

# The Netherlands Bike & Boat: Holland's Wadden Sea & Friesland Coast

## Bike Vacation Only

Cycle through Dutch villages and sweeping farmlands on our bike and barge Holland trip, where land and sea are intertwined. Experience the unique ebb and flow of the Wadden Sea, where twice daily the tide pulls back to reveal sandy strips of beach. On the boat, try your hand at the sail or relax in the hot tub or deck while keeping a watchful eye on lighthouses, seabirds, and marine life. On land, windmills swirl in the breeze, grazing animals dot idyllic landscapes, and pristine bike paths lead you to nautical villages.

## Cultural Highlights

Sail aboard a romantic three-masted schooner in the UNESCO-listed Wadden Sea

Bike on picturesque paths through unspoiled quaint fishing villages, sand dunes and reclaimed polder lands

Learn Frisian from your captain and other friendly locals

Taste smoked herring and learn how it's processed

Picnic on a family run Friesian horse stable

Admire Hindloopen's colorful clothing and unique architecture

Visit an organic cheese farm for a tour and tasting

## What to Expect

This tour offers easy terrain on bike paths and roads through mainly rural areas. You will encounter traffic, especially in urban areas. Some of the bike paths are unpaved, and the terrain can lack shelter from the wind. Weather permitting, Day 4 features a full-day sail to the island of Terschelling; no biking is possible on this day. Whether the ship sails or transfers by motor will depend on sea/wind conditions and timing. Our VBT van support shuttle is available every day at designated points for those who would like assistance, with the exception of Day 5 on the island of Terschelling.

**Tour Duration:** 8 Days

**Average Daily Mileage:** 10 - 34

**Average Cycling Time:** 01:15 - 04:00

## Climate Information

### **Average High/Low Temperature (°F)**

May 61°/46°, Jun 66°/52°, Jul 69°/55°, Aug 70°/55°, Sep 64°/51°

### **Average Rainfall (in.)**

May 2.0, Jun 2.4, Jul 2.9, Aug 2.4, Sep 3.2

## **DAY 1: Embark ship in Enkhuizen / VBT Bicycle Vacation Begins**

You are responsible for making your own way to the ship in Enkhuizen, arriving between 1:30 and 2:30 p.m. Please note that you cannot embark before this time, as the ship is being prepared for your arrival. If you are running late, you must contact the ship as you might miss the welcome, safety briefing and warm-up ride. The ship's telephone number is +31 6 547 713 22. However, rest assured that the ship does not set sail this evening, so you can embark later. It will be moored a short five-minute walk from the railway station, in Enkhuizen's harbor for sailing ships, at Tritondam 5 - 1601 GT Enkhuizen (pier Dirck Chinaplein 1).

After lunch on your own, enjoy a walk through the old city center. Its numerous stately mansions, canals, churches, city walls, and harbors reveal the 17th-century mercantile wealth of Enkhuizen. Meet again at 2:00 p.m. and embark ship.

Once on board, you'll be welcomed by the ship's crew and your second VBT trip leader. After time to settle in, join a safety briefing before a warm-up ride around Enkhuizen.

This evening, gather on board with the group for a welcome dinner.

Please note regarding WiFi on board: Shipwide WiFi/WLAN connection (free of charge) is available only in harbor. If stable Internet access is critical to you, VBT recommends that you purchase your own bundle before traveling overseas.

Please note regarding Ride with GPS: Due to the limited WiFi onboard, VBT also recommends downloading your VBT Maps & Route Notes prior to arrival on the boat if you wish to use Ride with GPS on your smartphone. During your vacation, you will be able to follow these route notes on your smartphone with turn-by-turn voice navigation as you ride. This option is in addition to VBT's traditional printed maps and route notes available on tour.

Hotel: *Ship Mare Fan Fryslân*

Meals: Dinner

Today's Ride Choice:

Cumulative Distance Range: 18 km (11 miles)

Afternoon

Enkhuizen Warm Up: 18 km (11 miles)

What to Expect: Ride back and forth along the mooring to get comfortable with your bike. Shift gears, test the brakes, make adjustments and follow the route notes. It also serves to acquaint you with the Dutch bike network that we follow most of the week.

## DAY 2: Cycle to Medemblik / Sail to Texel

This is a perfect day for a bike and barge in Holland. After breakfast, disembark and cycle along the IJsselmeer to Medemblik. The largest lake in Western Europe, IJsselmeer is a shallow artificial lake, with an average depth of 16 to 19 feet (5 to 6 meters). It was created in 1932 when an inland sea, the Zuiderzee, was enclosed by completion of the 19-mile (32-km) Afsluitdijk, part of the Zuiderzee Works project designed to keep the waters of the North Sea at bay.

As you ride along the lake, enjoy lovely views of the famous Dutch polder landscapes, a tranquil and colorful canvas of dikes, agricultural fields, and small rural settlements. Keep your eyes open for birdlife in the meadows.

Upon arrival at Medemblik, you will have time to enjoy lunch and explore the small, picturesque inner town with its many houses from the 17th and 18th centuries. After lunch on your own, you will board the ship and, weather permitting, sail to Oudeschild on the Island of Texel, the largest of the Wadden Islands.

Dinner will be served on board this evening.

Hotel: Ship *Mare Fan Fryslân*

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 28 km (17 miles)

Morning

Enkhuizen to Medemblik: 28 km (17 miles)

What to Expect: After exiting the city gate of Enkhuizen, you'll find yourself in grasslands, flower fields, and agricultural land. Just before entering the small town of Wervershoof, a windmill offers a great photo

opportunity. Today you will follow the Omring dike originally built by monks in the 14th century to protect flood-prone land. Before entering the pretty town of Medemblik, you will pass a historical steam-powered pumping engine on your left, from where you see the giant 427-feet (130 meters) wind turbine towering behind the town.

## DAY 3: Explore Texel Island

With its 12.4 miles (20 kilometers) of sandy beaches and countless miles of traffic-free bike paths, Texel Island is a paradise for cyclists and nature lovers—especially bird lovers, as many migrating birds flock to these shores.

After breakfast, a short walk takes you to the Kaap Skil Museum van Jutters and Zeelui (the Skil Cape Museum of Beachcombers and Sailors), uniquely built from recycled wood and other items. The proprietors open it especially for VBT guests. During your visit, you will meet some of the residents and learn about the local history. You will have time to wander the museum's grounds and visit a fisherman's cottage dating from 1930 and 1950. You can also visit the charming windmill.

The rest of your day is free. Texel Island has much to explore: seven pretty villages, several additional museums, and the seal colony at Ecomare. If you wish, you can cycle to the bright red Eierland Lighthouse at the island's northern end where you'll find breathtaking vistas and, of course, the island's famous Texel sheep—considered some of the tastiest lamb anywhere. VBT has a recommended route, but you are free to explore on your own. Notice the characteristic earthen garden walls, which once separated plots of land.

Afterward, enjoy dinner on the ship again this evening. The ship is again moored in Oudeschild on Texel overnight.

Hotel: Ship *Mare Fan Fryslân*

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Today's Ride Choice:

Cumulative Distance Range: 40 km (24 miles)

Morning-Afternoon

Texel: 40 km (24 miles)

What to Expect: Ride through the quiet agricultural roads and paved bike paths of Texel. During your visit to the Skil Cape Museum of Beachcombers and Sailors, you'll learn plenty about the displayed artifacts. The majority of these antiques were discovered by divers and beachcombers who considered Texel

"Treasure Island," thanks to all the heirlooms that were lost below the water or washed upon shores. At the Eierland Lighthouse, take in the magnificent views of Wadden Sea, North Sea, and Vlieland.

## DAY 4: Sailing day to Terschelling

Spend the day (weather permitting) sailing to Terschelling, our second Wadden Island. If you wish, you can help the ship captain sail the *Mare Fan Fryslân*. Or you can simply sit back on deck or in the Jacuzzi and watch for seals and other marine and birdlife. Your route traces the southern coasts of the islands, maneuvering passages past sand and mud banks.

As you sail, you will learn a few words of the Frisian language from a native speaker and enjoy lunch on board.

Late in the afternoon, arrive at Terschelling, admiring its landmark 400-year old stone Brandaris lighthouse as you approach. You will moor in West Terschelling, the largest village on the island. Disembark to regain your land legs during a stroll, perhaps trying out your Frisian tongue while visiting the quaint shops, pubs, or ordering dinner on your own in one of the local restaurants.

The ship remains moored in Terschelling overnight.

Hotel: Ship *Mare Fan Fryslân*

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today's Ride Choice:

Non-Biking Day: Leisurely sail to the island Terschelling

What to Expect: Give your legs a break from your bike and barge Holland vacation with a relaxing day on the boat. Trade stories with your ship captain and crew who will help you with some basic Frisian language lessons while sailing. When you arrive at West Terschelling, stop to browse second-hand bookstores and antiques shops or take a stroll along the moor while watching other ships come and go.

## DAY 5: Terschelling / Sail to Harlingen

A true cycling paradise, Terschelling is home to sweeping natural beauty, rich Frisian culture in four beautiful villages and the widest beaches in Europe. The island's bike paths stretch for more than 43 miles (70 km). The island is also known for its cranberries, cultivated here since 1840 when a barrel of cranberries washed ashore. The barrel, apparently lost from a ship that used it to help prevent scurvy, inspired locals to cultivate the fruit for their own sailors. Today, you can sample the tart berries in local

specialties and baked goods.

For lunch, enjoy a special visit to the kitchen of local chef Flang Cupido. A native Terschellinger, Cupido provides insight into the very locally sourced products used to prepare your midday meal.

The afternoon is free for you to continue exploring this lovely little island.

Weather permitting, you will later sail for the pretty mainland town of Harlingen. Dinner is included on board this evening. After dinner, you may wish to stroll along the canals, historic warehouses, and mansions of this quaint port town.

Hotel: Ship *Mare Fan Fryslân*

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 31 – 57 km (19 - 35 miles)

Morning-Afternoon

Terschelling Loop: 31 km (19 miles)

Terschelling Plus: 57 km (35 miles)

What to Expect: From the harbor of West Terschelling, dominated by the famous lighthouse Brandaris, our bike route loops along the western shore from where you can see Vlieland Island between Texel and Terschelling. We then alternate riding between the pine wood forest and the dune area until the village of Hoorn, where we will have a home hosted lunch with Flang Cupido, a Terschelling islander. After lunch, our route skirts the Wadden Coast (a UNESCO World Heritage site).

## **DAY 6: Frisian horse stable hosted picnic / Makkum**

Start the day with a reel through typical Dutch polder landscape, much of which lies below sea level.

Admire the dike systems that keep this fertile agricultural area well drained. Modern wind turbines share the stunning landscape with traditional Dutch windmills.

The highlight of the day is a visit to the Friesian horse stable of Pieter and Tiety Okkema in Witmarsum. Their passion of the Frisian horse will shine through as they give you a tour around the stables, showing some of their competition horses, explaining about the breed and how they train the horses for both the saddle and carriage. Pieter is also a state-certified farrier. During the visit, savor a picnic lunch in their

cozy canteen.

After lunch you may either shuttle back to the ship or cycle to our next mooring site in Makkum.

Enjoy dinner in one of the local restaurants in Makkum this evening.

Hotel: Ship *Mare Fan Fryslân*

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 27 – 44 km (17 - 27 miles)

Morning

Harlingen to Witmarsum: 27 km (17 miles)

Afternoon

Witmarsum to Makkum: 17 km (10 miles)

What to Expect: After leaving the industrial side of Harlingen, the Dutch Polder countryside dominates today's scenery. Following lunch, our route takes you through open agricultural polder to meet the ship in Makkum. Vast fields of green stretch over the horizon, and you'll cycle past tiny canals, windmills, and grazing cows. Eat dinner in this quaint town, where you'll find everything from meat and vegetable tapas to local Frisian goat cheese and pastas.

## DAY 7: Cycle to Stavoren / Sail to Enkhuizen

Enjoy your last day of cycling on a seaside route that passes through charming towns. Cycle out of Makkum, following the coast and marshlands through the sweeping polder landscape and prolific farmland.

Stop in the small town of Workum. Its Jopie Huisman Museum is dedicated to the work and life of this Frisian self-taught master painter. A short distance after Workum, meet your Trip Leaders for a guided visit and tasting at a small organic cheese farm.

Continue to Hindeloopen, an enticing patchwork of old streets, canals and wooden bridges. Isolated from the Dutch mainland and influenced by trading partners from Denmark, Norway, Britain and beyond, the people of Hindeloopen developed a unique dialect and an eclectic style of dress and décor. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the shipping trade brought Hindeloopen great prosperity. Locals spent much of their

wealth in Amsterdam on precious fabrics and furnishings supplied through the Dutch East India Company. Upon arrival, meet one of the locals in her home and experience the beautiful costumes from the Dutch Golden Age for yourself. Lunch is on your own today, perhaps at a Hindeloopen café.

Continuing along the IJsselmeer coast, you will soon reach Stavoren, the oldest town in Friesland. Your ship meets you here and takes you back to Enkhuizen.

Dine on the ship one last time this evening.

Hotel: Ship *Mare Fan Fryslân*

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 26 – 46 km (16 - 29 miles)

Morning

Makkum to Hindeloopen: 26 km (16 miles)

Afternoon

Hindeloopen to Stavoren: 20 km (13 miles)

What to Expect: Your final day of cycling takes you along quiet country roads, through the picturesque villages of Allingawier and Workum to Hindeloopen, where you have free time for lunch. After lunch, continue cycling along the banks of the IJsselmeer to meet your ship in the historic harbor of Stavoren.

## **DAY 8: Depart Ship / Discover Amsterdam / VBT Bicycle Vacation ends**

After breakfast, say goodbye to your ship crew and trip leaders as your tour ends. It is important that you leave the ship no later than 9:00 a.m.

## **Accommodations**

May vary depending on departure date.

### **Ship Mare Fan Fryslan (Days: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7)**

A beautiful and extravagant three-masted schooner with a capacity of 24 passengers, the Mare Fan Fryslân was built in 1960 as a freight ship and completely renovated in 2006. All 12 comfortable cabins



offer 2 lower beds and private bathrooms with shower and toilet. The porthole window can be opened, and the cabins have air conditioning. Common areas include a salon that also serves as a restaurant and the wheelhouse bar with breathtaking views through a large, panoramic window. There is ample seating and a Jacuzzi on the upper deck. The ship's sail can be operated either by hand or motor. Complimentary Wi-Fi/WLAN connection is available throughout the whole ship, but only while in the harbors. The ship moors each night.

Drinks of all types are available for purchase at the bar on board. It is not customary for guests to bring their own wine and liquor on board; your understanding is appreciated. Onboard meal menus are set, though the chef is happy to accommodate vegetarians and those on restricted diets for health reasons.

Please note: VBT has adopted a no-smoking policy on the ship, in the van during transfers and at meals.

[Click here to view deck plans](#)