

DANCE ON THE WATER

RHINE RHAPSODY 2017

JULY 3-17, 2017

Day 01 - Monday July 3 - Amsterdam

(D included)

Arrival in Amsterdam! Each person is responsible for their transport from the airport to the hotel. After arrival **Maurits van Geel** will greet us to be our guide for the Dutch non-cruise part of our tour.

It is only a short drive to reach our *Hotel Ibis Amsterdam Centre Stopera* [or similar] in Amsterdam city center, located 10 to 15-minute walk from Dam Square, Rembrandt Square and the Central Train Station. (Information how to get there from the airport by public transportation will be sent separately.)

It has a 24 hour drink and snack service and a spacious courtyard where guests can sit during summer. The hotel rooms have air conditioning and flat-screen TVs. An all-you-can-eat hot and cold breakfast buffet is served in the morning, as is a special Late Riser breakfast between 11 am and 12 pm.

There are trams and buses available in the direct surrounding and the nearby metro station brings you to Central Train Station in 2 stops. Various restaurants, bars and shops are in the area as well.



For those arriving in time, there will be a lunch (not included) followed by a city walk. Famous spots as the Amsterdam Opera building, located near the flea market and with its view on the so-called ‘Skinny Bridge’ as well as a stroll over the floating flower market will be included in the tour.

Amsterdam is also famous for its centuries-old diamond cutting industry. We will walk to *Gassan Diamonds* to have a 40 minute tour in which visitors get to know everything about carats, colors, clarity, the unique *Amsterdam cut* and also something about the history of this Amsterdam craft. You can even select your own diamond and have it made into a ring, pendant or earrings.

After all these impressions we will return to our hotel which is very close to Gassan Diamonds and have a rest before dinner.

Amsterdam is best explored by bike, on foot or by boat. Therefore we will walk to the *Haesje Claes* restaurant. This is a typical and authentic Amsterdam restaurant, located in an historical building. The

interior consists of pictures, mirrors, famous Delft tiles, glass lead windows, astonishing art work, gold leather wallpaper and oak wood paneling, each telling their own story.

At the restaurant we will have our orientation briefing, receive name badges and make introductions.

Back home on foot or by public transportation.

Day 02 - Tuesday July 4 - Amsterdam (B, D)

After a relaxed breakfast we will depart at 9.30 to visit Muiden , a small town with a lively harbor. The town was in the historical record by 777, and received its city charter in 1122, but it is best known for its historic *Muiderslot castle*. This is the most beautiful and best kept medieval castle of Holland and located only 15 minutes from Amsterdam. We will have a guided tour to quarters that are not freely accessible to the public, and we'll have a chance to explore the castle and its surrounding gardens ourselves. You might even want to browse around in the adjacent harbor or have a coffee at the castle's cafe.

Around noon we will return to our hotel. There will be no lunch provided, to allow you to find a nice little restaurant of your own choice and to offer you the full benefit of a free afternoon.

Another opportunity to visit a museum (**optional** visit to **Van Gogh Museum** available), or stroll around in Amsterdam, enjoy a drink at one of the numerous cafés or to go shopping.



We will meet again in the city center at Dam Square to have dinner at *Humphrey's*. It might not be typical Dutch cuisine, but it is very popular among the Dutch for its quality food. A bus will pick us up after dinner to have our evening dance led by Marija Hillis, with a few guest teaches by Maurits van Geel and will bring us back to the hotel.

Day 03 - Wednesday July 5 - Amsterdam (B, L)

Today we will leave at 8.30 to travel north of Amsterdam. This gives us the opportunity to pass the large inner sea located in the center of the country, called the *IJsselmeer*.

The 'national' Dutch costume with its pointy lace cap is known in many countries of the world, but in fact this is not at all truthful. It is only worn in the village of *Volendam*, where we will have lunch today.

Before reaching *Volendam* we will visit *Marken* peninsula and village. Although it is not far from *Volendam*, *Marken* has long been an island and the population made its living by fishing.

Because of its remote location, the locals wore their own local 'costumes.' Nowadays only elder women still wear the traditional dress.

Walking through Marken we can see the characteristic building style exclusive for this tiny village. Before we will cross the IJsselmeer by boat to Volendam, it is recommended to try local fish delicacies such as the famous Dutch (raw!) herring, smoked eel or baked cod at fish stalls at the harbor. You will also have plenty of chance to buy nice souvenirs in Marken.

In less than half an hour we will reach Volendam. Nowadays it is extremely crowded in tourist season. We will have lunch at *Hotel Spaander*, an historic hotel dating back to 1881 which has a truly authentic Dutch feel to it. The hotel's famous restaurant offers a delightful menu featuring Volendam and Dutch specialties, while being served by waitresses in traditional Volendam costume.



After lunch the bus will bring us back to Amsterdam where you will have free time.

This would be a chance to visit the world famous **Rijksmuseum** with Rembrandt's paintings (**optional** visit available). There is no dinner provided tonight.

In the evening a bus will pick us up at 8.15 p.m. at the hotel to have an evening dance with Marija and Maurits again.

Day 04 - Thursday July 6 - Amsterdam

(B, L, D)

At 9.00 our bus will depart to *Giethoorn*, nicknamed *Venice of the north*.

This scenic village was founded around 1230. The first inhabitants found a great man horns of wild goats there, which had probably died in the flood of St. Elizabeth in 1170. They called their settlement "Geytenhorn" (horn of goats), which still later became Giethoorn.

The village is the result of peat cutting. Because of the cutting, ponds and lakes were created, and waterways and canals were dug to transport the peat.

Many houses have, as it were, been built on little islands which can only be reached over the bridges that are characteristic of Giethoorn.



Around 10.00 we will have a guided boat tour in Giethoorn and time for a coffee (not included).

After our visit to this scenic village we will drive in about half an hour to another scenic village with entirely different style buildings. The farms in this village have bright green and blue painted window frames and doors and very typical ornamentation of the houses.

Staphorst is known for its very conservative and extremely religious community which has its own local traditions and costume. We will visit an old farmhouse which has been converted into a small museum and Maurits will give us a guided tour.

A local lady will tell us about the history of the Staphorst's costume and we will have lunch at the museum.

After a short drive we will arrive at the house of Tineke and Maurits van Geel. The farmhouse dating from 1810 has been converted into a comfortable house. Don't be surprised to find that they actually live in the stable! We will spend a relaxing afternoon together and will be offered a display of Dutch costumes from their private collection.

A catered dinner will be provided at the van Geel home. Before we return to our hotel at 8.00 p.m., we will say farewell to Maurits, who will not join us back in Amsterdam.

Day 05 – Friday July 7 – Amsterdam - *EMBARKATION* after 3 pm (B, D)

After breakfast, check out of your hotel and enjoy a half day city tour of Amsterdam including Dam square, Central Station, the Westerchurch, Anne Frank house and other attractions, with a lunch stop on the way. End the tour in port and board your floating hotel, the *M/S Bellejour*. Evening canal cruise after dinner.

Day 06 – Saturday July 8 – Amsterdam - Set sail 13:00 (B, L, D)

After breakfast depart on a half day excursion to view the famous windmills of Zaanse Schans! Enjoy an exciting guided walking tour and visit the paint-mills, oil-mills and saw-mills, plus view a range of traditional crafts, cheese and clog-making, pewter works and Delft blue pottery painting! Return to the ship and set sail during lunch. A **Welcome cocktail and presentation of the Captain and the crew** will precede dinner.

Day 07- Sunday July 9 – Cologne- 13:00-22:00 *CRUISE* (B, L, D)

WELCOME TO GERMANY! Morning at sail. Afternoon bus/walking tour will include the Hay Market, Festival Halls, Town Hall, Jewish Baths, Old Market, and **the Dom**, the remarkable Gothic cathedral whose construction began in 1248 and was only completed in 1880!

Day 08 - Monday July 10 - Cochem - 13:00-22:00 - Reichsburg Castle *CRUISE* (B,L,D)

Morning free. In the afternoon tour the breathtaking Reichsburg Castle, perched 100 meters over the Moselle River! Tour various Castle chambers, each one with its own story, and end the day exploring Cochem and its beautiful town center.



Day 09 - Tuesday July 11 - Rudesheim 12:00-23:00 Wine Tasting *CRUISE* (B, L, D)

Embark on a mini train ride which will take you through the idyllic vineyards until you reach the heart of the town where you will visit the famous **Mechanical Musical Museum** featuring over 350 self-playing instruments, followed by wine tasting at a local winery.

Day 10 - Wednesday July 12 - Speyer 12:00-20:00 *CRUISE* (B, L, D)

The morning is free to take the **optional** Heidelberg Castle Tour or enjoy the passing countryside. In the afternoon tour Speyer, one of Germany's oldest cities, highlighted by UNESCO's Romanesque Cathedral and the burial site of 8 Emperors including some from Roman times.



Day 11 - Thursday July 13 - Stasbourg 08:00-18:00 City Tour *CRUISE* (B, L, D)

WELCOME TO FRANCE! Your sightseeing of this UNESCO's World Heritage site will begin with a bus tour that will include the Place de la Republique, Orangerie, EU Parliament, and Cathédrale de Nôtre

Dame. This will be followed by a boat tour offering unique views of half timbered houses and impressive European institutions. This evening enjoy the **Captain's Farewell Dinner!**

Day 12 - Friday July 14 - Basel - Lucerne - Zurich- **DISEMBARK** (B,L)

Disembark at 9:00 a.m. and depart for the beautiful alpine city of Lucerne! After **touring the Old Town** enjoy some free time for browsing and lunch at the famous Stadtkeller Restaurant with music and Swiss traditional cuisine. Then, continue on to Zurich where you will enjoy a short **tour** of the medieval Old Town, the Bahnhofstrasse, St Peter's Church and Lake Zurich. End the day at your Zurich hotel. Dinner is on your own.

Day 13 - Saturday July 15 - Zurich (B)

Free day - study your guide books!

Day 14 - Sunday July 16 - Zurich (B)

Free day!

Day 15 - Monday July 17 - Zurich - Home (B)

After a final breakfast, hotel check-out.

INCLUDED FEATURES:

- **4 nights at a hotel in Amsterdam with breakfast (*Ibis* or similar)**
- **3 nights at a first class hotel in Zurich with breakfast (*Ramada* or similar)**
- **7 nights/8 days aboard the 5* "*Bellejour*" in cabin categories of your choice.**
- **A total of 28 meals (14 breakfasts, 7 lunches, 7 dinners), with free wine/beer/sodas for lunch and dinner daily, while on board the cruise. Additional meals provided in Amsterdam, per this Itinerary.**
- **Captain's Welcome cocktail and Farwell dinner on the cruise**
- **A total of 4 Amsterdam tours and 10 sightseeing tours and excursions on the cruise INCLUDED**
- **Live piano music in the evenings & other entertainment during the sailing**
- **English speaking Cruise Director and local guides throughout. (on the cruise)**

NOT INCLUDED

- **International airfare**
- **Arrival/departure transfers**
- **Meals and sightseeing other than specified daily (B, L and/or D)**
- **Costs of a personal nature including liquor, laundry, telephone, souvenirs etc.**
- **TIPS to land guides/drivers and ship crew - suggested amounts will be advised**
- **Travel Insurance (recommended)**