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BELGIAN WAFFLE

Barging Belgium's Waterways

ITINERARY

TOUR PREPARATION

PRICING & ACCOMMODATIONS



Date	Price	Duration	Availability	BOOK NOW
July 2 – 9, 2025	\$5,400	8 DAYS	Open	
Netherlands: July 9 - 12, 2025	\$3,500	4 DAYS	Open	

INTRODUCTION

When you look at a map of the dense interlacing network of inland waterways crossing Flanders and Wallonia from east to west and north to south, they depict patterns similar to those on the famous breakfast treat that features the country's name. The same can be said of the break lines on bars of Belgium's incredible chocolate; they, too, resemble the Belgian waffle.

Start your tour in Brussels to sample its captivating way of life, where history and chocolate intersect. Then join us for a gentle cruise focusing on the good things in life. With the abundance of cultural riches concentrated on the canal banks, you'll discover the characteristic cities, exciting sites, and unique flavors only Belgium can offer. Indulge in local specialties such as chocolate, beer, wine, and other delicacies. Discover Halle, Mons, Oudenaarde, Bruges and Ghent. Enjoy a visit to the Château de Beloeil — nicknamed the Belgian Versailles — and also tour the award-winning Chant d'Éole vineyard and wine cellar.

A memorable week awaits you aboard the beautiful hotel barge Raymonde — our home while we sample the delicious cuisine and dazzling cultural highlights of the region. Extend your stay with a three-night tour of the Netherlands, staying in fabulous Amsterdam. Don't waffle on your decision to join this intimate tour. Our ten staterooms aboard Raymonde are sure to sell quickly!

BELGIUM HIGHLIGHTS

- Welcome reception and dinner in Brussels
- City tour of Brussels
- Exclusive cruise to the heart of Wallonia and Flanders
- The Strépy-Thieu Boat Lift and the Ronquières Inclined Plane—two extraordinary engineering achievements
- Château de Beloeil, nicknamed the Belgian Versailles, and its immense gardens
- The Chant d'Éole vineyard and its sparkling wines with a Belgian flair
- Oudenaarde seen throughout the centuries
- Bruges - Flemish architecture at its best
- Festive Gala Dinner at conclusion of the cruise
- All meals included
- All drinks included with meals and at the bar

NETHERLANDS HIGHLIGHTS

- The International Peace Palace at The Hague
- Amsterdam city tour
- Rijksmuseum
- Canal cruise
- Zaanse Schans
- Edam
- Volendam
- Marken

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Day 1 – Wednesday, July 2, 2025

Arrive in Brussels

Plan your international flights to arrive in Brussels by mid-afternoon today. It is easy to catch a taxi from the airport to our hotel, or book a private transfer (we'll provide some options prior to departure). Explore the amenities of the hotel and the surrounding neighborhood until time for our welcome cocktail in the hotel's bar. Afterwards we walk to a nearby restaurant for our Welcome Dinner. Please let us know on your reservation form if you would like to arrive one day early (July 1) to rest up from jet lag. ***(Welcome Dinner included)***



Arrive in Brussels

Day 2 – Thursday, July 3, 2025

Brussels City Tour / Welcome On Board

After breakfast and check-out, meet our guide for an exciting day of sightseeing in Brussels. We begin our visit with a short stroll in the old city centre. We'll learn about the world-famous Grand Place with its unique city hall and splendid guild houses. Take time to view the Manneken Pis, a famous bronze fountain sculpture in central Brussels, depicting a puer mingens; a naked little boy urinating into the fountain's basin.

We continue our adventure through the capital by coach. Pass by the magnificent St. Michaels cathedral, the Congress Column, the Heizel district with the renowned Atomium (entrance included), the remarkable Chinese pavilion and the Japanese tower. We drive back to the centre via the Palace of Laken and visit the Zavel district with its many antique stores. After seeing the impressive Court of Justice and the elegant Louiza Square, we drive to the stately Place Royale, the Royal Palace and the old Palace of the Nations which is now the home of Parliament. Around the corner, the heart of Europe beats: the buildings of the Commission, the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament.

After lunch we participate in a Chocolate Workshop. After being welcomed to the chocolate factory we learn the history of cocoa and how it is transformed into chocolate. We have a demonstration of how artisanal pralines are created by professional chocolate-makers assisted by two of our group members. Interspersed throughout the various presentations are three different chocolate-tastings. To conclude, the staff takes questions and we have an opportunity to purchase these fabulous chocolates in the gift shop.



Brussels Grand Place



Brussels Atomium

Finally, we transfer to the pier at Halle (approximately 1 hour drive) and board our barge at 6pm. After settling into our cabins we are introduced to the crew during a welcome cocktail reception, followed by dinner and our first of six nights aboard. ***(All meals)***



Brussels Chocolate Factory

Day 3 – Friday, July 4, 2025

Halle – Strepy Thieu

South of Brussels and just on the Flemish side of the boundary between Flanders and Wallonia, Halle is an endearing city spreading around a white Gothic church. The old centre has a Renaissance town hall, looking towards St Martin's Basilica, which holds an unusual amount of centuries-old treasures. Enjoy a tour of Halle including

- The Basilica of St Martin - the home of the Black Madonna of Halle - an absolute must during any visit to Halle.
- Discover the wonderful world of Lambic brewing at Brewery Boon in Lembeek and find out what makes Oude Geuze so special.
- Beer walk : 4 km walking tour - This walk takes you through the streets and squares in search of the devil's spirit and Halle's centuries-old brewing tradition.

Afternoon sailing on the Canal du Centre to Strepy-Thieu where we dock for the night. *(All meals)*



Halle Market Square

Day 4 – Saturday, July 5, 2025

Strepy Thieu - Mons

We spend the morning cruising. Our first big adventure is the monumental Ronquières Inclined Plane, built between 1960 and 1968. Construction of the plane reduced delays caused by the 14 previous locks. After navigating the incline our barge takes a boat lift. Using two independent caissons, the lift allows a crossing in less than 35 minutes with a 240-foot height difference (75 m), in one swoop replacing four former boat lifts and two locks.

We continue cruising to Mons where we embark on a **food tour**. Few cities can boast about their heritage like Mons can. This is a vibrant, modern city with a deep, historic past. The Grand-Place offers a myriad of places in which to lose yourself. Our guide takes us to the center of Mons to learn about the city's history and edible delights. This stroll is a combination of history, culture, and anecdotes accented by a tasting of four local specialties. Indulging in the local cuisine makes this tour an unforgettable experience. After the tour we return to our barge for dinner and overnight in Mons. *(All meals)*



Ronquières Inclined Plane



Mons Town Hall

Day 5 – Sunday, July 6, 2025

Mons – Peronnes-lez-Antoing

Set off on a visit to the **Château de Beloeil** and the **Chant d'Éole vineyard**. The Château de Beloeil — nicknamed the Belgian Versailles — contains a valuable collection of 15th- to 19th-century art, including a library with more than 20,000 books and precious manuscripts. The furniture is a sampling of some of the top work of French cabinet makers in the 17th and 18th centuries. The paintings depict the grand achievements of most of the castle's family members.

After visiting the Château we continue on to the Chant d'Éole estate. This vineyard came into being when a family of Belgian farmers joined forces with a family of eminent sparkling winemakers. They use the best modern techniques to guarantee a sparkling wine that adheres to Belgian tradition. Our tour recounts the vineyard's history, with enthusiastic guides explaining the different stages of production — from planting to bottling, and everything in between. We finish with a tasting of three signature spirits — the Brut Blanc de Blancs, the Rosé Brut, and the Elixir Saint-Georges.

After reboarding our barge in Mons, we spend the afternoon cruising on the Nimy-Blaton-Péronnes Canal, a strategic waterway in the center of Belgium. The canal opened in October 1955 and enabled a liaison between the Canal du Centre and the Scheldt River. We dock in Péronnes-lez-Antoing where we are free to do some personal exploration before dinner and overnight. *(All meals)*



Château de Beloeil



Château de Beloeil Library

Day 6 – Monday, July 7, 2025

Peronnes-lez-Antoing - Oudenaarde

This morning we commence cruising to Oudenaarde. Take advantage of some downtime to relax on the Sun Deck and watch the scenery roll by. We pass through the city of Tournai before arriving in Oudenaarde in the early afternoon.

This afternoon we enjoy a **guided tour of Oudenaarde and a distillery**. Oudenaarde is a picturesque city full of historic monuments, with the most notable being the town hall and its two main churches. Other memorable sites include the lovely beguinage, the house where Margaret of Parma was born, the Boudewijnstoren, and the 18th-century meat market. Everything is testimony to a rich and lively past. The city has more than 100 historic monuments. Set off on an urban hike taking you to the loveliest areas and tourist sites. Enjoy some free time on your own to see what the city has to offer.

We then head over to a distillery. This will be the time to learn about how jenever, gin, and whiskey are distilled. Of course, we'll have a taste! Return on board our barge for dinner and overnight. ***(All meals)***



Aerial View of Oudenaarde

Day 7 – Tuesday, July 8, 2025

Oudenaarde - Ghent

Today we glide along the Scheldt from Oudenaarde to Ghent, surrounded by the magnificent scenery of several natural parks. Our excursion this afternoon is a **guided tour of Bruges and a brewery**. Arriving in Ghent we head to Bruges (about a 60- to 75-minute coach ride). Its works of art, tranquil ambiance, romantic aura, and stunning architecture make it one of the top places to visit during any European vacation. The city has meticulously preserved the elegance and class it exuded during its golden age as a maritime trade center.

After seeing the highlights of Bruges, we visit a brewery for a taste of ale. This brewery was founded in 1856. Six generations later it remains a dynamic brewery, still attached to its origins and the authentic Bruges Zot.

We return to our lovely barge for one final night aboard. Tonight is our festive gala evening where we thank the crew and wish them a fond farewell. *(All meals)*



Bruges Belfry (UNESCO)

Day 8 – Wednesday, July 9, 2025

Depart – or - Commence Netherlands Tour Extension

Enjoy breakfast on board this morning before disembarking at 9:00am. We will assist those who are not joining our tour extension to the Netherlands in coordinating a departure transfer to the Brussels airport or destination of your choosing. It is approximately a one-hour drive to the airport. There are bus and train options, as well as taxi and ride-share. Bon Voyage and safe travels! *(Breakfast)*



Farewell to Belgium

LET'S GO DUTCH

July 9 – 12, 2025

The Netherlands

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The Netherlands is often incorrectly referred to as Holland. It is one of the most vibrant and interesting countries in Europe. Known for its eclectic capital city of Amsterdam – with its canals, amazing museums, and vibrant nightlife – the Netherlands is far more than this, and when we venture further afield we will find picture postcard pretty towns as well as dynamic cities like The Hague. You won't want to miss this exciting tour extension capping our cruise in Belgium.

Day 8 – Wednesday, July 9, 2025

The Hague - Amsterdam

After disembarking from our barge this morning we board our motorcoach and commence a 2.5 hour drive to The Hague. After a break for lunch we take a guided tour of this Royal City, the third largest in the Netherlands. It has something to offer every visitor. We begin at Koningin Julianaplein, then see Central Station, the largest terminal in the Netherlands with 12 tracks. Some of the monumental and historic buildings we see today are the Queen's Palace, the Peace Palace with its international judicial institutions, the Palace Noordeinde, and the famous Binnenhof. The Binnenhof started off as a hunting lodge, then a castle, and later developed into complex of various historic buildings. Next is Buitenhof, the government buildings, Kalvermarkt, Fluwelenburgwal and Herengracht.

Top highlights of this day will be our visit to the **Mauristhuis Museum** – home to some of the most famous Dutch paintings – as well as our private tour of the **Visitor's Centre** inside the grounds of the Peace Palace.

We conclude our journey with a one-hour drive to Amsterdam, where we check in at our centrally located hotel. After some time to settle in, we take a short walk to **d'Vijff Vlieghen** to enjoy a special three-course dinner with wine. *(Breakfast / Dinner)*

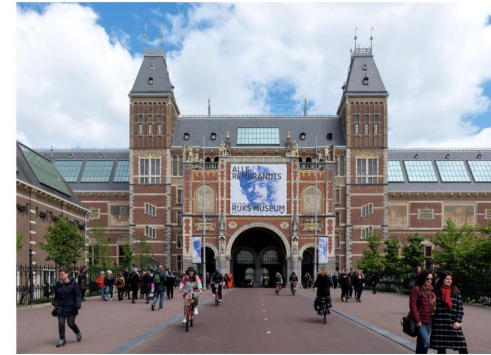


The Peace Palace

Day 9 - Thursday, July 10, 2025

Amsterdam Tour

After enjoying breakfast at our hotel, join our guide for a full day of sightseeing in Amsterdam. This exciting city is best visited on foot, so bring your most comfortable walking shoes! From our hotel in the historical city centre, we pass Damrak and central station with its reminders of a glorious past. Continue through 19th century quarters to modern day Amsterdam, passing by Museum square where the famous Rijksmuseum, Van Gogh and Stedelijk museums are located. We tour the Rijksmuseum to marvel at its vast collection of art masterpieces. We'll see the Singel flower market and some remaining windmills in the capital. Stop for a chance to pay respects at the Homomonument. We'll see the numerous bridges and canals that give this city its romantic atmosphere during a canal cruise with wine and cheese. Get a glimpse of the wealthy past of Amsterdam with a visit to a diamond factory. Returning to our hotel we have a free evening for fun in this wonderfully gay-friendly city! ***(Breakfast)***



Rijksmuseum



Amsterdam Canal Tour

Day 10 – Friday, July 11, 2025

Zaanse Schans / Edam / Volendam / Marken

The Zaanse Schans is a delightful village on the banks of the river Zaan with characteristic green wooden houses, charming stylized gardens, small hump-backed bridges, tradesmen's workshops, historic windmills and engaging little shops. This enchanting village has been lovingly established by relocating local houses, windmills, storehouses and barns to form a remarkable replica of a typical "Zaanse" village of the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Apart from the cluster of windmills, characteristic wooden houses and delightful shops to visit, there are intriguing traditional Dutch crafts such as wooden shoes, pewter and cheese making, several fascinating museums and restaurants.

Continue to the charming fishing villages of Marken and Volendam. Marken was once an island but now it is connected to the mainland. It's wooden houses on stilts still stand near its small harbor. Visit a traditional cheese-farm in Edam to taste different kinds of cheeses. Volendam is known for its traditional Dutch customs. We enjoy free time to explore Volendam.

After an exciting day in the countryside, we return to Amsterdam for our festive Farewell Dinner with wine included. ***(Breakfast / Dinner)***



Zaanse Schans Windmills



Edam Cheese Market



Marken

Day 11 – Saturday, July 12, 2025

Farewell to Amsterdam

The tour extension concludes with your check-out from our hotel this morning. We have not included airport transfers since we are not all departing on the same flight. It is easy to organize a taxi transfer with the hotel's concierge. Please let us know if you wish to extend your stay an additional night at our Amsterdam hotel. Our rate is only valid for one additional night.



Farewell to Amsterdam

TOUR PREPARATION

Entry Requirements— You will not need to obtain a visa to visit Belgium or the Netherlands. Starting in 2025, the EU will require visitors from around 60 visa-exempt countries – including the U.S. – to apply for travel authorization through the European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS). This is a quick online application that comes with a small fee. In most cases, applicants can expect to get approval within minutes. We will inform tour participants about how to do this after this new requirement is implemented. Your passport needs to be valid for at least three months beyond the date of your departure from the region and must have at least one blank page for stamps. Here is a link to the [official ETIAS website](#).

Immunizations & Health- No vaccinations are required, but we encourage you to review the [recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control](#). We ask that you have all your routine vaccinations and your Covid boosters current. Please check with your health professional or a local travel clinic and follow recommended protections. Is your tetanus booster current?

Exit Requirements- There is currently no separate departure tax required of departing visitors other than that included with the cost of your airline ticket.

Making Travel Arrangements to Brussels

On this tour, international airfare is NOT included. You will need to get your round-trip international air to Brussels, Belgium (airport code BRU) and back to the U.S.A. If you are joining our tour extension to the Netherlands, your departure airport will be Amsterdam (airport code AMS). We encourage you to work with Steven Goldberg at Frosch Travel in Chicago, who can help you find the best flights to meet your needs.

You need to arrive in Brussels by 2:00pm or 3:00pm on Wednesday, July 2, 2025. Depart at any convenient time on Wednesday, July 9 (or Saturday, July 12, if you are joining the Netherlands extension).

Steven Goldberg / Frosch Travel

Toll-Free in USA: 1-800-323-1276

International guests, please call +1-312-371-9686

Email: steven.goldberg@frosch.com

When calling, please identify yourself as a Toto Tours participant. If you leave a message on Steven's voice mail, he will return your call promptly. He will be happy to discuss your travel plans and help you decide when to purchase your ticket for the best rate.

NOTE: The recent trend in travel is for travelers to finalize their plans much closer to departure than was customary in the past. While we try to be as flexible as possible we often must turn away last-minute registrants because we relinquish hotel space and air reservations 8 – 12 weeks prior to departure! Please keep this in mind when making your travel plans.

WHAT TO BRING

Weather in the areas we will be visiting are generally pleasant in July, with lows in the upper 50's and highs in the 70's. We are all aware of global warming, however, so we cannot be shocked if an unexpected heat wave causes temperatures to soar above these averages. Please be prepared for everything so you can adjust to conditions as they present themselves. Pack light and bring mix-and-match clothes that can be layered for warmth or taken off to cool down. Bring one dressy outfit for our gala farewell aboard our barge, and the extension farewell dinner in the Amsterdam. Pack medications in a carry-on just in case your bags don't arrive when you do. We suggest leaving expensive jewelry at home.

Suggested Packing List:

- Proof of citizenship. Passport required and electronic travel authorization.
- Comfortable walking shoes with good treads for city sightseeing.
- Long pants and collared shirts for dinners and evenings out on the town.
- Shorts (in case we experience hot days).
- Short- and long-sleeved T-shirts for layering and sun protection.
- Casual long-sleeved shirts.
- Sweater and jacket for cool evenings.
- Raincoat / compact umbrella for possible rainy days.
- Socks and underwear for a week (laundry service is not available aboard the barge).
- Swimsuit (for the jacuzzi aboard the barge).
- Daypack for excursions.
- Sunscreen / lip balm / sunglasses / sun hat.
- Personal toiletries, and insect repellent.
- Ziploc Bags (gallon size for wet items or toiletries).
- Electrical Adapter. In Belgium and the Netherlands the power plugs and sockets are of type C or E. The standard voltage is 230 V and the standard frequency is 50 Hz. [Click here](#) to see the adapter needed for this tour.

- A good book for your flights and leisure time aboard the barge.

MONEY MATTERS

The monetary unit in both Belgium and the Netherlands is the Euro. The exchange rate as of August 12, 2024 is about \$1.10 per euro. [Click here](#) for the most current exchange rate.

ATMs are widely available throughout the tour. It is wise to carry some cash with you, however, in case you get caught in a situation where an ATM is not available.

Tipping Guidelines: Tipping is not customary in Belgium and the Netherlands in restaurants or for hotel staff, but it is courteous to leave a few euros if you are pleased with the service. Here is a helpful article about [tipping in Belgium](#). Here is a similar article for [tipping in the Netherlands](#). Tips for our guides and drivers are not included in the tour price. We will send a recommended group tipping budget prior to departure.

THE TOTO SPIRIT

Toto Tours provides Adventure Travel Experiences as differentiated from tours in the traditional sense. Adventure Travel allows (even encourages) you to be an active participant. Adventurers can be identified by certain traits. They are:

- fun-loving optimists who have a sense of humor and accentuate the positive;
- good natured realists who are willing to accept situations as they exist;
- undaunted by the unexpected, like occasional delays or bad weather;
- willing to forego some of the amenities we normally take for granted;
- eager to try new things & test limits;
- punctual;
- not whiners!

Indulge yourself aboard our canal barge tour of the waterways of Belgium with all the best that the country has to offer – fine wines, extraordinary cuisine, stunning scenery and magnificent historical sights. Top it all off with a delightful tour extension to the Netherlands. If you have any questions, please email us at: tototours@gmail.com.

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PRICING – MAIN TOUR

(tour prices per person)

Price: : \$5,400 in double occupancy hotel and barge accommodations.

Private Room: \$1,900 additional, for a total tour price of \$7,300.

Deposit: \$1,000

(Due at time of registration for the tour. May be paid with a credit card.)

Remaining Balance (main tour): \$4,400 double / \$6,300 single

Remaining Balance Due: April 11, 2025 (80 days prior to departure)

(Full payment required with reservation form if enrolling after this date.)

Note: The tour price does not include bank service charges for processing credit card payments and assumes that the balance of the tour price will be paid by check. If you would like to pay the final balance with a credit card, a 4% service charge will be applied. Let us know if you wish to pay by credit card, and we will adjust your invoice accordingly.

Included: One night hotel and Welcome Cocktail and Dinner in Brussels, Brussels city tour with lunch, transfer to the barge, barge cruise with all meals from dinner the first evening to breakfast on the final day, all onboard beverages (not including the “special” list), accommodations in a double-occupancy, climate-controlled cabin with shower in private bathroom, welcome cocktail onboard, assistance from our steward, gala evening, guided excursions and visits mentioned in the program, emergency/repatriation insurance, all port fees.

Not Included: Arrival transfer from airport to our Brussels hotel, drinks and wines from the barge’s “Special List” or drinks ordered during excursions or transfers, cancellation and baggage insurance, personal expenses, departure transfers. Tips to the barge staff, guides and drivers are not included. We will organize a group tipping fund prior to departure.

NETHERLANDS EXTENSION PRICING

(extension prices per person)

Price: \$3,500 in double occupancy hotel accommodations.

Private Room: \$700 additional, for a total extension price of \$4,200.

Deposit: \$500 (in addition to the main tour deposit of \$1,000)

(Due at time of registration for the tour. May be paid with a credit card.)

Remaining Balance After Deposits (main tour + extension): \$7,400 double / \$10,000 single

The Netherlands Extension Price Includes: Three nights hotel accommodations, daily breakfasts at the hotel, Welcome and Farewell Dinners, air-conditioned motorcoach for sightseeing, services of a local English-speaking guide, excursions and visits mentioned in the program, use of a “whispers” system for guided tours inside museums.

The Netherlands Extension Price Excludes: Departure transfer from our Amsterdam hotel to the airport, special drinks ordered beyond what is on the menu for our included dinners, insurance, personal expenses. Tips to the guide and driver are not included.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Click hotel name to read description

- Brussels: [Radisson Collection Hotel Grand Place](#)
- Barge: [MS Raymonde](#)
- Amsterdam: [Hotel NH Amsterdam Leidseplein](#)

BOOK NOW