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Cycling In Amsterdam And The Netherlands: The Very Best Routes In The Cyclist's Paradise



Synopsis

There is no happier cyclist than a Dutch cyclist. This is not only because The Netherlands is mainly flat, but also because the Dutch enjoy the most extensive cycle network in the world. Amsterdam is famous for its cyclists and with this guidebook you'll cycle on those routes the locals love themselves. Whether you are a novice cyclist, want to give children a safe and fun cycling experience, want to do some serious mileage or want to embark on a study trip to experience the Dutch cycling infrastructure, this second and fully revised edition caters for all! With 1,064 kms (656 miles) of routes, this book can provide up to three weeks of cycling fun. Six circular day rides, all with various distance itineraries, explore Amsterdam and its direct surroundings. A circular touring route of 337 km (208 miles) provides a highlights route of Dutch landmarks. From Amsterdam, you'll explore the Dutch windmill reserves and tulip fields, the amazing coastal sand dune reserves, splendid inland waterway routes, unspoilt countryside, medieval towns like Gouda, Edam, Delft and great cities like The Hague, Utrecht and Haarlem. More routes heading north, east and south provide further route variety on what The Netherlands has on offer. Utrecht Ridge National Park, the River Rhine, the famous Delta Dams, the world's largest reclaimed island and even some real Dutch hills are all part of the pack! The routes in the book have full connectivity with all main Dutch ferry ports, Amsterdam Schiphol Airport and Amsterdam, The Hague and Utrecht Central railway stations. This allows you to start cycling straight away, whether you arrive by plane, ferry or train. 300 listed facilities include bike rentals, bike shops, B&Bs, hotels, hostels and campsites. This guidebook fits easily in a standard handlebar map holder, with maps and directions that make navigating easier than ever before. Additional chapters about the history of the Dutch cycling culture and the unique Dutch cycle route system make this book a must for anyone who loves cycling! Eric van der Horst is the author of various specialised cycling guidebooks "for those who love cycling, but don't like traffic" and caters for an international audience. Just as for his "London-Land's End Cycle Route Book" he also runs an updates page and GPS-tracks service for this book, see www.cyclinginholland.com.

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Customer Reviews

"Excellent pannier-pocket guide" (BBC TV presenter and travel writer Nicholas Crane), "The cycling bible" (Rob Olijkan of Bikecity Rental in Amsterdam)

"Cycling Dutchman" Eric van der Horst went on his first cycling holiday when he was 16. It took him over 15 years to explore the full extent of the Dutch cycle route network. The routes in this guidebook represent his personal local favorites. Eric also travelled the world by bike and cycled in many different countries. Today, he lives in England and works as a cycle route consultant, Bikeability instructor and author.

This is a spiral bound book printed in color published by British publisher CycleCityGuides. It's intended for a British audience so, for instance, it includes all the information you need to ferry yourself and bike to the Netherlands from Great Britain. The first 32 pages are general information about cycling in Holland. For Brits switching to the opposite side of the road this may be useful for reprogramming their brains. As an American, the information was of very little use. The Fiets route system is brain dead simple to figure out. Basically, the entire country is criss-crossed with bike routes. The intersections are numbered and signed (small green and white signs), with bike maps (Fietskaarts) available with the corresponding numbers. There is nowhere in the country that cannot be safely and conveniently accessed by bike. Cycling heaven. If you can read a map and apply basic logic and observation, you are good to go. There is zero enforcement of bike traffic rules, so just be cool and safe. There are plenty of web sites to answer questions if you search something like Holland cycling. Cycling maps like the "ANWB Fietskaart" (1:50,000) series are available on UK and German (de) sites; just scroll down to the bottom of this page (shipping is cheap but slow, and your American account and password work fine). Also on is the "ANWB Fietsatlas" (1:100,000) spiralbound. I didn't like the scaling: too many details lost. Falk publishes a Fietsatlas (1:75,000) that is much better, but isn't available on the web that I could find that would ship to America. Maps and

atlas' were not that easy to find in country, so we were glad we brought them with. The last 130 or so pages of the book are dedicated to the routes the author has put together. Maps are provided and turn by turn instructions with distances between points denoted down to the tenth of a kilometer. So here's the two problems I personally had with the book. First, I know this turn by turn format is very common, but I don't like it in general. In the Netherlands in particular, it is totally unnecessary because the whole country is so well signed and mapped. Second, the subtitle, "the very best routes in a cyclist's paradise", is somewhat misleading in my opinion. The routes are one main circular route (310 K, Amsterdam, Utrecht, Delft, Den Haag, Haarlem, Amsterdam) with four appendage routes. So you either follow the routes exactly, or the book is of little use. We crossed the main circular route in about four places on our trip, and I didn't see anything special about the particular routes chosen. I would say the main circular route would give you a good overview of Holland. On the other hand, if you can read maps and judge the lay of the land, there is no reason not to just wing it. (There's a Dutch website that will map out a route between any two points in the country. I found the routes to be horrible. I did much better using common sense and maps.) So "Cycling The Netherlands" is not my cup of tea. But if it is yours, I can say the book is very well done. Here's a few tips from my own experience. Other than the carbon fiber roadies, nobody wears helmets. It is hard to find rental bikes other than 3 speed tanks. Be prepared to wait out the occasional downpour. We never cycled through any areas that seemed unsafe. The "LF" route system need not be followed: there are millions of choices that work just as well. Almost everybody in Holland speaks easier to understand English than in the U.K. The bike campgrounds we saw were OK, but nothing special: just a small spot on grass to pitch a tent. If a map shows a ferry crossing, there WILL be an operating ferry there during day light hours (usually about one euro, don't know about night hours). Signs: Bicycle with a red slash through it means "leaving exclusive bike road", not "no bicycles allowed". Dead end or one way auto signs with picture of bike and moped underneath means does not apply to bikes. In cities, a row of triangles painted on the tarmac means yield to oncoming traffic. The cars do generally respect these markings and yield to through cyclists. Holland is a beautiful and easy destination. I highly recommend it to anyone interested in a cycling vacation, and particularly to newbies. Bonus tip: Pass through Utrecht on your trip. Spend a day and rent a kayak and explore the canals going through the city. Possibly the best thing we did on our trip.

This was an extremely useful guide which not only gave clear biking directions but also lots of other information about museums, culture, etc.

We find it very helpful giving us all the bike route info in the Netherlands. It is small and compact also so easy to carry along.

Nice book with much good information and pictures of routes. Delivered speedily and in excellent condition! Thanks

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