through the Waddensee to Den Helder and with a bit of luck you may see wild seals sun-bathing on the sandbanks. Den Helder is the hometown of the Dutch navy. Notice the many navy vessels while sailing into the harbour. Den Helder also contains a lovely open air museum with some remarkable ships. Admission is free and after dinner your guide will take you there for a walk, as it is very close to where the Elodie is moored.

### **Texel Friday 44 km / 27 miles**

We’ll take the early morning ferry to Texel while the Elodie waits for us in Den Helder. We will cycle round the island with those of you that are keen to do so, but today also offers an excellent opportunity to create your own itinerary. Your guide will take you to the seal center "Ecomare", the Nature Reserve "de Slufter" and the beach by "de Koog". There are many other interesting things to visit that are easy to find and at reasonable distances, for example Jutters museum displaying a fine collection of rarities that have been found on the beach or fished out of the sea by the fishermen; the market in Den Burg or the local brewery. At the end of the day we will return to the Elodie.



### **Den Helder – Alkmaar Saturday 20 or 53 km / 12½ or 33 miles**

You can either start cycling from here or spend some more time on board and start at St Maartensvlotbrug, where you can join the others. We will continue our bike tour to resorts such as Schoorl, Bergen and Groet, passing through an area of sand dunes - a beautiful, slightly hilly landscape. Today it's possible to spend some time at the beach and even take a dive in the North sea. The Elodie awaits you in Alkmaar town center; after dinner, our guide takes you for a walk around this charming town, famous throughout the world for its cheese markets.

### **Alkmaar – Zaanse Schans - Haarlem Sunday 38 km / 23.5 miles**

Today we experience a real windmill day. In the morning we cycle to Graft and de Rijp, via Oterleek and Ursem, along the Eilandpolder. Then we take the ferry at Spijkerboor to cross one of the many canals of this wetland area, and we get to the "Zaanse Schans". We'll take plenty of time for this open-air museum because there is a great deal to be seen. We can often see the Zaanse mustard mill in action, and you can take home a jar of windmill-pressed mustard. For the experienced bikers there's the option to cycle to Haarlem, but it's also possible to stay on board and enjoy the boat tour.

### **Haarlem Monday 0 km / 0 miles**

The beautiful city of Haarlem offers a wide variety of places to discover. Haarlem is a „young“ city with students from all over the country - and other countries, too - who enjoy life outside and on the water, as soon as the weather allows it. Your guide will offer you a tour to the beautiful flower gardens

Or you take time for sitting in a nice „terrace“ and watching the colourful life on the waterways and in the streets. You can make your own itinerary for exploring or maybe some souvenir shopping if you like.

### **Haarlem – Amsterdam Tuesday 30 km / 18.5 miles**

In the morning we cycle to Hans Brinker's statue. By now we have all had some cycling training, so you have the option of cycling to Amsterdam; it's not far, but you can also stay onboard and enjoy the boat ride. Amsterdam is certainly well worth exploring because of its many attractions: a boat tour around the canals, the Van Gogh museum and the Rijksmuseum; or just savour the atmosphere and enjoy the colourful procession of people strolling by, while sitting at a sidewalk café. In the evening you can choose a restaurant to your liking from the many excellent eateries to be found in Amsterdam.

### **Amsterdam - Wednesday**

We take leave of you after breakfast.

*Please note: Daily mileages and tour planning may change according to weather or other circumstances.*