

Maryland Gardeners – Holland Belgium Tulip Cruise Gardens, Castles, and Tulips: April 27 – May 8, 2026

**Sponsored by Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland
Featuring Keukenhof Tulip Festival**



Highlights/Inclusions

- 4 nights hotels and 7 nights on brand new ship Amadeus Amara
- Charter coach and local driver
- 27 meals, 11 breakfasts, 7 Lunches, 9 Dinners
- All admission and entrance fees to venues
- Guided canal cruise and tulip museum of Amsterdam
- 'Versailles of Holland'- Het Loo Palace known for its exquisite gardens/fountains
- De Wiersse Castle Gardens, a moated manor house surrounded by 38 acres of gardens
- Fairytale town of Bruges and Medieval Ghent
- Full day at world famous Keukenhof, one of Europe's largest garden displays
- Castle de Haar, the largest castle in the Netherlands with waterworks, an arboretum, Flemish tapestries and paintings
- Royal Greenhouses of Laeken in Brussels, only open for a few weeks in the spring
- Sightseeing, admissions, and expert guides
- Amadeus Amara carries a maximum of 164 passengers, but our group will enjoy custom excursions and events and is limited to 34 guests

Holland/Belgium Tulip Cruise

Trip Overview

Immerse yourself in the spring beauty of Holland and Belgium!

We begin our journey with an independent travel day and spend a night in a centrally located Amsterdam hotel. Then we will embark on our cruise ship, the Amadeus Amara, for the next 7 nights cruising along the waterways of Holland and Belgium, passing fields of flowers and windmills. Departing Amsterdam, we will start off with a bang, with a visit to Keukenhof during peak bloom. Traveling through the countryside, we will enjoy day trips to medieval towns, private gardens, castles, and botanical gardens and arboretums. A highlight visit will be to the Royal Greenhouses of Laeken, only open to the public for 3 weeks of the year. The wonderful architecture of Alphonse Balat creating the monumental pavilions, wide arcades, and glass cupolas is a wonder to behold that contains some of the original plant collections from 1873 and other rare plants.

Following our 7-night cruise, we will then have 3 nights in a 5-star hotel in canal-filled Utrecht, a town that is similar but without the crowds of Amsterdam, and trips throughout the countryside.

Amadeus Amara

Our home for 7 nights, Amadeus River Cruises is a family-owned company with over 40 years of experience in luxury river cruising. To be launched in the spring of 2025, Amara offers over 70 cabins, some with floor to ceiling windows to offer panoramic views. You can take a dip in the indoor pool or savor a drink on the sundeck while taking in the views. Check out the floor plans at [Amadeus Amara](#).

Your Hosts

Claire Jones is a garden designer, speaker, and author who combines her horticultural knowledge and design background to educate and inspire fellow travelers. For more of her tours, go to [Claire Jones Landscapes](#).

Lois Moss is the owner of Tour 2 Explore More, and has organized numerous garden-themed tours, both domestically and internationally. Previously she was a CPA with an international accounting firm, an entrepreneur who co-founded a chain of bicycle stores and founder of a non-profit that focused on bicyclist and pedestrian advocacy. She has focused on creating custom tours that highlight gardens and Horticulture since 2016.



Lois Moss



Claire Jones

Holland/Belgium Tulip Cruise

Itinerary

Day 1: Monday, April 27 Amsterdam

Arrive in Amsterdam and you will be met at the airport and transported to the hotel. The arrival day is Kings Day, a National Holiday, with lots of parades and events in Amsterdam. Enjoy sightseeing for the day. Optional things to do are to visit Hortus Botanicus Amsterdam, the riverfront flower market, Anne Frank Museum, or the Van Gogh Museum – your choice on your own.

Group welcome dinner tonight.

Overnight; Hotel in Amsterdam (TBD) Welcome Dinner

Day 2: Tuesday, April 28 – Cruise Day 1 Keukenhof

Depart Amsterdam this morning early to enter **Keukenhof** before the crowds arrive, and spend the entire day at Keukenhof, the Garden of Europe, where approximately 7 million tulips, narcissi, fritillaries, and



hyacinths form a colorful carpet of blooms. Alternating exhibitions bloom across the grounds in several pavilions along with shopping and restaurants.

You have the option of staying the entire day, or returning earlier, if you want to see more of Amsterdam on your own.

We will embark on the ship in the early evening, our home for the next 7 days. We will have a botanical themed trivia game with prizes in the Amadeus Club plus a welcome cocktail and dinner on the ship.

Overnight: Amadeus Amara Breakfast, Lunch, Cocktails and Dinner

Day 3: Wednesday, April 29 – Cruise Day 2 Arnhem, Holland

If we have time this morning, we will have a cheese tasting /demo at Heerlijk & Hartig, where you will taste the vast range of Dutch Cheeses. There is a deli and store where you can pick up some delicious cheese and other goodies. We will be docked at Arnhem which is close to the German border and voted “the greenest city in Europe”. We will visit the **Kroller-Muller** sculpture garden and museum, where you will find the world’s finest Van Gogh collection and masterpieces by Monet, Seurat, Picasso, and Mondriaan. A unique combination of art and nature with sculptures by Hepworth and other famous sculptors, it is a treasure trove.

We then will travel to see **Tuin de lage Oorspring**, a garden destroyed in WW2 and rebuilt with garden rooms, waterworks, orangeries, fruit walls, herb garden, a labyrinth, and a camellia lane.

Overnight: Amadeus Amara Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Holland/Belgium Tulip Cruise

Day 4: Thursday, April 30 – Cruise Day 3 Middleburg, Belgium

This morning, we dock in Middleburg, Belgium. As one of the centers where the Dutch East India Company flourished in the 17th century, this lovely city features merchant houses, mansions, narrow alleys, scenic squares, hidden gardens, and canals.

We will depart by coach to visit the **Arboretum Kalmthout**, a botanical paradise located close by. Starting as a nursery in 1856, the grounds developed over the years into a naturalistic garden with perennials, creepers, shrubs, and trees. Introductions of hundreds of new plants came out of this garden, collected from the wild and from new cultivar selections.

Overnight: Amadeus Amara
Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 5: Friday, May 1 – Cruise Day 4 Ghent, Belgium

We will travel by coach to the fairytale city of Bruges, one of the loveliest historic towns in Belgium, loaded with charm and culture. After a walking tour of the town center, we will have free time to explore the Medieval architecture preserved since the late Middle Ages.



Things to do on your own are to visit the Lace Center and Museum, Mille Fleurs tapestry shop and the World Heritage site Beguinage, a place of emancipated laywomen who led a pious and celibate life. Thirty white-painted houses dating from the 16th century to the 18th century are built around a tranquil convent garden founded in 1245.

Overnight: Amadeus Amara
Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6: Saturday, May 2 - Cruise Day 5 Antwerp, Belgium

Arrive in Antwerp where we have another day trip with our own chartered coach to **Meise Botanic Garden** (Plantentium Meise), one of Europe's largest botanical gardens. Explore the Flower Theater, Orangery, the Rose Garden, Medieval Garden, Apiary, Heritage trees, Fragrance Garden, and Castle Gardens. Then, a highlight of our trip, we will visit **The Royal Greenhouses of Laeden**, our opportunity to see the wonderful architecture of Alphonse Balat with its historic plant collections.

Overnight: Amadeus Amara
Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Holland/Belgium Tulip Cruise

Day 7: Sunday, May 3 – Cruise Day 6 Rotterdam, Holland

Today, we will visit the **Arboretum Trompenburg**, a treasure trove for plant lovers, boasting a large collection of trees, shrubs, perennials, bulbs, and tubers. Originally landscaped as an English country garden with a complex of connected gardens and water features, the aviary, the ecological Forest Garden De Overtuin, and the desert hot house are of special interest.



We will have free time in Rotterdam to explore, like the Market Hall, the largest enclosed marketplace in Rotterdam, where you can shop for fresh food, fish, flowers, and hand crafts. Or visit the famous ‘cube’ houses where art and architecture meld together, or one of the many fine museums.

Overnight: Amadeus Amara
Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

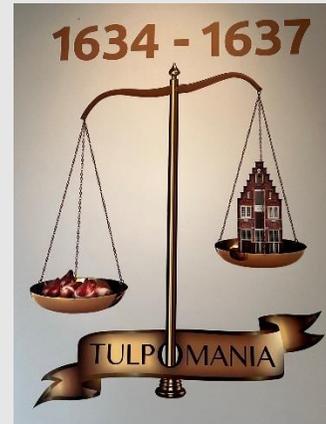
Day 8: Monday May 4 – Cruise Day 7 Amsterdam

Today we will have a canal cruise of Amsterdam to explore the UNESCO World heritage-listed canal district. Discover the historic buildings and admire the elegant merchant houses that date back to the Dutch Golden Age. See stunning gables, ornate decorated facades, beautiful churches, and many other top attractions.

Discover **The Tulip Museum**, featuring exhibits and films devoted to the Tulip, the unofficial flower of the Netherlands. Find out how and why *Tulipmania* possessed the people of Holland and inspired collectors and breeders to seek out higher and higher prices.

The rest of the day will be free to explore at leisure.

Overnight: Amadeus Amara
Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 9: Tuesday, May 5 Utrecht

We disembark this morning and board our charter coach to visit “the Versailles of Holland”, **Het Loo**. On the outskirts of Apeldoorn, the palace was used by the Dutch Royal family as a summer residence for many years. Famous for its gardens, palace park, and forest, together they make up the Crown Estate. A formal Dutch Baroque Garden surrounds the palace with elaborate decorations, created by William and Mary. The design is an axial layout, with fountains, parterres, and statues.

Featuring many rare plant species brought back by the East Indian Trading Companies to William and Mary, today the gardens are still considered one of the most beautiful gardens in Europe.



Holland/Belgium Tulip Cruise

The splendid floral displays/designs are cultivated here and are arranged lovingly by those responsible for the garden and are displayed throughout the palace.

We will then visit a private garden nearby. (TBD)

Overnight: Utrecht, Hotel Karel V (5- star)

Breakfast

Day 10 Wednesday, May 6

Utrecht

The coach will pick us up at our hotel in Utrecht and we will visit **De Wiersse Castle Gardens**. Surrounded by farmland and woods, lies the moated manor house of De Wiersse. Managed by the family since 1678 this historic garden unfolds in a sequence of avenues and pergolas, bridges over gently flowing streams, fountains and statues, meadows and formal parterres, and serpentine beech tunnels. The mosses and ferns of the romantic wild garden give way to a productive kitchen garden, mixed borders, and a sunken garden. Countless bulbs and spring flowers are found throughout the garden and naturalized in the woodland and meadows.

Later, we will stop at one of a kind - **Museum Speelklock** - the most cheerful museum in the Netherlands with beautiful mechanical music machines which will surround you with centuries-old self-playing musical instruments. Musical clocks, music boxes, self-playing orchestras, Dutch street organs, and musical clocks - this lively museum will keep you mesmerized.



Overnight: Utrecht, Hotel Karel V

Breakfast, Lunch

Day 11: Thursday, May 7

Utrecht

Today we will visit the **De Theetuin Garden**, the private garden of landscape designer and author Jacqueline Van Der Kloet. The garden is the main subject in one of Jacqueline's latest books: "*A Year in my Garden*". A mix of perennials, ornamental grasses, trees, shrubs, and hedges, the framework of the garden, Jacqueline has mastered a casual, magical technique where bulbs intermingle with other plants, as if dancing through the plants. She has collaborated with leading plantsman, Piet Oudolf, on many projects.

Castle de Haar is next on the list, with history dating back to 1391. The castle was rebuilt by Baron van de Haar and his wife, Helene de Rothschild and features 200 rooms decorated with ornate wood carvings, old Flemish tapestries and paintings

Surrounding the castle is a fantastic formal garden reminiscent of Versailles, full of box hedges, a maze, rose garden, ancient trees, waterworks, and elegant flower beds.

Overnight: Utrecht, Hotel Karel V (5- star)

Breakfast, Dinner

Day 12: Friday, May 8

Return Home from Utrecht to AMS airport.

Breakfast

Holland/Belgium Tulip Cruise

Karel V Grand Hotel Utrecht (3 nights)

What was once a 14th century monastery and served as accommodation for knights and priests is now a luxury 5-star hotel in the center of Utrecht. Surrounded by gardens, less than 10 minutes from the central station, spacious rooms overlook the gardens and is a serene and sophisticated oasis in the center of a bustling city.

What's Included

Lodging	11 nights (7 nights aboard Amadeus Amara, 4 nights in 4/5-star hotels)
Private transportation	Full-sized charter coach and local driver
Welcome and Farewell dinner	
27 meals	11 Breakfasts, 7 Lunches, 9 Dinners
Entrance Fees	All admission and entrance fees to venues on itinerary
Tour Guides	The tour will be hosted and managed by Claire Jones and Lois Moss
Tips	Gratuities for the drivers, guides, and other staff
Airport Pickup	You will be met at AMS (Amsterdam) airport when you arrive
2% Cash Back	You have the option of paying for the trip via credit card or ACH electronic transfer. If you pay via ACH electronic transfer, you will receive a 2% cash back

What's NOT Included

Airfare	We are happy to help you decide your airfare
Travel Insurance	Travel insurance is highly recommended. Some policies require purchase soon after your first deposit. We can help you decide what may be best for your circumstances
Meals Not Listed	We value your time and individual preferences, so any meals not listed in the itinerary are your choice. We will provide a curated list of restaurants, markets, and shops to help you decide
Travel after the tour	The tour ends in Utrecht which is a transportation hub between Amsterdam and Brussels. We will help you decide what transportation method is best for you.

Packages and Options

Available Packages

Click [here](#) for cabin locations and descriptions. There is limited cabin availability, so don't delay.

Deposits are \$500 per person and are fully refundable until August 20, 2025.

Double Occupancy		Single Occupancy	
C-1	\$5,790	C-1	\$6,990
B-1	\$6,490	B-1	\$8,990
A-1	\$6,990	A-1	\$10,590
Suite	\$7,990	Suite	\$12,690

Holland/Belgium Tulip Cruise

2% Cash Back/Discount

Payments via ACH electronic transfer will receive 2% cash back

Available Options & Packages

Extra night(s) in Amsterdam will be available

Arrive a day or more before the tour starts. Our hotel will be walking distance to numerous Museums, restaurants, shops, palaces, parks, and sights. Prices will be announced in late 2025 and will include breakfast, fees and taxes.

Registration

Click here to register

Lois Moss, owner of tour 2 Explore More, can answer any questions you may have regarding the itinerary, airfare, and traveling to the region. She has been to Belgium and Holland numerous times, including taking the Amadeus cruise in April 2025. Lois lived in London after college and has visited Europe dozens of times. Please contact Lois at 503-853-2399, Tour2ExploreMore@gmail.com.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. Tour Registration

By submitting a reservation request for this tour, you confirm that you have read and accept these Terms & Conditions. The travel company providing this tour is Tour2ExploreMore. The person promoting this tour is Claire Jones. She is not an agent or employee of Tour2ExploreMore. You further agree that this is a release of any claim that you may have against Tour2ExploreMore, as well as Claire Jones, Claire Jones Landscapes LLC (collectively "Claire Jones"), and tour co-sponsor organization (Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland), arising out of this tour.

2. Willingness & Ability to Participate

The success of a tour depends on each person's ability to participate fully and to cooperate with other tour members, the guides, 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 and 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.

Holland/Belgium Tulip Cruise

3. **Tour Price**

The tour price and services are directly related to the number of participants. The tour's minimum/maximum number of tour participants is indicated in the Tour Brochure (18-36). If the minimum participation of 18 participants is not met, the tour will be cancelled or postponed, or tour members may have the option of agreeing to a change in pricing. Once the maximum participation is met, a wait list is created in the order in which reservations are received.

4. **Registration Confirmation, Deposit and Payment Schedule**

A deposit of \$500 is required to hold your reservation. All deposits are fully refundable until August 20, 2025.

Please do not book any non-refundable air travel that may be associated with the tour until you are notified by the tour escort that the tour has reached the minimum required level of participation.

Remaining payments are due as follows:

- October 20, 2025 – first installment equal to 33% of the tour price
- December 20, 2025 – second installment equal to 33% of the tour price
- February 20, 2026 – remaining balance

5. **Withdrawals, Cancellations & Refunds**

A withdrawal from a tour after August 21 registration, regardless of the reason, is subject to the following terms:

- August 22 to December 20, 2025, the withdrawal fee is \$500 per person
- From December 21, 2025 to February 20, 2026, the withdrawal fee is \$800 per person
- After February 21, 2026, the tour deposit and all installments are forfeited.

You are welcome to find a replacement who can take your place, in which case your deposits will apply towards the tour.

If the tour is canceled because the minimum number of participants is not reached by August 20, 2025, Tour 2 Explore More will refund in full the deposit and any installment payments made by tour members.

If the tour is cancelled due to circumstances beyond Tour 2 Explore More's control, including travel bans or health regulations, the amount of any refund is determined by the recoverable portion of your tour payments.

No refunds will be granted for any accommodations, services, or events which are not used, or which are canceled.

6. **Changes to Itinerary:** Tour 2 Explore More, LLC, reserves the right to substitute hotels, activities or excursions in response to changes in availability, local events or weather conditions, provided such substitutions do not adversely affect the overall quality of the tour. Such substitutions do not constitute grounds for withdrawal with full refund.

Travel insurance is highly recommended. It can mitigate, if not all, potential penalties described here. It may also provide coverage for illness, injury, death, property loss, delay or cancellation, or other circumstance. Travel insurance is not included in the price of the tour. Tour registrants are encouraged to secure coverage at their own expense. For some types of insurance (cancel for any reason, or for pre-existing medical conditions, for example), coverage must be secured within 30 days of when you make a deposit.

Holland/Belgium Tulip Cruise

7. Tour Agent/Operator

The Tour Agent/Operator is Tour 2 Explore More, LLC.

8. Waive and Release

Your registration and payment waive and release Tour To Explore More LLC, and Claire Jones, their affiliates, directors, officers, employees, including any person or entity employed or utilized by them, from all claims arising from any injury, loss, damage, accident, delay, or expense resulting from events beyond their control, including, without limitation: natural disasters, war strikes, incidents of politically motivated violence, sickness or quarantine, government restrictions or regulations, and in the absence of gross negligence, arising from the use of any vehicle or from any act of omission by any bus company, airline, tour service, hotel, restaurant, or other firm, agency, company, or individual.

Disputes: Any dispute concerning this trip shall be resolved by binding arbitration, submitted to and decided under the rules and procedures promulgated by the American Arbitration Association, with each party paying an equal share of the costs of such arbitration. Any in-person hearing shall be held in the State of Maryland.

Documents Required

Passport

A valid passport is mandatory to leave the U.S. and/or enter Europe. Your passport must not expire within 6 months of your return from Europe, otherwise, it will be considered non-valid and need to be renewed. If you need a passport, or your passport needs to be renewed, please act now! It can take several months to receive a new or replacement passport.

ETIAS and ETA

In addition, starting in 2025, **ETIAS** (European Travel Information and Authorization System), will go into effect. American nationals will need to apply for travel authorization for short stays through the network before traveling to Europe.

If your flight connects through the United Kingdom, you will also be required to purchase an **ETA** (Electronic Travel Authorization).