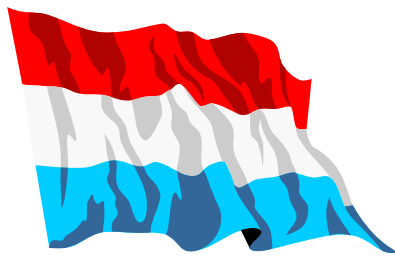


DUTCH BULB FIELDS AT EASTER

2nd to 5th April



Springtime in Holland is when much of the countryside is covered in a rich carpet of colour as spectacular bulb fields and famous tulips form a colourful and dazzling blanket across the country. At the centre of it all is Keukenhof Gardens, justly named “The Greatest Flower Show on Earth” where a glorious visual feast awaits visitors. This 32 hectare site is planted with some seven million flower bulbs, and when they bloom they become an explosion of colour and a magnificent spectacle unique throughout the world.

Friday 2nd April Departing Oxted early morning for Dover and the ferry to Calais, we make our way to the Jongenhoeve Cheese Farm at Gouda where we shall have a video presentation and demonstration of the cheese making process, with tasting. Following the visit we continue our journey to the Avifauna Hotel, our home for the next three nights. The hotel is situated in the Vogelpark, Holland’s first national bird park (we have free entry), a beautiful park with large stretches of water, spouting fountains and an abundance of flowers.

Saturday 3rd April After breakfast we make the journey to Het Loo Palace close to the town of Apeldoorn. The palace itself and the surrounding gardens have largely been restored to their original 17th-century design. The various rooms paint a vivid picture of the Royal family’s domestic life over three centuries, from William and Mary up to the reign of Queen Wilhelmina. The interiors are furnished with items of furniture, objects and paintings that generations of members of the royal family had around them. A collection of royal carriages, hunting coaches, sleighs and veteran cars is exhibited in the stables. The entire complex is surrounded by extensive woodland dotted with romantic lakes. The reconstructed gardens breathe the atmosphere of their 17th century origin with their fountains and elegantly box-lined parterres.

Sunday 4th April Departing after breakfast we take the short drive to Keukenhof Gardens, where tulips, narcissi, hyacinths and other bulbs create a sea of colour in this attractive park, with its ancient trees, shrubs and ponds. Here there will be time to wander and enjoy the millions of bulbs which were planted in the autumn and lovingly tended throughout the winter to make this rich tapestry of brilliant colours for the spring. Walk through the huge glasshouses, also full of colour, and along the edge of a very charming lake - in total the gardens extend to some seventy acres. In the



What's included:

Avifauna Hotel, Alphen aan den Rijn
3 nights Dinner, Bed & Breakfast, incl. dinner on board a boat on the Sunday evening.

All bedrooms have private facilities, TV & telephone.

Visit to Cheese Farm, with demonstration & tasting

Entry to Het Loo Palace

Entry to Keukenhof Gardens

Evening Dinner Cruise

Time to explore Bruges

COST: £469.00 per person

Single Room Supp: £104.00

Club Class Seat on Ferry: £27.50

15th century the area consisted of woodlands and virgin dunes and was the hunting ground of the Countess Jacqueline of Hainault and her entourage. In 1830 the first drawings for the park were made by German landscape gardener Zocher, in the English landscape style, and the pond and 'beech lane' with its majestic trees stem from this period. In 1949 a group of prominent Dutch bulb growers from the Lisse region developed plans to create an open-air flower exhibition to serve as a permanent showcase for the bulb and flower industry. They named it Keukenhof, or kitchen garden. Later we take a scenic drive through the neighbouring bulbfield area. This evening we shall dine on board a boat whilst cruising some of the local lakes.

Monday 5th April After breakfast we leave the hotel and travel south into Belgium, making a stop in Bruges, known as "The Venice of the North". Here canals carve their way through rows of ancient stone inns and houses. The entire city remains one of the best-preserved examples of northern renaissance architecture in all of Europe. Here there will be time for lunch and sightseeing. Later we continue our journey on to Calais for the ferry to Dover. Arriving home mid-evening.

