

Tour Itinerary

Monday: Frankfurt – Bonn – Cologne – Amsterdam (B) (500KM)

The morning begins with a leisurely drive north-west from Frankfurt to Bonn, the capital of the former West Germany until reunification. The national government is now run from Berlin, but Bonn retains a rich history that is well worth exploring. Discover the city's secrets on an orientation stroll through its streets, walking past highlights such as the Rococo-fronted town hall and Ludwig Van Beethoven Haus, a museum celebrating the life of the much-loved composer. Then it's on to Cologne, where you'll head inside the city's glorious Gothic Cathedral, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The rest of the afternoon is yours to explore Cologne further, to do a spot of local shopping or to simply relax with a suitably refreshing German brew. After lunch the day is rounded off with a drive into the Netherlands. (B)

Hotel: 3* in Amsterdam or city nearby **Hampton by Hilton Amsterdam / Holiday Inn Leiden or Similar**

Tuesday: Amsterdam – Zaanse Schans – Amsterdam (B) (50KM)

A day of delights begins with a leisurely trip through the Dutch countryside, where you will get to sample at Close quarters some of the things that the Netherlands is traditionally famous for: clogs, cheese and windmills. Call in at the hugely popular model town of **Zaanse Schans**. Next, you will head from the quiet countryside to the Cosmopolitan city as your journey takes you back to Amsterdam.

After visiting a well-known **Diamond Factory**, where you will see the unique cutting techniques that have been practiced here since the 16th century, you can take an optional hour-long pre-dinner canal cruise, which is a great way to discover more about this unique European city. After disembarking you will walk to one of the city's grandest areas, **Dam Square**, where the Royal Palace is located and the Queen's birthday celebrations take place. You will have photo opportunities here, free time for shopping or further sightseeing, and then round the day off with dinner.

From mid-March to mid-May we will also visit Keukenhof Garden, more information please see: www.keukenhof.com

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Wednesday: Amsterdam – Brussels – Paris (B) (500KM)

After leaving Amsterdam in the morning you will head south across the border into Brussels, the Belgian capital and political centre of the European Union. On the way, the tour stops to see the distinctive **Atomium Monument**, a cell-shaped structure of stainless steel spheres and tubes built for the 1958 World's Fair. In the centre of Brussels itself an orientation tour will call in at the exquisite **Grand Place**, as well as seeing the famous impish **Manneken Pis statue**.

After some free time, during which you can try some mouth-watering Belgian delights. Then from Brussels it's south again across the French border and on to the bright lights of Paris.

Hotel: 3* in Paris or city nearby **Campanile Paris Est-Bobigny / Ibis Paris Orly or similar**

Thursday: Paris – Versailles – Paris (B) (60KM)

Paris is your oyster over the next two days as you enjoy guided tours around one of the world's most Celebrated cities. Your Parisian adventures get off to a spectacular start with a drive along the famous Champs-Élysées to the Place de la Concorde, which played such a key part in the French Revolution. You'll also get to see the iconic Arc de Triomphe here too, the imposing monument that sits near the Western end of the avenue and commemorates the fallen of the revolution and Napoleonic wars. You'll Take in another significant historical building next as you head to L'Hôtel National des Invalides, where Napoleon's tomb is located, followed by a stop at the most legendary of all Paris's icons: the Eiffel Tower. You can either take time to explore the neighborhood and have some lunch or scale the Eiffel Tower. Choice is yours. Finally, you'll travel on the coach out through the Parisian suburbs to the **splendid Palace of Versailles**, the vast regal château that was the residence of the royal family until the start of the Revolution in 1789. Today the palace is another popular Parisian attraction. In the evening, you can enjoy one of our optional Paris evening shows. (B)

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