

## Cycling from Utrecht

6 days, € 484



## Introduction



Our four round tours take you into areas of natural beauty and past many forts, castles and interesting historical fortified towns. The landscapes are varied, and several rivers and lakes adorn your route. A recurring theme is the Dutch Waterline, a former defence line with forts, sluices and fortified towns. Utrechtse Heuvelrug National Park.

## Day to Day

### Day 1 **Arrival in Utrecht**

Some say that the canal city of Utrecht is one of the most beautiful in Europe. The largely low-traffic city centre, built around the Dom tower, is best explored on foot and has many cosy cafés, national monuments and even world heritage. If you are into art, Christian art museum Catherijneconvent is highly regarded. More modern: Utrecht is the town of Miffy (by Dick Bruna), and designer / architect Gerrit Rietveld (1888-1964). To find out the story behind the wharves along the Old Canal, opt to take a boat trip.



## Day 2 **Round Tour South – New Dutch Waterline**

**64 km**

After a hearty buffet breakfast, set off on your first tour! This day of cycling will take you along rivers and canals and through a variety of landscapes. You will cycle to the historical town of Culemborg and back to the centre of Utrecht. The Nieuwe Hollandse Waterlinie (1870-1940) was an important military defence line in Dutch history. Canals and sluices made it possible to inundate large expanses of land to keep an advancing enemy at bay. In places where inundation was not possible forts were built, blending in with the landscape. Also part of the defence line: fortified towns – great favourites with the tourists of today. Because the line is 85 km long, it is known as the largest national monument in the Netherlands. For many decades, the military zone was off limits to the public; and there was a building ban for the surroundings. That's how the zone became a green corridor, where nature was left alone and wildlife flourished. Good news for the cyclo-tourist! In the nature reserves you will come across impressive forts that are worth a visit. Guides will inform you about the military history and the ingenious system of hydraulic engineering that made inundation warfare possible. Recommended highlights of the day are Fort Vechten; a unique kind of quick dam called plofsluis; the fortified town of Vianen; and the old town of Vreeswijk with its boatyard, (museum) harbour, exposition on inland navigation, and three locks.

Shortcut: If you wish, you can shorten the route by 5 km by taking a ferry at Fort Everdingen, the very cool home of brewery Duits & Lauret. Here you can relax for a while, enjoying a specialty beer and various tasty snacks.

## Day 3 **Round Tour West – Rivers & Small Towns along the Old Dutch Waterline**

**70 km**

Follow the river Vecht out of the city to De Haar Castle, the largest castle in the country, restored in 1892. Beautifully executed in neo-Gothic style, the castle welcomes visitors to tour its fully equipped kitchens, servants' quarters, and stunning rooms and halls. Take the time to stroll through the beautiful gardens. Next, get back on your bikes and follow the River Old Rhine to the fortified town of Woerden. Its history goes back many centuries: In the local history museum you will find Roman remains. Then proceed via Lange Linschoten to Oudewater where you can opt to visit the Weighing Hall (1482) where women used to be weighed to determine whether they were witches. Step on the scales to find out if you would have been deemed light enough to fly on a broomstick. Afterwards, enjoy the natural scenery along the River Hollandsche IJssel, which will lead you to the fortified town of Montfoort. Full of historical buildings, it merits exploration. At the end of the day, follow the River Leidse Rijn into the centre of Utrecht.

Shortcut: You can shorten your route by 9 km by skipping Oudewater and the small rivers Lange Linschoten and Hollandsche IJssel.



#### Day 4 **Round Tour North – Oostelijke Vechtplassen**

**60 km**

Oostelijke Vechtplassen is the collective name for a 7,000-hectare nature reserve, largely the result of long-term peat extraction. It is a low-lying fen complex in a polder, a peat wetland and lake district important to many bird species. Situated to the east of the River Utrechtse Vecht, the central part is the famous water sports area 'Loosdrechtse Plassen'. You will first cycle along its southern border, passing several New Dutch Waterline forts. Then you will cycle along the River Vecht, its banks dotted with posh country houses. You will visit a series of beautiful old villages such as Breukelen, Nieuwersluis, Loenen aan de Vecht and, if desired, Vreeland. Subsequently, you can do some bird spotting while you weave between the lakes. Finally, you will reach Utrechtse Heuvelrug National Park. Whilst you follow its border, feast your eyes on fields of heather (in August). Take your time to enjoy several panoramic views. The wetlands at Tienhoven and Molenpolder are beautiful. In freshwater succession (from open water to reedbeds to dry land to woods) sometimes a floating mat (or quaking bog) can develop. This very rare habitat type can be found here! A floating mat of sphagnum mosses and other vegetation, anchored by sedges, on the surface of the water (or on top of very wet peat). The wide-open peat meadows around the farming villages of Westbroek and Groenekan emanate tranquillity.

Shortcut: You can shorten your route by 7 km by skipping the nature reserves Tienhoven and Molenpolder. You then cycle from the heath near Hilversum through and along the forest straight to Groenekan.

#### Day 5 **Round Tour East – Castles, Orchards, Woods**

**67 km**

From Utrecht, follow the Kromme Rijn and the Langbroekerwetering canal to Wijk bij Duurstede. The countryside is characterized by the alternation of meadows, orchards, castles and stately country houses. You will also cycle through the woods at the edge of Utrechtse Heuvelrug National Park. The town of Wijk bij Duurstede has a rich history. Between the 7th and 9th centuries it was known as Dorestad, a center of international trade. The ruins of Duurstede Castle and Castle Park are worth a visit. Nearby St. John the Baptist / Great Church is a national monument. It is a Gothic pseudo basilica with an unfinished tower. On your way back to Utrecht, enjoy the natural beauty of the Utrechtse Heuvelrug. Eventually you will reach the town of Doorn and its impressive castle, Slot Zeist, surrounded by a beautiful English landscape park.

Longer route: You can also take a 8 km longer route. After Wijk bij Duurstede, follow the "Limes", the old frontier of the Roman Empire, along the Lower Rhine. The beautiful village of Amerongen and Amerongen Castle are worth cycling the extra distance.

#### Day 6 **Return home**

After one last satisfying hotel buffet breakfast, your holiday will come to an end. It is time to go home.



## Prices, Data, Booking

### Starting dates:

Daily from April 1 till September 25

Price pp		€
Double room, breakfast		479.00
Single room, breakfast		754.00
Extra night double room, breakfast only		80.00
Rental bike		€
Child bike		77.00
Hybrid		91.00
E-bike		196.00
Extra services		€
Bike Breakdown pass	€ 5.60 x 5	28.00
Child seat	€ 7.00 x 5	35.00
Bike theft insurance	€ 4.20 x 5	21.00
E-bike theft insurance	€ 8.40 x 5	42.00
Tag-along bike	€ 14.00 x 5	70.00
Child trailer	€ 25.20 x 5	126.00
Bike helmet	per piece	10.00
SGR	per piece	5.00
discount	per piece	-20.00

### Starting point:

Utrecht

## 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 Mitland \*\*\*\* (Utrecht)

[www.mitland.nl](http://www.mitland.nl)



## Practical Info



5 nights included



4 star hotel



Breakfast included



Detailed roadbooks with maps and tourist information



The possibility of renting our bikes



7-days a week service-hotline



Utrecht Centraal



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 and tickets, go to [www.ns.nl/en](http://www.ns.nl/en). For bus details, how to reach the hotel, check: [www.9292.nl/en](http://www.9292.nl/en).

