

## THE ROAD TO COPENHAGEN CYCLING HOLIDAY - 680 MILES

### DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

This itinerary is flexible and should be seen as a guide only. Local conditions, weather or fitness could involve changes to our daily plans. All times and distances are approximate. 'B, L, D' refers to the meals included in the trip cost, i.e. Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner.

#### DAY 1 Ferry Departure

We will meet at Harwich International Port, Essex and catch the overnight Stena Line ferry, the Stena Hollandica, to the Hook of Holland. Around 9am the following morning we will disembark and once we have cleared immigration and customs we reconvene in the car park close to the ferry terminal for a final bike check and the cycling begins



#### DAY 2 Hook of Holland to Zandvoort 37 miles

On the first day of our tour we will be following North Sea Cycle Route (LF1) from the Hook of Holland, with the North Sea away to the left, the landscape is one of dunes and sandy beaches as we wend our way to Zandvoort one of the largest beach resorts in the Netherlands and home to the famous Zandvoort motor racing circuit. (B, L)

#### DAY 3 Zandvoort to Den Helder 61 miles

After a relaxing evening in Zandvoort, first thing in the morning we will push on along the coastline traversing the city of IJmuiden (the largest fishing port in Western Europe) which lies at the mouth of the North Sea Canal connecting Amsterdam to the North Sea, and after some interesting cycling through the city later on in the day we will be once again pedalling through a spectacular and diverse landscape. As we cycle into Den Helder we will be traversing some unique nature reserves noted for their dunes and woods. This evening's accommodation is in Den Helder a naval town and once an important part of the defence line 'De Stelling van Den Helder' constructed during the Napoleonic era. (B, L)

#### DAY 4 Den Helder to Leeuwarden 61 miles

By now the rhythm of the tour is taking shape and after a good break-fast and the morning's briefing we will be cycling along the Dutch coast before crossing the Afsluitdijk, a 32 kilometre dyke that connects North Holland with Friesland. The Afsluitdijk also acts as the closing dyke between the IJsselmeer (the largest lake in Holland) which is fed by the rivers Amstel, Rhine, Vecht, IJssel and the Wadden Sea. After some exciting cycling, today's proceedings are brought to a close in Leeuwarden, the capital of the province of Friesland. Leeuwarden is a market town lying in the heart of an agricultural district and a university town and home to more than 600 monuments so there will be plenty to see during an evening's stroll. (B, L)

#### DAY 5 Leeuwarden to Delfzijl 63 miles

Upon departure from Leeuwarden we will be heading almost due east for all of today's cycle tour, as ever in the Netherlands, the cycling terrain will be flat and the cycle paths well signed and well maintained. En route to Delfzijl we will be cycling through Groningen, the most vibrant city in the northern Netherlands. We will be aiming to stop for a coffee in the wide open spaces

of the Grote Markt which forms the centre of Groningen itself. From Groningen we have around 19 miles more rural cycling to complete before we arrive in the coastal town of Delfzijl. (B, L)

#### **DAY 6 Delfzijl to Wilhelmshaven 78 miles**

This morning we will be leaving the Netherlands behind and crossing the border into Germany, today's ride is a spectacular affair that traverses part of the South Großes Meer (Südteil Großes Meer) this nature reserve was established in 1974 and is surrounded by a 2,500 hectares (6,200 acres) of protected landscape. With its extensive belt of reed-beds and the adjacent wetlands the Großes Meer and its surrounds are a breeding area and habitat of regional importance. Black-tailed godwit, snipe, lapwing, short-eared owl, marsh harrier, hen harrier, bittern, sedge warbler, blue throat and reed bunting are a few of the species of breeding bird that are important from a conservation perspective. In winter huge flocks of greylag geese and greater white-fronted geese shelter here.



From then on our journey takes us through some gently undulating and perfect cycle touring terrain to reach the town of Wilhelmshaven which lies on the western side of the Jade Bight, a bay of the North Sea. Wilhelmshaven is Germany's only deep water port and is home to its largest naval base as well as being part of the Lower Saxony Wadden Sea National Park (itself part of the Wattenmeer UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site). (B, L)



#### **DAY 7 Wilhelmshaven to Cuxhaven 78 miles**

Today's cycle tour will find us heading to the south east to skirt around the Jade Bight, we then cross the River Wesser at Sandstedt, before heading north and now cycling alongside the river to reach the city of Bremerhaven.

Having enjoyed a break for coffee and cake in the city we continue to hug the coastline of the North Sea as we make our way along some fine cycle paths to our evening's accommodation in Cuxhaven

which lies at the mouth of the River Elbe. (B, L)

#### **DAY 8 Cuxhaven to Burg 67 miles**

With a cycle route so dominated by the sea and rivers it is inevitable that at some stage we will be taking a ferry and this morning we start the day with a journey from Cuxhaven a bit inland towards the town of Wischhafen in Lower Saxony and by around lunch time from here we cross the mouth of the River Elbe to reach Glückstadt and continue cycling to Brunsbüttel a town in Schleswig-Holstein, northern Germany and the location of the western entrance to the Kiel Canal, the busiest artificial waterway in the world. From Brunsbüttel we head North West and traverse the environmentally important area surrounding the Kudensee before cycling into the small town of Burg where we will spend the evening. (B, L)



### **DAY 9 Burg to Kiel 63 miles**

Burg is surrounded by farm and marshland, and this quiet, lovely landscape forms the early backdrop for the start of the day's cycling, we will then cycle alongside the magnificent Kiel Canal where we will be side by side with luxury liners and other ocean going leviathans before pedalling into the city of Kiel itself which is the capital of Schleswig-Holstein. We will be having dinner in Kiel's historic grand harbour region before retiring for a well-earned rest. (B, L)

### **DAY 10 Kiel to Rodbyhaven 72 miles (including ferry 90 miles)**

After a relaxing evening in Kiel we will be cycling out of the city on the western shoreline of the Kiel Fjord before catching a ferry at Dusternbrook and crossing the fjord to Monkeberg. From there we will be following the Baltic Coast (Ostseekus-tenroute) D2 coastal cycle path to the north east to Laboe and onwards to Stein, Behrendorf and ultimately onwards to Heiligenhafen. From Heiligenhafen we then cycle onto the island of Fehmarn and having cycled across the island we finally say goodbye to Germany and catch the ferry over to Denmark where we will spend the night in Rodby. (B, L)

### **DAY 11 Rodby to Dalby (Haslev) 67 miles**

In common with many parts of the Netherlands and Germany, Denmark has a strong cycling culture and riders will find the flat topography and the extensive network of cycle routes an absolute joy upon which to ride. We will be departing from Rodby and soon joining National Cycle Route 7 and then following a route that takes us through Maribo, Saksøbing and Guldborg before arriving at Vordingborg. From Vordingborg we move onto the Regional Cycle route number 56 which takes us through some lovely forests to reach the town of Praesto on the southern shore of the Praesto Fjord and from there we remain on the route 56 to Dalby where we call a halt to today's cycling. (B, L)



### **DAY 12 Dalby to Copenhagen 42 miles**

Copenhagen is within touching distance but there is still a little more fantastic cycling to enjoy. From Dalby we return to the Regional cycle Route 56 and continue northwards to join the National Cycle Route 9 in the coastal town of Koge and from there we continue northwards on course for Copenhagen, we have plenty of time in which to make our destination, we will pause for one final coffee stop in one of the many beach resorts that lie to the west of Koge Bay.

From Koge we remain on the Cycle Route 9 before taking National Cycle Route 6 into the very heart of Copenhagen which marks the end of our adventure. There's an optional hour's cycling tour planned for Copenhagen before we check-in at hotel. We will having a last meal together in central Copenhagen. (B, L)