Cruise Details

Name:	Heart of Belgium & Holland - Northbound
Reference:	TAUCKQHX202706102027
Operator:	Tauck
Cruise Type:	River
Cruise Rating:	Luxury
Ship:	MS Grace
Regions:	Dutch Waterways
Departs On:	06 Oct 27
Departs From:	Brussel (Bruxelles)
Arrives On:	13 Oct 27
Arrives At:	Amsterdam
Cruise Nights:	7
Total Vacation Days:	8

Itinerary

Day 1: Brussel (Bruxelles) (Belgium)

Tour begins: 4:00 PM. A transfer is included from Brussels Airport or train station to your riverboat; check-in time is 4:00 PM. Join us aboard your riverboat for a welcome reception and Captain's toast followed by dinner.

Arrives On: 06 Oct 27

Day 2: Antwerp (Belgium)

Spend the morning getting to know Brussels, with a choice of two very different looks at the Belgian capital. A coach and walking tour takes in the city's landmark architecture and historic squares, with a local guide adding stories of Brussels past and present. Or explore the city through its remarkable Art Nouveau heritage, combining a guided drive and walk with a visit to the Horta Museum, the former home and studio of architect Victor Horta (the Van Buuren Museum is visited if the Horta Museum is unavailable). Then the afternoon is yours: return to the riverboat for lunch,

or stay in Brussels to explore as you wish – perhaps take in UNESCO-designated Grand-Place and the Galeries Royales Saint-Hubert, elegant 19th-century covered arcades distinguished by a soaring glass-vaulted roof, graceful arched façades, cafés, chocolatiers, and theaters; seek out some of the city's colorful comic-strip murals; or settle in with a Belgian chocolate, waffle, or beer. A shuttle returns you to the riverboat by mid-afternoon, before it sets sail for Antwerp, arriving later this evening.

Arrives On: 07 Oct 27

Day 3: Brugge (Bruges) (Belgium)

Belgium's largest port city, Antwerp has long been a magnet for art lovers and diamond traders. It was of Europe's most important – and one of its richest – cities in the mid-16th century when merchants traded sugar and diamonds here. Golden Age artists Peter Paul Rubens, Anthony Van Dyck and Frans Snyders called Antwerp home in the 17th century and Renaissance monuments and a still unfinished 13th-century cathedral enrich the variety of architectural styles that grace its medieval heart. Join a local guide on a walking tour that explores the historic gems of this lively town, from bustling Grote Market to medieval guild houses, baroque churches, UNESCO World Heritage Sites and atmospheric squares. Following a morning of exploration in Antwerp proper and lunch aboard your ship, you'll be met with a choice of excursions this afternoon! One option offers you a visit to the newly renovated and recently reopened Royal Museum of Fine Arts for a look at its impressive collection of art from the 14th through the 20th century, with an impressive hall dedicated to the art of its native son, Pieter Paul Rubens. Another takes you on brewery tour across the city highlighted with tastings of the city's famous Belgian beers at local establishments. Your final choice offers you additional time to spend the afternoon exploring as you wish in Antwerp. Cocktails and dinner are at leisure tonight onboard ship.

Arrives On: 08 Oct 27

Day 4: Brugge (Bruges) (Belgium)

You're off on a choice of excursions this morning. One brings you to flemish city of Bruges, known as "the Venice of the North," for its canals and tiny medieval streets; have lunch in town. On your walking tour in cobblestoned, fairy tale-like Bruges, you'll feel like you've walked into a painting by Jan Van Eyck, who captured life in the city during its heyday in the 15th century. The hike up the stairs of the medieval bell tower is well worth the effort; you'll be rewarded with wonderful panoramic views. The other choice brings you to another flemish city, Ghent, for a walking tour through its Old Town; the pedestrian-friendly cobblestoned town center feels like an outdoor museum of early Flemish architecture. Think about climbing to the top of the 14th-century belfry, crowned with a dragon, for the view – Ghent laid out before you is a visual feast of castles, churches, and historic merchants' houses. Be sure to try the local specialty, Ghent noses, a traditional raspberry candy sold at stands on the street – or a warm waffle with sugar or honey.

Have cocktails and dinner onboard as your riverboat charts a course towards Gorinchem.

Arrives On: 09 Oct 27

Day 5: Gorinchem (Netherlands)

Voted "the most beautiful fortified town in the Netherlands," Gorinchem was founded in 1,000 AD, fortified in the 13th and 14th centuries, and today boasts the largest fully intact fort in the Netherlands. A quintessentially Dutch town with flowers and windmills, it is surrounded by green polders with grazing cows. The city was originally part of the Dutch Waterline of defense and the historic city center is still a well preserved walled fortress. This morning, depart by water taxi to the water castle of Slot Loevestein, where your arrival is greeted by a choice of activties. Choose from either a guided tour of the premises - learning about the castle's rich and longstanding history, an archery lesson, a Djembe workshop (a large drum played with bare hands) or a fencing lesson. Lunch is back aboard the ship as you'll enjoy an afternoon of cruising en route to your next destination - Rotterdam. Tonight, join us for an after-hours to the Mauritshuis, home to many incredible Dutch Golden Age paintings from the likes of Vermeer, Rembrandt, Steen and counteless others. You won't have to go too far for dinner, as you'll dine in the presence of these incredible works of art following your tour.

Arrives On: 10 Oct 27

Day 6: Rotterdam (Netherlands)

Enjoy a choice of guided shore excursions as your riverboat is docked in Rotterdam, founded as a fishing village in the 13th century. A living monument to Holland's Golden Age until it was bombed to rubble during World War II, the city today welcomes with world-class architecture and urban design, along with surviving traces of Old Rotterdam in Delfshaven (Delft Harbor) and Oude Haven (Old Harbor). You may choose to stay in town to explore the sights with a local guide, with time at leisure to explore as you wish; embark on a guided excursion to Leiden, the birthplace of Rembrandt, and home to charming architecture, canals and historic sights, including the country's oldest university or get to know Rotterdam on a beer tour across the city. Return to the riverboat late afternoon.

Arrives On: 11 Oct 27

Day 7: Amsterdam (Netherlands)

Spend the day in the world-famous 17th-century capital of the Netherlands, known for its artistic heritage, historic canals, and narrow houses with gabled facades. One of the best ways to see Amsterdam is by water, and this morning you'll have the chance to glide through its waterways on a guided cruise before your choice of excursions. One takes you on a guided tour of the Rijksmuseum to see such works as The Milkmaid by Vermeer, Self-Portrait by Van Gogh, The Merry

Family by Jan Steen, and Rembrandt's Night Watch, followed by lunch at the museum's Michelin-starred restaurant, RIJKS. Your other choice takes you to the nearby city of Volendam for a bike ride past dikes, windmills, and small bridges on your way to a local farm for a cheese-making lesson. Return to your riverboat for a farewell toast and dinner, followed by a musical performance.

Arrives On: 12 Oct 27

Day 8: Amsterdam (Netherlands)

Tour Ends: Amsterdam. Disembark your riverboat this morning by 9:00 AM. A transfer is included from Tauck's riverboat to Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport or Centraal Station. Fly home anytime. Allow a minimum of three hours for flight check-in at the airport.

Arrives On: 13 Oct 27

For more information on this cruise, please call +44 (0)1202 767926.

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