

Elfstedentocht Cycle Route

Ride the route of the famous 11 Cities skating race

The Eleven Cities Cycling Tour offers an enchanting journey through the heart of Friesland, tracing the path of the fabled Dutch Elfstedentocht ice skating route. These eleven Frisian cities, interconnected by canals, rivers, and lakes where the renowned skating event unfolds during severe winters, unveil a captivating landscape steeped in history and culture.

Cycling through Friesland, revered as one of the most picturesque provinces in the Netherlands, introduces you to a tapestry of remarkable sights. From the Watergate in Sneek to the Royal Eise Eisinga Planetarium in Franeker, the Bonifatius City Brewery in Dokkum, and the expansive IJsselmeer, our journey is adorned with countless highlights awaiting discovery along this captivating route.

Book online: Elfstendentocht: 11 Cities

Details about the Frisian Eleven Cities bicycle tour

The starting and ending point of our Eleven Cities Cycling Tour is the city of Leeuwarden. Visit the Netherlands' most leaning tower and delve into the culture and history of Friesland at the Fries Museum. Friesland and water are closely connected, so it's no surprise that you'll frequently encounter both large and small lakes along the well-developed cycle paths.

Cyclists are treated to picturesque landscapes throughout the route, including serene countryside, charming villages, iconic Dutch windmills, and scenic waterways. The route's cultural richness, historical significance, and natural beauty make it a beloved cycling experience for locals and tourists alike.

The highlights of the 11 Cities cycling holiday at a glance

- **Leeuwarden:** Begin your journey in the capital city of Friesland. Leeuwarden boasts stunning architecture, including the Oldehove tower, and cultural treasures like the Fries Museum.
- **Sloten:** This small fortified town offers a glimpse into the past with its well-preserved ramparts and charming canals. The town is known for its picturesque streets and historic buildings.
- **Stavoren:** As one of the oldest towns in Friesland, Stavoren has a rich maritime history. Don't miss the "Lady of Stavoren" statue, which represents a famous legend about a wealthy merchant.
- **Hindeloopen:** Known for its distinctive blue and white houses and strong maritime traditions, Hindeloopen is a must-visit. Explore the Hindeloopen Museum to learn about the town's culture and art.
- **IJlst:** This town is famous for its centuries-old windmill and traditional wooden bridges. Take a moment to appreciate the craftsmanship of the historic Eise Eisinga Planetarium.
- **Sneek:** As one of the larger cities along the route, Sneek offers a vibrant atmosphere with its canals, historic buildings, and the Waterpoort, a monumental city gate.
- **Bolsward:** Marvel at the grandeur of the city hall and explore the town's rich history in the various museums. The Bolsward Stadhuis (town hall) is a beautiful example of Renaissance architecture.
- **Harlingen:** Known as a major port town, Harlingen exudes maritime charm with its canals, harbours, and historic warehouses. Enjoy fresh seafood and take in the coastal vibe.
- **Franeker:** Home to the famous Franeker Planetarium, this city is steeped in astronomical history. Explore the old university buildings and soak in the town's intellectual heritage.
- **Dokkum:** This fortified town offers a glimpse into medieval times with its well-preserved walls and historic buildings. Enjoy the serene atmosphere along the canals.

Interesting facts about the Frisian Eleven Cities cycling holiday

The Eleven Cities Tour boasts a diverse and engaging route profile that captures the essence of Friesland's varied landscapes. As cyclists traverse this legendary path, they encounter a mix of flat stretches, gently rolling hills, and occasional inclines, offering a dynamic and enjoyable riding experience.

The predominantly flat terrain prevailing throughout much of the route ensures a pleasant and accessible journey for cyclists of various skill levels. Wide, well-maintained cycle paths wind their way through serene countryside, charming villages, and picturesque canals.

These sections facilitate relaxed and leisurely cycling, allowing riders to soak in the scenic beauty and immerse themselves in the local ambience.

This tour has been graded as **Medium**. Find out more about our **cycling holiday difficulty levels**.

Book online: Elfstendentocht: 11 Cities

Tour information



Medium



8 Days / 7 Nights



Self-Guided



Luggage transfers included



Total cycling distance: approx.
275 km

To the online version



Itinerary

DAY
1


Individual arrival in Leeuwarden

Your Eleven Cities Tour by bike starts in Leeuwarden, the capital of the Dutch province of Friesland. After checking into the hotel, you can explore the old town surrounded by canals with its stately mansions. Visit the sloping church tower of Oldehove. The unfinished church tower, like the leaning tower in Pisa, gradually leans to the side and is a National Monument. Despite the slight slope, the tower is easy to visit. Get in the mood for your cycling holiday with an evening walk along the canals of Leeuwarden.

DAY
2

Leeuwarden – Sneek approx. 50 km


The first stage takes you on flat cycle paths to the small town of Bolsward, one of the 11 cities in Friesland. This historic place was once built on three mounds. A visit to the distillery Sonnema Berenburg is worthwhile. Try their well-known herbal bitters based on the juniper brandy jenever. The landmark of your first stage destination Sneek is the water gate, which is unique in the Netherlands. Located in the Frisian lake area, the city is popular with leisure captains and water enthusiasts and famous for the annual water sports event Sneekweek in the first week of August.

 ca. 50 km

DAY
3


Sneek – Rijs approx. 55 km

Today you cycle in the direction of the IJsselmeer. On the way to the final destination Rijs, a short detour to Sloten, the smallest city in the Netherlands, is definitely worth it. Historic buildings and cosy terraces and cafes invite you to take a long break. Not far from Rijs, you have an uninterrupted view of the IJsselmeer. The lake created by an artificial dike is the largest in the Netherlands. Leave your bike at the hotel in Rijs and take a long walk and stay until sunset, it's well worth it.


 ca. 55 km

**DAY
4****Rijs – Makkum** approx. 30 km


Follow the coast of the IJsselmeer today and you will reach the port city of Stavoren. The symbol of the city is located directly on the harbour, the statue of the widow of Stavoren. According to legend, a wealthy merchant's widow wanted the most precious possession that could be found. When the grain was brought to her, she despised this. You can find out how the story continues at the statue. A few kilometres further north, another break in Hindeloopen is worthwhile. The picturesque old houses and wooden bridges tell of the heyday of the port city in the 17th and 18th centuries. You will spend the night in Makkum. This city is known as the oldest pottery factory in the Netherlands.

 ca. 30 km**DAY
5****Makkum – Harlingen** approx. 55 km

Shortly after the start of today's route in Makkum, you will see the Afsluitdijk on your left. This dam of 32 km separates the IJsselmeer from the Wadden Sea. First of all, a stop in Franeker, one of the eleven cities of Friesland, is worthwhile. Visit the Royal Eise Eisinga Planetarium. It is considered the oldest in the world. The harbour of Harlingen is your final destination today. Discover the old town with its many interesting buildings. You should not miss the beautiful town hall and the Grote Kerk. The evening can be spent on the beach of Harlingen, not far from the statue of the stone man.


 ca. 55 km**DAY
6****Harlingen – Dokkum** approx. 60 km

The longest stage of this cycle tour along the eleven cities takes you today over the green dikes along the Wadden Sea. You cycle a little inland through the terp village of Hogebeintum. At about nine meters above sea level, the village is located on the highest mound in the country. The pilgrimage city of Dokkum is today's final destination. Decorated with characteristic facades, the city exudes a special atmosphere. According to legend, the water from the Boniface spring has a healing effect. We don't know if the beer has a healing effect, but find out and try one of the refreshing hop juices from the Bonifatius brewery. Cheers!

 ca. 60 km

DAY
7**Dokkum – Leeuwarden** approx. 25 km

Only a few kilometres of cycling lie ahead of you today in the last stage of the Elfstedentocht by bike tour. You cycle back to Leeuwarden through the typical Frisian landscape. A stroll through the charming little shopping street Kerkstraat is just as rewarding as a guided boat trip through the canals of Leeuwarden.

 ca. 25 kmDAY
8**Return trip or extension**

Unfortunately, your Elfsteden cycling tour ends after breakfast. If desired, we are happy to extend your stay in Leeuwarden with an extra night.

Route information

The average daily stages are 50 to 60 km. The route is mostly on paved bike paths, partly on side roads with little to no traffic. Because of the somewhat longer stages, this cycling tour is ideal for experienced amateur cyclists with good physical conditions.



Prices and dates

Price calculation and check availability: **Elfstedentocht: 11 Cities**

Place of arrival: Leeuwarden

Season 1
01.04.2024 - 24.09.2024
Daily

Elfstedentocht Cycle Route, NL-LL-07	
Base price	749.00
Single room surcharge	359.00

Hotel information: You will stay in carefully selected 3*** and 4**** hotels.

Additional nights

Place of arrival: Leeuwarden

Season 1
Apr 1, 2024 - Sep 24, 2024
Daily

Leeuwarden	
Extra night p.p / BB	94.00
Single room surcharge	30.00

Our rental bikes

Price

7-Speed Unisex Bike	90.00
Unisex E-Bike	165.00

Prices per person in GBP

Included services and travel information

Services

Included

- 7 nights accommodation as described, including breakfast
- Luggage transfer(s) 1 piece max. 20kg per person
- Travel folder 1 x per room (German, English with route and overview maps, detailed route description, places of interest, important telephone numbers, suitcase labels)
- GPS data available on request
- Service Hotline

Not included

- Tourist tax, if applicable, to be paid locally

Arrival information

- Airport: Amsterdam Schipol
- Train: Leeuwarden station
- Parking: There is free parking at your hotel, reservation is not possible