



Zaanse Schans village



Avalon Sky Deck

NETHERLANDS & BELGIUM CANALS CRUISE

June 3, 2022 - 13 Days

*Cruise on Avalon's Artistry II
With Floriade Expo (held every 10 years)*

Explore the Netherlands and Belgium by ship and canals! Tour the highlights of Amsterdam for 3 days, then board Avalon's ship *Artistry II*. Following various canals, we cruise to Middelburg where you can choose from 4 excursions. Marvel at the artistry and natural beauty of Belgium. In Ghent and Brussels, walk the ancient streets, sample treats at a Belgian chocolate-making workshop, explore by bike, or take a guided tour. In Antwerp, discover centuries of history, experience the Red Star Line Museum where brave emigrants boarded ocean liners for North America long ago, or see the stunning altarpiece by master painter Rubens in the cathedral. Take an architecture tour by bicycle through Rotterdam or create a classic Delft tile in a pottery workshop. Return to Amsterdam and thrill to the spectacular International Floriade Expo of flowers and gardening that is held every 10 years.

Activity Level: 2



TOUR
25

30 Meals Included:

11 breakfasts, 8 lunches, 11 dinners

Fares per person:

\$8,995 twin; \$11,340 single - Category E (window)
\$10,395 twin; \$13,440 single - Category B (French balcony)
\$10,595 twin; \$13,740 single - Category P (French balcony)
Other cruise categories are also available.

Please add 0.3% GST.

Early Bookers:

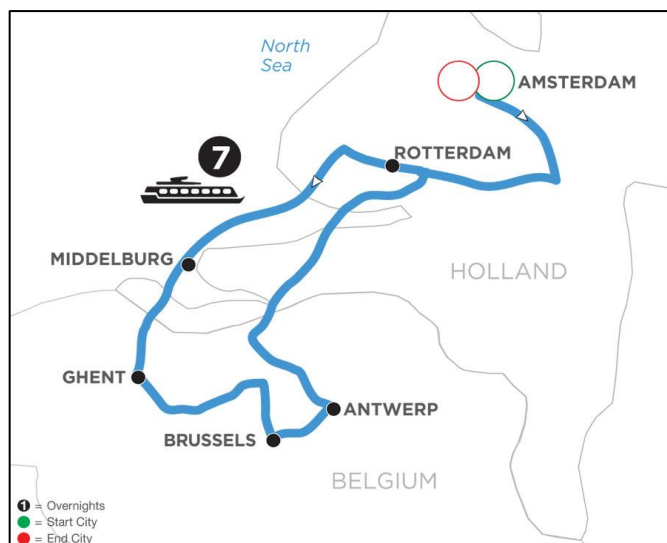
\$300 discount on first 8 seats; \$150 on next 4

Experience Points:

Earn 150 points on this tour.

Redeem 150 points if you book by February 24, 2022.

Departures from: Victoria



ITINERARY

Day 1: Friday, June 3

A transfer is provided to New Westminster. We stay overnight at the Inn at the Quay, overlooking the Fraser River. You may want to take a stroll along Westminster Quay. Meet your fellow travellers from the BC Interior during a get-acquainted dinner. **Note:** While it may seem unnecessary to travel to Vancouver the day before your flight, ferries and flights from Victoria can shut down unexpectedly which would cause a missed international flight.

Meals included: Dinner

Accommodation: Inn at the Quay

Day 2: Saturday, June 4

A transfer is provided to Vancouver Airport and our non-stop flight on KLM to **Amsterdam** departs in early afternoon.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Overnight flight

Day 3: Sunday, June 5

We arrive at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport in the morning and local time is 9 hours ahead. Our Netherlands guide and driver meet us at the airport and we go to the recreated Dutch village, **Zaanse Schans**, dating back to 1850. Wander about the picturesque village, visit a cheese farm, paint mill, and oil mill, and view traditional crafts



Zaanse Schans windmill

of cheese-making and clog-making. Enjoy a traditional Dutch Pancake lunch. Afterwards we travel through the unique landscape of the Beemster Polder to Amsterdam. Our 4-star hotel is located in central Amsterdam and offers a restaurant, indoor pool, fitness centre, and free wi-fi.

Meals included: Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Park Plaza Victoria Hotel

Day 4: Monday, June 6

Amsterdam was founded in the Middle Ages and has many historic buildings. During a guided walking tour, we visit **Dam Square** with the impressive Royal Palace and New Church, the Begijnhof, the floating Flower Market, the canals, and Waterloo Square with its famous market, the Rembrandt House, and Portuguese Synagogue. This afternoon, we go to renowned **Rijksmuseum** which has an exceptional collection of 15th and 17th century paintings by Dutch masters. View Rembrandt's famous *The Night Watch* plus works by Vermeer, Steen, and Hals. The rest of the afternoon is free time, so you can explore Amsterdam sights near the hotel on your own.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Park Plaza Victoria Hotel



Amsterdam canal

Day 5: Tuesday, June 7

During a day tour outside of Amsterdam, we first stop in **Gouda**, the 'City of Cheese', to visit the Old Weigh House with the Cheese Museum and see the intricate stained-glass windows of Saint Jan's Church. At the Dutch Treacle Waffles factory, we enjoy a baking workshop and tasting. Next is Delft, famous for its characteristic Blue



Delft craftsman

Porcelain. At the **Royal Delft factory**, we learn about the history and production process, experience the painters' passion during a demonstration, watch the craftsmen at work, and of course browse in the gift shop. This afternoon, we travel to **The Hague**, capital of the Netherlands. During a guided city tour, we see the Houses of Parliament, the Palace Noordeinde, and Carnegie's Peace Palace, nowadays the International Court of Justice.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: Park Plaza Victoria Hotel

Day 6: Wednesday, June 8

The morning is free time. A transfer is provided to the dock in Amsterdam and we board the beautiful **Avalon Waterways ship, Artistry II**. We settle into our cabins, home for the next seven nights. Meet the captain and crew at a welcome reception, then savour your first succulent meal in the dining room. Take in the tranquil scenes as the ship cruises through canals and waterways south to Middelburg.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner
Accommodation: Avalon Artistry II

Day 7: Thursday, June 9

Middelburg was founded about the turn of the 9th century and is now capital of the province of Zeeland. The inventions of the microscope and telescope are often credited to two Middelburg spectacle-makers. Four tours are offered and you can choose one by signing up on board the ship.

- 1) Take a guided walk through woods and dunes; see Castle Westhove and farmlands of the beautiful North Sea area.

- 2) Join a guided tour of the Delta Works, the largest flood-protection system in the world, and a miracle of modern technology.



- 3) Visit a family-owned Oyster Farm, active in the cultivation of crustaceans and shellfish in the Netherlands since 1906, and savour a taste of oysters and lobster with a glass of wine.

- 4) Join a walking tour through the winding cobblestones and canals of Middelburg. See the 15th century Gothic Town Hall and learn about its important role in the spice trade and Dutch East India trading.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Avalon Artistry II

Day 8: Friday, June 10

Overnight, we cruise across the border from Netherlands into Belgium, and arrive in **Ghent** this morning. Although it is inland from the North Sea, it is a port city connected by canals and also a university city, the largest in the East Flanders province. Choose from three tours here.



- 1) Explore Ghent, "The Diamond of Flanders", with a guided tour of this showcase of medieval Flemish wealth. Visit St. Bavo's Cathedral with its remarkable Flemish artwork.

- 2) Join a guided tour of Graffiti Street where artists create striking spray-can art to their heart's content. You can also become an artist yourself and create your own street art.

- 3) Explore the outskirts of Ghent and lesser-known sights on a guided mountain bike tour.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Avalon Artistry II

Day 9: Saturday, June 11

Brussels is the capital of Belgium and hosts many of the administrative branches of the European Union. Choose from three morning tours:

- 1) Join a guided tour of Brussels, see the Town Hall with its landmark buildings, discover the many local bars, cafés, and shops of the Lower Town streets, and visit the Atomium.

2) Join a Belgian chocolate-making workshop to learn how to create your own delicious candies. Enjoy a cup of the finest hot chocolate while crafting traditional confections of pralines and mendiants from scratch.

3) Take a bike tour to explore Brussels in a fun and eco-friendly way and learn all about its history and culture. Your local guide will show you the must-see sights and some hidden spots.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: *Avalon Artistry II*

Day 10: Sunday, June 12

The *Artistry II* arrives in **Antwerp**, Belgium, via the ship canal from Brussels. Choose from three tours:

1) Take a guided tour of the sophisticated city of Antwerp to visit the central Grote Markt, lined with 16th century guildhall houses, the beautiful city hall, and Cathedral of Our Lady with its stunning altarpiece paintings by Rubens.

2) Visit the Red Star Line Museum. Follow the footsteps of the emigrants, become acquainted with Red Star Line passengers, and accompany them on their trip from their native village via Antwerp to the New World.

3) During a bike tour, discover centuries of history and a story around every corner. There is a unique atmosphere in small neighborhoods and squares.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: *Avalon Artistry II*

Day 11: Monday, June 13

We arrive in **Rotterdam**, Netherlands, Europe's largest seaport. With its location at the mouth of one of the channels of the Rhine, it is sometimes nicknamed "Gateway to Europe". Choose from three tours:

1) The classic guided tour of Rotterdam features the Cube Houses, the unique Erasmus Bridge, and plenty of other fascinating sites.

2) Attend a pottery workshop. In a characteristic painter's room, a professional painter guides you through the process of painting a Delft tile.

3) The bike tour features the architectural highlights of Rotterdam such as the Cube Houses, Market Hall, Erasmus Bridge, the vertical city 'De Rotterdam', and iconic Central Station. In the city centre, admire how historic buildings clash with modern skyscrapers.

Before dinner, a cruise through Rotterdam harbour provides wonderful views of its skyline and waterfront buildings.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: *Avalon Artistry II*



Day 12: Tuesday, June 14

Overnight, the *Artistry II* cruises back to Amsterdam. Transportation is provided to Almere, on the outskirts of Amsterdam. This is the site of the spectacular **Floriade Expo 2022**, an international world exhibition of flowers and gardening that is held every 10 years in the Netherlands. Our farewell dinner is on the ship, docked in Amsterdam.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: *Avalon Artistry II*

Day 13: Wednesday, June 15

We say goodbye to *Avalon Artistry II* and drive to Schiphol Airport. Our flight leaves in late morning, non-stop to Vancouver with arrival at noon. A transfer is arranged to your Victoria pickup point.

Meals included: Breakfast

INTERNATIONAL HORTICULTURAL EXHIBITION FLORIADE 2022

For six months in 2022, Almere, Netherlands, will be on the world stage hosting Floriade Expo 2022, an event held once every 10 years. With 148 acres of land, 40 inspiring country presentations, and a spectacular greenhouse complex, it is with good reason that Floriade Expo is considered one of the world's major horticultural shows. It will be the perfect place to enjoy flowers, plants, vegetables, and fruits in park-like surroundings. The Floriade park will be a celebration of new technologies for greenery, food, energy, and health, researched and implemented at this living laboratory.

Floriade's theme "Growing Green Cities" presents the creative, green, and sustainable solutions required to make this a reality. This theme is more important than ever because, by 2050, some 68% of the global population will live in cities on a mere 2% of the earth's surface area. Floriade's four sub-themes are Greening the City, Feeding the City, Healthyng the City, and Energizing the City. Inspiring gardens and exhibitions will be mixed with impressive attractions, surprising tasting sessions, art, and culture. Naturally, all in wonderful, green surroundings.



Dutch horticulture will present innovations and solutions for sustainable, liveable cities. Visitors will experience horticulture and have their senses stimulated by a huge variety of products. There will be more than just Dutch organizations at Floriade Expo 2022 because about 40 countries will participate. National pavilions will present their own culture, plants, flowers, and innovations to the rest of the world. The arboretum will be an alphabetically organized tree and plant encyclopaedia that you can walk through. An 850-metre cable car link will provide a convenient connection between the southern and northern parts of the Floriade park with an amazing view.

Floriade Expo takes place every 10 years, so the next one will be 2032. Don't miss this spectacular international exposition. Wells Gray Tours is offering only this one tour departure to visit Floriade.

TOUR & CRUISE NOTES

Please book early. Avalon has confirmed a block of staterooms for this tour, but some unsold staterooms may be recalled if the ship is getting full. River cruises are extremely popular and most are sold out long before departure, so you should not delay booking this tour. These cruises in Netherlands and Belgium are expected to be booked solid in 2022 because Floriade Expo is running and does not occur again until 2032. Please book as early as possible.

It is unlikely that we will be able to secure more staterooms after Avalon recalls our unsold rooms.

As an additional incentive, Avalon is offering an early booker discount of \$950 each which is already deducted from your fare, but this will end in fall 2021, then fares will increase \$950.

Documentation: A valid passport is required with sufficient blank pages and must not expire until three months after return date. Visas are not currently required for Netherlands or Belgium.

Gratuities for cruise staff and European guides and drivers are included. Gratuities to your Wells Gray tour director and your driver to/from Vancouver Airport are left to your discretion.

Currency: The Euro is the standard currency in Netherlands and Belgium. You should have Euros for smaller purchases and gratuities. You can order from your bank one or two weeks prior. Credit cards are widely accepted. The currency on board the ship is the Euro. Purchases can be charged to your ship account and paid at the end of the cruise by credit card.

Single fares quoted are for the first 5 singles sold. Fares will increase for additional singles booked.

Triples are not available on this tour.

ON BOARD THE *MV ARTISTRY II*

Our ship, the *Avalon Artistry II*, was launched in 2013 and carries only 128 passengers. The floor to ceiling windows and French balconies on the Royal and Sapphire decks make for bright staterooms, with a contemporary design. With just 64 staterooms and only 4 decks, including the huge open Sky Deck, the experience is intimate yet diverse enough that you can meet people from around the globe. Comfort is essential — dress code is relaxed and casual with just one dressy yet not formal night on the gala final evening. There is a large open-seating dining room, and a spacious lounge with bar that is open all day. Dining is also relaxed with breakfast and lunch buffets, and a nightly four-course dinner with open seating. Complimentary wine, beer and soft drinks are offered with lunch and dinner. All-day coffee service is available, plus there is afternoon tea, social hour in the lounge, open air bistro on the Sky Deck, and Night Fare at 10:30 pm. There is a fitness centre and hair salon on board, and free internet access. Your cruise director keeps you informed about the daily entertainment, the upcoming lectures on ports of call, and various on-board activities to enrich your Netherlands and Belgium experience. Three tours are generally offered at each port and you choose the right one for your activity level. Typically, one tour is on a motorcoach, one is on foot, and one is cycling. Sometimes a paid excursion with more elaborate inclusions is offered, and you can reserve for these 3 months before sailing.

There are five categories of staterooms. Category D and E are on the Indigo or lowest deck with small windows and measure 172 square feet. Categories A and B on Sapphire deck and Category P on Royal deck measure 200 square feet and have floor to ceiling windows and a sliding door to the French balcony. The dining room is on Sapphire deck and the Panorama Lounge and Club Lounge are on Royal deck.

One of the youngest fleets on European rivers today, Avalon is part of the Globus Family and is backed by 80 years of itinerary planning experience. They boast a 98% satisfaction rate among their clientele in post-cruise surveys, an impressive track record. The passion for detail is evident in the design of the ships, from the placement of windows to the comfort of the lounges. Off the ships, the superb land programs help you experience each destination, with guided sightseeing in every port (complete with headsets), engaging port lectures, VIP access into key destinations, no waiting in lines, and great cultural immersion and storytelling thanks to skilled cruise directors and guides.





Activity Level 2: Light activity on the ship and moderate activity during most shore excursions and pre-cruise and post-cruise tours. Due to the historic nature of some attractions, it may be necessary to climb stairs, walk on uneven surfaces such as cobblestone streets, and walk up to a kilometre at an easy pace. There are 3 excursions from the ship most days with different activity levels, so choose one based on your ability. Sometimes the coach cannot drive all the way to an attraction. There is an elevator on the ship that serves all decks except Sky. There can be longer walks in the airports so you should request a cart or wheelchair in advance or at check-in if this could be an issue for you. The coaches cannot carry a scooter or motorized wheelchair. If you are not able to participate in Activity Level 2, Wells Gray Tours recommends that you bring a companion to assist you. The tour director, local guides, drivers, and ship staff have many responsibilities, so please do not expect them, or your fellow travellers, to provide ongoing assistance. Please consider these mobility issues prior to booking this tour. If you are not capable of keeping up with the group or require frequent assistance, the tour director may stop you from participating in some activities or some days. In extreme situations, you may be required to leave the tour and travel home at your own expense; travel insurance will probably not cover you.

TOUR 25 This is a Tour 25 departure, meaning the tour is limited to 25 participants, a more intimate travel experience. Please note that this limitation applies to the pre-cruise and post-cruise land arrangements. There will likely be up to 128 passengers on the ship.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Transportation to/from Vancouver Airport
- 4 nights of hotel accommodation and taxes
- Flight from Vancouver to Amsterdam and return
- Current air transport taxes and fuel surcharges
- Airline luggage fee for 1 suitcase per person
- Coach transportation for 2 days in Netherlands
- English-speaking guide for 3 days in Netherlands
- Zaanse Schans Dutch village
- Guided walking tour of Amsterdam
- Rijksmuseum guided visit
- Old Weigh House with the Cheese Museum
- Saint Jan's Church
- Dutch Treacle Waffles factory with baking workshop and tasting
- Royal Delft Blue Porcelain factory tour
- Guided tour of The Hague
- Transfer from Amsterdam hotel to ship dock
- 7 nights on *Avalon Artistry II* cruising the canals of Netherlands and Belgium
- Cruise gratuities for the ship's crew
- Port charges and cruise taxes
- Choice of 4 tours in Middelburg, Netherlands
- Choice of 3 tours in Ghent, Belgium
- Choice of 3 tours in Brussels, Belgium
- Choice of 3 tours in Antwerp, Belgium
- Choice of 3 tours in Rotterdam, Netherlands
- Transfer from ship to Floriade Expo and return
- One-day admission to Floriade Expo 2022
- Cable car ride across Floriade Park
- Transfer from ship to Amsterdam Airport
- Knowledgeable Wells Gray tour director
- Gratuities for European guides & drivers
- Luggage handling at hotels and ship
- **30 meals:** 11 breakfasts, 8 lunches, 11 dinners

TOUR POLICIES

Payments: A deposit of \$1,000 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due February 24, 2022. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

Discounts: Early bookers receive \$300 discount on first 8 seats and \$150 on next 4 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after February 24, 2022.

Cancellation Policy: Up to January 24, 2022, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$300 per person. From January 25 to February 24, the cancellation charge is \$400 per person. From February 25 to March 24, the cancellation charge is 40% of the tour fare. From March 25 to April 24, the cancellation charge is 80% of tour fare. After April 24, there is no refund.

Fare Changes: As this tour has been planned 13 months in advance, changes to foreign currency exchange rates and taxes, and surcharges from airlines, the cruise ship, and other tour suppliers can occur at any time and are beyond the control of Wells Gray Tours. The flight cannot be booked until July 2021; it is possible that there could be changes to airline or air fares, but it is expected fares will be similar to 2021. For these reasons, Wells Gray Tours reserves the right to increase fares due to such changes up until the time of departure. Hotels named in the itinerary could change, but substitute accommodation will be of similar or better quality.

Travel Insurance: A Comprehensive Insurance policy is available through Wells Gray Tours and coverage is provided by Travel Guard. Policies purchased at deposit include a waiver of the pre-existing condition clause for medical and cancellation claims, otherwise policies can be purchased no later than at final payment. Please contact us for details.

Home pickups may be offered in Greater Victoria, depending on the number of people booked and coach size. Decision is made about 2 weeks before departure and you will be contacted about your pickup point and time.

Photo Credits: Roland Neave (page 1 and 2 photos, Panorama Lounge, Club Lounge, Sky Deck, birthday dinner), Pixabay (Middelburg, Ghent), Floriade Expo 22, Avalon Cruises (page 6 ship)

Experience Points: This tour earns 150 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn Experience Points, or e points. One point equals \$1. Redeem your points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until February 24, 2022.

Consumer Protection BC Licences: Kamloops 178, Vernon 655, Kelowna 588, Penticton 924, Victoria 65842

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