

IJsselmeer Grand Tour

10 days, € 1225



Introduction



Now here's a challenge for you: Cycle 439 km all the way around Lake IJsselmeer! On the way, take in the beautiful scenery and learn a big lesson in Dutch history. This is a route along the loveliest and quietest roads and bike tracks a cyclist could possibly hope for. The historical landscape around the former Zuiderzee, the many old fishing and trading towns on its shores all have a story to tell. This tour is marked by diverse and attractive scenery. As on all our carefree cycle tours, we provide luggage transfer and excellent accommodation.

Day to Day

Day 1 **Arrival in Huizen**
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Day 2 **Huizen - Amsterdam**

37 km

Get an early start so you will have plenty of time to visit Amsterdam. Your first stop today is at the fortified medieval town of Naarden, built in a star shape fort to enable better use of cannons, the moat and walls have been very well preserved. Further down the route you will arrive at the town of Muiden, situated at the mouth of the River Vecht. Home to the most visited castle in the Netherlands, Muiden Castle was built on a moat in 1280 by Count Floris V of Holland to collect a toll from passing ships on the River Vecht. With the interior restored to how it looked in the 17th century it is certainly worth a visit. Then Amsterdam awaits you.



Day 3 **Amsterdam - Hoorn**

61 km

There's so much to see and do in Amsterdam! Make sure you have an early start. Have you been to see the Gallery of Honour at the Rijksmuseum since the make-over? Why not pop in for a quick visit before you hop back on your bike and plunge into peaceful countryside. Waterland awaits, with wet meadows, wooden bridges and windswept reeds and rushes. Waterlandsmuseum "De Speelklok" in the pretty village of Monnickendam explains the history of this extraordinary cultural landscape. Then cycle up the shore of Lake Markermeer to friendly Volendam. The quaint stone houses in the distinctive heart of the catholic fishing village seem to have been drawn up without an organized street plan. "De Dijk", overlooking the harbour, is lined with souvenir shops, pavement cafes and restaurants. Just around the corner is the pretty village of Edam. For centuries, small, round, salty cheeses produced by dairy farmers in neighbouring polders were shipped out of Edam and exported all over Europe. For six weeks in summer a traditional Wednesday-morning cheese-market is held as a tourist attraction by local volunteers (10.30 -12.30 hrs). At the end of the day, you'll reach the lovely, historical town of Hoorn. Like Enkhuizen (see day 4), it has a history in whaling, shipbuilding, fishery and - most importantly - shipping and trade. Both towns housed branches ("chambers") of the Dutch East India Company.

Alternative route: if you want to explore Marken, follow the route to the isle of Marken. From there you can take the ferry to Volendam (price around € 11 p.p.).

Day 4 **Hoorn - Medemblik**

49 km

Continue up the shore of Lake IJsselmeer, atop the old sea dike, along the beautiful town of Enkhuizen. Don't miss Zuiderzee Museum which tells the story of the days when ships from the Zuiderzee sailed the seven seas trading in bulbs and spices; the days when Holland dominated world trade and the Dutch East India Company was the first-ever multinational. This period is known as the Golden Age and roughly spans the 17th century. The museum has also combined a collection of historical architecture with demonstrations of traditional trades. On the second stretch of today's lake-side route, you'll see more cropfields, orchards and windmills before you reach Medemblik. It's an old town, with a marina, a bakery museum and a steam engine museum.

Day 5 **Medemblik - Makkum**

59 km

Today is the day you cross the Afsluitdijk! Cycle through Wieringermeer Polder (created 1927 -1934) to the starting point of the dam at Den Oever. The closure dam is 34 km long and was completed in 1932. It cut off the Zuiderzee from the North Sea. This was necessary to stop the sea from flooding towns on the Zuiderzee. Once the dike was in place, the sea had become a lake. By 1940 the saltwater had been replaced by fresh water from the River IJssel. Except for the eel, none of the Zuiderzee fish survived. A new fresh-water fish population replaced them. On the other side of the closure dam, you will find yourself in Friesland province in the town of Makkum.

The cycle path on the Afsluitdijk is currently closed for construction works. During the closure cyclists can make use of a free bus which will transport them to the other side. Bikes can also be transported on this bus. The bus goes once every hour.

If you have a tandem, wheelchair or other type of bicycle, it cannot come with the bus as standard. For options, see: The Afsluitdijk.



Day 6 **Makkum - Rijs** **47 km**

The people of Friesland have their own language (a proper language, not a dialect) closely related to English. When they say butter, bread and green cheese in Frisian, it sounds like English and not like Dutch "boter, brood en groene kaas". You will find bi-lingual road signs and local Frisian specialties such as "Fryske Dumkes" (hazelnut biscuits). Drift south along a string of interesting old villages of which Hindeloopen is a favourite. It is famous for its colourful traditional costumes and painted furniture. At the village of Workum, stop to consider for a minute that for 250 years, up until the Second World War, fishermen from this town caught eel only to sell it... in England. They even had their own mooring places on the Thames. Today, like Makkum, the place is better known for its pottery.

Day 7 **Rijs - Zwartsluis/Vollenhove** **69 km**

In the morning, you will cycle through Gaasterland, undulating and woody, to your first port of call, the picturesque town of Lemmer, a favourite with boaters in summer. Next, it's full steam ahead to a World Heritage Site: Wouda steam-driven pumping station has been operational since 1920 and was used to drain a lake. For centuries, windmills took care of water management in the Netherlands before steam engines took over. Nowadays most of our 1600 pumping stations are electrically powered. In the afternoon, nature lovers will bask in the beauty of Weerribben-Wieden National Park where water, reeds and rushes dominate the landscape. It is said to be the most valuable marshland of north-western Europe.

In case our hotel in Zwartsluis is not available, you will spend this night in the lovely hanseatic city of Vollenhove. You will have the chance to visit Zwartsluis the upcoming morning.

Day 8 **Zwartsluis/Vollenhove - Harderwijk** **62 km**

After exploring Zwartsluis, popular with boaters and other water sports enthusiasts, you will set off atop the old Kamperzeedijken (Kampen sea dikes) to the marvellous town of Kampen. It has one of the best-preserved town centres in the country. Check out the town gates on the River IJssel side of town. Kampen was a member of the Hanseatic League, a northern European alliance of trading guilds in the 13th-17th centuries. Their main aim was to ensure safe passage for travelling merchants. They also helped each other with information, knowledge, contacts and privileges. This network generated income, allowing merchants to invest in culture and architecture. Perhaps this explains why Hansa towns, centuries on, are so attractive to tourists. The River IJssel, which emptied into Zuiderzee sea, counted several Hansa communities on its banks. In the afternoon, pick up the route again and follow the fringes of Veluwe Forest down to Harderwijk. Just think, this was once a bustling fishing town on the Zuiderzee and now it stands on a lake overlooking a polder...

Day 9 **Harderwijk - Huizen** **49 km**

Set those wheels in motion and pedal along the shores of Randmeren lakes. Arkemheen-Eemland is wide open, empty and a National Heritage Landscape. The area was surrounded by dikes in the year 1360 to stop croplands from being flooded by the sea. Arkemheen polder is special because the original lots are still intact. The lots are divided by curvy creeks, remnants of Zuiderzee tidal streams. Some plant species still recall the influence of salt water. Part of the polder is being preserved as a bird habitat for "Natura 2000". The visitors' centre has more information. Should you have an abiding interest in the Age of Steam, you may like to visit steam-driven pumping station Hertog Reijnout. It controlled water levels in the low-lying polder from 1883, taking over from a windmill with the same name.

Day 10 **Return Home**

After breakfast, it's time to go home.



Prices, Data, Booking

Starting dates:

Daily from April 1 till September 20.

Please note: a minimum stay of 2 nights in a row is required in the hotel in Amsterdam on the following dates (and a higher price will be charged):

April 3, 4 & 5, 2026

April 17 & 18, 2026

April 24 until 27, 2026

May 14 until 16, 2026

May 22 until 24, 2026

| Price pp | | € |
|---|-------------|----------|
| Double room, breakfast | | 1,215.00 |
| Single room, breakfast | | 1,710.00 |
| Extra night double room, breakfast only | | 85.00 |
| Upgrades pp/night | | € |
| Hotel Heavens, Hoorn | | 35.00 |
| Westcord Art Hotel, Amsterdam | | 10.00 |
| van der Valk hotel Hoorn, Hoorn | | 15.00 |
| Surcharge per person | | € |
| Stay in Amsterdam on Saturday | | 25.00 |
| Rental bike | | € |
| Child bike | | 99.00 |
| Hybrid | | 117.00 |
| E-bike | | 252.00 |
| Extra services | | € |
| Bike Breakdown pass | € 4.00 x 9 | 36.00 |
| Child seat | € 5.00 x 9 | 45.00 |
| Bike theft insurance | € 3.00 x 9 | 27.00 |
| E-bike theft insurance | € 6.00 x 9 | 54.00 |
| Extra luggage | € 5.00 x 9 | 45.00 |
| Tag-along bike | € 10.00 x 9 | 90.00 |
| Child trailer | € 18.00 x 9 | 162.00 |
| 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:

Huizen or Amsterdam



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.

**Fletcher Hotel Nautisch
Kwartier *** (Huizen)**
www.hotelnautischkwartier.nl

Westcord Art Hotel */****
(Amsterdam)**
www.westcordhotels.nl/hotel/art

Hotel de Keizerskroon *
(Hoorn)**
www.de-keizerskroon-hoorn.nl

Hotel Medemblik *
(Medemblik)**
www.hetwapenvanmedemblik.nl

Beach Hotel de Vigilante **
(Makkum)**
www.strandhotelvigilante.nl

Hotel Jans * (Rijs)**
www.hoteljans.nl

Hotel Zwartewater **
(Zwartsluis)**
www.hotelzwartewater.nl

Best Western Hotel Baars **
(Harderwijk)**
www.hotelbaars.nl



Practical Info



9 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



Naarden-Bussum. 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 Naarden-Bussum departs 4 times per hour. Travel time is about 40 minutes. A single ticket costs approx €7,- per person excl. bicycle.

For timetables and tickets, go to www.ns.nl/en. From Naarden-Bussum you should take the bus to Huizen. This is about 20 minutes and will cost about €2,50 per person.

For timetables and tickets: www.9292.nl/en.

