



Amsterdam & Prague

8 days

Tour Description

This trip affords an interesting contrast between two unique European cultures. The Netherlands delights with its dreamy canals and colorful flower markets. Its history centers on the merchants and fishermen who leveraged the city's location and waterways. Prague awes visitors with its impressive Castle and Charles Bridge. Once part of the mighty Habsburg Empire, the architecture fits its past as an influential city.

Highlights

- ❖ City tour of Amsterdam
- ❖ Explore the Keukenhof Gardens with its acres of tulips
- ❖ Visit to the Anne Frank House
- ❖ Half-day sightseeing tour of Prague
- ❖ Visit to the Czech countryside

Sample Tour Itinerary

Amsterdam – 4 nights

Day 1: Arrive Amsterdam

Arrival into Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport will be in the early morning. After clearing customs, meet your Welcome Assistant who will greet you and assist you to your private motor coach for your transfer to your hotel. The rest of the day is yours at leisure to explore this one of a kind city. Tonight you may relax and unwind and join your fellow companions in the hotel's dining room for a hearty meal this evening.

Day 2:

After breakfast this morning meet your guide for a tour of this interesting and historic city. About 800 years ago, the Amstel River was dammed, giving the town its name. Where medieval fishing boats once docked, you can tour 17th century buildings from Holland's Golden Age, mingle with street performers and shop some of Amsterdam's most luxurious stores. You'll see such landmarks as the Koninklijk Paleis, or Royal Palace. Its 17th century Neo Classical façade dominates Dam Square, the historic heart of the city. You will pass the Munttoren (Mint Tower), with clock and bells that still seem to mirror the "Golden Age". Also of particular interest is the 16th-century Scheerstoren (Weeping Tower), which, according to legend, derived its name from the sailor's wives who used to bid their husbands an emotional farewell from here. Then we'll pass the Floating Flower Market on Singel, which is a stunning mass of flowers strung along the canal on permanently moored barges. Awnings stretch to cover stall after stall of brightly colored blossoms, bulbs, and potted plants.

**Day 3:**

After breakfast this morning we depart on our excursion to the countryside to see windmills and tulips. The first bulbs were brought to Holland in 1592 and soon became highly popular, especially among the aristocracy. Trading in bulbs was a lucrative business and prices soared to ridiculous heights. Today, the bulbs are more affordable, but competition to produce new strains is still fierce. The place to see tulips in their full glory is the Keukenhof Gardens at Lisse, where vast numbers of these and other flowers creates dazzling patches of color. Here, flowers at their peak have a short but glorious season. The blaze of color is everywhere. The park is said to be the greatest flower show on earth, and it's Holland's annual spring gift to the world.

Day 4:

We will start the day with a visit to the famous Anne Frank House. No one should miss seeing and experiencing this house, where eight people from three separate families lived together in near total silence for more than 2 years during World War II. It was here that Anne wrote her famous diary as a way to deal with the boredom and her youthful jumble of thoughts, which had as much to do with personal relationships as with the war and the Nazi terror raging outside her hiding place. Make your way to one of the many canal boats for a tour of the city by water. Seeing these excellent structures from the water is worth the wait.

Prague – 3 nights**Day 5:**

This morning after breakfast you will again be met and transferred to Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport for your short flight to Prague. Upon arrival you will be transferred to your hotel. Prague's position at the crossroads of Europe has made it a magnet for foreign traders since before recorded history. By the early 10th century it had developed into a thriving town with a large marketplace (the Old Town Square) and two citadels (Prague Castle and Vysehrad), from where its first rulers, the Premyslids, conducted their many family feuds.

Day 6:

After breakfast, you will depart your hotel for a half-day sightseeing tour of this old and classical city. Your journey begins as you cross the Vltava River which has played a vital part in the city's history and provided inspiration for artists, poets and musicians throughout the centuries. Many bridges cross the river and you will visit the most famous one in the city, the Charles Bridge, completed around 1400. It is Prague's most familiar monument; it connects the Old Town with the Little Quarter. The gothic Old Town Bridge Tower is one of the finest buildings of its kind. Designed by Peter Parler, it was built at the end of the 14th century. If you have time to get to the viewing gallery on the tower's first floor you will be rewarded with one of the finest views of Prague and its 100 spires. Later we stop at Prague Castle and Hradcany. The history of Prague begins with the castle, founded in the 9th century by Prince Borivoj. The Castle has been rebuilt many times. After a disastrous fire in 1541, the badly damaged buildings were rebuilt in Renaissance style and the Castle enjoyed its cultural heyday under Rudolph II. Later, the Hapsburgs who resided in Vienna used the Castle only occasionally. Since 1918, it has been the seat of the president of the Republic.

Day 7:

After breakfast, depart for a fascinating journey into the heart of the Prague countryside. We will drive through picturesque local villages, stunning valleys, and typical unspoiled countryside. You will have the impression of stepping back in time as you pass these rural communities still farming in the tradition of their ancestors. As we approach Karlstein the impressive castle up on the hill can be seen. The castle was founded by Charles IV as a country retreat, a secure treasury



for the imperial crown jewels and a symbolic expression of his divine right to rule the Holy Roman Empire. After the tour of the beautiful castle above the river there will be time to wander the little village below before returning to Prague.

Day 8:

This morning we transfer to Prague International Airport with ample time to check your luggage and board your flight back to the USA.

INCLUSIONS

- Accommodations: Amsterdam 4 nights, Prague 3 nights
- Meals: Continental breakfast daily, lunch and dinner as noted in itinerary
- Ground transportation via air conditioned luxury coach
- English speaking assistants and guides
- Admission tickets as outlined in the itinerary