Northwest Horticultural Society

THE NETHERLANDS & BELGIUM GARDEN RIVER CRUISE

Tuesday April 27 - Friday May 7, 2027



TOUR AT A GLANCE

11 DAYS / 10 NIGHTS

Tour includes:
3 nights Crowne Plaza Utrecht
7 nights Amadeus Star luxury river cruise
24 meals: 10 breakfasts, 6 lunches, and 8 dinners
A curated collection of public gardens and private gardens
Transportation for all excursions
$350 contribution to Northwest Horticultural Society

An online map can be found by clicking here
Pricing varies by cabin type for the river cruise



TOUR OVERVIEW

Experience the majesty of the gardens in the Netherlands and Belgium. On this 10-night escorted tour we explore a diverse range of private and public gardens, learning about creative garden design, skilled plant cultivation, horticulture research, flowers and foliage galore, plus we experience the world famous Keukenhof Gardens and the exclusive Royal Greenhouses of Laeken (pending confirmation of the dates it will be open).

There are numerous educational experiences throughout the tour -- at many of the gardens, we will have a an introduction or tour, either with the head gardener or a local expert. In the months prior to the tour, reading materials will be provided for self-study.

There are hundreds of gardens and horticulture sights in this part of the world. The tour will be escorted by member Susan Picquelle, an admitted plant addict who is doing her best to support many nurseries as she fills her new garden in Poulsbo. The itinerary was developed after a number of trips to the area by Lois Moss, who is co-owner of Visit Gardens and has developed several tours for NHS. Expert local guides will shepherd the group for the duration.

We stay at the Crowne Plaza Hotel Utrecht for the first three nights, followed by seven nights on the Amadeus Star luxury river cruise ship. The hotel is in Utrecht, sometimes referred to as “Amsterdam without the crowds,” an easy 30-minute, non-stop train ride from Amsterdam Schiphol airport. A guide will be at the airport to direct you from the arrivals hall to the train station, and another guide will be waiting for you at Utrecht Centraal train station to guide you on the 3-minute walk to the hotel.

The tour includes a week aboard the Amadeus Star, sailing along the canals and waterways of the Netherlands and a bit of Belgium. Each stop along the way will have something unique to offer plus we will have our own custom shore excursions to glorious gardens. The tour includes items that are often additional costs on some river cruise tours: port charges, crew gratuities, bicycles, beer and wine at meals.

You will delight in the company of fellow garden enthusiasts. The minimum group size is 26 and the maximum group size will be 28.



SUSAN



LULA



OISIN

Your host for the tour is NHS member Susan Picquelle. Susan has lived in the Northwest since 1983 with her husband Jim. As a member of the NHS Tour Committee, Susan believes that garden touring is one of the best educational and most fun activities a gardener can experience. Susan recently retired from her second career as a landscape designer after first retiring from a long career with the NOAA.

You will also be accompanied by Lula Smit and Oisin Laryu as tour managers and guides. Lula has been guiding in The Netherlands for over a decade. She created Friends of Holland, which coordinates local guides throughout the region. She spends her off seasons in South Africa, where she was raised. Raised on a farm, Oisin had an early love of nature. His first careers included tech work, teaching, and carpentry, which he still enjoys in the off seasons. Oisin is also a gifted naturalist, historian, and storyteller.



ITINERARY AT A GLANCE - DAY BY DAY

Tue, April 27
Arrival at Amsterdam Schiphol Airport (AMS)
Walking tour to the pocket gardens of Utrecht
Welcome dinner at Huize Molenaar

Wed, April 28
Hortus Leiden
Utrecht Botanical Garden

Thr, April 29
Private garden: Jacqueline van der Kloet
Singer Laren museum and sculpture garden
Private garden: Marieke Nolsen

Fri, April 30
Keukenhof Botanical Garden
Board our luxury cruise ship, the Amadeus Star

Sat, May 1
Private garden: Jelle Grintjes
Het Loo Palace & Gardens

Sun, May 2
Scenic cruising
Walking tour of Middelburg

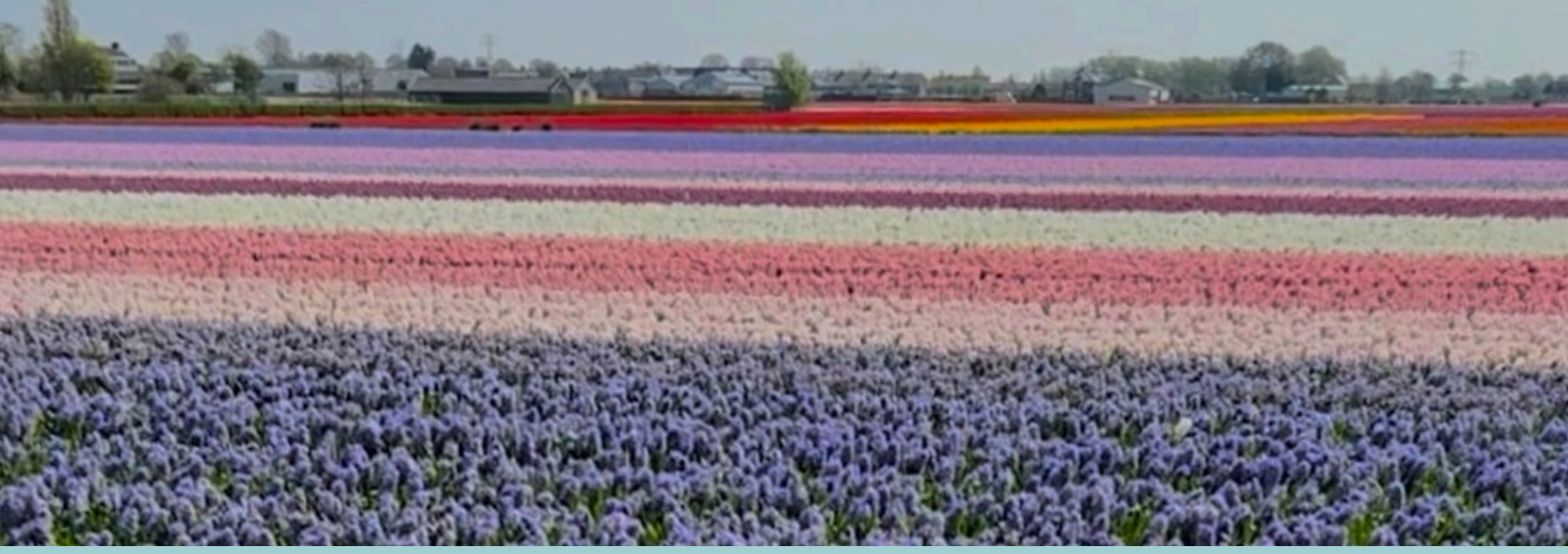
Mon, May 3
Walking tour of Bruges
Private garden: Chris Ghyselen

Tue, May 4
Royal Greenhouses of Laeken (date dependent) or Meise Botanic Garden
Walking tour of Antwerp and Rubenshuis Gardens

Wed, May 5
Arboretum Trompenburg
Private garden: Waterside

Thr, May 6
Hortus Amsterdam
Independent time in Amsterdam

Fri, May 7
Disembark ship



DAY 1 - UTRECHT



TUESDAY, APRIL 27

Arrival day into Amsterdam Schiphol airport (AMS). A welcome guide will assist you with getting on the train to Utrecht, which is a 30 minute ride. The station is under the airport. There will be another welcome guide waiting for you at the Utrecht train station who will walk with you to the check-in area at the Crowne Plaza Utrecht. It's a 5-minute walk from the station to the hotel.

Those with time today may want to visit some of Utrecht's many sights:

- Museum Spielklock, a museum filled with mechanical music-making machines, street organs and music boxes
- Climb the Dom Tower, the tallest church tower in The Netherlands
- Explore the Oudegracht, medieval wharf cellars along the canals, housing eclectic boutiques, vintage shops, and cafes

Our first official activity will be a walking tour to pocket gardens that are dotted around central Utrecht.

We end the day with an included dinner at historic Huize Molenaar, featuring an elevated vegetarian meal that will satisfy even ardent carnivores.

Included Meals: Dinner

DAY 2 - UTRECHT



WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28

We start the day with a visit to Utrecht Botanical Garden which includes the largest rockery and alpine gardens in Europe.

We then head to Hortus Leiden, one of the oldest botanical gardens in the world, founded in 1587. We will start our visit with indepedent lunch and then explore the collections and exhibits with a guide.

Dinner is at your leisure this evening, and we once again stay at the Crowne Plaza Utrecht.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 3 - UTRECHT



THURSDAY, APRIL 29

Our first visit today will be Jacqueline van der Kloet's private garden. She has authored a number of books and is an expert at bulbs of all sorts.

Next up is the Singer Laren museum and sculpture garden. The basis of the collection was formed by an American husband and wife whose fortune came from the steel industry founded in Pittsburgh, PA. There is a garden here plus a café and art collection of both paintings and sculpture.

We wrap the day with a visit to Marieke Nolsen's private garden. Author and teacher, Marieke's garden includes thousands of perennial plants and bulbs plus it is in an historic nature preserve.

Dinner is at your leisure this evening, and we once again stay at the Crowne Plaza Utrecht.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 4 - AMSTERDAM

After checking out of the hotel, we head to the world famous Keukenhof Garden. We will arrive in the morning, before the crowds. You will be dazzled by millions of tulips plus many, many other types of bulb flowers including daffodils, fritillaria, hyacinth and more. Lunch is independent today.

We depart Keukenhof in the early afternoon and it is time to board your luxury river cruise ship, the Amadeus Star. We settle into our cabins which is effectively a floating hotel for the next seven nights. There will be a welcome reception, followed by our first of seven gourmet dinners onboard. Wine and beer are included for both lunch and dinner during the cruise. There's evening entertainment onboard or you may decide to relax in your cabin or on the top deck of the ship.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



FRIDAY, APRIL 30





We have custom excursions on our cruise. Meals onboard are included in the cruise package. For the days when we are not on the ship for lunch, we will have picnic lunches prepared by the crew. If you prefer to purchase an alternative lunch during our excursions, that is always an alternative to the picnic lunches.

DAY 5 - ARNHEM



Today begins with a visit to Jelle Grintjes garden, Tuinontwerpbureau. He is known for designing low-maintenance, biodiverse gardens that explode with color.

Het Loo Palace & Gardens is sometimes called “the Dutch Versailles” but historically, it is actually the reverse. The palace near Paris was created after a French king saw Het Loo Palace. There will be a guided tour of the gardens, followed by independent time in the palace and gardens.

To close out the day in Arnhem, we will have an optional walk to Superbloom before returning to the ship. This urban area at a traffic interchange was created to bring greenspace to what had been concrete and gravel.

Dinner is onboard. Every night the menu is different and you can choose from a number of entrees and options.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

SATURDAY, MAY 1

DAY 6 - MIDDELBURG

The ship is sailing when we wake up. You might enjoy the ship-top walking track or have a leisurely breakfast. We have scenic sailing this morning and expect to dock in Middleburg around 11am.

To acquaint everyone with charming and historic Middelburg, there will be a walking tour that includes Huis van Bloemen florist and decor shop.

Enjoy some independent time in beautiful Middelburg before returning to the ship for dinner.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



SUNDAY, MAY 2

DAY 7 - BRUGES/GHENT



MONDAY, MAY 3

The ship docks at the edge of Ghent. Our custom excursion will be to Bruges, one of the most-photographed towns in Europe. There will be a walking tour with local guides followed by free time in this charming town. Consider taking a canal cruise with your free time in Bruges. You can enjoy the bag lunch from the ship or you can purchase lunch from a café or market.

On the way back from Bruges we will visit Chris Ghyselen's private garden, Oostveld.

Upon arrival back in Ghent, you have the option of being dropped off for a bit of independent time in historic Ghent city center or you may choose to stay on the coach and return to the ship.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8 - ANTWERP



TUESDAY, MAY 4

From Antwerp our custom excursion will be to Laeken at the northern edge of Brussels. Depending on the dates that the greenhouses are open, we hope to visit the Royal Greenhouses of Laeken which are open to the public only three weeks each year. Dates won't be released until early 2027. If the Royal Greenhouses aren't open, we will instead visit Meise Botanical Gardens this morning.

Return to the ship for lunch on board.

Following lunch, we have a walking tour of Antwerp that ends at Rubenshuis and its courtyard garden. Enjoy the rest of the day on your own in Antwerp before returning to the ship for dinner.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner





DAY 9 - ROTTERDAM



WEDNESDAY, MAY 5

The first visit of the day is Arboretum Trompenburg, where there will be a docent tour followed by independent time. This under-the-radar garden includes national plant collections, a Japanese-style garden, unique desert greenhouses and lots of spring-flowering trees and shrubs.

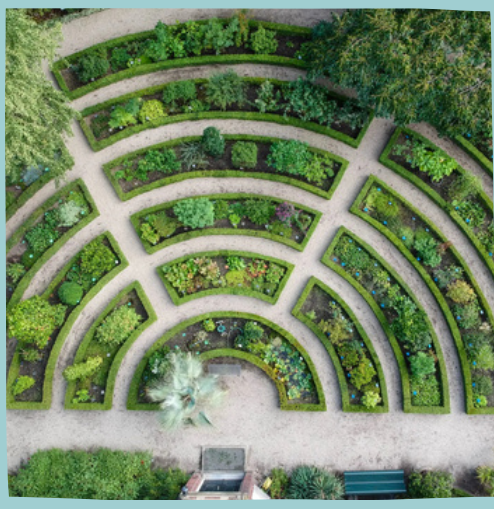
Return to the ship for lunch on board.

In the afternoon you will visit Waterside Gardens, an experimental plant nursery and plant showcase of specimens from around the world.

Return to the ship for dinner on board.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 10 - AMSTERDAM



THURSDAY, MAY 6

Enjoy lunch on board before we set off for Hortus Amsterdam which began as a medicinal garden in 1638. Located near the historic center of Amsterdam, a single Coffea arabica plant smuggled out of the Middle East and grown here became the foundation for global coffee production.

This afternoon you have independent time in Amsterdam.

Tonight is the finale dinner onboard the ship.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

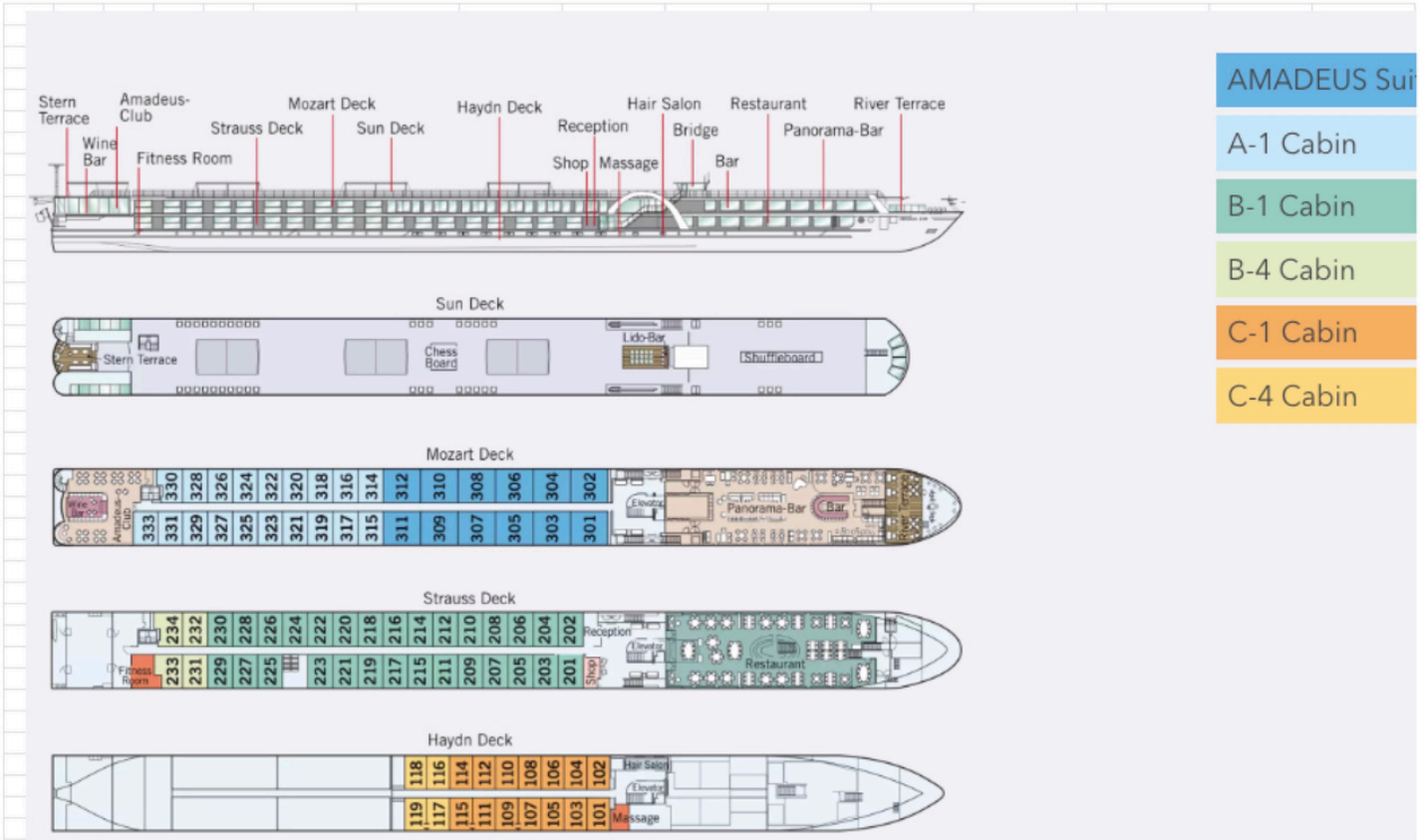
DAY 11 - AMSTERDAM

FRIDAY, MAY 7

Today is disembark and departure day. Whether you stay longer in Amsterdam independently, continue your travels or head home, have a safe journey home or to wherever your travels take you!

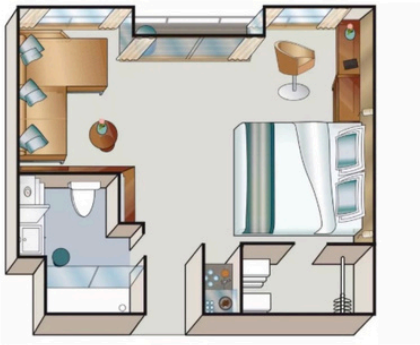
Included Meals: Breakfast

AMADEUS STAR DECK PLAN



AMADEUS Suite (284.2ft²) with walk-out exterior balcony:

The magnificent suites offer private walk-out balconies and lounge areas—perfect for enjoying your morning coffee or gazing at the starry sky at night.
Each suite includes our AMADEUS Signature Bed (available as a double or twin), a luxurious bathroom with a shower and high-quality Rituals® bathing products, walk-in wardrobe, Espresso machine with complimentary selection of coffee, flat-screen TV, cabin safe, bathrobe and slippers, hair dryer, direct dial telephone, individual climate control, and a minibar for your convenience.

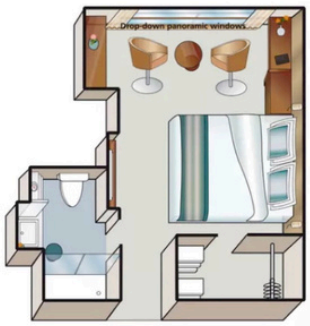


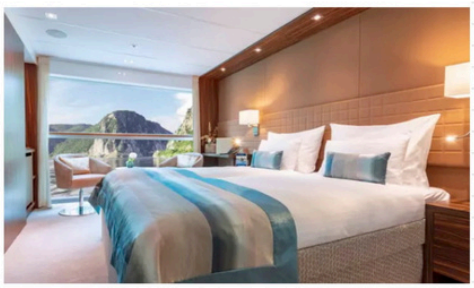


A-1 Cabin (188.4ft²) with drop-down panoramic window:

B-1 Cabin (188.4ft²) with drop-down panoramic window:

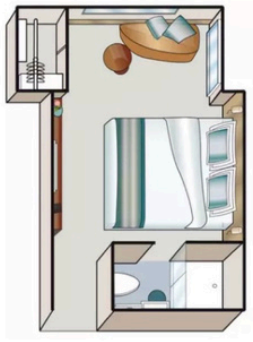
Discover the perfect balance of luxury and tranquility in your personal retreat.
These staterooms feature the AMADEUS Signature Bed (available as a double or twin), a drop-down panoramic window for uninterrupted river views, a spacious bathroom with a walk-in shower and premium Rituals® bathing products, walk-in wardrobe, flat-screen TV, individual climate control, well-stocked minibar, in-room safe, hair dryer, and direct dial telephone – ensuring a comfortable and refined travel experience.

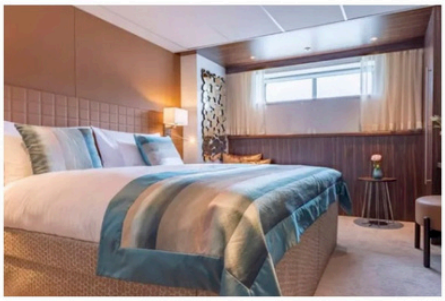




C-1 Cabin (172.2ft²) with panoramic window:

Designed with both style and practicality in mind, our Haydn Deck cabi
a peaceful and well-equipped space for your journey.
Each cabin features a spacious bathroom with a walk-in shower, luxurio
Rituals bath products, and a hair dryer, along with a fixed panoramic wi
that fills the space with natural light. Thoughtful touches like a comforta
double or twin bed, generously-sized wardrobe, secure in-room safe, fl
screen TV, individual climate control, and direct dial telephone ensure
ful and well-equipped stay.





PRICING AND PAYMENTS

Tour prices below are if 26 to 28 people register

The minimum for the tour to move forward is 26. The maximum will be 28. If 25 or fewer people register by October 31, 2026 the price may be increased, based on the number of people who have registered.

- **Price per person, in a shared room, start at $5,816**
  - You will have the choice of a room with 2 beds or a room with 1 bed. If you are seeking a roommate, we will let you know if a second person is looking for a roommate.

- **Price, in a solo room, start at $7,758**
  - No roommate and you have your own room.

Deposit and balance due

A deposit of $1,000 per booking is due at registration. An installment of 50% of your total cost will be due by October 1, 2026, and the remaining balance will be due by December 1, 2026.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Contribution to NHS

Pricing includes a $350 contribution to Northwest Horticultural Society. Thank you for your support. All participants are required to be a member of NHS at the time the tour begins.

3 Nights Hotel Accommodation, 7 Nights River Cruise

The hotel is Crowne Plaza Utrecht, conveniently located walking distance to shops, restaurants, museums, and sites. The ship is the luxurious Amadeus Star.

Transportation

You will be greeted at the airport and directed to the AMS airport train station for a short ride to Utrecht Centraal station, which is adjacent to the hotel. There will be a charter coach and local driver for trips from the hotel or cruise ship to gardens.

24 Meals (10 Breakfasts, 6 Lunches, 8 Dinners)

Both the hotel and cruise ship will provide breakfast. Included lunches will be provided on board or will be picnic lunches. There is a welcome dinner, along with included gourmet dinners every night on the ship.

Taxes, Fees, and Tips

Gratuities for the ship crew, drivers, and guides are included in the tour price. Pricing also includes shore fees, port charges, taxes, and custom excursions.

Convenient, Secure Payment Collection

You can pay using your credit card or ACH electronic transfer on secure, encrypted booking software.

Alcoholic Beverages

While on board the Amadeus Star, beer and wine are included during lunch and dinner. All other alcoholic beverages are at the guest's expense.

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

Travel Insurance
Travel insurance is highly recommended and will be available as part of the booking process. Unexpected events can disrupt your travel plans, either before you leave or during your trip. Consider purchasing travel insurance soon after making your first tour deposit, as this may impact the availability of pre-existing medical condition waivers and/or *cancel for any reason* upgrades.

Meals Not Listed
Any meals not listed in the itinerary are your choice and not included in the tour

Alcoholic Beverages
Alcoholic beverages are not included, except for lunches and dinners on board the Amadeus Star which include beer and wine.

Payment Processing Fees
Payment is accepted by credit card and ACH bank transfer, both of which are subject to processing fees.

Airfare, Personal Expenses, Onward Travel, Anything Else Not Listed in Inclusions

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS

A cancellation, regardless of the reason, is subject to the following fees:

- From now until September 30, 2026, the withdrawal fee is $500 per person
- From October 1, 2026 until November 30, 2026, the withdrawal fee is $1,000 per person
- From December 1, 2026 until January 31, 2027, the withdrawal fee is $2,000 per person
- After January 31, 2027 all payments are fully nonrefundable

If the tour is canceled because the minimum number of participants is not reached by October 31, 2026, Visit Gardens will refund in full the deposit and any installment payments made by tour members. If the tour is cancelled due to circumstances beyond Visit Gardens's control, including travel bans or health regulations, the amount of any refund is determined by the recoverable portion of your tour payments.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

The success of a tour depends on each person's ability to participate fully and to cooperate with other tour members, the tour guide, the coach driver, and the tour escorts. Tour participants must be capable of meeting the activity level for this tour, including:

• Board and disembark a coach without assistance
• Walk a mile or more each day and stand for 30-45 minutes at a time, multiple times a day
• Climb and descend stairs
• Walk on uneven paths, paved or unpaved
• Handle your own luggage, including loading it on the coach and carrying it to your hotel room

This is a non-smoking tour; smoking is not permitted during group activities including meals. Local customs may make it impossible to prevent exposure to smoke by others at times during the tour.

An electronically signed liability waiver will be required from each tour participant.

By submitting a reservation request for this tour, you confirm that you have read and accept Visit Gardens' full Terms & Conditions.

Northwest Horticultural Society

Email: info@northwesthort.org
Website: www.northwesthort.org
Instagram: @nwhortsociety
www.facebook.com/northwesthort

Join fellow NHS members as we travel and learn from each other and from horticultural experts around the world. The NHS Travel Program supports our mission to provide inspiration and education to our members. Our tours expand knowledge and appreciation of horticulture while fostering camaraderie among participants.

Tour Operator: Visit Gardens LLC

Lois Email: Lois@visit-gardens.com
Brian Email: Brian@visit-gardens.com
Instagram: @visitgardensllc

