

ELFSTEDENROUTE HIGH YACHTS

Sneek - IJlst - Sloten - Stavoren - (Hindeloopen) - Workum - Bolsward -
Harlingen - Franeker - Dokkum - Leeuwarden



286 KILOMETER

1/2 WEKEN

When talking about Friesland, the Eleven Cities Tour is often mentioned in the same breath. Also known as the "tour of tours," the Frisian Eleven Cities is a famous ice-skating tour and a tourist route that passes through 11 historic cities and villages. The tour covers 200 kilometers of canals, lakes, and canals through the Frisian countryside and is considered the largest ice-skating tour in the world. The tour can only be completed if there is at least 15 cm of thick ice, but fortunately, watersports enthusiasts can sail this beautiful route every summer.

The route cannot be navigated with every type of boat, which is why it is specifically designed for yachts with a height higher than 2.40 meters. The small town of Hindeloopen can not be reached, therefore it is left out of the route.

From Sanzi Yacht Charter, we set course for IJlst.

Via the Houkesloot, we head towards the city center of Sneek and pass by the Sneeker Waterpoort. It is one of the most famous monuments in Friesland and is clearly visible from the water. Once you have crossed the bridge, you can take the perfect photo by looking back. The Waterpoort is beautifully lit in the evening, and if you can find a spot along one of the quays, we highly recommend it. From this point, the center of Sneek is also within walking distance, where you will find all kinds of cozy shops, restaurants, or you can pay a visit to the Frisian Maritime Museum.

After Sneek, we continue on to IJlst, which is situated along the route between Sneek and Heeg and is a beautiful historic town.

The most beautiful part of IJlst is located along the Eegracht and Galamagracht. Along this elongated canal, you will see beautiful facades and stately houses from the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. The beautiful authentic atmosphere that IJlst exudes is mainly due to the many historic buildings that are still standing. Most of them are open to the public and are definitely worth a visit. Be sure to visit the sawmill 'de Rat', which was built in 1632 and is still in operation. Here, you can see how wooden beams and planks are sawn using wind energy.

We set course for Bolsward.

Bolsward has two marinas, both of which are equipped with all the necessary amenities. Bolsward has a beautiful city center with a number of nice restaurants and cafes, and it's a pleasant place to take a stroll. It's also nice to visit the weekly market on Thursday mornings.

After Bolsward, we continue on to Workum.

Workum is a well-known village among water sports enthusiasts. There are several beaches for kite-surfing, wind-surfing, and sailing. Workum is one of the oldest towns in the province and has plenty to offer: you can admire beautiful paintings by Jopie Huisman, visit a museum about the history of Workum, and take a lovely walk through the old center and the surrounding nature.

After Workum, we sail over the Fluessen towards Stavoren.

Stavoren is a picturesque town on the IJsselmeer and has a rich history. Its name is derived from the word "staveren," which means "pole foot" in Old Frisian. This refers to the poles that were once used to reinforce the banks of the harbors. Stavoren also has a legend dating back to the Middle Ages. According to this legend, Stavoren was once the wealthiest city in Europe, and the legendary "Lady of Stavoren" is said to have lived here. However, the city is said to have perished due to her greed and disappeared into the waves of the sea. Her statue can be admired in the harbor. A stroll through the historic center is highly recommended.

After Stavoren, you sail back across the Fluessen along Heeg and Woudsend, across the Slotermeer to Sloten.

Sloten is the smallest town of the Frisian Eleven Cities. It has had its city rights since the 14th century and has always maintained them. The town is incredibly beautiful to look at and is full of historic buildings, mills, canals, and bridges. It is also one of the best-preserved historic towns in the Netherlands. There is a nice marina with all facilities available.

After Sloten, there is an opportunity to visit Balk as well. At the Slotermeer near Balk is a nice marina with a restaurant Paviljoen where fresh eel and salmon are smoked on the terrace every week. You can enjoy a delicious lunch or dinner here and there is regular live music. It is about 500 m walk to the charming center of Balk. The village has a cozy atmosphere and character. It contains several supermarkets, a bakery, and various shops. On the last Wednesday of August, the popular Gondelvaart takes place, a 70-year-old tradition, when illuminated gondolas sail through the Luts, which is definitely a must-see. After Balk, you cross the Slotermeer back towards Woudsend and Heeg.

Although Heeg & Woudsend do not belong to the Eleven Cities, they are worth visiting and are well attuned to water sports enthusiasts. On the Heegermeer, you will find several islands, including the Konijneneiland. From olden times, a breeding ground for rabbits, but now mainly a beautiful piece of nature with beautiful moorings and stunning views over the Heegermeer and the occasional rabbit. Heeg is ten kilometers south of Sneek on the Heegermeer.

Eel fishing was a major livelihood for a long time. What Heeg is mainly known for now is water sports. The village is full of monumental buildings, churches, and old, historic homes. In the center, there are also many cozy restaurants with local products to be found. Once a year, in July, the Heechsimmerfestival takes place. Various bands perform on a floating stage on the beach of the Heegermeer.

From Heeg, you sail back along Joure, Terherne, and Akkrum to Earnewâld.

Earnewâld is not one of the eleven cities but should definitely not be missed. At Earnewâld, you will encounter the nature reserve De Oude Venen. Here, you are allowed to partially navigate through. The nature is a combination of lakes, peat bogs, strips, reed lands, bog pools, roughs, thickets, marsh forests, and vast hay meadows, which make for a beautiful piece of nature. This area can be explored on foot, by bike, or by boat. In addition, Earnewâld has a marina and a beautiful swimming beach with a large recreational area. Several restaurants, cafes, and a supermarket can also be found.

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The route continues to Leeuwarden.

Arriving in Leeuwarden, the capital of Friesland. Leeuwarden is a city with a rich history and culture, the influences of which are still visible in its beautiful architecture and museums. From the impressive Oldehove tower to the modern Fries Museum, there is something for everyone to discover and experience. Stroll through the cozy streets and enjoy local specialties in one of the many cafes and restaurants. In Leeuwarden, you can also go shopping. A recommended spot to moor with the boat is the Prinsentuin; this beautiful city garden offers a quiet and green environment to relax. The Prinsentuin is located just outside the center of Leeuwarden and offers a beautiful view of the canal.

From Leeuwarden, there is the possibility to sail to Franeker and Harlingen or to Dokkum.

Dokkum is a city where there is always a lot to do, a charming town located in the northeast of Friesland, on the edge of the Lauwersmeer National Park. The city has a rich history dating back to the Middle Ages and is especially known for the legend of Boniface, who was murdered here in 754. Nowadays, Dokkum is a popular tourist destination with numerous sights and activities.

As a tourist in Dokkum, you can enjoy the charming city center with its old buildings, canals, and cozy shops and terraces. Visit the Boniface Chapel and the Boniface Well, which recall the legend of Boniface. Take a walk along the ramparts, the old city walls, and the town hall. Visit the Admiralty House, where you can learn everything about the maritime history of Dokkum and the Frisian Admiralty.

Franeker is a charming town located in the heart of Friesland. It is rich in history and culture, with its unique eighteenth-century planetarium and its famous university. Walking through the picturesque streets and along the canals of Franeker, you will feel transported back in time and taste the authentic Frisian atmosphere. Franeker has cozy shops and nice boutiques.

Harlingen is a cozy old town center with all kinds of shops and restaurants. Visit the Hannemahuis, a museum about the history of Harlingen and the Wadden. There is also the Monument for Fisheries, which reminds us of the city's rich fishing tradition. A real harbor town where there is always something to do. From the water, Harlingen can also be admired, and there are several marinas.

The route continues back via Leeuwarden and Grou towards Terherne.

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Grou is not one of the eleven cities but is one of the best-known water sports villages in Friesland where there is always a lot going on. In the summer, many events take place that are all related to water sports. The village on the Pikmeer is known as the starting point of the annual Skûtsjesilen. Grou has a cozy village center with a varied shopping center and a wide choice of cozy restaurants and many sights. Taste the local delicacies: Friesland is known for its delicacies, such as sugar bread, Frisian sausage, and Beerenburg. Try these local specialties at one of the many cafes and restaurants.

We sail back to Sneek via Terherne.

Terherne is also known as the Chameleon village. The cozy and quaint village has 900 inhabitants in the winter and no fewer than 8,000 in the summer. For children, the chameleon island is highly recommended. On the island, there are exciting paths that lead along and over the water, through trees, and over marshes. In addition, there are activities such as pole jumping over the ditch, from the cable car, and there are countless other adventures to experience. Discover the nice restaurants on the water to relax and enjoy.

Via Terherne, you sail back over the Sneekermeer.

The Sneekermeer is approximately 4.3 square kilometers in size and has an average depth of 2 meters. It is one of the most popular recreation areas in Friesland. The Sneekermeer offers numerous water sports opportunities. Along the shores of the lake, you will find various beaches where you can sunbathe and picnic. In addition to the many water sports activities, the Sneekermeer is also a beautiful nature reserve. The lake is surrounded by vast meadows, reed beds, and forest areas, making it an ideal place to just relax.