

## Utrecht Region: take your bike on an expedition

**Cycling in Utrecht Region means discovering something new around every corner. You'll come across hidden gems and feast your eyes. Whether you want to soak up our rich history by bike, pedal across vast meadows and moors, wind your way through shady forests, or explore the towns and cities along scenic canals, we have it all. So do what the locals do, take your bike on an expedition and feel right at home!**

### Touring on two wheels

Utrecht Region is perfect for cyclists, mainly because of the unique routes that take you through some of our most beautiful places. There is a network of cycle nodes throughout the region. You can simply follow the routes or download them. Connected to these routes, you'll find tourist transfer points. These mark the start of routes that feature additional points of interest, such as the Burgundy Cycle Route, the Architecture Route or the Waterworks Route.

The region is also very bike-friendly. Thanks to smart innovations, a great infrastructure and smooth cycle paths, cycling is safe and enjoyable. There are over 1500 kilometres of cycle paths, cycle lanes, cycle streets and dedicated bridges and tunnels, as well as widely available e-bike charging points. When it's time to rest, many towns and cities offer secure cycle parking that is free for 24 hours. So your bicycle, e-bike or racing bike is safe here.

### Adventure in nature

Wherever you may be in the region, the countryside is never far away. Fresh air, plenty of space and an endless variety of scenery. If water is your thing, cycle along the River Vecht and marvel at the country estates and breathtaking castles, or follow the Hollandse IJssel river to the picturesque town of Oudewater. You can even take your bike on board a riverboat and cruise down the Eem to the fishing village of Spakenburg. Cycling through the forests of the Utrecht Hill Ridge National Park, you'll come across castles, moors and inland dune areas. For stunning traditional Dutch landscapes, explore the peatlands around Montfoort or the Zouweboezem wetland nature reserve, which is teeming with frogs, birds and roe deer. Or let the fragrant moorlands of the Goois Nature Reserve amaze you. There is also a beautiful nature reserve around the Grebbe Line. Book a hotel with bike rental and cycle into the countryside. It doesn't get much more Dutch than that!

### Peddalling to the top

If you're up for a more challenging ride, clip into your pedals and follow in the tracks of the pro riders of the Giro d'Italia, the Tour de France and the Vuelta a España. In fact, Utrecht is the only city in the world to have hosted stages of all three of these Grand Tours.

On the Utrecht Hill Ridge, you'll find no less than 110 kilometres of mountain bike routes. Why not climb the Amerongse Hill? It's the highest point in the region and a favourite among recreational and racing cyclists who love a challenge. In the forests around Soest, the hills will get your leg muscles working. When you're ready to take a breather, then you'll find plenty of places to sit down for a pancake or a warm apple pie with whipped cream!

### In love with the past

Did you know that the Utrecht Region is bristling with stalwart châteaux and chic country estates? From the fairytale De Haar Castle in Haarzuilens to the centuries-old châteaux of Slot Zeist, Slot Zuylen and Amerongen Castle, there's plenty to explore. There's even a castle on the Oudegracht in the very centre of Utrecht: the mediaeval Oudaen castle, where you can enjoy a beer from the in-house brewery. They taste even better after a bike ride on a sunny day!

Cycle even further back in time along the remains of the Limes. Along what was the frontier of the

Roman Empire stand three of the best preserved Dutch castella (forts). Nowadays, they serve new purposes, for example as a cool spot to stop for lunch.

Once your energy levels have been replenished, you might feel fit enough to take on the De Stijl Route. This route teaches you about Amersfoort artist Piet Mondrian and Utrecht furniture designer and architect Gerrit Rietveld: the region's home-grown creativity.

The Dutch Water Defence Lines are a testament to the Netherlands' ingenuity, with imposing forts and bunkers hidden around the countryside. Today, they offer great places to camp, have lunch, hike or sail.

With a bit of luck, you'll come across no fewer than eight forts in the Kromme Rijn region. Camp Amersfoort is a reminder of our more recent past. It is a national monument to World War II prisoners and a poignant historic museum.

It is worth noting that the Limes, the Rietveld Schröder House and the Dutch Water Defence Lines are all UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

### **Pearls in the region**

Between the region's fashionable towns and cities such as Utrecht, Amersfoort, Woerden and Montfoort - and picturesque villages such as Linschoten - there are many hidden gems. You can cycle along dikes and polder roads, passing meadows, lakes and nature reserves. Pedal along the rivers Lek, Linge and Vecht, and the Loosdrecht Lakes. On the latter two, you can even take your bike with you on a bicycle boat!

In spring, the fruit trees in the orchards are in full blossom. From June onwards you can pick cherries, while later in the year apples and pears are ripe. Stop at a roadside stall to buy some fresh fruit. If you prefer something savoury, dairy farms, kitchen gardens and farm shops offer a variety of milk, cheese and locally grown vegetables. Great for children!

On the Old Rhine Route from Woerden, it's like cycling through a painting, with riverbanks that offer spectacular views. In the silence of the Utrecht Hill Ridge, cycling feels as relaxing as a week in a monastery. Take a break from cycling and delight in the charming sights that greet you as you wander around villages where time seems to have stood still.

### **Bike like a local**

In the region, you can rent all sorts of bicycles: city bikes, cargo bikes, touring bikes, e-bikes, mountain bikes and tandems. Often, you can even rent children's bikes and child seats. It's not surprising, as cycling is the perfect way to get to know Utrecht Region and its inhabitants. People of all ages cycle here, whether it's to school, work, the pub, the park, the shops, or the market. That is perhaps the very best part about cycling. You feel more like a local than a tourist; freer and more at home. Welcome to Utrecht Region!