



## ● DAY 1 · CITY OF ORIGIN - AMSTERDAM (OPTIONAL TRIP TO KEUKENHOF)

Flight departure from the city of origin to Amsterdam. Arrival and rental car pick-up.

Your adventure on Dutch soil begins here! Today's first stop is the vibrant, dynamic and creative city of Amsterdam, which for decades has revelled in its reputation as one of the world's top tourist destinations. It certainly doesn't lack attractions. Criss-crossed by iconic canals and considered one of Europe's most enthralling cultural hubs in Europe, the city captivates travellers with magnificent works of art by the great Dutch maestros, which sit harmoniously alongside the latest global trends in design, art and architecture. Its modern and cosmopolitan atmosphere blends perfectly with its unique historical feel, dotted with stately mansions built in the Golden Age and the unmistakable beauty of its barge-filled canals. A city dominated by water that's ideal for exploring on foot, by bike and by boat, in the purest Dutch style. Round off the day by strolling through the central Dam Square, where you'll find the majestic Royal Palace (Koninklijk Paleis), the National Monument and the New Church (Nieuwe Kerk), where the current King and Queen of Holland said 'I do'. Share the city's vibrant atmosphere with locals at trendy venues and outstanding restaurants where you can savour the delicious local cuisine and tantalising international dishes. If you have time, and you're travelling between the months of March and May, you can combine your visit to Amsterdam with a trip out to the Keukenhof tulip fields. Located just over an hour outside the city, Keukenhof is one of the must-visits to fully understand this wonderful country's connection to flowers. You will arrive at this idyllic place after travelling through areas of great beauty, dotted with mills. In spring, the fields of bulbs explode in a thousand colours, making it a spectacular drive. The wooded park of Keukenhof, about 32 hectares, meets visitors with gorgeous aromas and an almost infinite variety of colours. Soon you will understand why this place is known as "the garden of Europe". In total, there are more than seven million bulbs planted here. (Note: In addition to spectacular gardens, you can also see floral shows, wonderful works of art and interesting exhibitions. You can hire a guided tour in Spanish, English, French, German, Italian, Swedish, Russian, Japanese and Chinese. Another way to explore the park is along its canals, on board the so-called "whispering boats". The trip usually lasts between 50 and 75 minutes).

Return and overnight stay in Amsterdam.

## DAY 2 · AMSTERDAM - Zaanse Schans - Kop van Noord-Holland - Edam - Volendam - Marken - Amsterdam

Wake up in vibrant Amsterdam and delve further into several of the country's icons: flowers, canals and delicious cheese. A good way to start the day, visiting its cheerful and famous Floating Flower Market, located on the photogenic Singel canal.

You will be surprised to see how it is supported on picturesque barges! This traditional market tells visitors about the past, when the flowers arrived in the city by boats from across the channels. We get back onto our Route. Today will allow you to visit charming places just a short distance from the capital. At the wheel, you will continue to enjoy the sublime Dutch natural scenery, which has given it such international fame.

If you're keen on seeing the quintessential image of windmills and green houses or taking part in a delightful clog-making workshop, you should stop off in Zaanse Schans. Tourist heart of the Zaan region, which significantly illustrates the history and essence of this region, offers unique moments, such as when the wind blows and the mills start working. To learn more about this area, we recommend visiting the Zaanse Museum. We continue to explore the North of Holland (Noord Holland) where the polders carve out a landscape where you can usually see typical scenes with hundred-year-old mills, grazing cows, towns that seem to have stood still in time, fields of flowers...

This is all thanks to the audacity of the Dutch and their knowledge of water management, along with the sandy soils and humid climate of the region. And then more of your journey into country's history through its landscapes and flowers! The inland region of Kop van Noord boasts the largest-known area of uninterrupted flower bulbs on the planet. The area between Petten, Den Helder, Nieuwe Niedorp and Wieringerwerf is unique. A privileged strip of land between the North Sea and Lake IJssel blanketed with millions of flowers. Once there, you can walk or cycle through "seas of colours". After exploring the region at your own pace thanks to the freedom of your rental car, you can start your return trip to Amsterdam. Your first stop en route could be Edam, a former whaling port that rose to fame for its excellent cheeses, exported to almost every corner of the world. You'll know Edam cheese for its cylindrical form covered in red wax. Simply, delicious! One of the town's main attractions is its picturesque Kaasmarkt (cheese market), which takes place on Wednesday mornings in July and August. Dotted with historical buildings and quaint streets, the town is also home to the Edam Museum. And then, Volendam is just ten minutes away by car. Another treasure on today's route. Popular with tourists and full of traditions, this seductive fishing village on the banks of the IJsselmeer is always a great choice for a stop-off. You'll be surprised to see that many of the inhabitants are wearing colourful traditional costumes. The town's beautiful scenery boasts fishing boats moored in the harbour, picturesque canals and small drawbridges, which provide its visitors with a unique and romantic atmosphere. And if you have time, you can make one last stop in the truly stunning Marken. Isolated for centuries, a bridge was built in 1957 that linked this islet in Lake IJsselmeer to the mainland. Today, it welcomes visitors with a simply wonderful atmosphere. You can learn more details about its history at the Marker Museum.

Overnight stay in Amsterdam.

### ● DAY 3 · AMSTERDAM - ENKHUIZEN - AFSLUITDIJK - AMSTERDAM (OPTIONAL TRIP TO NAARDEN)

Have a hearty breakfast, as an intense day lies ahead that will give you an amazing insight into the crucial bond between the land and the sea. Off we go! We'll head up to the north of the country, famous for having a long list of unforgettable destinations related to the sheer might of water and Dutch people's determination to control it and reclaim land. Holland has been waging its own battle against water for centuries in order to expand the country's borders. The result: a quarter of the Netherlands is made up of land reclaimed from the North Sea. Amazing! A legendary and unprecedented battle that has been helped by the most cutting-edge engineering and the gritty Dutch spirit. Then back on the road. Our first stop will be Enkhuisen, a small but fascinating town about one hour north of Amsterdam. As soon as you arrive, you'll feel like time has stood still. Marvel at the typically rural cottages and soak up the maritime atmosphere of this part of the country! On the shore of Lake IJsselmeer, it could be said that this diminutive fishing village has become a living museum in miniature, reminding visitors of bygone life beside the Zuiderzee. Get ready to see, feel and experience what life was like before the Afsluitdijk turned the Zuiderzee into the IJsselmeer! We recommend a visit to the Zuiderzee Museum to get a full insight into the history of the province and to see the largest collection of wooden fishing boats in Holland. (Note: Admission not included. From spring to October, the outdoor area is open to the public, where you can take boat trips and see buildings from the golden age of the area and houses transported from their original locations). Onward with our journey north. After about twenty-five minutes on the road, you'll arrive at a huge dam with an unpronounceable name: the legendary Afsluitdijk. You'll be astonished to see how it still keeps the fury of the sea at bay. You're looking at one of the most famous engineering works in the Netherlands. Cross the world's most famous dam and feel the power of the water! The 32-kilometre dike (the A-7 motorway) that connects the provinces of Friesland and North Holland is one of the most amazing roads you'll ever drive along. For the more daring, another option is to cycle along the dike (there's a great bike lane). (Note: On the dike itself, you'll see a monument in honour of Cornelys Lely, an engineer who designed the drainage plan of Flevoland. You'll also come across a restaurant and an observation tower, from where you'll get the best photos of the area). What's more, you'll find a brand new project waiting for you at the gateway to Friesland: the Wadden Sea Centre. This Centre is located at the end of the dike and provides an interactive experience all about the Wadden Sea, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It explains how the dike encourages fish migration, as well as talking about the area around Lake IJssel and the evolution and changes seen by the Afsluitdijk dam and its surroundings over the years. For a true adrenaline rush, you could have a go at hang-gliding to get a bird's-eye view of the wonderful countryside nearby. Aside from that, a comprehensive audio guide is available in several languages on the benefits of aquatic engineering and the future plans of the dam. (Note: An optional trip is over to Naarden, iconic since ancient times for its use of water as a means of defence, as well as being one of the best-preserved fortified towns in Europe). Return and overnight stay in Amsterdam.

#### ● DAY 4 · AMSTERDAM - DE HAAR - UTRECHT

Get ready to leave Amsterdam today. But beforehand, immerse yourself in its almost unlimited range of art and culture. This is another of the strengths of this creative country. Of course, the name of Holland is forever linked to artists of the ilk of Van Gogh. This city is home to a large number of museums and galleries that deserve to be discovered at a leisurely pace. Among our recommendations of today are the magnificent Rijksmuseum, the national museum of Holland. Located in the city centre, it houses a wonderful collection of Dutch historical objects and art. Walking through its rooms will teach you about the history of Holland in an international context, from the year 1100 to the present day. Among its treasures are works by 17th-century maestros such as Frans Hals, Jan Steen, Vermeer and Rembrandt. Don't miss "The Night Watch" (De Nachtwacht) by Rembrandt! And if you want to delve further into the work of this brilliant artist, we recommend you visit his former residence, which today has been converted into a museum. These are two essential stops to help you understand the artistic importance of the Dutch Golden Age. We recommend combining a visit to the Rijksmuseum with another of the city's cultural attractions: the nearby Van Gogh Museum, which houses the largest collection of works by the brilliant 19th-century post-impressionist painter. Here, you'll be able to see outstanding works such as "Sunflowers", "The Potato Eaters" and "Bedroom in Arles". (Note: You can access the museum more quickly via the Voucher Lane. Children under the age of eighteen can enter free of charge. The Van Gogh Museum is open every day of the year except 1st January. You can also visit the museum on Friday evenings). Before arriving in Utrecht, forty minutes away from Amsterdam, we suggest a brief stop at the beautiful De Haar Castle, one of the largest in the country. After the visit, it's onward with the journey. Founded by the Romans and known throughout the world for the famous Treaty of Utrecht (1715), this central city fuses its historical heritage and lively university atmosphere with its beautiful canals (singels). Utrecht is famous for its enchanting cafés and charming terraces, its hundreds of monuments, churches and convents, its picturesque squares and beautiful parks, its imaginative cultural and gastronomic offerings, and an extensive list of excellent museums such as the Dick Bruna House, Catharijneconvent, the Centraal Museum, the Museum Speelklok and the famous Rietveld Schröder House, a landmark of the De Stijl art style which has been declared a World Heritage Site for its major influence on modern architecture. A short walk through the south of the city will let you see another of its most recognisable snapshots: the magnificent residences built alongside the canals by the nobility in the Golden Age. Do not leave Utrecht without visiting its lively markets or exploring the green landscapes beset by the castles that surround it. Overnight stay in Utrecht.

#### ● DAY 5 · UTRECHT - MAASTRICHT

Wake up in this beautiful historic city that welcomes travellers with open arms. Lively and bustling, Utrecht spreads out around the omnipresent Dom Tower, the city's main landmark and the highest bell tower in the country. Visible from anywhere in the old town, its imposing demeanour and the unmistakable sound of its bells will fascinate you. (Note: If you're here on a Saturday, we recommend visiting the lively plant and flower market at Janskerkhof). Onward journey to Maastricht, located about two hours away. This cosmopolitan city, founded by the Romans and one of the oldest in the country, boasts excellent museums such as the Bonnefantenmuseum (home to a priceless collection of modern art), magnificent historical monuments and basilicas such as the Romanesque Cathedral of Our Lady (Onze-Lieve-Vrouwe). The city cherishes many of the fortifications and walls of yesteryear that narrate the vital role that it played in the history of Holland. Overnight stay in Maastricht.

## ● DAY 6 · MAASTRICHT - VALKENBURG - MAASTRICHT

Maastricht is probably one of the most beautiful cities in the Netherlands, with a delightful old town that is ideal for walking and enjoying its interesting buildings and atmosphere. Its many attractions include its walls, from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; the central Vrijthof Square with the Basilica of Saint Servatius; the Sint Servaasbrug footbridge across the River Meuse; the Bonnefanten Museum; the Basilica of Our Lady; and the city's forts, military bastions and maze-like tunnels dating back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. We also recommend Mount Saint Peter, which has an old fortress with a network of caves home to hibernating bats. A fascinating city of great importance for a United Europe; the treaty for the creation of the European Union was signed here in 1992. In the afternoon, we recommend a visit to the town of Valkenburg to see its fascinating Roman caves and the eponymous castle.

Round off the day with a nice meal in one of the city's cafés. Maastricht is famous for its cuisine and is a global mecca for fine dining, as well as high fashion and for having a different way of life to the rest of the country.

Overnight stay in Maastricht.

## ● DAY 7 · MAASTRICHT - THORN - 'S-HERTOGENBOSCH - TILBURG - BREDA - MILLS OF KINDERDIJK - ROTTERDAM

The journey between Maastricht and Rotterdam shouldn't take you much more than two hours. That said, there are some fascinating stops en route, so we recommend setting out quite early. The first is the small town of Thorn, located half an hour from Maastricht. This characterful Dutch town is teeming with history and is famous for its little whitewashed houses. Our next stop is S'Hertogenbosch which is home to Saint John's Cathedral, one of the finest in Holland. Tilburg boasts a beautiful main square and many interesting buildings, the most prominent being the De Pont Museum of Contemporary Art. Last but not least we have Breda which has one of the most beautiful old towns in the region of Brabant. Its main attractions are the castle, the church, and the historic centre in general. In the afternoon, we continue the journey through the Netherlands to the well-known port city of Rotterdam, located 45 minutes from Breda. If you have time, though, you can also go up to the magnificent nineteen windmills of Kinderdijk, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site and which together make one of the most beautiful and typical scenes of Holland. Did you know that Holland has more windmills than any other country in the world? The mills have played a key role in the so-called "Dutch miracle". Many were designed to drain water and keep the land reclaimed from the North Sea dry. The picture-postcard image of these windmills built in the mid-eighteenth century pulls in thousands of tourists. Not to be missed! You'll be able to see how many of them are still in operation, and you can also take a boat trip along the canals. (Note: If you're travelling in winter, have a go at ice skating among the mills). After such a busy day, we recommend an early arrival at the hotel and a good night's sleep to recharge your batteries. Overnight stay in Rotterdam.

## DAY 8 · ROTTERDAM - DELFT - THE HAGUE

Spend the morning exploring Holland's second biggest city, Rotterdam, home to the largest port in Europe (a must-visit to enjoy the views) and once the largest in the world until it was ousted from this position in 2004 by Shanghai. Do not miss its fascinating modern architecture, the result of extensive rebuilding of the city after it was bombed and destroyed by German forces during the Second World War. Make sure you visit the cube houses: 40 conventional houses that lean at a 45 degree angle making them the first cube-shaped houses in the Netherlands. The design of each house represents a tree, and all the houses together, a forest. It is possible to pay an admission fee to visit one of them, even a hotel has been created out of some. Also worth a visit are the pencil building (Het Potlood) and Erasmus Bridge, an engineering marvel spanning some 800 metres, with a light blue steel structure and 40 cables that fly over the water below. There are many other sights to enjoy, such as historic Delfshaven, one of the most welcoming neighbourhoods in the city and which has retained a pre-war feel. Visit the wonderful Pelgrumvaderskerk church and the replica of the Delft, an eighteenth-century warship. If you are looking for something very different, take a look around the futuristic Kop van Zuid with its skyscrapers and contemporary architecture. Round off your city visit at the exceptional Boijmans van Beuningen Museum of Art.

After lunch, head over to Delft, just over sixty kilometres away on the A4. This city is internationally renowned for its connection to Johannes Vermeer, the Royal House of Orange and the famous Delft blue pottery, another icon of the country, which you can admire at the Royal Delft, the last remaining earthenware factory from the 17th century. (Note: Visitors will enjoy a tour of the museum and factory, a painting demonstration and a visit to the showcases which exhibit the collection of classic and modern ceramics). And if you want to relax and contemplate everything from another perspective, we recommend leaving dry land for a few minutes to take a pleasant river trip through the canals to see from the water historical buildings, churches and mansions. (Note: River trip not included). Finish the day in The Hague, located twenty minutes from Delft, and discover its majestic architecture, the excellent Mauritshuis art museum and the Madurodam, a miniature city that showcases Holland's highlights to scale. In addition to being the seat of the Dutch Government and the King's residence, The Hague is home to numerous international institutions: it is the legal capital of the world, location of the International Criminal Court and the Peace Palace. (Note: Remember that between Rotterdam, Delft and The Hague is Westland, Holland's area of greenhouses. This is an essential place to learn all about the secrets of horticulture in the country, another of its hallmarks. If you have time or want to extend your trip by another day, you can head to Gouda. The town has lots to offer, in addition to its famous cheese and its world-renowned cheese markets held in the Stadhuis square. Gouda has one of the most beautiful old centres in Holland. Admire its marvellous historical buildings and stroll along its hundred-year-old canals, dotted with cosy terraces and pretty shops).

Return and overnight stay in The Hague.

## DAY 9 · THE HAGUE - LEIDEN - AALSMEER (FLORAHOLLAND) - AMSTERDAM

Today is the final stretch of this fascinating road trip. You'll never forget the sublime landscapes and historical towns brimming with leisure and entertainment options. On your way back to Amsterdam, you can stop off in Leiden, if you haven't already done so. Home to the oldest university in the country and famous for being Rembrandt's birthplace, the city boasts a variety of museums, including the Siebold House and the Lakenhal Museum, and wonderful green spaces such as the magnificent botanical garden. Dotted with stately homes, university buildings and museums, the old town of Leiden has one of the largest concentrations of canals and bridges in the whole country. Every summer, there's a major boat parade along its canals, another of the most iconic images of the country. And being a university town, there's no shortage of terraces, cafés and restaurants! After a break, you can set off on the forty-five kilometres between here and the capital city. Before arriving, though, you can stop off at Aalsmeer to visit Floraholland, a vibrant flower market. The town is one of the country's main flower-growing centres, and there's no shortage of landscapes covered by flowers and greenhouses. In addition to learning about new varieties and colours of flowers, you'll find out which ones are named after well-known modern heroes. And Holland is the land of flowers par excellence! (Note: The Westland and Aalsmeer regions are two key points in international flower trade). Depending on your flight time in the morning, you can also visit Aalsmeer first thing (around forty minutes from Amsterdam) to attend the flower auction that takes place every day (the Bloemenveiling). It's one of the largest in the whole world! Discover the exciting and sometimes tense atmosphere in the auction room and how the bidders jostle next to the trailers full of flowers. Don't forget to take some bulbs home with you as a souvenir! Overnight stay in Amsterdam.

● DAY 10 · AMSTERDAM - CITY OF ORIGIN

Arrival at the airport with enough time to drop off your rental car and flight back to the city of origin.

Arrival. End of the trip and our services.

## Your trip includes

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### Your trip includes

- ✓ Return flight.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Amsterdam.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Amsterdam.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Utrecht.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Utrecht.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Maastricht.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Maastricht.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Rotterdam.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Rotterdam.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Hague.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Hague.
- ✓ Rent-a-car.

### Your trip doesn't include

- ✗ Accommodation taxes in Holland direct payment in facility.
- ✗ Accommodation taxes in Utrecht direct payment in facility.
- ✗ Accommodation taxes in Rotterdam direct payment in facility.
- ✗ Accommodation taxes in Hague direct payment in facility.
- ✗ Possible toll charges.
- ✗ Insolvency protection.

## Destinations Visited

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Amsterdam



Edam



Volendam



Marken



Enkhuizen



Utrecht



Maastricht



Valkenburg



's-Hertogenbosch



Tilburg



Breda



Rotterdam



Delft



Hague



Leiden



Aalsmeer



## Important remarks

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- To avoid queues and crowds, you can book tickets to the most outstanding museums and exhibition halls online and in advance. We recommend trying to visit the museums early in the morning or in the afternoon. To obtain discounts on tickets and save yourself from having to queue, you can purchase cards such as the Holland Pass, the Museumkaart, the I Amsterdam City Card or the Rotterdam Welcome Card. Many museums offer special discounts for minors, students and pensioners.
- Triple rooms in Europe are generally rooms with twin beds or a double, in which a folding bed is installed to accommodate the third person. Due to the inconvenience this causes, we advise against using this option as far as possible.
- Check-in time at the hotel on the day of arrival depends on each establishment, but in no case will it be before 3:00 p.m., unless otherwise indicated.
- The proposed excursions and tours for each day are purely suggestions, as you can tailor the trip to suit your times, tastes and needs.
- A credit card is considered a guarantee, so sometimes you will need one for check-in at hotels.
- Hotels usually have cots available. Otherwise, babies will have to share a bed with an adult.
- To pick up your rental car, you'll need a credit (not debit) card in the name of the person who made the booking, who must also be the named driver of the vehicle.
- Consult the necessary documentation to enter the destinations visited and for transit in the countries where air stopovers are made.