

AMSTERDAM, BRUSSELS AND PARIS: DUTCH MASTERS AND VAN GOGH

DATE: JUNE 12 – 23, 2004

From its seafaring heritage to flower-filled landscapes, discover the charms of the Netherlands and the Old World enchantment of the fabled Low Countries. In this historical country, you will encounter Van Gogh's, Rembrandt's, and Vermeer's masterpieces, but you will also enjoy the charms of water and nature.

Arriving in Belgium, relive the rich past of Antwerp, Brussels or Bruges through their glorious architecture, through the works of the Flemish painters of the XVth and XVIth century, through typical arts and crafts and through other Belgian specialties. Experience the inimitable curves and ornaments of Art Nouveau, invented by Victor Horta.

Stroll along the waterways in two countries where the past confronts you everywhere. Get to know the Belgian and Dutch culture where modern lifestyle has learned its lessons from the centuries of the past.

Continue to Paris, the city of lights and explore the treasures of the Louvre and the Musée d'Orsay. Follow the steps of Claude Monet in his gardens of Giverny, and discover Auvers-sur-Oise and the inn where Van Gogh ended his life as well as the cemetery where he and his brother Theo are buried.

Saturday, June 12th

Depart West Lafayette / Indianapolis or Chicago for Amsterdam

Depart on your overnight flight from Indianapolis or Chicago to Amsterdam.

Sunday, June 13th

Arrive Amsterdam

Welcome to Holland, home of tulips, windmills, wooden shoes and dykes. You will be met at the airport by your English speaking tour escort and private deluxe air conditioned motor coach. Transfer from the airport to your hotel with a brief orientation tour of Amsterdam. The afternoon is free to relax from your overseas flight or to explore this exciting cosmopolitan city. In the early evening, we will take a cruise through the canals of Amsterdam followed by a welcome dinner at a local restaurant.

Overnight in Amsterdam

(D)

Monday, June 14th

Amsterdam

After breakfast depart from your hotel by private motor coach with a local guide for a sightseeing tour of Amsterdam, the largest and most important city in Holland. You will see hundreds of cut flowers and plants on display at the Floating Flower Market on the Singel Canal. Then proceed past the King's Castle, which was constructed in 1662. You will also see "Nieuwe Kirk", a late Gothic church containing the tombs of famous Dutch admirals. Walk down Kalverstraat to Begijnhof Square with its old 16th and 17th century buildings. See "Munttoren", a former town gate and one of Amsterdam's famous landmarks. Your tour will include a visit to the famous Rijksmuseum opened in 1885. The Rijksmuseum has over 400 works of art. Your special guide will show you many masterpieces of Dutch art such as Rembrandt's The Night Watch and The Jewish Bride. The last visit today will be to the Van Gogh Museum which opened in 1973. A special guide will show us many of the 200 paintings and 500 drawings that the museum houses. Balance of the day is free for individual sightseeing like visiting the Rembrandt's house. Dinner on your own tonight.

Overnight in Amsterdam

(B)

Tuesday, June 15th**Amsterdam**

After breakfast, on today's excursion, you will be heading east to the Kröller-Müller Museum. This museum is most famous for its Van Gogh collection (270 pieces). In the well-known sculpture garden you will discover work by Hepworth, Rodin, Marini and Moore. Return to Amsterdam. The afternoon and evening will be free with the possibility of visiting the Anne Frank House, situated opposite Westerkerk.

Overnight in Amsterdam

(B, L)

Wednesday, June 16th**Amsterdam**

After breakfast at the hotel, we leave for a full-day excursion. We start with the nearby city of Haarlem. The city was founded in the 10th century on the edge of the offshore bar, near the inland seas, which have now disappeared. Haarlem was the residence of the Counts of Holland and it was fortified in the 12C. The city is also well-known as the "City of Frans Hals". His works can be seen at the Frans Hals Museum. A special guide will show us these exquisite paintings. We then drive south to The Hague passing the Frans Roozen Bulb Gardens, which is one of the most pleasing and colorful flower-bulb attractions. The Hague is the political capital of the Netherlands, home of the parliament and International Court of Justice. Here we will visit Mauritshuis, completed in 1644 and today home of the Royal Picture Gallery. A short drive takes us to nearby Delft, one of Holland's oldest towns. Delft is also very famous for its tile manufacturing. In the center of the town is the market square which contains the Gothic town hall (Stadhuis) and the Gothic church (Nieuwe Kerk). Visit the Royal Delft Blue Pottery factory where you will see the production of the famous Delft porcelain and tiles. In the late afternoon we return to Amsterdam in time for our final night in Amsterdam.

Overnight in Amsterdam

(B, D)

Thursday, June 17th**Amsterdam / Antwerp / Brussels**

Depart after breakfast for a drive to Belgium and the huge port town of Antwerp, founded in 1200. Antwerp boasts a 500 year old tradition in the art of diamond cutting and is famous for its diamond exchange. Your tour will include the old city center of Antwerp and the local guide will introduce you to the variety of artistic wonders offered by this city. Visit the Rubens House (the 'Rubens House Museum'.) Nowadays visitors to the house should be aware that they don't visit a house as it was left behind by its most famous inhabitant but rather a reconstruction of what it must have looked like in the first half of the 17th century. The collection of paintings by Rubens himself and by some of his contemporaries makes it an enjoyable experience. During our visit, one can stroll through the reconstructed garden; visit the work shop of Rubens and his private quarters. Peter Paul Rubens, was the greatest and most famous of all the Antwerp painters. After he returned from his stay in Italy (1600-1608), Rubens bought this existing 16th century house. He lived in the house from 1616 onwards and died here in 1640. We continue south in the early afternoon to Brussels, the capital of Belgium. After an orientation drive showing the most famous sights like the Royal Palace, Basilique du Sacre-Coeur, Cathedrale Sts Michel et Gudule and the Atomium, we check into our hotel. Dinner will be at a local restaurant followed by a visit to the Grand Place, which may be the most beautiful square in Europe.

Overnight in Brussels

(B, D)

Friday, June 18th**Brussels**

After breakfast this morning, a local guide will give us more detailed information about Brussels, which is also the capital in the new Europe. Our tour ends at Museum d'Art Ancien, which is best known for the finest collection of Flemish art in the world. Here a special guide will show us some of the more than 2.500 works that are exhibited in the museum.

Your afternoon is free for individual sightseeing or join an afternoon optional excursion to the city of Ghent known for Jan van Eyck's Altarpiece.

Overnight in Brussels

(B)

Saturday, June 19th**Brussels / Paris**

After breakfast we drive south thru France to Paris, in la belle France. Upon arrival we will meet a local guide who will lead a sightseeing tour including Eiffel Tower, Arc de Triomphe, Champs Elysees, Church of the Madeleine and Notre Dame Cathedral. Dinner at our hotel. After dinner we will have a drive through the city of lights.

Overnight in Paris

(B, D)

Sunday, June 20th**Paris**

This morning you will have a special guided tour of the Louvre Museum, a royal palace that now contains the greatest art collection in the world. Then we take a walk to nearby Musee d'Orsay, a restored train station that now contains masterpieces of the "Impressionists" such as: Monet, Chagall, Renoir, Gauguin, Manet, and Van Gogh, just to mention a few. The afternoon will be at leisure to pursue your own interests or join an optional excursion to Versailles, for a visit of Louis XIV's great palace. Return to Paris for balance of the day.

Overnight in Paris

(B)

Monday, June 21st**Paris**

After breakfast today, we visit Monet's home. In 1883 the Impressionist painter Claude Monet rented a house in the village of Giverny, and worked here until his death at the age of 86. The house known as the Foundation Claude Monet and its magnificent garden will be seen today on our excursion. A special guided visit will be given to the nearby Musee d'Art Americain Giverny which has 19th and 20th century art works. Before leaving we will have lunch at a local restaurant. We continue to the village of Auvers-sur-Oise, where we will see the graves of Vincent and Theo van Gogh. Afternoon return to Paris for a free evening.

Overnight in Paris

(B, L)

Tuesday, June 22nd**Paris**

The entire day free for individual sightseeing, shopping etc. before our final farewell dinner at a local restaurant

Overnight in Paris

(B, D)

Wednesday, June 23rd**Depart Paris / Indianapolis or Chicago / West Lafayette**

After breakfast transfer to the Paris Charles DeGaulle Airport for your return flight to Indianapolis or Chicago.

(B)

Arrangement of itinerary may be subject to change due to convenience of participants or circumstances beyond our control.

Meals: B= Breakfast L= Lunch D= Dinner

