Bicycle Tours in Belgium: Bike and Barge: Amsterdam to Bruges

OVERVIEW

The Netherlands and Belgium are a cycling paradise with bike paths, flat terrain and plenty to see and do along the way. On this bike and barge tour you will discover the southern region of Zeeland in the Netherlands and dip into the West Flanders region of Belgium. By day you'll bicycle through polders (reclaimed wetlands rich for agriculture or pastureland) and small villages, in the evening you'll sleep on a luxury barge. Cruise through canals and pedal along bike paths between the world famous cities of Amsterdam, Antwerp, Ghent, and Bruges. Visit iconic places like Gouda (pronounced Gowda) and taste its famous cheese. Pedal past the famous windmills of Kinderdijk and delve deep into local culture when we meet local cheese farmers and visit a working windmill.

If this sounds great but you prefer a longer trip, check out our Bike and Barge: Amsterdam to Bruges Plus! Belgium's Breweries tour.

HIGHLIGHTS

9 days, 8 nights (1 hotel night in Amsterdam, 7 nights aboard our luxury barge); meals as noted in itinerary; windmill visit; guided canal cruise of Ghent; guided visits in Antwerp and Bruges

TOUR FACTS

Tour Style	Bike and Boat: Learn more about our Bike and Boat tours at https://www.experienceplus.com/choosing-the-best-tour/styles/bike-and-boat
Includes	9 days, 8 nights (1 hotel night in Amsterdam, 7 nights aboard our luxury barge); meals as noted in itinerary, including 7 packed lunches; windmill visit; 1 beer tasting; guided canal cruise of Ghent; guided visits in Antwerp and Bruges
Countries	Belgium, Netherlands
Begin/End	Amsterdam / Bruges
Arrive/Depart	Amsterdam (AMS) / Brussels (BRU)
Total Distance	366km (226 miles)
Avg. Daily Distance	52km (32 miles) per riding day
Tour Level	
Keep in Mind	We work hard to maintain consistency across all of our tours, but some trips have unique differences. Here are some things to keep in mind about this tour. Cabin space is limited so consider the size of your luggage. A 25 inch suitcase will fit under the bed. WiFi may be sporadic onboard the barge. For more questions about the Barge check out our Bike & Boat FAQ

Please Note: We may have small itinerary changes to this trip after you download this PDF document. If you have booked this trip and there are major changes, including changes to towns or activities, we'll email you directly. However, you should always be sure to refer to the online itinerary for the most up-to-date trip information including arrival and departure tips before you depart for your trip:
https://www.experienceplus.com/bike-tours/belgium/bike-barge-amsterdam-bruges

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DATES & PRICES

Dates	Price	Single Supplement*
May 04, 2024	USD$5495	USD$1300
Jul 12, 2024	USD$5495	USD$1300

DAILY RIDE SUMMARY

Day	Distance/Gain	Terrain	Day Level	Notes
1	Test ride			
2	47km / 245m (29mi / 804ft)	Gentle		
3	51km / 166m (32mi / 544ft)	Gentle		
4	47km / 86m (29mi / 282ft)	Gentle		
5	31km / 135m (19mi / 443ft)	Gentle		
6	54km / 243m (34mi / 797ft)	Gentle		
7	41km / 137m (26mi / 449ft)	Gentle		
8	41km / 174m (26mi / 571ft)	Gentle		
9	Last Day			

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ARRIVAL INFO

Meeting time 2 p.m. - on Day 1, meet your fellow cyclists and Tour Leaders at the Day 1 Hotel specified on the itinerary.

Note: As you are planning, remember that the hotels listed in our itineraries are our primary hotels and are - in rare cases - subject to change. Before you make arrangements, check with us if your tour departure is guaranteed. If your tour departure is out further than 6 months, please also check with us as there might be slight changes to the itinerary.

The below information will help you plan your arrival. For more tips or other routes, you might like Rome2Rio. The fare and timing information listed below is approximate.

Airport: We recommend flying into Amsterdam (AMS).

Getting from the Amsterdam airport to the Day 1 hotel:

1. Commuter Train from the airport to "Amsterdam Centraal" (15 min/EUR 4-5)
2. Taxi from the Station to the Day 1 Hotel (10-15 min/EUR 15)

Or

- Taxi from the airport to the Day 1 Hotel (40 min/EUR 60-75)

View Dutch train schedules at www.ns.nl or Trainline. On commuter-type and regional trains, pre-booking of tickets is not necessary.

DEPARTURE INFO

Your tour ends on the final day with a guided walk of Bruges at 11:30 a.m. at the below location. If you wish to partake, we recommend you book your homebound flight for the next day.

- Crowne Plaza Hotel **in Bruges**

If you'd like to spend more time in Bruges after the tour end, you may book your preferred arrangement directly with the above hotel, where our walking tour ends. We also have other hotel recommendations.

The below information will help you plan your departure. For more tips or other routes, you might like Rome2Rio.

Airport: We recommend flying out of Brussels (BRU).

Getting from the ending location to the Brussels airport:

- Bus to Brugge/Bruges train station (15 min, every 3-5 min/EUR 2), or taxi (10 min/EUR 13)
- Train from Bruges to Brussels Airport (1.5 hours/fares vary)

View Belgian train schedules at Belgian Rail or Trainline. On commuter-type and regional trains, reservations are not necessary.

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Arrive Amsterdam

DAY 1: Sat, May 6th

Distance 4 km (2 mi)
Meals Dinner
Lodging Hotel Room Mate Aitana

Highlights Amsterdam, bike fitting and test ride, welcome dinner

Welcome to the vibrant capital city of Holland, Amsterdam! We hope you arrived a few days early to visit some of the highlights of this colorful city — between its museums, canals, hip locales and lively night scene there is plenty to explore. Settle into our hotel where we'll have our safety meeting and bike fitting followed by our first spin on the bikes before a special dinner together.

Bicycling along the Hollandic Waterline

DAY 2: Sun, May 7th

Distance 47 km (29 mi)
Gain 245 m (804 ft)
Terrain Gentle
Level
Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging Fleur Barge
La Mar Barge

Highlights Forts of Muiderslot and Weesp, town of Muiden, Bruekelen, dinner on board

Follow bike paths out of Amsterdam and head into the region of the Hollandic Waterline, a defense system born in the 17th Century where castles and military forts with integrated systems of flooding could be used to turn Holland into an island to keep out invaders. A century later the water froze creating a bridge for the French army to attack. This plan has left several imposing forts including Muiderslot and Weesp which we'll cycle past today. Enjoy local farmland and beautiful canals flanked by charming villas. We'll pedal through Breukelen, the namesake of the New York City borough of Brooklyn. Later, we'll cruise toward our landing spot for the night and enjoy dinner on-board. In 2024, the May 4 departure is on the Fleur, and the July 12 departure is on the La Mar.

Bike to town of Gouda and Kinderdijk windmills

DAY 3: Mon, May 8th

Distance 51 km (32 mi)
Gain 166 m (544 ft)
Terrain Gentle
Level
Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging Fleur Barge
La Mar Barge

Highlights Schoonhoven - famous for its silversmiths, Gouda cheese museum and tasting, UNESCO World Heritage Kinderdijk windmills

This morning our barge will cruise for a few hours to reach the town of Schoonhoven, famous for its silversmiths and carillon makers. Bicycle through town and check out the town hall's clock-tower bells before heading to Gouda, famous for its orange cheese. Enjoy a visit to the town's cheese museum, and pick-up some picnic supplies (cheese anyone?) to enjoy at your next stop: the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Kinderdijk. Here 19 majestic windmills are aligned to form a stunning sight. After exploring we'll keep pedaling south to rejoin our boat in Dordrecht. Enjoy dinner on-board and perhaps a leisurely walk in town to enjoy the center. In 2024, the May 4 departure is on the Fleur, and the July 12 departure is on the La Mar.

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Breakfast cruise and bicycle to Tholen

DAY 4: Tue, May 9th

Distance 47 km (29 mi)
Gain 86 m (282 ft)
Terrain Gentle
Level
Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging Fleur Barge
La Mar Barge

Highlights Willemstad, a do-it-yourself-moving-bridge; picnic lunch; Roosevelt heritage museum; Tholen; working windmill visit

Another breakfast cruise takes us to Willemstad, a strikingly star shaped fortified town on the shores where the Holland Diep river splits into multiple rivers as it rushes out to sea. Experience the do-it-yourself-moving-bridge before reaching the town of Oud Vossemeer, where the Roosevelt name was very present in the 17th and 18th centuries (and still is), leading many to theorize that the American Roosevelt family whose Dutch ancestor arrived in the US in 1650 was probably from this town. Next we'll pedal south to Tholen which was once an island in this giant estuary-like environment, but is now connected to the mainland. We'll enjoy a visit to a working windmill during our ride. In 2024, the May 4 departure is on the Fleur, and the July 12 departure is on the La Mar.

Pedal and cruise into Antwerp, Belgium

DAY 5: Wed, May 10th

Distance 31 km (19 mi)
Gain 135 m (443 ft)
Terrain Gentle
Level
Meals Breakfast, Lunch
Lodging Fleur Barge
La Mar Barge

Highlights Cruise into Antwerp; visit "Onze Lieve Vrouwe (Our Lady) Cathedral" home to several of Rubens' paintings

Set off on bikes for a delightful morning ride! We'll get back to the boat before lunch to cruise into Antwerp, enjoying a unique view of the port and harbor as our barge makes its way to the city of diamonds. We'll enjoy a guided visit of Flemish painter Peter Paul Rubens' art in the city's Cathedral. After which you can head off to visit the rest of the city, including the historic city center, the diamond district, or the Red Star Line Museum from where 2 million emigrants shipped off to North America between 1873 and 1934. Explore the city and enjoy dinner on your own this evening before returning to our boat for a restful night's sleep. In 2024, the May 4 departure is on the Fleur, and the July 12 departure is on the La Mar.

Antwerp to Sint Amands

DAY 6: Thu, May 11th

Distance 54 km (34 mi)
Gain 243 m (797 ft)
Terrain Gentle
Level
Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging Fleur Barge
La Mar Barge

Highlights Schelde riverbank bike path; Sint Amands; Bosteels Brewery

We'll leave the city of Antwerp and return to the countryside cycling on small roads and along the Schelde river bike path. We've arranged a special visit of a 200 year-old brewery, family-run now by the 7th generation. We will continue pedaling along the tidal river until we reach the quaint town of Sint Amands. In 2024, the May 4 departure is on the Fleur, and the July 12 departure is on the La Mar.

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Bicycle and Cruise into Ghent

DAY 7: Fri, May 12th

Highlights Bicycle beside stately villas; Ghent's rich historic center

This morning we will continue to cycle along the river before branching north through historic marshes. These marshes are where sheep production thrived due to the nutritious grasses. Subsequently, Ghent became one of the richest cities in the world during the Middle Ages because of its woolen industry. A bike path along the Schelde river brings us to our boat, which we'll board for lunch as it cruises closer to the city center. While we are docked in a suburb, we'll transfer into the historical center for a visit. This lively university city is still one of the prettiest cities in Belgium. Admire its traditional, tall Flemish buildings towering over the small streets and plazas. Enjoy dinner on your own in one of the many restaurants or cafés. In 2024, the May 4 departure is on the Fleur, and the July 12 departure is on the La Mar.

Distance 41 km (26 mi)
Gain 137 m (449 ft)
Terrain Gentle
Level
Meals Breakfast, Lunch
Lodging Fleur Barge
La Mar Barge

Bicycle Ghent to Bruges

DAY 8: Sat, May 13th

Highlights Breakfast cruise, Bruges, UNESCO World Heritage Site Medieval City Center

Start the day with a short breakfast cruise before setting off on your bicycle to ride into the crown jewel of Belgium, Bruges. We'll be moored in the city center, providing excellent access to Bruges's many treasures. Stroll along the canals that were once main arteries of the city and don't miss a visit to the medieval square and City Hall. This city is characterized by its fantastic architecture. Bruges is bustling with additional sites to see including the stepped gable houses, market square with the belfort, and historic neighborhoods such as the "Beguinage", a community of lay women from the 13th century to visit. We'll enjoy dinner together on board our boat tonight. In 2024, the May 4 departure is on the Fleur, and the July 12 departure is on the La Mar.

Distance 41 km (26 mi)
Gain 174 m (571 ft)
Terrain Gentle
Level
Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging Fleur Barge
La Mar Barge

End of our bike and barge tour

DAY 9: Sun, May 14th

Highlights Guided walk of Bruges

Enjoy a guided walk of Bruges this morning before heading off on your own. We recommend that you spend a few more days enjoying Bruges's many sites and museums including a chocolate, diamond, and Belgian fry museum. Enjoy!

Meals Breakfast

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INCLUDED

WHAT'S INCLUDED

When you book a tour with ExperiencePlus! our goal is to ensure your only focus each day is to hop on your bike and explore scenic cycling routes in new destinations. Inclusions may differ depending on which tour style you pick but all ExperiencePlus! tours include what we believe are the most important aspects of a bike tour.

- On all our guided tours, you can expect superb tour leaders who are fun and multilingual, bi-cultural experts, and cycling enthusiasts. They will support you and help you navigate confidently on and off the road.
- High quality bikes selected for the terrain you are cycling on and correct bike fitting to ensure comfortable cycling.
- Thoughtfully designed itineraries and routes that take advantage of stunning cycling destinations and the freedom of bicycle travel. Plus, all the logistics are taken care of.

PRE-TRIP SUPPORT

- Bicycle training programs designed specifically for your tour and fitness level.
- Planning tips on what to pack, hotel recommendations and other helpful details from our Travel Planning Pages: https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/
- A gift of your choice (cycling jerseys, socks, or a t-shirt) as our way of saying thanks for choosing EP!
- *Traveler services including assistance booking extra nights at the tour starting and ending hotels. (*Explorer and Self-guided tour styles excluded)
- See "What's Included" for tour-specific inclusions and be sure to check the "Keep in mind" section under "Tour Summary" online.

BICYCLES

For a full list of what's included with your bike see: https://www.experienceplus.com/what-to-expect/our-bikes/. If you would like to bring your own pedals and shoes we recommend doing so. On Explorer and Self-guided tours we include a GPS device on all bikes.

NAVIGATING, DAYSHEETS AND VAN SUPPORT:

On a guided tour, each day you'll receive a daily briefing with a highlighted route map. On a self-guided tour you'll receive a comprehensive orientation and bike fit on the first or second morning of your trip. About 14 days prior to your tour, we will provide you with access to RideWithGPS Experiences, our platform to distribute information on each tour day's activities, meals and ride, as well as GPS-routes.

Daily information on the RWGPS Experience includes important phone numbers, hotel information and interesting historical and cultural information. On Classic, Bike and Boat and Expedition tours we also navigate using our signature chalk dust arrows. Our arrows make navigating very easy—you may never need to look at the map. On Explorer tours the terrain and destinations are not always conducive to using chalk arrows so we'll ride as a group or you can navigate on your own with the GPS tracks.

On a guided tour you will have a support van providing water and snack resupply, mechanical assistance, a lift for tired cyclists, and luggage transfers. On some itineraries the van will not be able to follow sections of the route that stray from the road for example onto cycling paths. On a self-guided tour you will have luggage transfers that will transport your bags from one hotel to the other.

Need More Miles? On many days it is possible to add miles to the day, just talk to your tour leader about your options or ask when you are planning your self-guided trip.

Need Fewer Miles? On a guided tour, the support van is available to offer snacks, encouragement, a lift over the next hill, or to the next hotel. On a self-guided tour we recommend you review the tour level to make sure you can ride the full distance.

ON A GUIDED TOUR: TIPPING YOUR TOUR LEADERS

If you feel your tour leader team has demonstrated great expertise and service, common practice within the travel industry is to tip. Tipping is voluntary and greatly appreciated, and gratuity amounts vary widely. Should you decide to leave a tip, as a guideline, we suggest 5-8% of the tour cost per traveler — this is for the entire tour leader team, not each tour leader. You can give the tip to any member of the tour leader team, as they share it evenly. In order to avoid social tensions, we encourage you to tip as individuals and not as a group. If you feel your tour leaders did not quite meet your expectations, please let us know. *Tips are included in Expedition pricing and not expected on self-guided tours.

PHOTOS:

By reserving space on tour, you agree that ExperiencePlus! may use, re-use and reproduce any images, photos or videos sent to us, or that are taken by our guides or other travelers, in any medium, including but not limited to print, electronic media, or Internet, free of charge and without your right to inspection. If you do not want us to use any images of you, you must inform us or your tour leader in writing at the start of the tour.

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STYLES

OUR TOUR STYLES

We realize that one size does not fit all and there are as many ways to travel by bike as there are different types of cyclists and travelers.

Classic Tours: Dream of traveling through a region by bike? Our unique chalk arrows lead the way as you explore small villages and world-class cities while traveling at your own pace.

- Tour Length: 7-15 days
- Hotels: 3-4 stars.
- Road Type: Pavement, bike paths.
- Multi-night Stays: Occasionally
- Navigation and support: 2-3 tour leaders, van support and chalk arrows
- Price: $$$
- Tour Levels: 1-4.5

Explorer Tours: Travel further off the beaten path - we let the destination dictate where we ride, not the road surface.

- Tour Length: 7-8 days
- Hotels: 2-3 stars
- Road Type: 30-50% gravel or hard-packed dirt, the rest pavement.
- Multi-night Stays: Occasionally
- Navigation and support: 2 tour leaders, GPS and van support
- Price: $$
- Tour Levels: 1-4

Bike and Boat Tours: Spend days cycling and your evenings relaxing on a private boat as you cruise to your next port.

- Tour Length: 7-8 days, some itineraries have land-based extensions available.
- Barge/Boat: 3-4 star, same cabin for the entire boat trip except for land extension.
- Road Type: Pavement
- Navigation and support:2 tour leaders, van Support and chalk arrows
- Price: $$$
- Tour Levels: 1-4

Expedition Tours: Multi-week tours where you spend long days on the bike with the added satisfaction of pedaling across multiple countries.

- Tour Length: 15-40 days
- Hotels: 2-4 stars
- Road Type: Pavement with occasional hard-packed dirt or gravel.
- Multi-night Stays: On rest days
- Navigation and support: 2-3 tour leaders, van Support and chalk arrows
- Price: $$$
- Tour Levels: 4-5

Self-guided Tours: perfect for those who have an independent spirit, want the flexibility to choose their own dates, and don't need van support or tour leaders during their trip. Every departure is a private tour!

- Tour Length: 6-8-days
- Hotels: 3-4 stars
- Road Type: Pavement with occasional hard-packed dirt or gravel on bike paths.
- Multi-night Stays: Occasionally
- Navigation and support: GPS routes and luggage transfers
- Price: $
- Tour Levels: 1-4

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LEVELS

We know that travelers have different cycling abilities and preferences for the number of miles, elevation gain, and type of terrain they want on a bicycle tour. We have rated each day of our tours on a scale of 1-5. Our Tour Level's are an average of the day rating on tour. We recommend looking at the daily summary on the PDF and Website Itinerary to see details about each day's ride.

LEVEL 1 - 1.5

Level 1 - 1.5 days will be mostly flat and the distance will rarely exceed 50 km. Level 1 - 1.5 tours are suitable for beginner cyclists, those traveling by bicycle for the first time, or multi-generational groups with a desire for a nice and easy bike tour with plenty of opportunities to stop and enjoy the scenery.

- **Average daily mileage:** 20 - 50 km. (12-30 miles) Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 0-400 M (0-1200 ft)
- **Terrain:** Mostly flat with occasional gentle climbs at a grade of less than 3%, that are sustained for a maximum of 3km. There might be a steeper but short climb.

LEVEL 2 - 2.5

Level 2 - 2.5 days are ideal for riders newer to bicycle touring looking for a bit of a challenge.

- **Average daily mileage:** 30-60 km (18 - 38 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 400 - 600 m (1200 - 2000 ft)
- **Terrain:** Mostly rolling terrain around 3%. Presents multiple 3% to 4% climbs. May present an occasional steeper climb.

LEVEL 3 - 3.5

Level 3 - 3.5 days are great for active individuals (who run, bike, swim etc. on a regular basis).

- **Average daily mileage:** 50-70km (30-45 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 600 - 900m (2000 - 2800 ft)
- **Terrain:** Multiple Climbs with grades of 4 - 6%.

LEVEL 4 - 4.5

Level 4 - 4.5 days are the best riding days for avid cyclists or very active individuals who are excited to challenge themselves on a bike.

- **Average daily mileage:** 70-90km (45-55 miles) Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 900-1000m (2800-3600 ft)
- **Terrain:** Presents multiple steep climbs (6% to 8% grades), 1 to 3km long. Alternatively, 4 — 6% grades for 6 kilometers or more.

LEVEL 5 (EXPEDITION)

Our Expedition tours designed for strong riders looking for the challenge of riding across countries or continents. Long daily mileages mean limited van support so we recommend these tours for riders who feel confident that they can ride every mile.

- **Average daily mileage:** 120 km (75 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 500-2000 m (1600- 6500 ft)
- **Terrain:** Expect and be prepared for any and everything.

REMEMBER

A tour level is the average of the days so we recommend you look at the day level on each day of the itinerary to help you better understand what to expect from your tour.

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CHECKLIST

TO DO ONCE YOU'VE BOOKED!

- ☐ Read through your Reservation Confirmation and After you Book Information (link sent to you by e-mail), it has important information to help you plan your trip!
- ☐ Check the date on your passport. The expiration date should extend three months past your date of return to your home country.
- ☐ Complete the Customer Information Form: https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/customer-information-form/
- ☐ We recommend you take out travel insurance. Find details at https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/travel-insurance/
- ☐ Choose a bicycle training program: https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/bicycle-tour-training/
- ☐ Peruse our country-specific Travel Planning Pages: https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/

6 TO 3 MONTHS PRIOR TO TOUR START DATE

- ☐ Refer to your Tour Packet/Itinerary to see step-by-step arrival and departure information for your tour, meeting place and time, if a reservation on a complimentary ExperiencePlus! Shuttle (if applicable) is required, along with other important information to help you plan your arrival and departure.
- ☐ Reserve your flights after you know you have a confirmed tour departure. Please check with our office if you do not know if your trip is confirmed.
- ☐ Book your pre and post-tour hotel nights.
- ☐ Begin your chosen training program
- ☐ Final payment is due 90 days (120 days for Bike & Barge/Boat tours) prior to the tour start. Please refer to your Invoice and the Final Payment Reminder e-mail which we send 10 days prior to the due date for detailed instructions.

6 TO 2 WEEKS PRIOR TO TOUR START DATE

- ☐ Start reading one of the books or watching one of the movies from our Reading and Movie Lists: https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/.
- ☐ Plan what you are going to pack and start packing! Refer to the Packing Lists for suggestions, and see luggage limits at https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/packing/.
- ☐ We'll email you your access code to Digital Daysheets, Hotel Itinerary, Participant Roster, names and contact information of your Tour Leaders, emergency phone numbers, and other important departure information about 2 weeks prior to your tour start date. All this will be provided to you via a feature called Experiences via the RideWithGPS App (tracks available but not necessary for navigation on Classic, Expedition and Bike & Boat tours).

DAY OF YOUR FLIGHT

Get as much sleep on the plane as you can. Pack one day of cycling gear in your carry-on just in case. See you soon!

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