

# Explore North Holland Weekend Break

Welcome to this weekend break full of Dutch classics! Windmills, tulips, cheese and clogs: they all pass by on this journey.

Along the way you will come across the picturesque windmills of Zaanse Schans, the characteristic fishing village of Volendam, the cheese market of Edam, and historic towns such as Hoorn, Medemblik and Enkhuizen. The last day is spent in cheese ville Alkmaar, where you cycle by e-bike through an amazing sand dune landscape. In springtime the agricultural fields in this area change into a colorful patchwork quilt: full of blooming tulips!

You travel by private car and driver, by train, by ferry, by bicycle and even by steam train and historic boat, all in just one weekend: a very diverse trip indeed! The best travel period to see the flowers in full bloom are the months of March, April, and May. In these months flower bulb fields burst into rows of vivid colors: a delight for the eye. Chances to see the most tulips are best in mid-April.

## Trip Itinerary

### FRIDAY - DAY 1: ZAAANSE SCHANS, VOLENDAM, MARKEN, EDAM & HOORN



Today you will explore the beauty of the countryside north of Amsterdam, which boasts many Dutch icons: wooden shoes, fishing, cheese and windmills! Travel to Amsterdam railway station on your own. Your private guide/driver will be waiting there for you and will firstly take you to Zaanse Schans. During the 17th century, over 600 windmills were constructed in the area around the Zaanse Schans, creating the first industrial zone. The windmills were used, among others, to grind spices, produce paint, saw wood, and produce oil. A number of these windmills still exist and can still be visited today. You can see how these wind-powered machines work, inside and out.

Next up is a stop in the ancient village-peninsula of Marken, located at the Markermeer lake. Here you will explore the small village and visit a wooden shoe factory. From Marken a ferry will take you to the famous fishing village of Volendam. Volendam is Holland's best known fishing village, with a harbor full of old fishing ships. Freshwater fishing still goes on on IJsselmeer lake, so stopping for fish at least once is a must during your visit! Volendam is a good place to enjoy, among others, *kibbeling* (traditional battered and fried fish nuggets), eel and herring. The best time for herring is from June on: this is the month in which *Hollandse Nieuwe*, the traditional Dutch soured herring that opens the herring season, hits the market. Naturally, this does not mean that herring is unavailable during the rest of the year. The next stop is the century old cheese market in Edam. Actual cheese markets are only held on Wednesdays in July and August, but the market square and 'waag' itself are very much worth a visit, even without an actual market going on.

From Edam your driver will take you a bit more to the north, to Hoorn, where you will stay overnight. Although Hoorn is nowadays a small and lesser known city, back in the 17th century this harbor town was of utmost importance to the Dutch East India Company. Hoorn flourished like no other from the trade, and reminders of this

rich past can still be seen in the many impressive monuments. The late afternoon/evening is free for you to stroll around in the charming city center and along the harbor with many old warehouses

**Tip:** From mid-June to the end of August a cheese market is being held at the Roode Steen square in Hoorn. Cheese used to be weighed at the magnificent Waag building.

In the evening you can enjoy your dinner in one of the many good restaurants in the center.

### **SATURDAY - DAY 2: HOORN - MEDEMBLIK - ENKHUIZEN - ALKMAAR**



Head to Hoorn's railway station on your own. If you have a little time left, take a look in the adjoining railway museum, which houses some impressive steam locomotives and ancient train carriages. At the railway station you board a real ancient steam train for a trip to Medemblik! On the way you'll pass the tiny railway stations of Wognum, Twisk and Opperdoes, dating from 1887 and painstakingly restored. In springtime you'll be treated to the superb sight of colorful fields of tulips in full bloom. Very Dutch indeed! After about 1 hour and 20 minutes you reach your destination of Medemblik, another historic town bordering the IJsselmeer Lake. You have some time to stroll around the charming town centre and harbor area before you board another impressive means of transportation: museum ship Friesland will make you experience how people traveled around here 100 years ago! In one hour and 15 minutes, this monumental boat dating from 1956 will take you across IJsselmeer Lake. This lake used to be called Zuiderzee (South Sea), with an open connection to the Wadden Sea / North Sea. This sea however, was turned into a lake by the build of the 32km long Afsluitdijk. Nowadays the largest lake in Holland gives many opportunities for watersports. The ship anchors in the harbor of Enkhuzen. Take a quick look around the old city centre before heading to the railway station (only 100m away from the harbor).

Every half an hour a train leaves Enkhuzen for Hoorn. There you change trains and head to Alkmaar. This total train trip takes a little over one hour. A 15 minute walk will take you from the railway station to the historic city centre, where your hotel is located.

Alkmaar is perhaps best known for its cheese market, but it is also home to an interesting selection of museums, cozy terraces, a compact historic city center, and easy access to the beach and sand dunes. The cheese market is held every Friday from April to September plus Tuesday night in July and August. Theatre and tradition mix up in this colorful folkloric spectacle that has been in action since 1365. Porters, loaders, tossers and weighers all have their specific roles and costumes. But even without an actual cheese market going on, the *Waagplein* square is a delight. In The Waag building the cheeses used to be weighed, and it now houses a cheese museum on the second and third floor. You'll arrive to Alkmaar too late to visit the museum though, but the building itself and the square are impressive!

### **SUNDAY DAY 3: ALKMAAR - END**



Another great aspect of Alkmaar is its proximity to the Dutch coast. Today it's time to pack your sunglasses and feel some wind in your hair. We will arrange e-bikes for you to take on a self-guided cycle tour along the flower bulb fields (in season) and the sand dunes between Egmond and Castricum. Of course the North Sea Coast is excellent for making beach walks, and there are some nice beach cafes and pavilions here. Take your time, it's your weekend break after all!

The route is approximately 40 km, mainly flat and almost all the way separated from car traffic. Wind can be strong here, though, so close to the sea, but the e-bike can give you a little extra push. In April and May you can see the flower fields at their best.

Return to Alkmaar by bicycle. If you have some time left, then walk around Alkmaar to explore. Alkmaar is a great small city to stroll around in. You'll see so many lovely canals and historic buildings on the way, but what is easily overlooked are the so-called hofjes. These are small inner courtyards, usually with a communal garden and many front doors opening out to the courtyard. Try and locate *het Hofje van Splinter*, *het Hofje van Paling en Foreest*, and *het Wildemanshofje* on the map. You can enter and have a look, as long as you keep relatively quiet: it might look like an open air museum, but it's a residential area after all.

At the end of the day travel to your home destination by yourself (train not included in price). End of program.

**OPTIONAL EXCURSION:** A guided city walk through Alkmaar with an enthusiastic local guide, showing you all the historic points of interest. You'll learn more of the history, but also the lives of the locals.

**PRICE PER PERSON (with 2 / 4 / 6 people): € 30 / € 21 / € 15**

An additional foodie tour extension and workshop in making the traditional Dutch stroopwafel (caramel cookie) is also possible at a surcharge.

## Trip Details

HOTELS	STANDARD	COMFORT	LUXURY
Hoorn	Hotel de Keizerskroon	Ysbrantz Boutique Hotel (standard room)	Ysbrantz Boutique Hotel (deluxe room)
Alkmaar	College Hotel	Grand Hotel	Wolf Hotel (deluxe suite)

### INCLUDED:

- overnight in hotels on double/twin room
- 2 breakfasts
- information package about route, sights and restaurants
- private day trip with car + driver/guide on day 1
- ferry Marken - Volendam
- historic train Hoorn - Medemblik
- historic boat Medemblik - Enkhuizen
- train ticket Enkhuizen - Alkmaar in 2nd class (standard) or 1st class (comfort and luxury)
- self guided bike excursion on day 3 with e-bike rental + route description

### NOT INCLUDED:

- travel to Amsterdam on day 1 and from Alkmaar on day 3
- all other meals and items not mentioned above
- optional excursions
- tourist tax (around € 5 pp)

PRICES LOW SEASON*	STANDARD	COMFORT	LUXURY



Explore the best of Holland away from the crowds

[info@beatthedutch.travel](mailto:info@beatthedutch.travel)

Price per person based on <b>2 persons</b> 1 double/twin room	€ 435,-	€ 490,-	€ 520,-
Price per person based on <b>3 persons</b> in 1 single and 1 double/twin room	€ 440,-	€ 505,-	€ 545,-
Price per person based on <b>4 persons</b> in 2 double/twin rooms	€ 360,-	€ 415,-	€ 445,-
Price per person based on <b>5 persons</b> in 2 double/twin rooms and 1 single room	€ 365,-	€ 425,-	€ 460,-
Price per person based on <b>6 persons</b> in 3 double/twin rooms	€ 325,-	€ 380,-	€ 410,-

\* Prices are per person, in EURO, and are subject to availability; this is only an offer and no reservations have been confirmed. Low season is february-june 2021 and september-november 2021

<b>PRICES HIGH SEASON**</b>	STANDARD	COMFORT	LUXURY
Price per person based on <b>1 person</b> in 1 single room	€ 760,-	€ 925,-	€ 940,-
Price per person based on <b>2 persons</b> 1 double/twin room	€ 455,-	€ 535,-	€ 585,-
Price per person based on <b>3 persons</b> in 1 single and 1 double/twin room	€ 460,-	€ 565,-	€ 615,-
Price per person based on <b>4 persons</b> in 2 double/twin rooms	€ 380,-	€ 460,-	€ 510,-
Price per person based on <b>5 persons</b> in 2 double/twin rooms and 1 single room	€ 380,-	€ 480,-	€ 535,-
Price per person based on <b>6 persons</b> in 3 double/twin rooms	€ 345,-	€ 425,-	€ 475,-

\*\* Prices are per person, in EURO, and are subject to availability; this is only an offer and no reservations have been confirmed. High season is july-august 2021 and december 2021

**Book this weekend**