

# The Dutch Floriade

8 'Blooming' Days – Amsterdam to Brussels



## Albatross gives you more...

- ✈ Spend a full day in the world famous Dutch Floriade – the huge horticultural event held only once every 10 years and enjoy a cable car ride 30 metres above the landscaped gardens and pavilions
- ✈ Enjoy 3 nights in the historic city of Amsterdam, visit the windmills of Zaanse Schans and the quaint fishing village of Volendam
- ✈ Dine in the character restaurant 'Haesje Claes'
- ✈ See a real 'Dutch Flower Auction' at Aalsmeer Flower Market and cruise on Amsterdam's canals in a glass topped canal boat
- ✈ Stay 3 nights in the Venlo region and visit Maastricht and Valkenburg
- ✈ Visit the splendid gardens of Paleis Het Loo and explore the gardens of the world at the Mondo Verde Gardens
- ✈ Spend one night in Brussels and explore the delightful Belgian city of Mechelen

## The Albatross Difference

 <p>More sightseeing time off the coach, average 102 kms travelled</p>	 <p>Max 30 passengers for a more personal touring experience</p>	 <p>Over \$700 value of extras included with no hidden costs</p>
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## Floriade 2012



Floriade is a World Horticultural Exposition that has been held in the Netherlands roughly every 10 years since 1960. For 2012, the Floriade Park is located in the Limburg region, near the town of Venlo, and covers 66 hectares. More than 100 exhibitors will together pay tribute to horticulture. The park comprises five unique worlds: themed zones connected by wooded areas. Worlds in which you will see, feel and experience nature in a constantly changing way.

Dozens of countries participate in this global spectacle. You will find yourself immersed in a melting pot of cultures where you will be introduced to different customs and rituals, as well as magnificent display gardens. For instance, a range of traditional buildings including Balinese towers and Javanese and Sumatran houses dominate the entry way to the Indonesian cultural gardens.

You can promenade along Floriade Boulevard which runs alongside the imposing water garden of the World Show Stage, relax in the magnificent Rose Garden and discover the ultra-sustainable Villa Flora which is home to the biggest indoor flower show. In the 'Relax and Heal World' you can taste, smell, feel, hear and see how nature influences your health, your wellbeing and your mood in tranquil surroundings. Learn about healing herbs and tea rituals. A barefoot path and a spa-like ambience gives every visitor a special Yin-Yang experience! In the 'Education & Innovation World' you will understand how important it is to keep on learning and innovating. You will also be able to taste unusual fruit and vegetable creations, maybe take part in an imaginary flower auction or even learn to make a stunning floral masterpiece.

At Floriade 2012 you will wander through gardens designed by famous landscape architects and creative artists, be inspired by the impressive pavilions with their striking ideas and innovations and, enjoy a cultural programme of music, dance, literature, theatre and visual art from all over the world. For more information go to [www.floriade.com](http://www.floriade.com)

### Floriade 2012 will be a spectacular voyage of discovery

#### DAY 1 AMSTERDAM

Your tour commences this evening with a welcome drink and dinner in your first class hotel. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. (D)

*Your Amsterdam Hotel – Radisson Blu. This excellent first class hotel is located in a quiet section of the historic centre of town, about a 5 minute walk to Dam Square and within easy access to all the main sights. Set within a series of historic buildings beside one of Amsterdam's canals, the De Palmboom restaurant occupies a 1742 building that was originally a Bible shop and later a famous grocery store and the Pastorie Bar previously served as a 19th-century vicarage. See [www.radissonblu.com/hotel-amsterdam](http://www.radissonblu.com/hotel-amsterdam)*

#### DAY 2 AMSTERDAM

This morning we are joined by a local guide for a tour of this cosmopolitan city. You cannot help but be impressed by the complex network of waterways and canals that thread through the city, broken only by picturesque pedestrian and road bridges. We have included a cruise along these charming canals in a glass topped boat. Your afternoon is free to explore the pretty twisting streets and the wide range of often eccentric cafes and bars, galleries, museums and monuments. Perhaps visit Anne Frank's House, now a museum to the bravery of one little girl, and maybe the Rijksmuseum, Rembrandthuis and the Van Gogh Museum. This evening we have included dinner at 'Haesje Claes' - a local restaurant bursting with Dutch style, character and ambience. Occupying six preserved Dutch buildings the dining rooms are full of ambience and are connected by little steps, corridors and hallways. (B, D)

#### DAY 3 AMSTERDAM

Around 20 million flowers are sold at the Aalsmeer Bloemenveiling (flower markets) every day. We have a relatively early start today to catch these massive 'Dutch Flower auctions' at their liveliest. The markets cover a staggering 7.5 million square feet. From an aerial walkway your bird's-eye view will be down over thousands of carts loaded with up to 13,000 varieties of flowers being linked into trains and towed around by swarms of small motorised vehicles. Behind large picture windows you will see the frenetic but silent 'Dutch Flower auctions' in action. Later we visit the Dutch countryside and spend time in the village of Zaanse Schans. This picturesque village is now very much a 'show village' providing a wonderful snap shot of Dutch life in days gone by. Alongside six windmills, two oil mills, a mustard mill, a paint mill and two saw mills are traditional Dutch cottages and gabled houses. There are a number of museums, fascinating craft shops, cheese shops, clog shops, cafes and restaurants.



Photo courtesy Paleis Het Loo





Lunchtime will be at leisure in Volendam. This charming fishing town has a historic ambience that has not changed much in six centuries. The characteristically small houses and canals, spanned by picturesque drawbridges, give Volendam a romantic feel. Back in Amsterdam, the remainder of the afternoon and evening is free. (B)

*Want to also visit the famous Keukenhof Gardens displays?*

*Please note our 7 May departure also includes a morning visit to Keukenhof*

**DAY 4 's-HERTOGENBOSCH**

Our morning stop will be at the remarkable Paleis Het Loo. Located just outside the town of Apeldoorn, the Palace of Het Loo was the home of the Dutch Royal family for 300 years. The interior of the palace is sumptuously furnished and the highly symmetrical gardens, justifiably famous for their fountains and statues, are delightful. Our lunchtime stop will be in the old town of Arnhem which is famous for its role as the pivotal battleground in 'Operation Market Garden' during WWII. In the afternoon we continue to the Limburg region and 's-Hertogenbosch (also known as Den Bosch), where we stay for the next three nights. Your hotel is located right on the historic market square in the centre of this pretty, authentically Dutch town. (B, D)

*Our Limburg Hotel – Golden Tulip Hotel Central.*

*Please note: On both September departures we stay three nights near Eindhoven.*

**DAY 5 's-HERTOGENBOSCH**

**TODAY WE VISIT FLORIADE!**

We spend the whole day in the wonderful 2012 Floriade World Horticultural Exposition. It is time to enjoy an aerial view of this massive Expo from the 30metre high cable car ride. It is time to wander around the multitude of international show gardens, designed by famous landscape architects and creative artists, impressive pavilions with their striking ideas and five themed zones connected by wooded areas. (B, D)

**DAY 6 's-HERTOGENBOSCH**

After a leisurely start, we spend the morning in the attractive pedestrian town of Valkenburg. Quite unusual for the incredibly flat Netherlands, Valkenburg is set in a beautiful, hilly region and even has the ruins of a castle above the town. Populated since Roman times the town is a charming place to spend the morning.

Lunchtime will be at leisure amongst the shops and market squares of the vibrant and cosmopolitan city of Maastricht. In the afternoon we visit the Mondo Verde Gardens. Set in 61 acres of land you will find displays of gardens from around the world. In one day you can visit beautiful gardens from the tropics to Japan, from Italy to Morocco from Russia and even Australia. The Tuscan gardens exude luxury with their thin cypresses, romantic spring fountains, scented olive trees and shaded terraces. Follow



*Volendam Fishing Village*

the small bridges through the Chinese garden, rock formations of Marrakech, the ornate gardens of the Alhambra, patios, marble pillars and brightly coloured mosaics. (B)

**DAY 7 BRUSSELS**

Our morning stop will be in Mechelen. Once capital of the region, Mechelen still boasts wonderful old market squares, cobbled stone streets and canals flanked by traditional gabled houses. Lunchtime, and the afternoon, will be at leisure in Belgium's capital, Brussels. Along with numerous key departments of the EEC, Brussels still retains its old world charm with sights such as the Town Hall, Grand Place surrounded by the ornate Guild houses and the little Mannekin Pis statue. This evening we have included a farewell dinner in your hotel. (B, D)

*Your Brussels hotel – NH Brussels City Centre*

**DAY 8 BRUSSELS**

After breakfast we have included a mid morning transfer to the central station and international airport. (B)

*'It was very good not to move every day staying more than one night in any one place. There was a good balance of organised sightseeing and free time. Also, I liked the fact that everything was paid for before – no optionals or extras to pay on tour. On the whole an excellent trip!'*  
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**Tour Inclusions**

- All excursions, scenic drives and sightseeing (as per the itinerary)
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- First class air-conditioned touring coach
- End of tour tips to Tour Manager and driver
- 7 nights selected accommodation as described
- Hotel portorage (1 bag per person)
- Welcome drink Amsterdam
- Buffet breakfasts daily
- 5 dinners including welcome and farewell dinners, Haesje Claes restaurant dinner Amsterdam
- Entrances: Aalsmeer Flower Market, Paleis Het Loo, Floriade entrance and cable car ride, Mondo Verde Gardens
- Amsterdam canal boat cruise



**2012 Dates and Prices**

8 days only \$2,589 pp twin share  
Single supplement \$789 (land only prices in Australian dollars)

STARTS	ENDS	STARTS	ENDS
7 May	14 May	21 August	28 August
21 June	28 June	4 September	11 September
28 July	4 August	12 September	19 September