



HOLLAND & BELGIUM Including Floriade 2012

Day 1 – April 19, 2012 Thursday

DEPART FOR AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS

Depart from your hometown today to begin your adventure in the Netherlands and Belgium.

Day 2 - April 20, Friday

AMSTERDAM

On arrival at Amsterdam Schiphol Airport, and after clearing Immigration and Customs, you will be met and transferred to your accommodations.



Past and present, trade and leisure, religion and coffee shops, diamonds and beer, all flourish together in splendid Amsterdam! During your stay you will see all that Amsterdam has to offer, from the historical monuments in the center of the city to the modern architecture from the 21st century. The capital of the Netherlands, Amsterdam, is a unique city. The old merchant houses, the canals and the lively streets make Amsterdam incomparable to other cities. A city full of culture with a variety of large museums: the Rijksmuseum with Rembrandt's *The Night Watch*, the Van Gogh museum, the Maritime museum, the Historical museum and the Municipal museum of

modern art. There are many smaller museums, as well, such as the Rembrandt's house and Anne Frank's house.

This afternoon enjoy a city tour by boat through the Amsterdam canals and harbor on the beautiful *La Reine*.

Some twenty years ago an artistic shipwright and an entrepreneur friend were on a trip across the Frisian lakes and noticed a neglected classic canal boat drifting in the reeds. It was not long before one plus one was three. The boat would be restored to original condition, there would be excellent food and drinks



on board and guests would line up to enjoy an unforgettable trip through the Amsterdam canals. Shortly after, on the Amstel River, a beautiful classic boat graced the scene, the queen among the Amsterdam canal boats: *La Reine*. A century ago, a canal boat such as *La Reine* was privately owned by wealthy citizens, like the village notary. It was a good investment since there were no good roads yet. In the 21st century it is more sensible for an individual to buy a car. The desire for the beauty of the water, the pace of pedestrians, the warmth of wood and glass, the intimacy of family, friends and colleagues remains. *La Reine* can satisfy this desire, even for a few hours.

Following the cruise, enjoy a walk to the floating flower market. Since 1862 this floating flower market on one of the oldest canals in Amsterdam, has grown to be the best known flower market in the Netherlands. Everything growing or blooming can be found here, from typically Dutch Tulips and Geraniums to subtle Room Cypresses. The flower stalls stand on the houseboats. The bulbs are ready for export, and can be enjoyed at home too!

This evening enjoy a welcome cocktail and dinner party with your fellow travelers and Lakani Tour Manager.

HOTEL DE L'EUROPE

Day 3 - April 21, Saturday

AMSTERDAM

Today is a full day to enjoy the countryside marked by windmills, dikes and ditches and its many unknown flower fields. Visit of Marken, a well known fishing village north of Amsterdam and drive via Edam to Zaanse Schans for lunch and a visit to a windmill.



Marken, the province of North Holland is home to plenty of small fishing villages and Marken is certainly one of the most famous ones. Take a nice walk on the former island of Marken, once terribly isolated in the large Zuiderzee, which had a profound influence on the strictly Protestant way of living in Marken. The inhabitants, many of whom still wear their traditional dress, can be somewhat surly, especially when you disturb them in their private lives. But the many cute wooden houses painted in the traditional dark green, generously compensate for this.

Edam is known as “the Pearl of the Zuiderzee” because of its numerous historic houses, monuments, canals, courtyards and a leaning tower with an old clock from the 16th century. Besides the romantic atmosphere of Edam, the village is also well known because of its ‘Edammer’ cheese.

The city of Zaanse Schans is a characteristic residential community on the banks of the River Zaan. Zaanse



Schans is a village cum open-air museum where you can see what everyday life used to be like before the Industrial Revolution. The houses in the Zaan area are built in wood and painted in bright green and white thus giving the village a very picturesque character. There are three windmills still in operation and a visit to one of them is included. There is time for a short stroll throughout the village.

Lunch today is in Restaurant De Hoop op d'Swarte Walvis. The building itself consists of three historical houses brought here from another spot in the 'Zaanstreek' region: an orphanage, a merchant house and a warehouse. These buildings have been adjoined and reconstructed with a beautiful terrace and garden overlooking the river Zaan and a row of windmills. The interior has an elegant ambiance combined with typical elements such as wooden beams and tiles from Delft & Makkum.

HOTEL DE L'EUROPE

Day 4 - April 22, Sunday

AMSTERDAM

Today you will visit the Rijksmuseum. The Netherlands' largest museum is housed in a monumental building designed by architect P.J.H. Cuypers in 1885. The Rijksmuseum collection contains around one million objects of which alternating selections are shown in 200 rooms:

- 15th-19th century paintings; including Rembrandt, Vermeer, Hals
- Sculpture and applied arts: Delftware, doll's houses, glass, silver, furniture
- Dutch history: model ships, weaponry, documents, portraits
- Asian art: China, India and Japan
- Prints and drawings: alternating exhibitions



A visit to the Van Gogh Museum is a unique experience. Nowhere else in the world can you see so many of Van Gogh's paintings in one place. Here, you can follow the development of the artist's work through all its stages and compare it with pictures by other 19th-century painters in the collection. In addition, the museum offers a wide variety of temporary exhibitions on a large number of subjects from the history of 19th-century art.

The Van Gogh Museum first opened its doors in 1973. The building, designed by Dutch architect Gerrit Rietveld, houses the world's largest collection of works by Vincent van Gogh: some 200 paintings, 500 drawings and 700 letters, as well as the artist's own collection of Japanese prints. The collection originally belonged to Theo van Gogh (1857-1891), Vincent's younger brother. Following Theo's death, it passed to his widow, Johanna van Gogh-Bonger (1862-1925). Although a number of works were sold, she retained a major group, representing all phases of Van Gogh's oeuvre. On her death in 1925, her son, Vincent Willem van Gogh (1890-1978), inherited the collection. In 1962, on the initiative of the Dutch state, he transferred the works to the Vincent van Gogh Foundation. They are now on permanent loan to the Van Gogh Museum and form the nucleus of its collection.

The Collection section is organized into three parts, featuring the work of Vincent van Gogh, the work of other artists contemporaries and friends of Van Gogh's - among them Paul Gauguin and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec - as well as a number of older artists whom he admired, such as Léon Lhermitte and Jean-François Millet, and the history of the museum collection.

HOTEL DE L'EUROPE

Day 5 - April 23, Monday

AMSTERDAM / VENLO – FLORIADE 2012 - / BRUGES, BELGIUM

Drive from Amsterdam to Venlo for *The Floriade World Horticultural Exposition* which has been held in the Netherlands roughly every 10 years since 1960. More than 100 exhibitors together will pay tribute to horticulture. The Floriade is a global spectacle in which many dozens of countries participate. You will find yourself immersed in a melting pot of cultures where you will be introduced to different customs and rituals.



The Floriade Park covers 66 hectares and encompasses 5 unique themed worlds separated by wooded areas. Each world has its own decor, program and activities. Worlds in which you will see, feel and experience nature in a totally different way each time. Later this afternoon continue our drive to Bruges, the capital and largest city of the province of Flanders in the Flemish Region of Belgium.

KEMPINSKI HOTEL DUKES' PALACE

Day 6 - April 24, Tuesday

BRUGES

Bruges (Brugge) is without a doubt one of the gems of northwest Europe, offering the visitor a rich combination of history and Flemish architectural splendors in a compact city center, which was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2000.

There is no doubt that a visit to Bruges is a rewarding experience. The city is a sheer pleasure just to wander around, discovering street after street of pretty Flemish buildings, delightful restaurants and bars, and more than its fair share of imposing historic monuments. The climb to the top of the Belfry tower is not to be missed; neither is a boat ride along the picturesque waterways of the old city.

The city's name is believed to derive from the Old Norse *bryggja*, meaning landing stage or wharf, and Bruges' fortunes reached their zenith in the 13th and early 14th centuries, when the city was the most important trading center in northwestern Europe. Things went downhill until the late 19th century, when Bruges once more came 'back to life', ironically almost entirely due to Georges Rodenbach's novel *Bruges la Morte*, which awakened international interest in what had become a sleepy backwater.



Modern Bruges is a dynamic, friendly, place, with a strong arts culture and all the ingredients of a successful tourist center. Enjoy a walking tour of the old center including a visit to Groeningemuseum. The permanent collection offers a rich and fascinating array of artworks from the southern Netherlands, Flemish, Belgian and Dutch art over the centuries is the theme of this gallery, whose collections include works by such luminaries as Jan van Eyck, Hieronymous Bosch and Marcel Broodthaers, as well as Renaissance, Baroque and modern works.

Visit Memling in Sint-Jan museum, the 8 century old Saint John's Hospital, which is famous for its collection of paintings by the great master of the Flemish Primitives, Hans Memling.

Enjoy a Canal boat ride which is one of the best ways to see Bruges, especially when the pedestrian streets are filled with tourists. A horse-drawn carriage is a popular way to get around Bruges (30-45 minutes).



KEMPINSKI HOTEL DUKES' PALACE

Day 7 - April 25, Wednesday

BRUGES / GHENT / ANTWERP / BRUGES



Ghent is a historic city, yet at the same time a contemporary one. The modern daily life of the city's active inhabitants plays itself out against a gorgeous historical backdrop.

Visit The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb. The Van Eyck brothers painted this unique altarpiece in 1432. It is the highlight of the Flemish Primitives and a milestone in art history. The Polyptych survived the Protestant Iconoclasm, fell into French hands under Napoleon and was requisitioned by Nazi Germany during the Second World War. But it has now been hanging peacefully for more than 50 years in the place where it belongs: St. Bavo's Cathedral. Though admittedly, the 'Just Judges' panel, which was stolen in

1934, is still replaced by a reproduction.

This afternoon, visit Antwerp with its handsome squares, cobbled alleyways, excellent restaurants and smart shops, Antwerp is a buzzing, stylish town, famous for its diamonds, arts and fashion. Belgium's second city has been the diamond capital of the world for centuries. Armed guards and traders with handcuffed briefcases announce that you are in the Diamond Quarter, while dozens of shops sell discounted 'rocks'. Antwerp, home of the Flemish Baroque master Peter Paul Rubens, also has a wealth of outstanding museums and galleries.



Antwerp's port is Europe's second largest (after Rotterdam), one of the 10 largest in the world, and principal source of the city's wealth. The importance of Antwerp's maritime heritage has been celebrated with the opening of the new MAS museum in late 2010. Antwerp gained fame during the 1980s through the efforts of the 'Antwerp Six'. These six avant-garde designers' legacy is very much alive today, not just in the Fashion Museum, or in the Antwerp Fashion Academy school, but on many streets, where it seems that every other shop window is a designer statement.

KEMPINSKI HOTEL DUKES' PALACE

Day 8 - April 26, Thursday

BRUGES / THE HAGUE, NETHERLANDS



We continue our journey to The Hague via the province of Zeeland. Zeeland also called Zealand in English, is the westernmost province of the Netherlands. The province, located in the south-west of the country, consists of a number of islands (hence its name, meaning "sea-land") and a strip bordering Belgium. Its capital is Middelburg and tourism is an important economic activity for them.

More than half of the Netherlands is below sea level. The fascinating Delta Expo shows you how the people of the Low Countries won their battle against the mighty North Sea. You will see the world's largest flood barrier called the Oosterschelde barrier. Besides the flood barrier, there is also an open-air exhibition where the accent lies on the environment and fishing. It especially focuses on the cultivation of mussels, oysters and trout, a specialty of the province of Zeeland. Continue on to The Hague, the seat of the Dutch government.

HOTEL DES INDES

Day 9 - April 27, Friday

THE HAGUE

The flower auction in Aalsmeer is the starting point for millions of flowers over the whole world. It sells some three billion flowers a year. Five mornings a week a wealth of cut flowers and potted plants are delivered to the Aalsmeer Auction to be sold. Visitors of the auction can watch the spectacle and enjoy the floral magnificence and revel in the activity of this trading centre. The electronic selling of the flowers takes place in a 42-hectare building. For example 2 to 3 million roses in 70 different kinds are sold here, which makes this flower auction to be the world's largest.



The Keukenhof is a spring-park of 28 hectare, with 6 million flower-bulbs, 160- year old trees, theme- gardens and a mill from 1892. In the various greenhouses special exhibitions are organized. By visiting the park, you will renew your knowledge about flower arrangements and maybe even get inspiration for your own garden.

HOTEL DES INDES

Day 10 - April 28, Saturday

THE HAGUE/DELFT/THE HAGUE

A tour of The Hague includes seeing the Parliament Buildings and Knight's Hall. The Hague is a city of tree-lined avenues, elegant buildings and historical landmarks. The Hague is the government center and also the most "royal" city of the Netherlands. In the center lies the "Binnenhof", the seat of the Dutch parliament with the impressive Knight's Hall. It is also where the Royal picture gallery Mauritshuis is located, right beside the Dutch Prime Minister's office.

The mansions along Lange Voorhout and the small palaces of the Dutch Royal Family are all within walking distance. Among the other points of interest in The Hague are the Peace Palace (seat of the International Court of Justice), Madurodam - Holland in miniature, Panorama Mesdag - a 120-meter long panoramic impression of Scheveningen in 1880, and Scheveningen seaside resort with its boulevard, beach restaurants and the North Sea.



Continue to Delft, home of the famous blue hand-painted pottery and a beautifully preserved medieval canal city. Visit the Porceleynse Fles Pottery and stroll around the old town and marketplace.

Our guide will take you on a short walking tour through this lovely town, which starts in Market Square, dominated by the City Hall and the impressive New Church. This has been the burial place of the Dutch Royal Family ever since William of Orange was first buried here in 1584.

HOTEL DES INDES

Day 11 - April 29, Sunday
AMSTERDAM / HOME

You are transferred to the Amsterdam Schiphol Airport today, and your journey comes to an end as you board your flight. You arrive home greatly enriched and enlightened by the sights and experiences you have had in this magical destination.

ACCOMMODATIONS

HOTEL DE L'EUROPE, Amsterdam



Opened in 1896, De L'Europe is often referred to as the other “Royal Palace of Amsterdam”, continuing to attract the city’s power menagerie and the world’s top celebrities. The hotel’s impactful décor sets it apart, surrounding its visitors with original Dutch Masters paintings from the private collection of Alfred “Freddy” Heineken. Plush furnishings, discreetly anticipatory service, and contemporary comforts create a sophisticatedly luxurious guest experience. Located on the Amstel River in Amsterdam’s center and five minutes from several of the world’s most heralded museums and attractions, the hotel offers breathtaking views of the city and river to its visitors.

KEMPINSKI HOTEL DUKES' PALACE, Bruges



Kempinski Hotel Dukes' Palace is situated in the heart of the medieval centre Bruges. With a 15th century Palace as décor, each room represents an imaginary voyage to the elite life of Dukes' and Duchesses. Your comfort becomes a priority when staying in one of the beautifully decorated rooms including marble bathrooms, private terraces and 300 thread count cotton sheets. From fine dining to casual light meals, the culinary team of restaurant Manuscript will surpass expectations with a diverse mix of classical Belgian cuisine prepared with fresh regional ingredients. The restaurant, bar and terrace are a welcoming retreat.

HOTEL DES INDES, The Hague



Hotel Des Indes is a haven of luxury in the heart of The Hague. The yellow façade of this five star deluxe retreat embraces you even before you enter. The rich history of The Hague and its monumental buildings reverberates throughout Hotel Des Indes. Each hotel room blends contemporary amenities with iconic architectural statements and the latest comforts, tasteful furnishings and excellent bedding. Hotel Des Indes offers an exceptional restaurant where you can indulge in a totally memorable four course High Tea.

Dates & Prices:

Tour No. 2310-12

April 19 – 29, 2012

\$11,795 per person / double occupancy

\$2650 per person / single room supplement

JOIN TOUR:	Friday (day 2, April 20)	Amsterdam
LEAVE TOUR:	Sunday (day 11, April 29)	Amsterdam

INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE:

- Finest accommodations in deluxe or best hotels in each area
- Three meals per day, a la carte where available
- Dine by choice (where available), allowing flexible dining
- Bottled water, coffee and tea with meals
- Individual arrival and departure transfers
- Transportation by a deluxe air-conditioned motor coach
- Entrance fees and sightseeing as outlined in the itinerary
- Gratuities to hotel/restaurant staff, local guides and drivers
- Knowledgeable English-speaking local guides
- Lakani tour manager on tours with six or more travelers
- \$50,000 Medical Emergency Evacuation Insurance

NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE:

- International & internal airfares
- Airport taxes
- Passport and visa expenses
- Personal expenses (ie: laundry, phone calls, alcoholic beverages)
- Discretionary end of tour gratuity to the Tour Manager