Cruise Details

Name:	Waterways of the Netherlands and Belgium
Reference:	EMERALDENAA200327-1
Operator:	Emerald Cruises
Cruise Type:	River
Cruise Rating:	Luxury
Ship:	Emerald Sun
Regions:	Dutch Waterways
Departs On:	20 Mar 27
Departs From:	Amsterdam
Arrives On:	30 Mar 27
Arrives At:	Amsterdam
Cruise Nights:	10
Total Vacation Days:	11

Itinerary

Day 1: Amsterdam (Netherlands)

Fly from the UK for the start of your cruise. Welcome to the Netherlands. Upon arrival, you'll be met at the airport by a member of our friendly greetings team and then transferred to your contemporary Emerald Star-Ship. This evening, meet your fellow guests and enjoy your first dinner on board.

Arrives On: 20 Mar 27

Day 2: Amsterdam (Netherlands)

Beyond Amsterdam's storied canals, a gentler rhythm unfolds as you venture into the Dutch countryside, where emerald-green pastures, mirror-like waterways and centuries-old windmills paint an impossibly picturesque scene. From the celebrated Zaanse Schans, where artisan workshops and working mills evoke the Dutch Golden Age, to charming towns like Alkmaar, famed for its historic cheese-making traditions, discover how the Dutch have shaped their landscape for

generations. Included Excursion
Zaanse Schans – from tradition to innovation
Your first stop is the nearby neighbourhood of Zaanse Schans, a picturesque open-museum and recreation of a traditional Dutch village from the 18th century. Stroll among the quintessential windmills and wooden houses reflected in canals and artisan workshops, then learn how this historically significant village helped power the Netherlands' transformation into an industrial leader.

From cheese-making and wooden clog-carving to early manufacturing innovations, Zaanse Schans village presents a unique blend of traditional heritage and progress. Your guided morning tour offers a fascinating perspective on Dutch culture – past, present, and future – from the old sailboats exhibited at the museum and preservation methods to the historic windmills used in various industries. DiscoverMORE
Alkmaar cheese market & tasting (extra expense)
Step outside of Amsterdam to visit the charming town of Alkmaar. It is a must-visit destination for travellers seeking an authentic Dutch experience where you can discover rich history, vibrant culture, and picturesque landscapes. Explore its historic cheese market, which has been a city tradition since 1365. Cheese is a significant trade product of the city of Alkmaar, and you will learn more about it on your visit today.
Activity level: Moderate, Duration: 3 hours

Arrives On: 21 Mar 27

Day 3: Veere (Netherlands)

Veere is a storybook harbour town on the Veerse Meer, where cobbled lanes and gabled merchants' houses gather around a tranquil marina. Once a bustling trading port, it now feels quietly exclusive, with historic quaysides, boutique shops, and waterside cafés framed by the graceful tower of the Grote Kerk. Included Excursion
Guided tour of the Delta Works
Today, your included tour takes you to the world-famous Delta Works: a modern marvel derived from centuries of resilience, and a prime example of how the Dutch have mastered their eternal battle with the sea. With its impressive system of dams, sluices and barriers to ensure the land is protected from the encroaching waters, the Delta Works ranks as one of the most ambitious flood defence projects ever built.

This guided tour offers a marvellous opportunity to learn about the history of water management pioneered by the Dutch, from windmill-powered drainage to cutting-edge engineering that protects millions today and how necessity has shaped change and development. EmeraldACTIVE
Guided e-bike tour of Veere
Alternatively, embark on an EmeraldACTIVE guided e-bike tour through the charming town of Veere, following quiet paths along the dykes as you admire the pristine scenery and untouched countryside that unfolds around you.

Arrives On: 22 Mar 27

Day 4: Willemstad (Netherlands)

Willemstad is a jewel of Dutch fortress history, its star-shaped bastions still enclosing a compact old town on the shores of the Hollands Diep. Cobblestone streets, stepped-gable houses, and a snug yacht-filled harbour give it an intimate, village-like charm, with waterside cafés and a traditional windmill completing the scene.

This afternoon, you'll arrive in Dordrecht, the oldest city in the Netherlands and of strategic importance in Dutch history. Once a thriving trading hub with its network of canals and vital connections to other ports, Dordrecht's affluence originates from its formidable maritime past. During your canal tour of Dordrecht, explore the winding waterways and tranquil quays, admiring the historic warehouses and gabled houses that evoke tales of maritime power and prosperity. Included Excursion
Canal tour of Dordrecht, the Venice of Holland
During your canal tour of Dordrecht, known as the 'Venice of Holland,' explore the winding waterways and tranquil quays and admire the historic warehouses and gabled houses – evoking tales of maritime power and prosperity. EmeraldACTIVE
Guided e-bike tour of Willemstad
In picturesque Willemstad, pedal along the quaint canals, historic ramparts, and charming streets lined with classic Dutch architecture.

Arrives On: 23 Mar 27

Day 4: Dordrecht (Netherlands)

Arrives On: 23 Mar 27

Day 5: Rotterdam (Netherlands)

Rotterdam is the Netherlands' bold, contemporary port city, where cutting-edge architecture and sweeping river views set a dramatic scene. Iconic structures like the Erasmus Bridge and cube houses rise above a lively waterfront of repurposed docks, creative districts, and buzzing cafés, giving the city a distinctly modern, urban energy. EmeraldPLUS
Visit to the World's First Floating Farm
Visit the world's first floating farm in Rotterdam, anchored in the Merwehaven Harbour. Established as recently as 2019, the Floating Farm Rotterdam is no mere dairy farm, but a pioneering vision of urban food resilience and a model of smart design, climate adaptive living and sustainable agriculture.

On this fascinating included tour, learn about the floating farm's circular food system and eco-technology in action, along with the water-resilient build and open design. Currently, there are around 40 resident cows who produce up to 320,000 litres (84,535 gallons) of milk annually and dairy products, such as yoghurt, cheese and butter, all processed on site.

Arrives On: 24 Mar 27

Day 6: Rotterdam (Netherlands)

The Hague is a refined coastal city where grand avenues, royal residences, and elegant squares meet long, sandy North Sea beaches. Tree-lined parks, shady boulevards, and peaceful woodlands soften the urban landscape, giving the city a relaxed, livable feel. Historic landmarks such as the Binnenhof parliament complex sit alongside world-class museums and contemporary districts, creating a sophisticated atmosphere that feels distinctly different from nearby Rotterdam. Included Excursion
The Hague - the ‘green city by the sea’
Today, your included morning tour uncovers a surprising side to The Hague. Besides its world-wide status as the seat of the Dutch government and UN International Court of Justice, The Hague is also renowned as one of the Netherland’s greenest cities, home to green parks, forests and a beautiful coastline.

The Hague has a growing reputation for its progressive urban lifestyle that extends to eco-friendly roofs, energy-efficient buildings and one of Europe’s most extensive bicycle path networks. Residents who live in this ‘green city by the sea’ enjoy a high quality of life with clean air and smart urban design, especially as The Hague is actively working towards a climate-neutral future – part of the European mission ‘100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030.’ DiscoverMORE
Visit to Royal Delft pottery factory (extra expense)
In the afternoon, you can join our optional DiscoverMORE program, with a visit to the world- famous Royal Delft pottery factory, learning all about one of the most popular types of earthenware in the Netherlands, Delft pottery. Royal Delft has been producing the renowned Delft blue pottery since 1653 and stands as the only remaining 17th century Delft pottery factory. Here, local master painters still decorate the exquisite pieces in the traditional manner – which dates back to the 1500s. Enjoy a guided tour of the factory, including a visit to the showroom and an inspiring painting demonstration.Activity level: EasyDuration: 4 hours

Arrives On: 25 Mar 27

Day 6: The Hague (Netherlands)

Arrives On: 25 Mar 27

Day 7: Liège (Belgium)

Welcome to Liège, a vibrant city along the Meuse River in Belgium’s French-speaking Wallonia region. Here, grand squares, ornate churches, and atmospheric streets meet a youthful cultural scene, with galleries, bars, and cafés tucked into former industrial quarters. The result is a lively, characterful city that feels both historic and intriguingly contemporary. EmeraldPLUS
Liège tour with waffle tasting
This morning, embark on a guided tour of this delightful city, celebrated for its rich heritage and culture. Strolling along the quaint streets and alleys of the historic Old Town, you’ll pass numerous landmarks dating back to the medieval era, as well as ornate churches and atmospheric squares, such as Place Saint-Lambert.

You will also learn more about

Liège’s storied industrial heritage. Once one of the most important river ports in western Europe, Liège was a powerhouse during the Industrial Revolution; these days, it’s a major hub for technology and engineering, in part, due to its esteemed university.

En-route, as part of your immersive experience, you’ll stop and savour a tasting of one of Belgium’s most beloved treats and the city’s delicious speciality, the Liège waffle – an authentic local taste. EmeraldACTIVE
Active walk in Liège
For those seeking an energised perspective on the city, join a guided walk through Liège. Along the way, your local guide will reveal hidden viewpoints, remarkable architecture, and everyday city life, bringing Liège’s rich history and modern spirit to life on foot.

Arrives On: 26 Mar 27

Day 8: Antwerp (Belgium)

The Belgian port city of Antwerp is world-famous for its centuries-old Diamond District and distinctive Flemish Renaissance architecture. Antwerp is a stylish riverside city where centuries of trade and creativity have shaped a distinctly polished character. Gothic towers rise above intimate squares, while handsome townhouses hide cutting-edge fashion boutiques, design studios, and cosy cafés. Along the Scheldt, former docklands now host striking contemporary museums and waterfront promenades, giving Antwerp a confident blend of old-world charm and modern flair. Included Excursion
Visit to Antwerp’s Green Oasis
On today’s included walking tour, you’ll have the chance to explore another of the city’s gems – a unique urban oasis known as PAKT, hidden away in the heart of the city. More than just a green space, PAKT is a bold example of urban living where Antwerp breathes, thrives and progresses. The focus of this tour is seeing how community, creativity and sustainability seamlessly come together. Once a cluster of old warehouses, this revitalised space is now home to rooftop farms and greenhouses, organic gardens, and eco-conscious venues. Meet passionate locals and entrepreneurs who share their vision for the forward-thinking PAKT project and reintroducing nature back into the city – a remarkable regeneration of Antwerp. DiscoverMORE
Excursion to Bruges (extra expense)
Known for its canals, cobblestone streets, and well-preserved historic architecture, Bruges is a picturesque medieval gem worth a visit. On this full-day tour, your expert guides help you delve deeper into the history of Gothic landmarks, bell towers, and basilicas. If you wish to experience the culinary scene in your free time, try the city's famous chocolate, fries, and beer.
Activity level: Active, Duration: 9 hours

Arrives On: 27 Mar 27

Day 9: Brussel (Bruxelles) (Belgium)

Welcome to Brussels, Belgium’s capital of contrasts, where ornate townhouses and Art Nouveau façades sit beside sleek EU institutions and modern street art. At its heart lies the opulent

Grand-Place, ringed with richly decorated guildhalls and the Town Hall, while nearby lanes tempt with chocolatiers, waffle stands, and intimate cafés. Iconic sights like the Atomium and Manneken Pis add a playful note, rounding out a city that feels both historic and distinctly contemporary.

Your afternoon can be spent at leisure exploring Brussels, or you can join one of two optional DiscoverMORE programs, which showcase the authentic – and world-famous – flavours of Belgium: a chocolate-making workshop or a Belgian beer tasting. Included Excursion
Brussels behind the scenes
Enjoy an insider's walking tour of the Belgian capital, venturing behind the scenes and its more familiar façade. Discover backstreet alleyways, hidden courtyards and creative neighbourhoods that reveal another dimension to the city. En route, discover Brussels' deep roots to caricature and comic art – from rebellious 19th-century satire to its world-famous comic strip murals featuring Tintin, Spirou and many more.

Enjoy the charms of the big city but off the beaten track, with hidden artisan chocolate shops selling world-renowned Belgian chocolates and vibrant local street art. Your knowledgeable guide will captivate you with insider tales of art, heritage and social intrigue that have long walked hand in hand in this city of contrasts. EmeraldPLUS
Caricature artist on board
On board your Emerald Star-Ship, gain insight into the whimsical world of caricature drawing during an interactive EmeraldPLUS experience led by a renowned Belgian artist celebrated for his playful portraits of famous figures. You'll be invited into his creative process, where he'll share personal stories, artistic influences, and the journey that led him to a life of caricature. As he brings faces to life with just a few expressive lines, you'll learn what to observe in a subject, how to exaggerate features with charm, and the key steps to building a caricature from sketch to character. This is a rare opportunity to engage with one of Belgium's most distinctive artistic voices in an experience that's as inspiring as it is entertaining. DiscoverMORE
Chocolate-making workshop (extra expense)
Roll up your sleeves and dive into the delicious world of Belgian chocolate at the Belgian Chocolate Workshop! Under the guidance of local chocolatiers, you'll learn key techniques, including tempering and moulding, and create a variety of chocolates such as pralines, truffles and mendiants. You'll even get to take home your own handmade creations. Along the way, you'll discover fascinating facts about cocoa and Belgian chocolate tradition, enjoy tastings and experience Brussels' sweet culture in a fun, hands-on setting.
Activity level: Active, Duration: 2 hours DiscoverMORE
Belgian Beer Tasting (extra expense)
Explore the heart of Brussels' craft beer scene with an exclusive visit to a top local brewery, where you'll dive into the brewing process, taste a selection of fresh, expertly crafted beers, and learn about Belgium's rich beer heritage from an expert guide—perfect for beer lovers looking to savour the best of Brussels in a fun and immersive way.
Activity level: Easy, Duration: 3 hours

Arrives On: 28 Mar 27

Day 10: Amsterdam (Netherlands)

Nestled along the River Zaan, Zaandam offers a gentle, small-town contrast to nearby Amsterdam, while remaining deeply connected to the country’s historic heart. Traditional green timber houses, historic warehouses and old shipyards whisper of centuries of industry and trade, even as you wander past contemporary buildings and stylish boutiques. Here, waterways and windmills still frame everyday life, so every stroll feels like a quiet step back into Holland’s storied past. Included Excursion
Layers of a Living City
Discover an alternative side of Amsterdam and its creative scene. On this fascinating guided tour, you’ll discover how this historic canal city is building a brighter, cleaner future, transforming its identity through creativity, social conscience and a wave of green initiatives. As Amsterdam shifts its gaze from a storied past to bold new possibilities, you’ll see how local communities are driving real change. Witness first-hand how the city is leading in innovation and sustainable urban living, from solar-powered architecture and circular design hubs to floating neighbourhoods and rooftop farms. EmeraldACTIVE
Guided e-bike tour to Waterland
Alternatively, join an EmeraldACTIVE guided e-bike tour to Waterland on the outskirts of Amsterdam, cycling past quintessential Dutch villages and windmills and fields bursting with colour.

Arrives On: 29 Mar 27

Day 11: Amsterdam (Netherlands)

This morning, after breakfast, it’s time to bid farewell to your fellow guests, crew and Emerald Star-Ship, leaving with exceptional memories of regional culinary flavours and inspiring local encounters.Transfer to the airport for your return flight to the UK Due to new restrictions on cruise ships at Amsterdam’s city docks, your cruise is now likely to embark and/or disembark at a port outside central Amsterdam. If your ship does not have a central Amsterdam docking, Emerald Cruises will provide a central Amsterdam meeting point and transfers to your ship as required. These changes are required by local authorities and are in line with our booking terms which allow changes to berthing or dock locations and ports where operationally necessary. You will be advised of the confirmed docking location prior to departure. This itinerary is a guide only and may be amended for operational reasons such as high and low water. As such, the cruise may operate altered from that stated above. Please refer to our terms and conditions for further information.

Arrives On: 30 Mar 27

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