



Floriade 2012

Horticulture in Holland

April 12 - 21, 2012

With over one third of Holland's total area below sea level, her people live in a constant struggle against the chill waters of the North Sea. It is said that God created heaven and earth – except Holland. The Dutch people made that! The ingenious use of windmills, dikes and canals has created large flat and fertile areas that, for hundreds of years, have been cultivated with the most colorful flowers. This spring we explore the gardens and culture of this tiny nation and experience the unforgettable Floriade, a worldwide horticultural event that is held just once every ten years.

We begin and end in Amsterdam, a city built on a network of tiny canals with its tall and narrow brick houses reflected in the glimmering water. We include a guided tour of the world-famous Rijksmuseum, spend a day at magnificent Keukenhof Gardens and visit the Aarlsmeer Flower Auction.

A full day at the Floriade 2012 will certainly be a highlight of the trip. The flowers, bulbs and plants of the Netherlands obviously play a leading role in this celebration of horticulture, but many other countries will also be exhibiting. This is truly a day not to be missed!

Our travels also include time in the east of Holland, where we visit some of the best gardens and estates that the country has to offer.

Discover Europe has crafted an itinerary that highlights the gardens, the museums, and the landscape of Holland in full bloom. The pace is never frantic, yet the days are pleasantly full and there are bound to be some unexpected diversions and adventures along the way. Your tour guide will provide background history, anecdotes and an insight into Dutch life as you travel around.

This April, join us on an unforgettable journey through a country that is bursting with the color and joy of springtime on *Floriade 2012*.



The Canals of Amsterdam



A River of Flowers at Keukenhof

The cost of this itinerary, per person, double occupancy is:

Land only (no airfare included): **\$3880**
Single supplement: **\$690**

Airfares are available from many U.S. cities. Please call for details.

The following services are included:

- Hotels:** 8 nights accommodation in first-class hotels.
All hotel taxes and service charges included.
- Coaching:** All ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary.
- Meals:** Breakfast daily, 1 lunch, 4 dinners.
- Guides:** *Discover Europe* tour director throughout.
- Expenses:** Porterage of one large suitcase per person.
- Entrances:** Entrance fees to all sites included in the itinerary.
- Insurance:** Complete travel insurance including cancellation coverage.





Thursday 12th April. Evening departure from your chosen US gateway city. **Overnight: Plane**

Friday 13th April. Upon arrival at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport, you will be met for the transfer to our city-center hotel. After checking in and some free time to relax and have lunch, we'll take to the canals for a tour of this beautiful city, best seen from the water. A dinner party at the hotel this evening welcomes you to Holland! **(D)** **Overnight: Amsterdam**

Saturday 14th April. The morning will begin with a guided tour of the Rijksmuseum. This national museum was originally founded in 1808 by Louis Bonaparte and houses an exceptional collection of 15 - 17C paintings. The rest of the day is free to explore the city: stroll the canals, shop in the Jordaan district, visit the Van Gogh Museum, or Anne Frank's House. Your tour guide will be on hand to help with suggestions and advice. The evening is free to sample some local cuisine - perhaps a rijst-tafel dinner, an Indonesian specialty that is a relic of Dutch colonialism in the East Indies. **(B)** **Overnight: Amsterdam**

Sunday 15th April. Leaving Amsterdam this morning, we turn south, heading past the historic city of Utrecht, towards Nijmegen, the only town in Holland built on several hills! We stop for a visit to De Tuinen van Appeltern, a changing exhibition of garden design with over 200 model gardens on display and boasting the largest collection of plants in the Netherlands. These are laid out in such a way as to give inspiration and help to all gardeners. We continue to Venlo, on the Dutch/German border, for a welcoming dinner at our hotel. **(B, D)** **Overnight: Venlo**

Monday 16th April. Today brings the undoubted highlight of the trip: The Floriade! Held only once every ten years, this event is not to be missed. This year's theme is 'The Theatre of Nature' and over 160 acres are being transformed to create vistas, woodland and lakeside walks, and gardens from around the world. We'll plan to spend the day here and you are free to wander at your leisure. We return to our hotel at the end of the day for a free evening. **(B)** **Overnight: Venlo**

Tuesday 17th April. Heading north along the border with Germany, we cross the Rhine at Arnhem and make a stop at Castle Rosendael, a 14th-century castle set in magnificently landscaped 17th- and 18th-century gardens. This afternoon we drive the short distance to the Hoge Veluwe National Park and the superb Kroller-Muller museum and Sculpture Park. The heart of the Kroller-Muller collection is its 276 works by Van Gogh. The Sculpture Park, the largest in Europe, has an extensive collection, including works by Rodin and Henry Moore, and is set in a lovely landscape garden. From here we continue to our hotel in Apeldoorn where there will be time to freshen up before dinner. **(B, D)** **Overnight: Apeldoorn**



Dutch Bulb Fields

Wednesday 18th April. Our excursion today takes us into the province of Overijssel, the very eastern part of the country. Our first stop will be the garden of De Wiersse, a moated manor house that has been described as the most beautiful garden in Holland. We'll have a private tour and lunch here before continuing to Castle Warmelo, a lovely manor house, parts of which date from 1457. The grounds were lovingly restored in the 1920's by Baroness Creutz and are particularly noted for their French and English style gardens. We return to Apeldoorn for a free evening. **(B, L)** **Overnight: Apeldoorn**

Thursday 19th April. This morning it is a short drive just north of the town to visit the Royal Het Loo Palace. Originally built by Prince William III in the 17th century as a hunting lodge, the palace was a royal residence until 1975. Its extensive gardens have been restored to their former glory and the palace is a fascinating record of three centuries of royalty. From here we return to our hotel in Amsterdam where the evening is free to find a local restaurant for dinner. **(B)** **Overnight: Amsterdam**



Castle Rosendael

Friday 20th April. An early start this morning as we head for the Aalsmeer Flower Auction. We view the whole operation from raised galleries running across the huge hall with windows looking into each of the five auction rooms. The display of color, sound and movement is extraordinary as the flower carts need to move quickly once purchased. The rest of our final day in Holland we spend at the glorious Keukenhof Gardens. We'll spend the best part of the day exploring the many themed gardens and pavilions. In addition to the glorious abundance of blossom, works of art by Dutch artists are on display throughout the park. We return to our hotel in Amsterdam for an evening of merriment and our farewell dinner party. **(B, D)** **Overnight: Amsterdam**

Saturday 21st April. Morning transfers to Amsterdam Airport for your returning transatlantic flights home. **(B)** **Overnight: Home**