

EXCITING EXPLORATION TOUR ALONG THE ATLANTIC WALL IN THE WADDEN AREA

Visit the impressive remains of the Atlantic Wall in the Wadden coast area. See the bunkers, strongholds and trenches and experience war history during an exciting 3-day tour through North Holland and Friesland.

The Wadden islands and part of the Wadden coast, Den Helder, the Afsluitdijk and the strongholds near Delfzijl and Termunten are all part of the Atlantic Wall. This cement and steel defence line along the Atlantic coast was built by the German occupants during WWII.

This 'rather sensitive' military heritage was neglected for a very long time or used as a stall, storage or holiday home. Only in the past few years have many parts of the Atlantic Wall become accessible again. Take an adventurous journey to these areas in North Holland and Friesland and experience the stories behind this fascinating bit of heritage.



Learn how Vlieland became part of the German defence line.



The Kazemattenmuseum: just 225 Dutch soldiers held around 17,000 Germans at bay here. A story to be proud of.

DAY 1 EXPERIENCE MARINE CITY DEN HELDER

You will be a guest at the former naval dockyard Willemsoord, the former shipyard and maintenance dockyard for the Royal Netherlands Navy. But it was emperor Napoleon Bonaparte who personally gave the orders to build the harbour in 1811. The navy departed 170 years later, but fortunately this monumental part of the city has remained intact and is now home to several nautical and cultural organisations and there are delicious restaurants in these monumental edifices.

Take a stroll over the former Rijkswerf and visit the Marine-museum, where you can learn about 500 years of naval history. Lightship Texel (no. 10) is moored on the south side of the terrain. The lighting mast of lightship Texel (no. 11) can also be found on the terrain. You will find theatre de Kampanje and Nationaal Reddingmuseum Dorus Rijkers (National Lifeboat Museum Dorus Rijkers) as well as the open air stage made of floodgates that was built in 2014. Den Helder has many accommodations to choose from, Lands End hotel, for example. Or how about the coastguard tower in Huisduinen, which has been transformed into a lovely apartment with breathtaking views over land and sea.



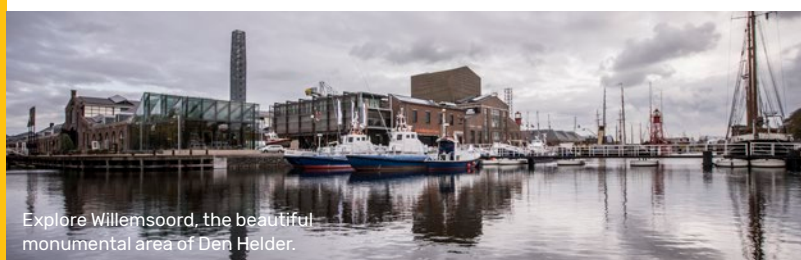
Atlantic Wall Centre in Den Helder.

DAY 3 ATLANTIC WALL CENTRE AND AFSLUITDIJK

After breakfast it's time to visit the new Atlantic Wall Centre. This museum, located in former German officers' quarters, tells the story of WWII in Den Helder and the Atlantic Wall in particular. The main topics are the bombings of the city, the construction of the Atlantic Wall, fleeing and the evacuation of the inhabitants and the destruction of their homes. A chronological wall shows the course of the war and a geographical wall gives you an impression of the Atlantic Wall in the Wadden area.

We will then travel to the Afsluitdijk. This famous water icon closes off the IJsselmeer from the Wadden Sea between North Holland and Friesland. The 32 kilometre long dike plays an important role in the battle against flooding. The dike was also a military fortress and the soldiers stationed here played a heroic role during the German invasion. This is the only place in the Netherlands where the German advance was successfully stopped.

This battle is the main theme in the Kazematten museum in Kornwerderzand, where personal stories are relayed and illustrated. There are also expositions about the period from the construction of the Afsluitdijk up to the 'Cold War' and Kornwerderzand's role as part of the Atlantic Wall. Join one of the guided tours to hear more stories about Kornwerderzand.



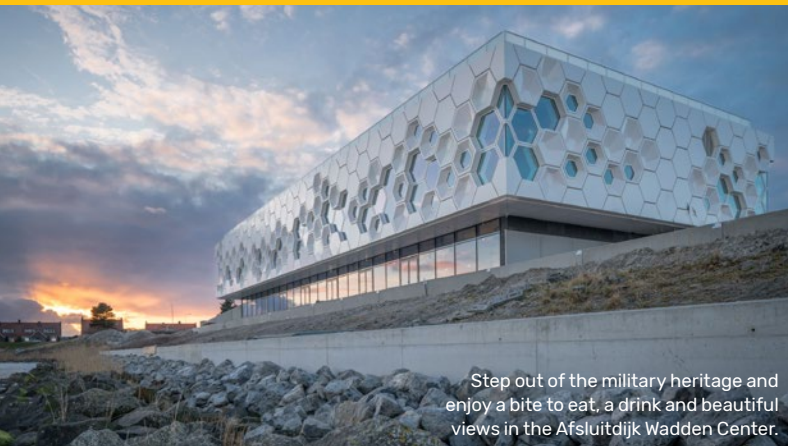
Explore Willemsoord, the beautiful monumental area of Den Helder.

DAY 2 RUSSIAN WAR ON TEXEL

The early bird gets the worm...or the ferry to the island of Texel. With more than 500 military buildings, Texel was a strategic point in the Atlantic Wall for the German occupants. You will learn much more about this at the Luchtvaart- en Oorlogsmuseum (LOMT - War and Aviation Museum). The museum has an interesting cycling route that will take you along the remains of the Atlantic Wall on Texel and several bunkers, including the southern battery on the Loodsmansduin as well as those near the museum.

The LOMT also has a permanent exhibition about the 'Russian War'. Many were taken as prisoners of war during the advance of the German armies in Russia and forced to live in camps under appalling conditions. To escape the misery, many Russians 'volunteered' for German service. This is how a group of Georgians came to man the Atlantic Wall on Texel.

Every year a few Georgians come to Texel to commemorate the uprising. They scatter soil from their homeland on the graves at the Loladze memorial cemetery on Texel. After visiting this very impressive place, we will return to our hotel in Den Helder. Dine in Veerhuis Lands End with views over the harbours of Den Helder, the Marsdiep, the island of Texel and, by good weather, the sun set.



Step out of the military heritage and enjoy a bite to eat, a drink and beautiful views in the Afsluitdijk Wadden Center.

TIME FOR AN EXTRA DAY?

Harlingen is easy to combine with a day trip to Wadden islands Terschelling or Vlieland. A visit to Leeuwarden's historical city centre, the 2018 European Capital of Culture, is well worth it. Boat trips can be taken from almost all cities on the IJsselmeer. Why not enjoy lunch or dinner on board.

WADDEN
visitwadden.nl

Highlights

- 1 Willemsoord
- 2 War and Aviation Museum
- 3 German defence line Den Helder
- 4 Kazematten museum
- 5 Afsluitdijk Wadden Center

