



Canal Society

of New York State

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- President -

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12 December 2011

Dear Member,

Enclosed please find the flyer announcing the Canal Society of New York State's 13 day, 11 night tour through Belgium (October 03-15, 2012) *"The Canals and Inland Waterways of Belgium"*. The flyer provides information on the site visits, how to book the Belgian land portion and its cost and payment schedule. You will also find valuable information on how to book airfare and its cost. This year we are working with our good friend David Edwards-May, CEO of Euromapping in Grenoble, France for all Belgian bookings. The purpose of this letter is to expand upon the information contained in the flyer and provide more details on airfare and trip insurance.

This tour is all about spectacular beauty - of landscape, waterways, towns, marvelous historical sites and museums. In north Belgium (Flanders) we will visit several beautiful UNESCO World Heritage cities, cruise high capacity, commercial, waterways and explore by boat the major commercial harbors that link the North Sea with Belgium's canal system and the products they transport.

South Belgium (Wallonia) is a rugged region of much higher relief than Flanders and therefore offers wonderful scenic vistas of limestone cliffs and deep valleys. It also has spectacular canal curiosities constructed to move boats up and over the high Hainaut Plateau near La Louvière without conventional locks. On the west side of the upland we will cruise through Western Civilization's highest shiplift (boat elevator) on the Canal du Centre that replaced four late 19th and early 20th century hydraulic lower capacity shiplifts. It raises and lowers boats 240 feet in less than 10 minutes - an engineering marvel not to be missed. But this boatlift is just the tip of the iceberg because on the north side of the same plateau is the Ronquières Incline where boats are hauled in a water filled box on rails and we shall cruise down this wonder of the waterways world. In addition we get the opportunity to get a behind the scenes look at most if not all of these structures. The Ronquières Incline replaced the old 19th century canal that had a flight of 16 small locks. This canal is still in water and for those that would like to bicycle we shall peddle down the entire flight.

So please join us for an adventurous journey of Belgian Waterways offering medieval towns, deep cuts, high boatlifts, splendid canals, wonderful scenery, and great companions.

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING CAREFULLY-THIS IS IMPORTANT.

- We need a **minimum enrollment of 25 people by 29 February 2012 or the tour may be cancelled** because this is when we **must have deposits** for motor coaches, hotels, restaurants, boats, and other items.
- **Lodging and Bicycles-** we need to know if **couples want 1 bed or 2 beds** and **who would like to bike** several kilometers **down** the 16 lock flight of old Charleroi-Brussels Canal. **Please let us know these choices with your deposit.**

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- **Cost in Euros and US Dollars (\$3,361.00 pp double occupancy and \$4,298.00 pp single)** – This year we are offering two payment methods for the land portion. As shown on the flyer you can book and make payments directly through Euromapping’s website (www.euromapping.com) or, as in the past, conventionally through me.

If you choose going through me payments are as follows:

Deposit 30% (\$1,008.00 pp double and \$1,289.00 pp single) – on or before 29 February

2nd Installment (\$1,353.00 pp double and \$2,009.00 pp single) – on or before 20 April

Final Payment (\$1,000.00 pp for both double and single) – on or before 15 June

- **The land portion is very good value for the money**, as it is several hundred dollars less expensive than the South Germany Tour last year. Plus the hotels in Ghent and Namur are beautiful boutique hotels - adaptive reuse of historic buildings once used for commercial enterprises. **Book early to get better appointed rooms.** A 4 page detailed itinerary containing lodging, boat trips, museums and site visits can also be viewed on our website www.newyorkcanals.org (on the home page click on *Belgium Waterways Tour*) or by contacting me, by phone or email.
- **Air Carrier-** I am using Delta Airlines connecting through New York - JFK.
- **Airfare-** Delta offered very reasonable fares indeed – less expensive than Continental’s quote last year. Two things are important:
 1. **Airfare price quoted on the flyer is a close approximation.** Up to the time that tickets are issued prices can fluctuate by \$20.00 or \$30.00 and maybe more, due to changes in taxes, fuel surcharges, or anything else. We cannot guarantee the precise cost at this time. Once it is paid in full and tickets are issued the price is locked in and that date will be May 20th when final payment for air is due (**See Enclosed Airfare and Travel Insurance Sheet**).
 2. **Very significant is the \$100.00 non-refundable deposit** for booking seats on the flights. So you must make a decision to go on this tour very soon. Therefore please call Michelle Popeck (at Gallery of Travel 585-427-0920 or 800-888-7232) and get your check for \$100.00 payable to Gallery of Travel on or before 1 February 2012. **We cannot guarantee the availability of seats on the flights or the attractive group price after 1 February.** This is why air fare is payable by check only NO credit cards. If we don’t get the required airfare bookings by 1 February checks can be destroyed.
- **Travel Insurance- is very strongly recommended. Please buy it!** You are spending thousands of dollars for this tour and **the insurance at approximately \$302.00 per person depending on age and single or double occupancy** is small compare to what you would loose. Should you fall ill or have a family emergency either before departure or during the tour itself you will be covered. **Please call Michelle Popeck for actual cost and what it covers.**

Please join us for a remarkable tour to Belgium in the company of friendly and cheerful companions. Please contact Michelle Popeck ASAP or before 1 February, 2012.

Very best regards,



Tom

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