Tulips and Springtime Gardens Cruise



Trip style:	Destination:	Walking Grade	Carbon Footprint:
Cruise & Walks	The Netherlands	1	270kg CO2

HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Famed for their flower-filled landscapes, the Netherlands and Belgium in bloom are a sight to behold. See both come alive in dazzling displays of spring colour on this luxury river cruise aboard the elegant Amadeus Queen or Amadeus Star. Visit a fascinating collection of botanical gardens, historic estates and distinctive garden spaces that showcase the Low Countries' rich gardening heritage. Combine it all with time to explore charming canal-lined cities and picturesque riverside towns, at the relaxed pace of river cruising. Highlights include Keukenhof, where millions of tulips and daffodils create a spectacular seasonal display and the magnificent formal gardens of Paleis Het Loo, former home of William of Orange and Mary II of England.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Smaller ships for a more intimate experience and relaxed feel on board
- Fully escorted travel from the UK with a Horticultural Specialist Tour Manager
- River cruising and guided garden visits with your HF Tour Manager to Specialist Tour Manager
- The spectacular spring displays at world-famous Keukenhof Gardens

- A guided tour of Paleis Het Loo and its formal gardens
- The beautifully designed Gardens of Adegem
- The historic Kasteel Amerongen country estate

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return rail travel from the UK and transfers
- Fully escorted travel from the UK with an HF Specialist Tour Manager
- 7-night river cruise with accommodation in an en-suite river view cabin
- Full board dining featuring breakfast, multi-course lunch on board or picnic lunch during excursions and dinner with menu choices, afternoon tea and late-night snack
- Wine, beer and soft drinks served with lunch and dinner
- 24-hour complimentary tea and coffee available in the Amadeus Club
- Welcome cocktail reception and dinner and gala dinner
- Guided garden themed excursions as per itinerary
- Onboard entertainment as per itinerary

ITINERARY - ITINERARY

Day 1 **Travel to Amsterdam**

Meet your HF Holidays Specialist Tour Manager and fellow travellers at London St Pancras International. After check-in, baggage checks and passport control, we board the Eurostar to Amsterdam.

On arrival, we transfer to our river cruise ship, Amadeus Queen or Amadeus Star, with time to unpack and settle into our cabins. This evening, we'll enjoy a welcome cocktail and special dinner accompanied by a traditional shanty choir before setting sail.

Day 2 **Arnhem and Wageningen Botanical Garden**

We arrive in Arnhem during breakfast before setting off for Kasteel Amerongen, one of the Netherlands' finest country estates. Surrounded by elegant formal gardens and parkland, it offers a fascinating insight into Dutch aristocratic life through the centuries.

In the afternoon, we continue to Wageningen Botanical Garden, where themed collections, colourful planting and specialist gardens showcase plants from around the world. We return to the ship before it sets sail in the early evening.

Day 3 **Zeeland's Gardens and Landscapes**

Arriving in Middelburg late morning, we set off to discover the distinctive landscapes of Zeeland.

Our first stop is Terra Maris, housed in the former orangery of historic Westhove Castle. Its dunes, woodland and traditional planting reflect the natural character of this unique coastal province.

We then continue to the seaside resort of Domburg, where there'll be time to walk through the dunes to admire a striking contrast to the formal gardens visited elsewhere on our tour. Our final stop is the charming harbour town of Veere, where we can wander along cobbled streets, admire traditional Dutch architecture and enjoy views across the Veerse Meer.

Day 4 **Ghent and the Gardens of Adegem**

Having arrived in Ghent overnight, today we experience two contrasting gardens.

We begin at the Gardens of Adegem, an inspiring private garden known for its imaginative design, colourful planting and beautifully maintained borders.

Later, we visit Ghent University Botanical Garden, home to extensive plant collections, glasshouses and research gardens. It's an excellent opportunity to discover both native and exotic species in peaceful surroundings. We return to the ship and set sail during dinner.

Day 5 **Antwerp**

Today we dock in Antwerp, one of Belgium's most fascinating cultural cities.

We begin at the beautifully restored Rubens House, the former home and studio of celebrated Flemish artist Peter Paul Rubens. Exploring the courtyard and historic garden offer a glimpse into the artist's life and inspirations.

After lunch on board, we continue to Plantentuin Antwerp, the famous Belgian city's botanical garden. Though compact, this peaceful green space boasts an impressive collection of medicinal and ornamental plants. We return to the ship and depart Antwerp during dinner.

Day 6 **Keukenhof Gardens**

One of the holiday highlights awaits today with a visit to the world-famous Keukenhof Gardens.

Often called the 'Garden of Europe', Keukenhof showcases millions of spring bulbs in spectacular displays. Sweeping drifts of tulips, daffodils and hyacinths create an unforgettable celebration of seasonal colour and we'll enjoy plenty of time to explore the gardens at a relaxed pace.

Returning to the ship we cruise towards Amsterdam in the evening.

Day 7 **Paleis Het Loo**

We wake in Amsterdam before setting off on a full-day excursion to Paleis Het Loo, one of the Netherlands' finest royal palaces.

Our guided tour takes in the beautifully restored palace and its magnificent Baroque gardens, complete with formal parterres, fountains, sculptures and ornamental avenues which were built for William of Orange and his then consort, Queen Mary II of England, in the 17th century. Together, they offer a fascinating insight into Dutch royal history and centuries of garden design.

On our final evening, we round off our cruise with a celebratory gala dinner on board.

Day 8 Departure day

After breakfast, we say farewell to the crew and transfer to Amsterdam Centraal for our Eurostar journey back to London.

DAILY WALK OPTIONS



Gentle walking grade 1

Short, easy walks on level paths with no stiles. Ideal for relaxed walking and active sightseeing. Typically, 2-3 miles (3-5km) or less, with little if any ascent.

ACCOMMODATION

Amadeus Star

Cabin Facilities

The Amadeus Star transforms every river cruise into a personalized experience, combining comfort, gastronomy, and leisure activities. Passengers can make use of the fitness and massage rooms, relax on the River Terrace, and unwind after a day of exploring in the chic wine bar.

Each cabin features a spacious bathroom with a walk-in shower, luxurious Rituals bath products, and a hairdryer. Fixed or drop-down panoramic windows fill the accommodation with natural light whilst thoughtful touches like a comfortable bed, ample wardrobe space, in-room safe, flat-screen TV, individual climate control and direct dial telephone ensure a restful stay.

Ship facilities

- Restaurant
- Panorama lounge bar
- Massage room
- Fitness room
- Lift between the Haydn and Mozart decks (sun deck not accessible by lift)
- Shop
- Amadeus Club with 24-hour tea and coffee station and wine bar
- Chess board, shuffleboard and loungers on sun deck

Ship Technical Details

- Construction: 2019
- Flag: Germany
- Length x Width 135m x 11.4m
- Draft: 1.5m

- Decks: 4
- Cabins/Suites: 70/12
- Max.passenger: 164
- Crew members: approx. 45
- Speed: 25 km/h

Amadeus Queen

Cabin Facilities

On board the Amadeus Queen, guests experience a perfect blend of modern elegance and timeless comfort. The ship offers a stylish travel experience along Europe's most beautiful waterways with highlights including an indoor pool with retractable roof, a restaurant, and a fitness room, hair salon and massage room.

Each cabin features a spacious bathroom with a walk-in shower, luxurious Rituals bath products, and a hairdryer. Fixed or drop-down panoramic windows fill the accommodation with natural light whilst thoughtful touches like a comfortable bed, ample wardrobe space, in-room safe, flat-screen TV, individual climate control and direct dial telephone ensure a restful stay.

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Ship Technical Details

- Construction: 2018
- Flag: Germany
- Length x Width 135m x 11.4m
- Draft: 1.5m
- Decks: 4
- Cabins/Suites: 62/12

- Max.passenger: 162
- Crew members: approx. 46
- Speed: 25 km/h

PASSPORTS & VISAS

Passport & Visa information

This information is for those travelling with a full 'British Citizen' passport; for all other nationalities or passport holders, please check with your local consulate for advice.

Passport Requirements

This information applies to travellers holding a full British Citizen passport. Entry requirements vary by destination and can change at short notice. For most EU and worldwide destinations, passports must be valid for the entire duration of your stay. Some countries also require a minimum period of validity remaining on your passport (often up to 6 months beyond your return date), even if you are not staying that long.
We strongly recommend ensuring your passport has at least six months' validity remaining at the time of travel to avoid any issues.

If you hold a different type of British passport or a passport issued by another country, you must check the requirements with the relevant embassy, consulate, or official government website.

Visa Requirements

Visa rules depend on your nationality, destination, length of stay, and purpose of travel, and they can change frequently. It is your responsibility to check whether you require a visa before travelling.
British passport holders should check the latest entry, passport validity and visa requirements for their destination on the UK government's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) website:
https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Packing list

Essential Information

It's best to be prepared for all weather conditions. To make it easier, here is a list of items you should consider packing.

Essentials

· Walking boots

· Waterproof jacket

· Waterproof trousers

· Insulated jacket/top

· Walking clothing

· Walking socks (plus spares)

· Sunhat

· Gloves/mitts and warm hat

· Water bottle (minimum 2 litre capacity)

· Headtorch

· High-factor sunscreen (minimum SPF 30)

· Sunglasses with a dark lens

· Rucksack (15-30 litres)

· Mobile phone

· Personal first aid kit (containing your medication, blister plasters, etc.)

· Passport

· Visa (if applicable)

· Copy of your travel insurance policy

· UK Global Health Insurance Card (**formerly known as EHIC**)

Recommended

· Collapsible walking poles

· Swimwear and travel towel

· Snacks

· Dry bags

· Rubbish bags

· Insect repellent

Optional extras

· Camera

· Sit mat

· Flask for hot drinks

· Durable lunch box

· Gaiters

· GPS device (excluding Bhutan, Georgia and India)

USEFUL INFORMATION

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is a condition of booking. Therefore, if you have not already arranged insurance, it is imperative that you do so before you travel.

For more information about healthcare and its costs, please visit: https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/

Useful information

Luggage

To facilitate the transportation of your luggage to/from the ship, we ask you to affix a clearly visible luggage label on the outside.

Wi-Fi

Complimentary wireless internet access is available on board the ship. Please note that the connection during your cruise may be weaker within certain sections of the route and does not meet the standard of a land-based internet connection. In addition, downtimes may occur on board, as international borders are often crossed during the cruise.

Laundry

Washing and pressing services are available onboard at a nominal fee and are handled through your cabin staff. Self-service laundry facilities, iron and ironing boards and dry-cleaning services are not available.

On board currency and payments

The currency on board is the EURO. You can pay on board with cash, debit card and credit card (Visa, Master Card, Diners Club and American Express). There are no ATMs on board and often only a limited number in the smaller towns along the rivers.

Useful information

Dress Code On Board Ship

There is a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere on board. Smart casual clothing is acceptable for all meal times; jackets and ties are not required for meals. The Captain's Dinner is an opportunity to dress up should you wish.

Optional Excursions On Board

A small-group guided excursion is included every day exclusively for HF Holidays guests. In addition the ship offers a range of optional excursions which can be booked and paid for onboard. Details will be provided by your Cruise Director.

Tipping

Gratuities for the Amadeus onboard crew are included in the price of your holiday. You are not required to pay any additional tips for onboard services. Gratuities for local guides and drivers are not included in the price of your holiday. Should you wish to tip them for excellent service, it is customary to tip local guides between €2 and €5 per person and drivers €1 to €2 per person for a 1/2 day tour.

TRIPNOTE VALIDITY

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred. In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary. The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

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