

Discover **FLEMISH BRABANT**



**VLAAMS-
BRABANT**

Groene Gordel

Leuven

Hageland

*“Press the pause
button”*



Centuries ago, kings, marquises, and princes were already escaping the hustle and bustle of the city and going to their hunting grounds and country estates in the green areas outside Brussels. Years later, Flemish Brabant is still surprisingly green, and remains a wonderful area to escape and relax.

Enjoy the countryside during a walk or bike ride through the woods and castle grounds of the so-called “Groene Gordel” (Green Belt) or across the Hageland’s vineyard-covered slopes. Have a day out at the most wonderful playgrounds and areas where kids can run wild and have the time of their lives. Get pampered at a wellness centre. Sample some of our unrivalled traditional beers. Stay another day and let us look after you for a night in our lovely local accommodations. There is so much to see and discover, way off the beaten track.

Six bloggers have blazed a trail for you. They headed off to discover unknown parts of Flemish Brabant and couldn’t help but fall for the province’s charm. Read their adventures and get inspired. Use our insiders’ tips to spend a delightful day out - or longer - in this most hospitable area. So, follow the example set by nobility, press the pause button and enjoy the fabulous Flemish Brabant.

Monique Swinnen
Tourism Representative for Flemish Brabant

COLOFON

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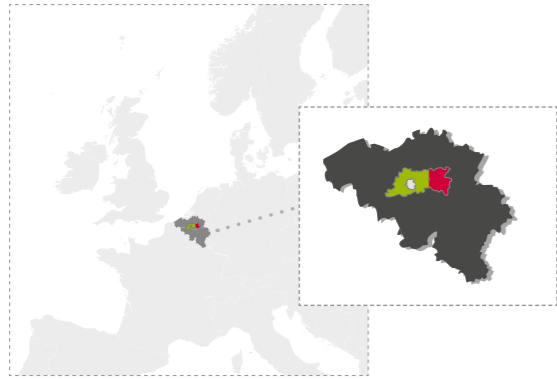
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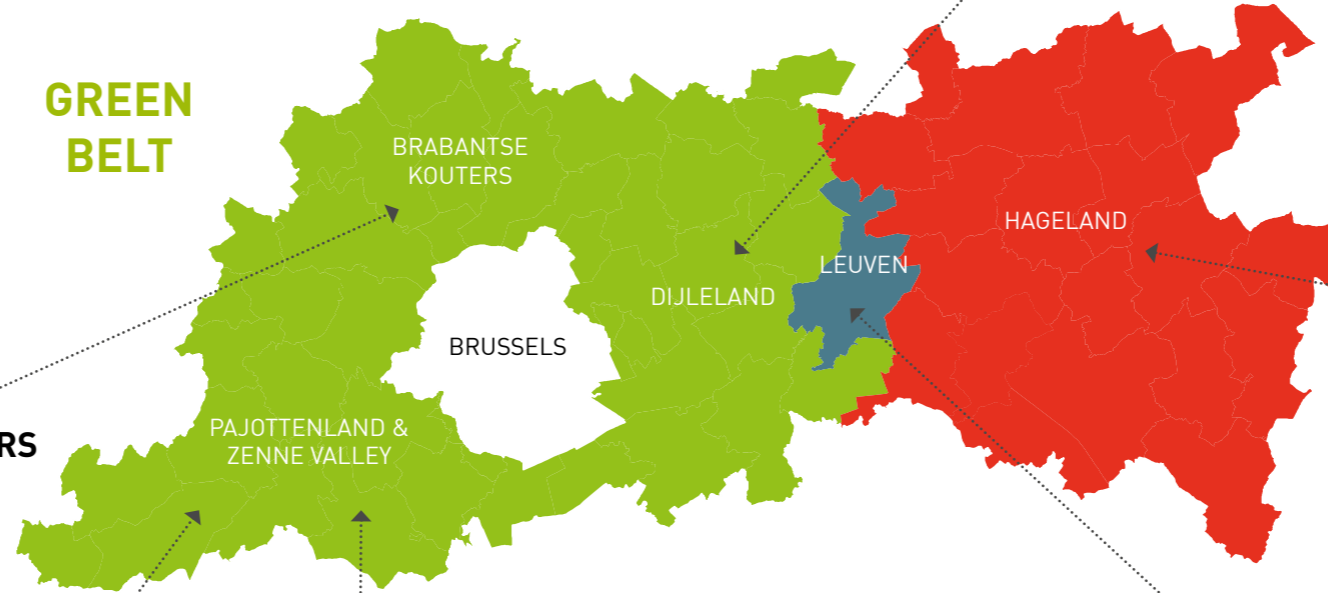
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Welcome to the centre of Europe



FLEMISH BRABANT

GREEN BELT



Biking around Brussels and discovering the hidden gems of the **BRABANTSE KOUTERS**



Out and about in **DIJLELAND**



A day (or two) in **HAGELAND**



HAGELAND

Discovering castles and nature's hidden gems, minutes from Brussels **DISCOVER PAJOTTENLAND**



The top things to see and do in the **ZENNE VALLEY**



City tripping in **LEUVEN**



BECOME A LOCAL

BUCKET LIST

What?

A bucket list website that challenges you to go out and discover the many hidden gems of Flemish Brabant! It's an inspirational list full of things to do, sights to see and places to eat, to enjoy this region's local charm to the fullest.

Who is it for?

Anyone, really! (Though primarily for internationals living in Brussels and its beautiful outskirts.)

Challenge accepted!

Go to www.bucketlistflemishbrabant.be and calculate your 'local' score!

Not convinced yet?

Share your bucket list progress online and **win a weekend break!***

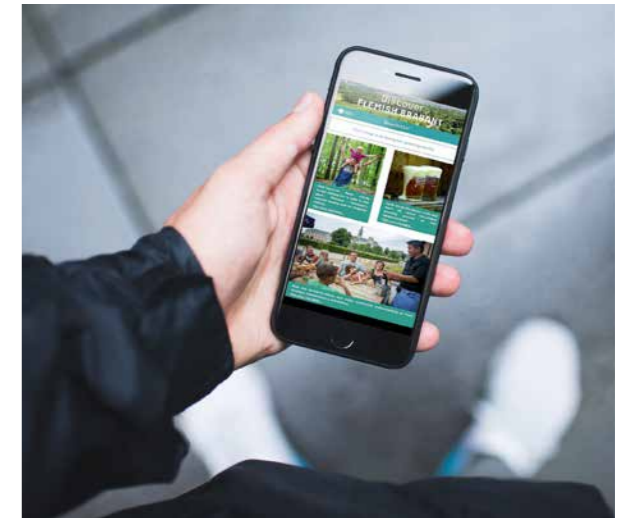
* Visit the website for more information on the contest.

www.bucketlistflemishbrabant.be

Expat newsletter

Would you like to stay informed about our recreational tips & tricks, customised for the international community? Subscribe to our newsletter: www.bit.do/expat-newsletter

- 🕒 Top 3 things to do during the weekend
- 🕒 A blogger looking for some peace & quiet – escaping the city
- 🕒 A 'local' taking you along on his/her favourite walk
- 🕒 ...



Looking for a charming castle to host a board meeting?

Or perhaps a practical low budget venue to brief a large group of colleagues? Whatever your needs, you will find a suitable meeting venue on:

www.zakentoeerismevlaamsbrabant.be

You can find over 200 meeting locations, quality approved by the government. Request up to 5 price offers for a single event, free of charge, simply by completing a single form. That's efficient!



Discover
PAJOTTENLAND



Discovering castles and nature's hidden gems, minutes from Brussels

PAJOTTENLAND

Where do you go when you need to recharge your batteries? How do you rejuvenate your soul when a hectic lifestyle sucks the energy out of you? Despite my love for Brussels, sometimes I want to escape the city with its noise, traffic and people.

But I don't always want to go far. Join me in discovering a spot surrounded by nature, with a dollop of fantasy and wonder thrown in, yet only minutes from the city! An escape to Gaasbeek, in the Pajottenland region ticks all the boxes!



Wendy Deyell

Wondrous Wanders

wondrouswanders.com

Through her 'wondrous wanders', Wendy Deyell shares her passion for uncovering and interpreting the treasures of Brussels and Belgium with others, particularly expatriates and multicultural groups - whether it's businesses, groups or individuals. Her insights and anecdotes during her storytelling walks always reveal unique and thought-provoking perspectives.



Castle walk

Heading southwest of Brussels, I arrive in the town of Gaasbeek, less than half an hour from the capital, ready to explore the wonders of the Green Belt region. I've just parked my car when a peloton of cyclists speeds around the town square! I take a quick snap and, smiling at my impeccable timing, I head off on a clearly signposted walk (see **Castle walk**, p.84) through the countryside. I find myself in serene nature, surrounded by chirping birds as I meander to my first stop, the Castle of Gaasbeek.

Gaasbeek Castle

Having fallen in love with the mystery and beauty of castles as a child, I jump at the chance to visit a new one. Did you know that Belgium has more castles per square kilometre than any other country in the world? Greenery like Ireland, lakes with paddling ducks and vineyards on a slope greet me as I pass through the rear gate of the castle domain and then... there it is, the picture-perfect fortified castle perched on a hill.

Gaasbeek Castle was built in 1240 and its story is full of plot twists, including destruction and reconstruction. Besides the castle itself, there is plenty of 'eye candy' to be spotted in the beautiful gardens to keep me and my camera busy.



Groenenberg park

Time to head to the next castle. Just opposite the castle property of Gaasbeek, I glimpse the lovely park surrounding the **Castle of Groenenberg**. This castle is relatively new – just over 100 years old – and is set in beautiful grounds overlooking the Pajottenland region, with its fields and gently rolling hills where Pieter Bruegel the Elder painted his famous landscapes. Groenenberg, an aristocratic country home, also has

a unique story. During WWII, German officers occupied the mansion and apparently there's a hidden bunker under the terrace where they sought shelter during air raids!



Farmers' market

I had planned to walk a bit more but I'm tempted by the **weekly local market** on the town square, so I wander over and buy some lovely farm-fresh products and a chicken to take home for dinner (one of the tastiest chickens I've ever eaten). My escape to the country leaves me in a mellow mood, with memories of yet another wondrous wander around Belgium.

i **Weekly farmers' market**
Every Saturday from 3 p.m.
Arconateplein, Gaasbeek



SOME MORE TIPS...

- ◉ The Gaasbeek area is stunning and offers clearly marked **walking and cycling routes**.
- ◉ If you're going to the Gaasbeek Castle, I recommend taking the longer route from the town through the grounds, rather than from the car park across the street. The scenery is unbeatable and strategically placed benches allow you to take in the **wonderful views**.
- ◉ Try to get started before noon. You may find yourself alone in the **castle grounds**, just like I did – it feels like stepping into another world.
- ◉ Spot **Brabant draught horses** in the rolling Pajottenland countryside.



I've worked up quite an appetite, so I retrace my steps, taking a detour down a lovely hidden stairway through the forest to return to Gaasbeek town.

Lunch is a delicious meal at Land Van Gaasbeek, just off the town square. It's run by a friendly couple in a warm setting. If you're lucky enough to have good weather, they have a large terrace in the back. I savour a perfectly grilled salmon filet accompanied by both home-made chips and mayonnaise, and the sun comes out just in time for coffee on the terrace!

Land van Gaasbeek
Donkerstraat 41- 1750 Gaasbeek (Lennik)
0476-27 34 06
www.landvangaasbeek.be



7 most idyllic playgrounds in green surroundings

Water slides and trees to climb, animals to pet and corduroy roads to cross. Children will have more than enough to keep them busy at the playgrounds and woodland play areas in Flemish Brabant.



1 Zoetwaterpark

A fun playground complete with a lovely outdoor café. Combine this with a walk along the five ponds at Zoet Water on the edge of Heverleebos and Meerdaalwoud. A mighty forest with straight lanes and winding paths.

📍 Maurits Noëstraat 15 - 3050 Oud-Heverlee - www.oud-heverlee.be



2 Woodland play area 't Vossenhol

A zigzagging path leads you through the forest past towers for climbing, beams for balancing and lots of other fun places to play. At the end of the path you reach a meadow with hills to play on, a sand pit, tunnels to crawl through and an amphitheatre. It's the perfect spot to spread out your picnic blanket and enjoy.

📍 Hoogveldbaan w/n - 3060 Bertem - www.berthem.be/spelbos



3 Woodland play area Everzwijnbad

A 30-metre long snake lies in wait among the bushes at Meerdaalwoud for the next child. Fear not, it won't eat you: it's there for you to climb on! The woodland play area is chock-a-block with poles to climb, puzzle trees and other adventurous woodland games.

📍 Weertsedreef 1 - 3050 Oud-Heverlee - www.natuurenbos.be



4 Het Vinne Provincial Domain Zoutleeuw

Cross the water on the corduroy roads. Tucked away behind the metre-high reeds, from time to time a startled water bird takes flight. Climb the lookout tower for a magnificent view and prolong the enjoyment with a local speciality from Bistro Het Vinne.

📍 Ossengewegstraat 70 - 3440 Zoutleeuw - www.provinciedomeinhetvinne.be



6 The Halve Maan Provincial Domain Diest

A sandy beach, outdoor swimming pool and a long water slide. It's a beach holiday at your doorstep. Explore the stunning nature of Webbekoms Broek, the historic ramparts around the delightful town of Diest and the many more surprises just waiting to be discovered.

📍 Omer Vanaudehovelaan 48 - 3290 Diest
www.provinciedomeinhalvemaan.be



5 The Kessel-Lo Provincial Domain

A park to go wild in in the green surroundings of Leuven. A wonderful place where the whole family is bound to have a fun-filled day in the heated outdoor swimming pool, on the playgrounds, rowing boats and playing on the sports fields.

📍 Beemdenstraat w/n - 3010 Leuven - www.provinciedomeinkessello.be



7 Huizingen Provincial Domain

Fantastically fun playgrounds, racing cars and rowing boats, animals to cuddle and a little train to take you around the domain: all this in the magnificent castle grounds. And you can even find delicious food.

📍 Henry Torleylaan 100 - 1654 Beersel
www.provinciedomeinhuizingen.be



Discover
ZENNE VALLEY



The top things
to see and do in the

ZENNE VALLEY

Looking for an opportunity to explore a different side of Belgium? Then the Zenne Valley is the place to be. Nestled just a few kilometres from Brussels' tourist hotspots, the towns comprising the Zenne Valley area offer a wonderful opportunity to experience local culture through historic sites, delicious Belgian cuisine and a taste of the traditional Lambic beers. Best discovered by car, follow these suggestions to create your own itinerary to explore this pristine region.



Anne Boyle

Culture Trip
theculturetrip.com

Anne Boyle is a Massachusetts native, but has considered Belgium her home ever since studying in Leuven in 2011. As a former culture trip editor, Anne enjoys writing about the best things to do and see around the country, and what makes Belgium a top destination in Europe.



Hike through the Forest of Halle

Though Belgium's natural scenery is mostly comprised of stretches of meadows and farmlands, if you're looking to escape to the woods, you can head to the Halle region. **The Forest of Halle's** tall sequoia trees and various winding paths set the scene for a beautiful walk in nature, regardless of season. Definitely visit the forest in mid-April, when the bluebells are in full bloom, creating a purple carpet of flowers and a fairy-tale atmosphere.



Explore the city of Halle

Best known for its Carnival celebrations (one of the biggest in the country), the small city of Halle boasts a rich history, dating back to the Middle Ages. When visiting the picturesque city, stop by the **Basilica of Saint Martin**, an impressive Gothic church whose ornate facade is as beautiful as its detailed interior. Take the time to explore all the nooks and crannies of the church, which display interesting architectural features and historic icons, including a famed Black Madonna. Afterwards, enjoy a stroll past the historic **Town Hall** and head further into the centre for some shopping. In between visiting the numerous quaint shops, have a coffee or tea with a slice of fresh cake at **Vandaag**.



Taste renowned Lambic beers at the Lambic Visitor Centre

Whether you're a beer aficionado or looking to brush up on your knowledge of Belgian beers, the Zenne Valley is a very special place to discover one of the country's classic beers, lambic, which is brewed in the area using local resources. The lambic brewing process requires more spontaneous fermentation, giving this particular beer a very distinct taste that ages well over time.

Visitors can truly experience this regional delicacy through a tour of the **Lambic Visitor Centre**, which showcases the traditional craftsmanship behind renowned specialities, such as Oude Geuze and Oude Kriek. The centre will show you how the lambic beers share strong historical and cultural ties to this particular region of Belgium. The sensory tour of the museum ends with a tasting session, where visitors can choose from a top selection of local lambic beers.

Visit the historic Beersel Castle

Featured in one of Belgium's most beloved comic book series, *Suske en Wiske*, the **Beersel Castle** is a significant site, as it once served to protect Brussels. With its brick walls, narrow staircases and looming tall towers, this 13th-century fortified castle strategically surrounded by a moat will transport visitors right back to medieval times. Explore the premises and learn about the castle's key historic events, such as the siege of 1489. Don't forget to check out the adjacent museum, which also gives an overview of the castle's history, restoration process and a number of special archaeological objects found on site, including large cannon balls.



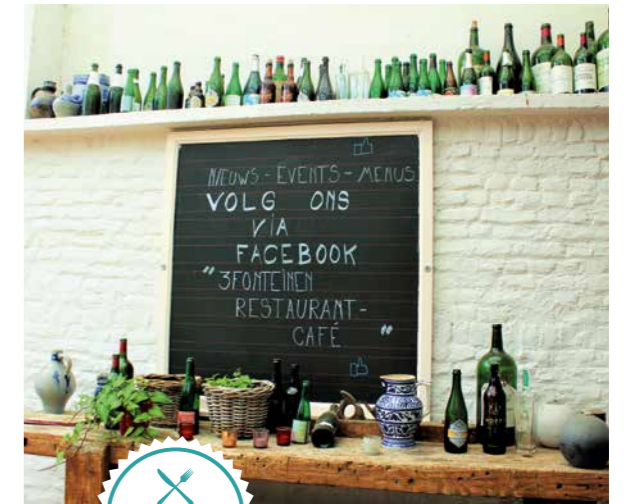
Stroll through the international rose garden of Coloma Park

While it's certainly no surprise the Zenne Valley is considered one of Belgium's greener spaces, the village of Sint-Pieters-Leeuw takes this title to the next level with its Coloma Park. Once a getaway for the rich, **Castle Coloma** and its surrounding estate now host an **international rose garden** which is home to over 3,000 varieties of the blossom from 25 different countries. Regarded as one of the most esteemed rose gardens in Europe, visitors can take a stroll through the carefully styled hedgerows and garden chambers to explore themed sections that range from local breeds in the Flemish Garden to a carefully curated Japanese Garden. Be sure to take some time to admire Coloma's International Garden, which contains an extensive number of roses from around the world, not to mention it's the perfect place to while away the afternoon on one of its many secluded benches.

Enjoy a local village market

If you happen to be in Sint-Pieters-Leeuw on a Friday, check out the local **farmers' market** just across the street from Coloma Park. Browse the colourful fruit and vegetable stands for fresh produce or try one of the select cheeses for an evening snack.

Weekly market
Every Friday from 3 p.m.
Rink, Sint-Pieters-Leeuw



Enjoy a traditional Belgian meal at 3 Fonteinen

When looking for a place to try Belgian cuisine in an authentic atmosphere, head to 3 Fonteinen in Beersel. Once a café, the restaurant/brewery is well known in the beer community for its traditional house-brewed Oude Kriek and Oude Geuze. Order a typical Flemish dish featured on the menu or, when in season, a heaping portion of Belgium's national delicacy, moules-frites. Pair the savoury meal with one or two of 3 Fonteinen's Lambic beers and relax in the company of locals.

3 Fonteinen
Herman Teirlinckplein 3, 1650 Beersel
02-331 06 52
www.3fonteinen.be



9

beer-tasting
opportunities

Brewing is in the genes of those who have grown up in Flemish Brabant. They will be delighted to let you sample their creations in the cosiest of brewery cafés and pubs.



1 The Beer Capital

The glass floor tiles give you a glimpse of the amazing beer cellar at The Beer Capital, possibly the café with the world's largest assortment of beers. There are around 2,000 Belgian beers in total! And all that on the Grote Markt in beer capital Leuven.

📍 Grote Markt 14 - 3000 Leuven
www.thecapital.be



4 Microbrewery Den Triest

A small brewery in the "Brabantse Kouters" that uses natural ingredients and hops from their own field. You can have a taste in the brewery's café; open every first Sunday of the month.

📍 Trieststraat 24 - 1880 Kapelle-op-den-Bos
www.dentriest.be



2 Domus

A cosy local brewery, standing in the shadow of Leuven's city hall. Legend has it that the freshly brewed beer runs straight from the wort boiler to the taps in the brasserie. Tip: try the tasty dishes made with Domus beer.

📍 Tiensestraat 8 - 3000 Leuven
www.domusleuven.be



5 Brewery 3 Fonteinen

Armand Debelder inherited the brewing bug from his father and is quite a legend in the world of lambic. He has even been named the world's third best brewer by the American website 'RateBeer'. Book an appointment to visit the brewery or take a gander in the brewery shop.

📍 Molenstraat 47 - 1651 Beersel
www.3fonteinen.be



3 Lambic Visitor Centre

Discover the flavours, aromas, sounds and textures of lambic beer in this exciting visitor centre. You can try the old geuze or old kriek (cherry) beer from the eleven lambic breweries and geuze blenderies in the region.

📍 Gemeenveldstraat 1 - 1652 Alsemberg
www.delambiek.be



6 Café-brewery Nieuwhuys

It's a tiny brewery in Hoegaarden's oldest stone house. From a dark or refreshing blonde triple, to a delicate malty beer and even the more unusual wheat beer: they can all be sampled in the brewery's cosy café.

📍 Ernest Ourystraat 2 - 3320 Hoegaarden
www.nieuwhuys.be



7 Geuze blendery and café De Cam

Geuze blender Karel Goddeau will tell you all about his passion with great enthusiasm: turning old and young lambic into delicious geuze. It's unbeatable with a sandwich filled with Pajottenland cream cheese. The best place to taste it? The characterful local café De Cam, just across the courtyard.

📍 Dorpsstraat 67 - 1755 Gooik
www.decaminfo



8 Brewery Van Campenhout

Brewer Kris Smedts grew up among the wort boilers and is keeping up the family tradition. That's five generations now, passed from father to son. Let the brewer show you around and finish up with a taste of the wonderful Witlov beers in Het Labo, the café in the brewery's courtyard.

📍 Brouwerijstraat 23F - 1910 Kampenhout
www.brouwerijvancampenhout.be



9 Brewery De Kroon

When the best beer experts in the country - father and son Delvaux - reopen an old brewery, then you just know you're in the right place. Discover both the old and the new breweries; try the beer and enjoy a tasty meal in Het Brouwhuis.

📍 Beekstraat 20 - 3040 Neerijse
www.brouwerijdekroon.be





Discover
BRABANTSE KOUTERS



Biking around Brussels and discovering the hidden gems of the

BRABANTSE KOUTERS

Have you ever wanted to spend time discovering beautiful places without needing to take a long trip to another big city or touristy landmark? Then why not enjoy a green cycling trip just outside Brussels that will take you back in time? Let's explore the northern side of the Green Belt around Brussels together. Are you ready to discover the hidden gems that await you just a stone's throw from Brussels?



Adrian Petrescu

CheeseWeb
CheeseWeb.eu

CheeseWeb.eu is dedicated to sharing stories of cultural connections through Slow Travel. Founded by Alison Cornford-Matheson, a Canadian writer who lived in Belgium for 11 years, CheeseWeb now includes a team of dedicated slow travellers based in North America, Europe, and beyond.

The Botanic Garden in Meise: One of the most colourful green spaces around Brussels

Our first stop is the impressive **Botanic Garden** in Meise, just 4 kilometres north of the Atomium. This 92-hectare green area is located on the Bouchout domain, around a 19th-century castle. If you want to learn more about plants and their uses during a recreational walk, this is the place to be.

The Botanic Garden in Meise holds no less than **18,000 plant species from all over the world**, both in its beautifully designed greenhouses and in its outdoor gardens. You can enjoy one of the various events held on site, browse the impressive botanical library, take an inspiring walk, book a guided tour or simply have a drink in the classy **orangery**. Definitely order a Meiske, the local beer, presented in a very unique way. The Botanic Garden in Meise is open all year round, so there is something new to discover in every season.



The greatest spaghetti bolognese in Belgium?

If you're looking to savour an excellent plate of pasta, head to In de Patattezak, locally also known as "Pee Klak", near the Botanic Garden, in Strombeek-Bever. According to the customer reviews it's the best in Belgium. I paid them a visit and I must admit I had a really tasty lunch. I ordered the spaghetti bolognese, but you can choose from different variations on spaghetti according to your taste. The accompanying cappuccino was also delicious, and the service was friendly and welcoming. Being almost hidden in Oude Mechelsestraat, it is not crowded with tourists, so you are likely to enjoy a typical Belgian atmosphere.

 **In de Patattezak - Pee Klak**
Oude Mechelsestraat 48
1853 Strombeek-Bever
02-267 52 52





A spectacular view of Brussels

After lunch, it's time to head to our next stop: Grimbergen. On our way, we are treated to an impressive view of the **skyline of Brussels**. The panorama is visible from Sparrenlaan, on the right-hand side. Beside the dominating Atomium, you can also spot the Japanese Tower, as well as famous skyscrapers downtown, like the Finance Tower, The Hotel or the Rogier Tower. It's a spectacular sight from this green spot in the midst of the fields!



Grimbergen: a town full of hidden gems

Grimbergen is a charming town with much to offer. On the calm central square, you can admire some beautiful traditional Flemish architecture. The picturesque 18th-century houses are reminiscent of Bruges. The square is dominated by **the Basilica of Saint Servatius** and the **Norbertine Abbey**. The former abbey farm now houses **MIRA**, the oldest astronomical observatory in Belgium, which opened its doors in 1967.




A few steps to the south, there is **Prinsenbos**, a small forest in the middle of the town, with quiet paths, a lake and the ruins of a 17th-century water castle. Next to the castle, in perfect condition, you can find the picturesque former coach house from the same century. Step inside to visit the captivating **Museum of Old Techniques (MOT)**, where you'll discover antique tools, pictures and stories about ancient washing techniques, blacksmithing and woodworking. Kids are more than welcome and can enjoy activities just for them. On the top floor of the museum, there's even a play attic, where they can try out fun wood and woodworking activities. After this educational tour, treat yourself to a fresh blonde Grimbergen beer on the rustic terrace of the nearby **Tommenmolen**, a charming café and restaurant set in a former watermill that dates back to the 16th century.



Cycle in green from node to node

An interesting method to navigate the green belt around Brussels is to use the **node system created specifically for cyclists and hikers**. The principle is simple: numbered nodes are set in strategic places. You pick your desired nodes on a map and you link them to create your sightseeing route. Road signs for cyclists and hikers are placed at virtually every turn, so all you have to do is follow them to your next node. This will allow you to cycle or hike off the beaten path, away from heavy traffic.

For **my cycling route**, I linked nodes no. 41-40-39-73-76-38-43-38-39-40 and then returned to no. 41. The Botanic Garden is close to node no. 41. Most of the attractions in Grimbergen are around node no. 38 and Tommenmolen is a few steps away from node no. 43.

 Get your Flemish Brabant cycling network map via www.toerismevlaamsbrabant.be, at the tourism services in Flemish Brabant, or plan your route online via www.fietsnet.be





7 peaceful places to relax

A wonderful sauna and a delightful massage before plunging into a heated outdoor pool. Press the pause button with a relaxing wellness session.



1 Waer Waters


Wonderful relaxation in a modern spa and sauna resort with attractive architecture in natural materials. Treat yourself to an abundant 6,000 m² of pure luxury.

 Rodenberg 21 - 1702 Groot-Bijgaarden - www.waerwaters.com



2 Thermen Dilbeek


A luxurious wellness hotel with all the facilities you could dream of: from jacuzzis to seven different types of saunas, relaxation areas, a beauty farm, wellness treatments, an indoor and outdoor swimming pool and much, much more.

 Kattebroekstraat 290 - 1700 Dilbeek - www.thermendilbeek.be



3 Thermae Grimbergen


Nude or in a bathing suit, the wellness facilities at Thermae Grimbergen are kept strictly separate. Join in with an aufguss or scrub session in the sauna, dive into the swimming pond and forget your worries in the relaxation area.

 Wolvertemsesteenweg 74 - 1850 Grimbergen - www.thermae.com



4 Thermae Boetfort


Sauna, wellness and relaxation in unique, 400-year-old castle grounds. Relaxing massages, wonderful treatments and a fabulous wellness hotel for true relaxation.

 Sellaerstraat 42 - 1820 Steenokkerzeel - www.thermae.com



6 Aquaheaven Leuven

Four private wellness areas, each with their own character: the Roman sauna, Exotic sauna, Colour sauna and Mosaic sauna. Each area comes complete with a sauna, a hammam, a jacuzzi and heated swimming pool, hot and cold showers, relaxation area and mini bar.

 Nerviersstraat 37 - 3000 Leuven - www.aquaheaven.be



5 Aquaheaven Vilvoorde


Four sauna areas - Finnish log cabin, Buddha temple, starry sky and green oasis - where you can enjoy in magnificent surroundings in complete privacy.

 Indringingsweg 1b - 1800 Vilvoorde - www.aquaheaven.be



7 La Nostra Vita

Start with a sauna to benefit the skin, then continue with a treatment by a professional beautician or take a dip in the heated outdoor swimming pool. You are bound to feel reborn after a visit to La Nostra Vita.

 Turnhoutsebaan 244 - 3294 Molenstede - www.lanostravita.be

A scenic landscape in autumn. In the foreground, a calm lake reflects the golden light of the sun, which is low in the sky on the left. The water's surface is dark with shimmering highlights. On the left bank, two large, mature trees with sparse, golden-brown leaves stand prominently. A few people are visible on the grassy bank behind them, some sitting on a bench. In the background, a dense forest of trees with varying autumn colors (yellows, oranges, and greens) covers a hillside. On the right side of the image, a large, multi-story building with a distinctive stepped gable roof is partially visible, nestled among the trees. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and serene, capturing the beauty of the fall season.

Discover
DIJLELAND



Out and about in **DIJLELAND**

It hasn't stopped raining for days, but this morning the sky finally seems to be looking brighter. Time for a walk! Fortunately my hometown, Leuven, is right next to Dijleland. This is part of the Green Belt around Brussels and it boasts around 300 kilometres of footpaths for those who fancy stretching their legs. 300 kilometres strikes me as a little too much for one day, so I make a selection. I decide to start with Teruren Park and then go to Doode Bemde in Neerijse.



Sofie Couwenbergh

Wonderful Wanderings
WonderfulWanderings.com

Sofie quit a stable job in marketing to forge her own career path and travel the world, exploring cities and cultures in her home country Belgium and beyond. She created her own self-guided thematic walks and shares travel tips and inspiration on her blog.



Tervuren Visitor Centre

I haven't been to Tervuren for years so I have also never visited the **new visitor centre** on the market square. This is the perfect place to start a local walk, as there is a lot to be learned from the information panels, interactive screens and films. What's really handy is the large interactive map where you can search based on your favourite activities (walking, cycling, etc.) or zoom in from the whole of Flemish Brabant to a specific walking area.

For **my walking route** in Tervuren Park, I linked nodes no. 4-41-42 back to 4 (5km).



A stroll in Tervuren Park

In fact I have already mapped out my route, so off I go, around the corner and towards **the park**. I head in the direction of walking node 41, which takes me through the forest. Following the pleasant footpaths I reach the crossing between the ponds and I continue in a northerly direction towards node 42 and Vossem pond. This part of my walk is along a wide path and is clearly very popular. Hardly surprising, as there is always something really lovely about walking along the water. When I arrive at node 42, I am also rewarded with a sunny bench complete with views over the pond. A short stop for some photos and some vitamin D, that's allowed. If you like you can walk all the way around the pond, but I choose a path that takes me back to the other side of the forest to the **Spaans Huis** (Spanish House), as it's already time for some lunch.



A sandwich with cream cheese

Het Spaans Huis is a small brasserie located in an old mill on the mill pond or Molenvijver, with a lovely big terrace with views over the water. The menu features many different local beers and simple snacks, such as a plate of blood pudding and even tea from Koffie Onan, the wonderful coffee and tea shop in Leuven. I'm in need of a little more than just a plate of blood pudding, so I choose an open sandwich with cream cheese. This arrives complete with a tasty salad and topped with radish. Yum! Batteries charged, I continue my walk in the direction of the **Royal Museum for Central Africa**. From there it's just a few minutes' walk back to the market square.



Het Spaans huis
Spaans-huisdreef 1 - 3080 Tervuren
02-688 22 33
www.facebook.com/HetSpaansHuis



The new AfricaMuseum

After five years of renovation, the new AfricaMuseum is a true architectural gem!

The old museum building has been restored to its former glory. The new, transparent building embodies the evolution of the AfricaMuseum: from a former colonial institute to an open museum for the Africa of today and the future.



The exhibition

The new permanent exhibition deals with contemporary themes such as biodiversity and environmental management, daily life, the African diasporas and the paradox of Africa's raw materials. The incredibly long, rich and dynamic history of Central Africa is presented whilst focusing on a relatively short period, but one that had a major impact: the colonial era and the independence of the DR Congo.



The glass reception pavilion is home to Bistro Tembo which has a beautiful view of the park, and a menu with an African touch.

A unique location

Surrounded by Tervuren Park and a short distance from Brussels, the AfricaMuseum is in a unique location. The park, with its stunning French gardens, eight ponds and the remains of the Castle of Tervuren links directly to the Sonian Forest and the Arboretum. It's an ideal starting point for a walk or bike ride.



AfricaMuseum

Leuvensesteenweg 13 - 3080 Tervuren
02 769 52 11

www.africamuseum.be, info@africamuseum.be

More information on Tervuren Park and the Sonian Forest is available at www.visittervuren.be



Chocolate treats

From Tervuren, I drive towards Neerijse, making a short stop on the way. Because in Duisburg, I come across the world's **best caramel praline**. And no, that is not a subjective opinion, given that the so-called Salin made by the master chocolate maker Geert Decoster was awarded this title at the International Chocolate Awards in London in 2013. Decoster sells his chocolate creations – always made entirely with single origin chocolate - in his shop **Centho** in Duisburg, but it is distributed worldwide. His many fans include famous names, such as TV chef Jamie Oliver, for whom he developed his own range, Flemish TV presenter Frieda Van Wijck and Dutch cyclist Lars Boom. Obviously I can't resist trying a Salin praline, and I can assure you, it is delectable.

Doode Bemde walk

After this sweet intermezzo I move on to Neerijse, where I have planned **a walk through the Doode Bemde**, 250 hectares stretching across Oud-Heverlee, Sint-Joris-Weert, Neerijse and Korbeek-Dijle. You can choose from 9 kilometres of footpaths leading you through forests, meadows and along the banks of the river Dijle (see **Margijs walk** p.85).



One for the road

After finishing my walk I think I have earned something tasty. Luckily **Brewery De Kroon** is not far from where I'm parked at node 213. With plenty of room inside, a large courtyard terrace and a long list of local beers, including four of its own, there's no better place to end your day than at De Kroon. During the weekend you can even visit the old brewery, now a protected monument, together with the new brewing installations. I order a café au lait, and with each sip, start to get my breath back.

I drive home in the sunshine, delighted to have spent this beautiful day discovering a small piece of Flemish Brabant.



Experience centre '14-'18

Looking for more adventures in Dijleland? Then go to the **Experience centre (Belevingscentrum) '14-'18 in Tildonk**. In this impressive former Ursulines cloister used by the German General von Beseler as a base for coordinating the siege against Antwerp, you can relive the **First World War** through the eyes of the people. It includes some unforgettable stories, touching photos and exciting anecdotes.



7

impressive views over Brussels

Amidst the tranquillity and green surroundings of the Green Belt you suddenly get a view of the big city: the tower blocks, the Atomium, Koekelberg basilica, the hustle and the bustle. The surreal contrast between city and countryside has never been as beautiful as it is here. Come and enjoy some unique panoramas.

1 Sparrenlaan/Vergezichtweg - Grimbergen

Blogger Adrian Petrescu could hardly believe his eyes when he saw the spectacular views over the Brussels skyline when cycling along the Sparrenlaan in Grimbergen. Not surprising: from there you can spot the Atomium, the Japanese Tower and other famous silhouettes.

Tip: start at the Botanic Garden in Meise and follow cycling nodes 41 - 40 - 39 - 73 - 76 - 38 - 39 - 40 - 41

Tip: go to the lowest point of Sparrenlaan, close to Berkenlaan and walk back uphill along the unpaved "Vergezichtweg" for the best view.

2 Heirbaan - Meise

Depart from Sint-Martinus church in Meise and follow the signs indicating the **d'Hoogvorstwandelpad** (10km). This is a pleasant introduction to the farmlands surrounding Belgium's capital, with astonishing views.

Tip: combine your walk with a visit to the Botanic Garden in Meise.

3 Lierput/Kobbegemstraat - Asse

Starting at the picturesque little white church of Hamme, in Kobbegem-Asse, follow the footpath signs indicating **'Dertien Bunderwandelpad'** (10.5km). You will pass the Mort Subite brewery and several lovely farmsteads in the hilly countryside. The highest peaks reward you with lovely views of the capital.

4 Kasterlindenstraat - Dilbeek

At Kasterlindenstraat you can enter the Thaborberg nature reserve along a narrow, signposted footpath, close to the border between Dilbeek and Sint-Jans-Molenbeek. It's very green here, as you will discover on the wheelchair path and the natural 'barefoot' path, and in the impressive natural mazes. The panorama across Brussels is simply amazing.



5 The Zenne canal

An extremely original way to get to know Brussels and the Green Belt is from the water. Start at the Havenlaan in Brussels, glide between the buildings in the capital towards the tranquility of the Green Belt. Kanaaltochten Brabant provides tours between 1 May and 31 October.

Find out the options on www.rivertours.be

6 Begijnbosstraat - Beersel

The walk called **Kesterbeekwandeling** (7.5km) reveals the contrast between two worlds: the rural district of Pajottenland on the one hand and the city of Brussels on the other. You won't mind the hills when you are rewarded with the wonderful views at the top. Depart from the Herman Teirlinckplein in Beersel and follow the signs.

7 Kesterheide - Gooik

The walk called **Kesterheide-Lombergwandeling** (9.4km) takes you to the highest point in the Pajottenland, the Kesterheide. Don't be surprised to discover the magnificent views: from the green hills of Pajottenland over the Brussels skyline.

Tip: start at the De Lijn bus station in Leerbeek on the main road (Steenweg) between Asse and Edingen. Follow the nodes in the Pajottenland walking network: 214 - 215 - 220 - 218 - 217 - 216 - 255 - 254 - 253 - 250 - 251 - 258 - 256 - 264 - 215 - 214



Discover
LEUVEN



City tripping in **LEUVEN**

Leuven is one of those cities that steals your heart at first sight. Located just a short train ride from Brussels, it's the capital of the Flemish Brabant province and is home to one of the oldest universities in Europe. It's young, dynamic and easy to explore on foot, making it the perfect destination for a day trip. Why not spend a really fun day in the city exploring Leuven's landmarks, trying great foodie places and doing a bit of shopping too? Are you ready to discover some of Leuven's hotspots? Let's go!



Sandy Tsakiridi

S Marks The Spots

www.smarksthespots.com

S Marks The Spots is a food and travel blog by Sandy Tsakiridi, a passionate foodie with an incurable case of wanderlust. Follow the spots in her online treasure map and discover the best foodie and fun spots in Brussels, London, Paris and beyond!



Coffee & history

Let's start the day with a cup of coffee and some sweet treats at **Bar Stan**, a young, hip café in the city's 'New Quarter'. I love its local vibe, laid-back atmosphere and friendly service. It's a great first stop before taking a long stroll around the cobblestoned streets of the Great Beguinage, which is sure to leave you awestruck.

Founded back in the 13th century, **Leuven's Great Beguinage** seems like a small town in itself, secured behind large walls near the Dijle river. It's a beautiful maze of small streets, squares and gardens dotted with dozens of houses in traditional brick and sandstone style – it's no wonder that it's been a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** since 1998. Once the home of the Beguines, the Great Beguinage nowadays accommodates the students and university staff of the KU Leuven; however, it is accessible to the public for free. A must-see when visiting Leuven!



The city centre

After a long, lovely stroll down the streets of the Great Beguinage, it's time to head to the city centre. A short walk later, you'll find yourself at the **Grote Markt**, across from yet another majestic sight, the **Town Hall**. Ornate and imposing, the Town Hall is a fine example of Gothic architecture and stands proudly across from **Saint Peter's Church**, the oldest church in Leuven. Our final destination before lunch is the Oude Markt, also known as the **longest bar in the world**. That's right, it's in Leuven! It's literally an open square surrounded by lovely buildings filled with bars, each with a unique style – so much fun, I guarantee you won't stop smiling.



M - Museum

Our next stop is the M - Museum, another must-visit spot in Leuven. Built by the well-known Belgian architect Stéphane Beel, the museum integrates two old and two new buildings, creating a dialogue between classical and contemporary art. You can spend a few good hours admiring the permanent collection and temporary exhibitions; however, there's so much to see that you could easily dedicate an entire day there. Your heart will definitely skip a

beat when you see the view from the museum's rooftop café – the perfect place to sip on cocktails or enjoy a concert on a warm day. If the day is not particularly sunny, you can have a glass of fresh juice at **Thelma Coffee & Design**, a wonderful concept shop offering a carefully selected range of clothes and design objects. Personally, I love the aesthetic of the space and I always feel right at home, so much so that I don't want to leave!



Shopping, shopping and, you guessed it... more shopping


Rested and fresh, it's time to wander through Leuven's shopping streets in search of cute local boutiques. Believe me, you will not be disappointed. My favourites are **LIV** for trendy, luxury-brand clothing, **Lasso** for hand-made jewellery and **Animaux Speciaux**, a taxidermist's wonderland with the coolest decor curiosities. Needless to say, you won't leave empty-handed! Before saying goodbye to Leuven, let's head to **Koffie en Staal**, a spot that proves 'coffee and steel' are a match made in heaven. The concept was launched by a talented couple passionate about coffee and design. This cute little space showcases handcrafted items made by the owners, like furniture and jewellery. The great coffee and yummy home-made desserts were the icing on the cake.

Leuven is full of little gems waiting to be discovered, so much so that it will leave you wanting to go back for more. This city seems to have it all: great architecture, foodie spots and a lively cultural scene. Make sure to put in on your itinerary and enjoy!



Enjoy Italian specialties in modern surroundings

After exploring great spots all morning, it's time for lunch, so Baracca it is! I had heard great things about this restaurant and it appears they're all true. Modern decor, efficient service and most importantly, fantastic food. Here you can have fresh burrata, the most delicious pizza and home-made tiramisu. Leuven has officially conquered my heart and taste buds!

 **Baracca**
Tiensestraat 34 - 3000 Leuven
www.baracca.be



12

charming
places to
stay

Do you love the bustling heart of the city or would you rather disappear into the peace and quiet of the countryside? Whichever you prefer, Flemish Brabant is sure to offer you the ideal and most charming addresses to make you feel right at home.



1 B&B Aquarand

Relax in luxury along Leuven's canal, just a cycle ride away from Leuven and Mechelen. It's also the perfect place for parties and meetings.

📍 Vaardijk 126 - 1981 Hofstade - www.aquarand.be



4 B&B Park 7

Enjoy the stylish delights in one of the seven luxury rooms in a 17th-century paper mill, in the castle park of the Count's family de Limburg Stirum. It features a delicious organic breakfast and wellness area.

📍 Kasteelpark 7 - 3040 Huldenberg - www.park7.be



2 B&B Den Engel

A stylish duplex apartment in the heart of the charming village of Erps. In the wine cellar – called bodega d'n Engel – you can sample the best Spanish wines and Belgian beers.

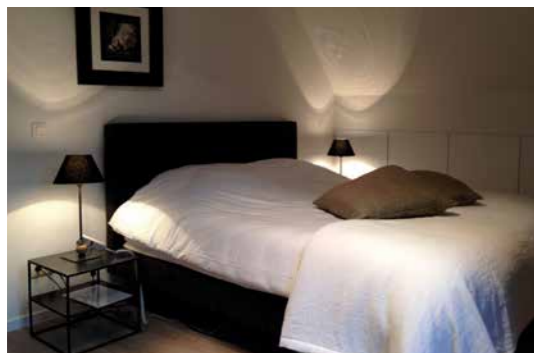
📍 Dorpsplein 13 - 3071 Erps-Kwerps - www.bnb-denengel.be



5 Huize Dumberg

Stay in this authentic belle époque horticulturalist home at the edge of the Sonian forest. Combine a lovely stay with dinner in the private restaurant, Hof ten Doore.

📍 Groenendaalsesteenweg 25 - 1560 Hoeilaart
sites.google.com/site/huizedumberg/home



3 B&B Michel

A villa with plenty of character nestled between the trees in the old castle grounds. Take a dip in the swimming pool or relax in the beautiful garden or infrared sauna.

📍 Ten Doorn 7 - 1852 Grimbergen - www.bnbmichel.be



6 B&B Het Verblif

This ecologically renovated three-sided farm within walking distance from Gaasbeek Castle is a very inspiring spot, right in the heart of the untouched Pajottenland countryside.

📍 Rosweg 54 - 1750 Sint-Martens-Lennik - www.hetverblif.be



7 B&B Louis1924

Star chef Thomas Locus is sure to pamper you in this stylish and romantic renovated farmhouse. Enjoy the culinary delights at his award-winning restaurant, Bistro Margaux, just a stone's throw away.

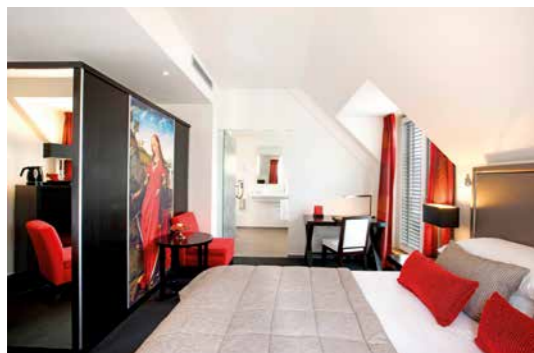
📍 Lange Veldstraat 19 - A1700 Sint-Martens-Bodegem - www.louis1924.be



8 B&B Inblauw

An exclusive suite complete with private sauna, splendid indoor swimming pool and delightful sun terrace. Total relaxation on the outskirts of Leuven.

📍 Jules Vandenbemptlaan 19 - 3001 Heverlee - www.inblauw.be



9 Martin's Klooster Hotel

A four-star hotel in a unique part of Leuven's patrimony, a former monastery with a rich history. The ideal base for discovering the historic city centre.

📍 Onze-Lieve-Vrouwstraat 18 - 3000 Leuven
www.martinshotels.com/nl/hotel/klooster-hotel



10 Hotel Tafelrond - The Fourth

Looking for a lovely accommodation in a very exclusive location? This brand new luxury hotel is located in a historic building on Leuven's Grote Markt and adjacent to the magnificent and stunning city hall.

📍 Grote Markt 5 - 3000 Leuven - www.tafelrond.com



11 Holiday home de Borgerij

Far away from all the hustle and bustle, in the green Gete Valley, lies the old farmhouse of the Borgers family, now a four-star holiday home. Featuring a swimming pond and a sauna, complete with a sun terrace and cosy fireplace.

📍 Hulsbeekstraat 110 - 3450 Geetbets - www.deborgerij.be



12 B&B Luttelkolen

Enjoy rural ambiance in the heart of Hageland, within walking distance of Horst castle. Visit the bar in the farmstead's garden and enjoy the good weather, but when it starts to get chilly you can curl up by the fire in the cosy sitting room.

📍 Luttelkolen 9 - 3221 Nieuwrode - www.luttelkolen.be



Discover
HAGELAND



A day (or two) in **HAGELAND**

A day is never going to be long enough to fully enjoy Hageland – one of my favourite walking and cycling areas in Flanders. To give you a taste of this lovely area, how about a country walk, a wine centre and a beguinage? You can also enjoy lunch at an old watermill and have supper at a traditional Flemish pub.



Denzil Walton

Discovering Belgium
discoveringbelgium.com

Denzil Walton is a British freelance writer who has lived in Belgium for more than 30 years. He blogs on places to visit “off the beaten track” and prefers to discover Belgium on foot or by bike.

The country walk

If you've never explored the **node-to-node walking network**, you're in for a treat! At each numbered node, a signpost points you in the direction of the next nodes. This allows you to mix and match to create your own hiking route rather than having to follow the set routes. Of course you can customise and shorten (or lengthen) your route as you please.

8 Starting from the Castle of Horst, there is an excellent 10-km circular route, the **Broekem walk** (see p.84).

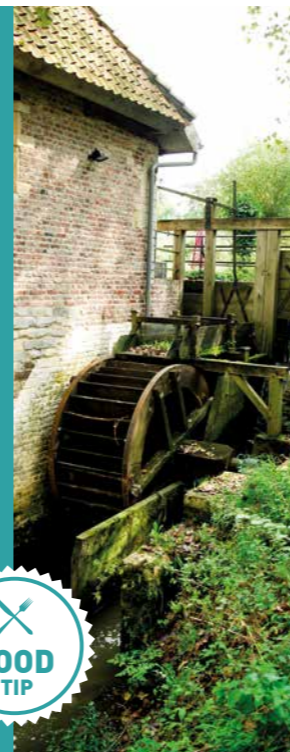


i Get your Flemish Brabant walking network map via www.toerismevlaamsbrabant.be, at the tourism services in Flemish Brabant, or plan your route online via www.wandelknooppunt.be

The place to be for a tasty break

Halfway around the loop, you'll find the Gempemolen bistro in an old watermill – the place to be for a tasty break. If you've brought your sandwiches with you, make the most of the designated picnic area, with tables, chairs, parasols and a drinks dispenser. If you haven't, the menu offers a selection of snacks and local specialities. It's warm and welcoming, with friendly, attentive staff and extremely quick service.

De Gempemolen
Gempstraat 56 - 3390 Sint-Joris-Winge
016-48 73 07
www.gempemolen.be



Sven Nys Cycling Centre

Fancy some sports in The Hageland? Then you shouldn't miss the **Sven Nys Cycling Centre**. This cyclocross champion has created a fascinating experience centre at the top of the Balenberg in the village of Baal where he was born, where you can enjoy the highlights of cyclocross. You can even test the latest bicycle models, try out the cross track on the hillside or just enjoy the terrace or a drink at the brasserie's bar.

The Wine Visitors' Centre

Wezemaal is called the 'wine village' and hosts the **Hageland Wine Visitors' Centre** in the old town hall. Admission is free, and it's the place to be if you're looking to find information on the history and current (booming) viniculture of the region. You can also taste and buy local wine there.

It's well positioned, as a short walk away you'll find Wijngaardberg (literally: vineyard mountain), an example of the petrified sandbanks of Hageland. Millions of years ago, the sea flooded the whole of Lower Belgium. When the water receded, it left sandbanks behind – the Hageland Hills. The resulting iron sandstone retains heat, making the Hageland Hills an excellent location for growing grapes. The southern flanks can be up to 7 degrees warmer than the northern flanks. The pinot noir, pinot gris and chardonnay, all grape varieties from the Elzas region, get sufficient light and warmth here. Have an hour or two to spare? Enjoy a walk through the Wijngaardberg vineyards.

i Find a top selection of regional vineyards on www.toerismevlaamsbrabant.be (discover).



Enjoy an authentic Flemish meal

If you are looking for a nice restaurant in Hageland, I really recommend booking a table at Herberg in de Ster – Bij Boeres, which serves authentic Flemish classics like stoofvlees (beef stew), plus local specialities such as Werchterse geitenkaas (goat's cheese from the music festival village of Werchter). If it's sunny you can sit on the large terrace and watch the cyclists zoom by. Here too the staff are friendly and helpful, and they will give you a hand choosing from the extensive range of Belgian beers and local wines. It's an ideal end to your day, and a chance to plan your next visit to Hageland.

In de ster - Bij Boeres
Kerkstraat 6 - 3111 Wezemaal
016-89 38 19
www.boeres.be

Diest

Diest is one of those small towns along the E314 highway that you pass on the way to somewhere else. But don't pass it by! Stop off and enjoy some quality time in this lovely market town, as it has so much to offer. Park in one of the three free car parks on the town's perimeter. If you're travelling by train, the centre is just a short walk from the station.

Only a short walk, but long enough for you to be ready for a cup of coffee, and where better than **Stuckens**? Comfy seats, soft music, friendly staff, great coffee, and a mouth-watering selection of biscuits and pastries to consume, and buy for later.

Museum De Hofstadt needs to be your next port of call. Intimate, tranquil and well laid-out, its seven rooms present the rich history of the "Orange City" (named after Diest's links with the House of Orange-Nassau). I particularly loved the Treasure Room, with its ornamental silverwork and its exquisite "enclosed gardens" of assemblage art.

If you have time, follow the **Orange Walk**, which will take you to most of the town's highlights, such as St. Sulpitius' Church, the Town Hall, the Warande Park, and the newly renovated boardwalk along the River Demer. By this time you're probably ready for lunch. I heartily recommend **Wannes Raps**. The food is well prepared, healthy and extremely tasty, served by the chef himself, and the menu is a nice combination of old and new.

If your time in Diest is limited, there's one location that is a definite must-visit: the Beguinage.



 Get your Orange Walk directions at the Tourism Office in Diest (Koning Albertstraat 16a - 3290 Diest) or download the map via www.toerismevlaamsbrabant.be/en/orangewalk.

The Beguinage of Diest

Beguines were unmarried women who wanted to live sober and pious lives in the service of God, but without being cloistered or making vows as nuns. They were often wealthy and self-sufficient; some had children. The 13th century saw an explosive growth of the beguine movement, with beguinages appearing in almost every town of significance in the Low Countries.

Beguines are first recorded to have lived in Diest in 1245. The Diest Beguinage consists of around 80 houses in small streets running parallel to each other, with an encircling wall that was built in the 16th century. The maximum population of the Beguinage was reached in 1674 when there were 395 beguines, 15 servants and 165 children. Beguines were present here until 1928. Every house in the Beguinage had its own patron saint. A statuette of the patron saint in wood or stone would




stand in a niche above the door. Each house was therefore named after the saint; this was particularly helpful as the houses were not numbered. The original statuettes can be seen in the Beguines' Room in the Museum De Hofstadt.

Walk along the cobble stones and view the beautifully renovated tiny houses in the Beguinage.



Vlooyberg tower

Is it a tower? An escalator? A stairway to heaven? The Vlooyberg Tower in Tielt-Winge is actually an eye-catching example of landscape architecture that seems to defy gravity as it floats above the Hageland countryside. It's over 11 metres high, weighs 13 tons, and is built from galvanized rust-coloured steel that matches the Hageland ironstone. Best of all, you can walk up to the top to enjoy stunning views over the nearby Kabouterbos forest.

 Oudepastoriestraat 22, 3390 Tielt-Winge



11

inspiring
walks

The only true way to discover a place is on foot, so you have the time to take in the beauty of the countryside. You'll be amazed by these walks through Flemish Brabant.



1 Linterse walk 7.6 km

Follow the loveliest paths in the Gete Valley, through the green countryside where sometimes there is not a house in sight. Past the old Geensmolen, Neerlinter Castle, churches and little chapels.

Start at the Kamsalamander hut, IJzerenweg in 3350 Drieslinter

Walking network Getevallei nodes 138 - 101 - 19 - 100 - 101 - 102 - 103 - 104 - 106 - 105 - 11 - 139 - 138



2 Halewijn walk 11.3 km

Walk through centuries of history in the small, but stunning town of Zoutleeuw while also enjoying the nature at Het Vinne Provincial Domain.

Start at Het Vinne Provincial Domain, Ossenwegstraat 70, 3440 Zoutleeuw

Walking network Getevallei nodes 307 - 306 - 344 - 345 - 346 - 347 - 310 - 36 - 35 - 31 - 3 - 37 - 38 - 30 - 32 - 33 - 309 - 308 - 307



3 Castle walk 7 km

Depart from the picturesque village square in Gaasbeek for a walk through the country's most beautiful castle grounds: Gaasbeek and Groenenberg.

Start at Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk (Church of Our Lady), Donkerstraat 26, 1750 Gaasbeek

Walking network Pajottenland nodes 11 - 111 - 124 - 126 - 730 - 129 - 127 - 123 - 104 - 103 - 11



7 Margijs walk 8.5 km

The most stunning nature in the Dijle and IJse Valleys. Wander through a mosaic of small arable plots and marshy forests, bushes and reed fields, ponds and channels. And pass through nature reserve De Doode Bemde and Margijs forest with its carpet of bluebells in the spring.

Start at Neerijse Castle, Lindenhoflaan 3, 3040 Neerijse

Walking network Zuid-Dijleland nodes 212 - 213 - 214 - 215 - 216 - 219 - 223 - 222 - 221 - 104 - 103 - 102 - 212



8 Brabants Leemplateau 13.1 km

The sunken lanes cut deep into the Brabant clay transform the rural landscape into a gentle patchwork of sloping arable fields, forests, meadows and wooded borders.

Start at Saint-Lambertus church, Kerkring 1, 3061 Leefdaal

Walking network Zuid-Dijleland nodes 5 - 57 - 58 - 59 - 506 - 505 - 509 - 206 - 205 - 218 - 207 - 208 - 510 - 518 - 51 - 50 - 56 - 57 - 5



9 Pilgrims' walk 12.4 km

Starting at the famous Basilica of Our Lady of Scherpenheuvel, you walk to the village of Zichem, from the film De Witte, and back. Past the medieval Maagdentoren made of iron stone. A tip: there's a magnificent view of the region from the tower.

Start at Basilica of Our Lady of Scherpenheuvel, Isabellaplein, 3270 Scherpenheuvel

Walking network De Merode nodes 244 - 148 - 140 - 120 - 209 - 283 - 141 - 136 - 375 - 135 - 134 - 208 - 138 - 383 - 139 - 406 - 137 - 244



4 Walgraeve walk 8 km

Revel in magnificent country landscapes during this hilly walk around the village of Vollezele where beautiful Brabant draught horses graze in the pastures.

Start at the Saint-Paulus church, Bakkerstraat, 1570 Vollezele

Walking network Pajottenland nodes 631 - 632 - 633 - 626 - 625 - 624 - 623 - 628 - 629 - 630 - 631



5 Bergbroek walk 11.2 km

Set off over the hills of the Hageland Valley, along stately farmsteads and the ancient Uitemmolen to the top of the Ramselberg. The beautiful views are yours for the taking.

Start at Saint-Maurus church, Gebroeders Van Tiltstraat 1, 3220 Holsbeek

Walking network Hagelandse Heuvels nodes 1 - 11 - 16 - 104 - 105 - 602 - 601 - 129 - 128 - 127 - 124 - 115 - 114 - 113 - 109 - 110 - 108 - 16 - 11 - 1



6 Broekem walk 10.3 km

From the mighty Horst Castle, this walk takes you through the Hageland woods and fields, over sunken lanes and between orchards to the listed Gempemolen. The mill is now a pleasant brasserie, making it the perfect place to stop for a break.

Start at Kasteel van Horst, Horststraat 28, 3220 Sint-Pieters-Rode

Walking network Hagelandse Heuvels nodes 143 - 141 - 142 - 138 - 137 - 59 - 237 - 235 - 236 - 139 - 140 - 144 - 143

10 Zoet Water walk 4.5 km

Walk along the banks of the five ponds of the Zoet Water (Sweet Water), between Heverleebos and into Meerdaalwoud. Visit the lovely chapel of Onze-Lieve-Vrouw at Steenberg and taste the water at the Minnebron spring.

Start at the CC Roosenberg, Maurits Noëstraat, 3050 Oud-Heverlee

Walking network Zuid-Dijleland nodes 17 - 16 - 15 - 14 - 12 - 13 - 14 - 17

11 Dikke Eik walk 13.4 km

Meerdaalwoud boasts over a thousand large oak trees. You pass the oldest of these in the Dikke Eikdreef (Great Oak Lane): this tree is at least 300 years old! Enjoy the mysterious tree sculptures along the way on the path called Pad van Ad.

Start at cultuurcentrum De Borre, Speelpleinstraat 10, 3360 Bierbeek

Walking network Zuid-Dijleland nodes 7 - 77 - 78 - 73 - 74 - 75 - 76 - 113 - 114 - 115 - 72 - 71 - 70 - 7



Get the walking network maps via www.toerismevlaamsbrabant.be, the tourism services in Flemish Brabant, or plan your route online via www.wandelknooppunt.be



MORE INFO

www.toerismevlaamsbrabant.be

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