

Frisian Eleven Cities Tour

8 days, € 840



Introduction



In the far north of the Netherlands, in a vast and flat landscape, lie eleven historical towns linked by canals. They set the stage for a phenomenal ice skating event that is held just as soon as the canals freeze over and the ice is solid enough: The Eleven Towns Tour. The 200 km marathon is so popular with the Dutch people that the route is often cycled in warmer months with a feeling of nostalgia as cyclists pass familiar waymarks. What a lovely route it is!

Day to Day

Day 1 **Arrival Leeuwarden**

Your Frisian adventure kicks off in Leeuwarden, the vibrant capital of Friesland province. If the spoken language sounds different to you here, you are absolutely right. The Frisian language differs from Dutch and is an important aspect of local culture.

Day 2 **Leeuwarden - Sneek**

53 km

We have three of the eleven towns lined up for you today. Bolsward is a lovely historical Hanseatic town that captures the hearts of many tourists.

You will stay the night in the lively town of Sneek, popular with water sports enthusiasts and daytrippers. Everybody loves the canals that adorn the centre. Waterpoort (1613) is the town's pride and joy. It's a water gate. Way back when the town was surrounded by a defensive wall, this was one of the town gates through which boats were permitted to enter and leave town. If you have a sweet tooth, try to get hold of the local brittle buckwheat cookies: "drabbelkoeken". Why not crown your evening in one of the many bars and cafes that liven up the town?



Day 3 Sneek - Stavoren/Rijs**58 km**

Leaving behind the hustle and bustle of Sneek, you will dive into the peace and quiet of the Frisian Lake District. Comprising nearly thirty inland lakes, it is said to be the largest lake district in western Europe. With water all around, experience a feeling of calm and forget about time for a while. Further on, you will reach a geologically interesting wooded area called Gaasterland that is suddenly not so typical of the Netherlands. You will find meandering creeks, slightly rolling terrain and deciduous woods directly on the coast of what used to be Zuiderzee. Even more unexpectedly, a wall of boulder clay called Rode Klif rises up from Lake IJsselmeer, offering endless views.

Day 4 Stavoren/Rijs- Makkum**32 km**

There's more Frisian cultural heritage in store for you today. In Hindeloopen, wooden bridges, houses with characteristic façades, narrow streets and even an ice skating museum hold great appeal. But there's more. You may have heard of Hindelooper painted furniture and traditional fabrics used for the local costume. The people of this town had a style all of their own, influenced by trading connections with Scandinavia and the Baltic. Feast your eyes on fantastic floral patterns and find out about the town's history and traditions at Atelier Glashouwer or Museum Hindeloopen. Next up is Workum which was once a town of potters famed for their grooved ceramics (clay is readily available around here). At Koch's workshop you can still see them at work. At the town hall get a glimpse of the town's rich history. Inside, visitors can see an original wooden prison cell where tramps, drunkards and criminals were locked up in times of old. Round off the day in historical Makkum, famous for producing Frisian pottery. The Tichelaar factory of tiles and ceramics has been going strong since 1594. To see Frisian pottery we recommend the ceramics museums in Harlingen and Leeuwarden.

Day 5 Makkum - Franeker/Harlingen**48 km**

We will pass the borders of Lake IJssel once again on the way to the next of our eleven towns, Franeker, a small but impressive town. It houses not only the Netherlands' second oldest university, the oldest student bar "Bogt van Guné" but also the country's oldest working planetarium: Eisinga Planetarium. From Franeker it's only a very short ride to Harlingen, smell the briny sea air as you approach this friendly harbour town. As you amble up and down the Wadden Promenade on the sea front, consider what a special place the shallow Wadden Sea is. It is even listed as Unesco World Heritage. At low tide the mudflats and tidal creeks are revealed and shore birds arrive to forage. During a walk through the centre of town you will discover a great number of monumental warehouses, buildings of architectural or historical interest and picturesque canals.

Tip: if you want to spend a day cycling on the Wadden Island of Vlieland or Terschelling, then we can book an extra night in Harlingen for you and a return ferry ticket. In the booking form, please add 1 extra night in Harlingen and the Boat tickets service. In the remarks section, add the name of the island you would like to visit.

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Day 6 Franeke/Harlingen - Dokkum**60 km**

Set off along the coast, with vast polders to your right, and consider how the people of Friesland might have kept their feet dry in a flood before sea dikes were invented. In fact, they built "terps", or raised dwelling mounds, and their churches and (farm)houses perched on top. At Hegebeintum, your first stop of the day, you can see one that has been partly preserved. At nearly nine meters it's the highest terp in Friesland. Today's journey ends in Dokkum. Once upon a time the town was orientated towards the sea to which it had an open connection. It became strategically important and was fortified with defensive earthworks and moats in 1582, the outlines of which can clearly be seen to this day. Later the harbour silted up and the town became land orientated. It has long attracted pilgrims who come to pay homage to St. Boniface, a missionary from England who came to convert pagan Frisians to Christianity. He was murdered here in Dokkum in the year 754. Outside the chapel, there's a well that Boniface was said to have discovered and blessed. The clear water has healing properties or so some say.

Day 7 Dokkum - Leeuwarden**45 km**

Today's scenery is the typically Frisian open, green landscape with water, meadows and cows. The Dokkumer Ee canal (which features prominently in the skating marathon) leads the way to the capital of Friesland. The unassuming bridge at Bartlehiem is most famous perhaps for surviving the crowds of supporters jumping up and down and cheering the skaters on. From here it's only a short stretch to Leeuwarden. Only a total of 26 km for you today, leaving plenty of time to look around this gem of the north. Feel like going shopping for a souvenir? Kleine Kerkstraat is one of the best-loved shopping streets in the country. The town has over six hundred monuments and boasts charming harbours. If it's action you want, climb the Frisian tower of Pisa called Oldenhove. The bronze statue "Us Mem" (meaning Our Mother) is a good place to start exploring.

You can also choose a shorter cycling route today of 27 km.

Day 8 Return home

Today your cycling holiday comes to an end. After enjoying a hearty hotel breakfast, it's time to pack your bags and return home.



Prices, Data, Booking

Starting dates:

Daily from April 1 till September 23.

Please note that there will be large-scale works on the railway near Leeuwarden from Monday 17 June to Tuesday 9 July 2024.

Leeuwarden will then have limited accessibility by train. Check the [NS website](#) for more information.

The price for an extra night in Harlingen is €80,- per person sharing a double room with breakfast included.

The price for an extra night in Harlingen is €125,- per person in single room with breakfast included.

Return boat ticket from/to Terschelling or Vlieland is €55,- per person.

Price pp		€
Double room, breakfast		835.00
Single room, breakfast		1,215.00
Extra night double room, breakfast only		80.00
Rental bike		€
Standard bike		105.00
Child bike		105.00
E-bike		210.00
Extra services		€
Bike Breakdown pass	€ 4.00 x 7	28.00
Child seat	€ 5.00 x 7	35.00
Bike theft insurance	€ 3.00 x 7	21.00
E-bike theft insurance	€ 6.00 x 7	42.00
Extra luggage	€ 5.00 x 7	35.00
Tag-along bike	€ 6.00 x 7	42.00
SGR	per piece	5.00
discount	per piece	-20.00

Starting Point:

Leeuwarden



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.



**Westcord WTC Hotel
Leeuwarden **** (Leeuwarden)**
www.westcordhotels.nl/hotel/wtc-hotel-leeuwarden



Stadsherberg * (Sneek)**
www.stadsherbergsneek.nl/

**Hotel de Vrouwe van Stavoren
*** (Stavoren)**
www.hotel-vrouwevanstavoren.nl

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

Hotel Anna Casparii*
(Harlingen)**
www.caspariigroup.nl

Hotel de ABDIJ ** (Dokkum)**
<https://hoteldeabdijdokkum.nl/>



Practical Info



7 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



Leeuwarden. 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 Leeuwarden departs 2 times per hour. Travel time is about 2/2.5 hours. A single ticket costs approx €27- per person excl. bicycle.

For timetables and tickets, go to www.ns.nl/en. For bus details, how to reach the hotel, check: www.9292.nl/en.

