

New + Old Dutch Waterline

8 days, € 1010



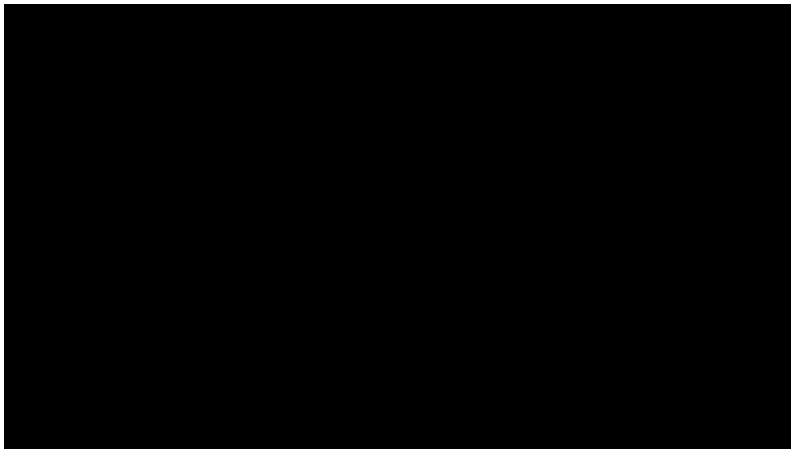
Introduction



Are you in search of the unexpected? This cycling tour through a unique military landscape is sure to keep you on your toes. The New Dutch Water defence Line (85 km long) was an ingenious defensive system of dikes, sluices, canals, low forts and bunkers.

Today the Water Defence Line is a great area to explore by bike, scanning the green surroundings for signs of a military structure. Having been a military site, it was off-limits to the public for a long time, allowing wildlife to establish here. This effectively turned it into a green corridor, an attractive route for nature lovers.

The New Dutch Water Line is the largest national monument in the country and is a UNESCO World Heritage site nominee. Because it blends into the green scenery, it is known as the Netherlands' biggest secret.



Day to Day

Day 1 Arrival at Utrecht/Bunnik

Your voyage of discovery starts in Utrecht, the fourth largest city in the country. The city center comes highly recommended with its historical ambiance; and canals and wharves with a difference.



Day 2 **Utrecht - Wijk bij Duurstede**

51 km

In the morning, you can visit the Waterlinie Museum at Fort Vechten in Bunnik. Here you can study the art of inundation warfare. Moreover, using a virtual reality headset, you can experience a parachute jump out of a plane into Water Line territory. Your next stop is a part of the defence line that was never actually used. The "plofsluis" looks like a bridge spanning a canal. In the case of controlled inundation, to stop water streaming out of the inundated zone into the canal, the bridge had to be blown up with explosives. It would then collapse into the water, serving as an instant dam to block off the canal. The journey continues past three locks and numerous forts including Fort Werk aan de Korte Uitweg, boasting a fantastic tea garden. At an Infantry position known as Werk aan de Groeneweg you will see many casemates and bunkers, as well as double trenches with earthen walls.

End the day in Wijk bij Duurstede, a small town with a big history. It stands on the vestiges of a trading settlement that was one of the most important in Northern Europe in the 7th - 9th centuries. Dorestad, as it was called, developed at the intersection of two main waterways that connected the hinterlands to sea, one going north (for trade with Scandinavia) and one west (for trade with England). More recently, in the New Water Line strategies, the River Kromme Rijn and the large lock in Wijk bij Duurstede played an important part in enabling the inundation of the area around Utrecht.

Day 3 **Wijk bij Duurstede - Gorinchem**

58 km

Today you will have two options: You can cycle towards the historical town of Culemborg. Then head for Werk aan het Spoel, a fort in the Waterlinie that defends one of the five special sluice gates known as fan gates, used for inundation. Nowadays the fort boasts an attractive restaurant with indoor and outdoor seating. The route continues to Leerdam. Glass artefacts and decorative objects have been produced here since 1765. If you're into glass, don't miss the Nationaal Glasmuseum. Or go to see glass blowers at work at the Glasblazerij. Finally, have you ever tried Leerdammer cheese? It tastes very different from other Dutch cheeses such as Gouda or Edam.

The other option is to cross the Lower-Rhine on Wijkse Veer ferry and head for the Netherlands' number one fruit growing district: Betuwe. Past the historical town of Buren you will reach the Linge River. Following this river, you will pass pretty villages such as Acquoy which boasts its own leaning tower of Pisa; and Beesd where you can look at windmill called Vrijheid (Freedom); and a county estate called Marienwaerd where good coffee and apple pie are served. You could stop off at De Paay owl and animal park or at Geofort interactive science center with an earth and navigation theme before reaching Glass Town Leerdam. After Leerdam there's another choice: either follow the Linge to the fortified town of Gorinchem, or an extra loop that takes you via Vuren and a few ferries to Loevestein Castle and Woudrichem before you take the last ferry to Gorinchem.

Day 4 **Gorinchem - Woerden**

50 km

Today you will cycle past part of the Old Dutch Waterline that saved us in the wars against Spain and France, 350 years ago. Your first stop is Nieuwpoort, one of the smallest fortified towns in the country, founded around 1200 AD. Next, continue to the town of Schoonhoven, traditionally known for the production of clocks and most importantly silver objects. Silver smiths have been turning out treasures here since the 17th century. To this day, the town is home to the Silver School, Silver Museum, galleries etc. The next stop is the picturesque town of Oudewater. It was to this place that women who had been accused of witchcraft fled from all over Europe to try to have their innocence proven by weighing. In the Witches Weigh House, stand on the scales (from 1482!) and discover whether you would have been considered light enough to fly on a broomstick.

Top off your day in Woerden. This historical town is known for its Saturday morning cheese market (April - August). Discover the castle, the windmills, the town museum and much more.



Day 5 Woerden - Weesp**48 km**

Mount your bike for another leg of this tour. The route follows the "Limes", the frontier of the Roman Empire. Your first stop is Fort Wierickerschans. Next is cheese town Bodegraven. The scenery along the route is typically Dutch, cows grazing in low-lying meadows; lakes fringed with reeds and rushes; and old watercourses.

It is possible to take a shorter route (just 39 km), missing out Fort Wierickerschans and Bodegraven.

To reach your destination, Weesp, you first cycle via Abcoude: in his early years, the painter Piet Mondriaan was inspired by the idyllic village of Abcoude and its surroundings and often cycled here to paint landscapes. He painted the Oostzijdse molen (windmill) more than twenty times between 1902 and 1908. It is still standing, so you can cycle over to see it. Your day ends at your hotel in Weesp, known as 'Little Amsterdam' on the river Vecht.

Day 6 Weesp - Oud Loosdrecht**60 km**

The highlight of the morning is Muiderslot, a small medieval castle, well-worth a visit and guided tour (if you don't mind crowds). It is picture-perfect, complete with moat, drawbridge, crenellated parapets, wall-walk, grand hall, living quarters etc.. Find out what life was like here in the olden days.

The fortified town of Naarden was built in the 17th century. It is full of interesting buildings, antiques shops, art galleries, eateries and museums. To find out about the star-shaped fortifications with double ramparts and moats, check out the Dutch Fortress Museum. At the end of the day, cycle a beautiful route along the River Vecht and then the Loosdrechtse Plassen, the lake district where you will find your hotel.

Day 7 Oud Loosdrecht - Utrecht/Bunnik**37 km**

Continue through the lake district to Loenen aan de Vecht, one of the Netherlands' most charming villages. It harbours 144 national monuments. Next, follow the River Vecht further up-stream to Breukelen, well-known for the lovely country houses that adorn the riverbanks. Did you know that Brooklyn in New York was named after Breukelen?

The meandering Vecht takes you to Maarsse and the outskirts of Utrecht. There you will find Fort Aan de Klop, where you can relax on the terrace at the bombproof Guard House with local products. After the fort you cycle over the dike along the Klopvaart, an inundation canal for the New Dutch Waterline to Fort de Gagel and Fort Ruigenhoek. These forts are located in a beautiful Dutch polder landscape, part of the Vechtplassen area.

Your holiday comes to an end at your hotel in Utrecht or Bunnik.

Day 8 Return Home

After one last hotel breakfast, it's time to go home.



Prices, Data, Booking

Starting dates:

Daily from April 1 till September 22.

Price pp		€
Double room, breakfast		1,000.00
Single room, breakfast		1,525.00
Extra night double room, breakfast only		110.00
Upgrades pp/night		€
Hotel Mitland, Utrecht		40.00
Rental bike		€
Child bike		77.00
Hybrid		91.00
E-bike		196.00
Extra services		€
Bike Breakdown pass	€ 4.00 x 7	28.00
Child seat	€ 5.00 x 7	35.00
Bike theft insurance	€ 3.00 x 7	21.00
E-bike theft insurance	€ 6.00 x 7	42.00
Extra luggage	€ 5.00 x 7	35.00
Tag-along bike	€ 10.00 x 7	70.00
Child trailer	€ 18.00 x 7	126.00
Bike helmet	per piece	10.00
SGR	per piece	5.00
discount	per piece	-25.00
Giving back to nature	per piece	5.00

Starting point:

Utrecht or Bunnik



Accommodation

The hotels or B&Bs on this trip have been carefully selected for their location, atmosphere and/or unique services. All rooms are en-suite. A list of the hotels we work with appears below. If a certain accommodation is unable to confirm due to lack of availability, we will request a comparable alternative. When selecting the accommodation, we try to take into account as much as possible a safe and closed bicycle shed. However, we cannot do this with all of them guarantee and this partly depends on the number of bicycles of other guests.

Hotel Hart van Weesp *
(Weesp)**

www.hartvanweesp.nl

Hotel Mitland ** (Utrecht)**

www.mitland.nl

Hotel 1851 (Wijk bij Duurstede)

www.hotel1851.nl

**Boutique Hotel Karel de Stoute
(Gorinchem)**

www.hotelkareldestoute.nl

Stadshotel Woerden **
(Woerden)**

www.vanrossumwoerden.nl

Fletcher Hotel Loosdrecht **
(Oud Loosdrecht)**

www.fletcherhotelloosdrecht.nl



Practical Info



7 Nights included



3/4 Star Hotels



Breakfast included



Detailed roadbooks with maps and tourist information



The possibility of renting our bikes



7-days a week service-hotline



Luggage transport to your next hotel



Utrecht. For more information:
ns.nl/reisplannen



Parking possibilities at the hotel



Any ferry crossings are not included

Arrival info



Nearest Airport is Amsterdam Airport Schiphol (AMS)



The train from Schiphol to Utrecht departs 4 times per hour. Travel time is about 30 minutes. A single ticket costs approx €10,- per person excl. bicycle.

For timetables, prices and tickets, go to www.ns.nl/en. For bus details, how to reach the hotel, check: www.9292.nl/en.

