

# Flanders Naturally #3



**Flanders**  
State of the Art

VISITFLANDERS



Dear friends of Flanders,

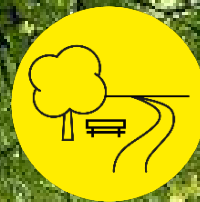
Welcome to Flanders, an endless source of natural beauty for nature lovers. Put on your walking shoes and head out on a challenging, adventurous hike. Or if you prefer a slower pace: enjoy the peace and quiet whilst you stop and take in the amazing views and idyllic landscapes. In this edition we will take you on a tour of the Flemish Ardennes and the Brabantse Wouden.

Forests in Brabant? Yes, that's right. On the outskirts of Brussels, you can escape the hustle and bustle of daily life. Head to Hallerbos, the Sonian Forest, Meerdaalwoud and the green valley of the Dijle, Laan and Ilse rivers where you can walk for hours on end, hearing only the sound of rustling leaves and whistling birds. Some of the many walks available will take you to Park Abbey with its extensive art collection and library, or the Geographical Arboretum of Tervuren, which sits like a jewel in the crown of the majestic Sonian Forest. Are you in the mood for some romance? How about a visit to the Minnebron spring in the Dijle valley? Legend has it that anyone who drinks the water from this spring will marry within the year. The way to a person's heart is through the stomach, or so the proverb says, and one thing you really need to taste in this region is the table grapes of the Flemish Brabant.

The Flemish Ardennes are located in the south of the province of East Flanders. A region that is renowned for its breathtaking landscapes, legendary slopes and picturesque villages. It's easy to access from Ghent, Bruges, Kortrijk and Brussels. Kluisbos, Muziekbos and Brakelbos are the three most beautiful forests in this region. Perfect for a relaxing walk or a bike ride in the untouched countryside. Adventurous walkers should definitely consider the more challenging hiking trails. Families who want to relax and unwind will prefer the Slow Down walking trails. Either way, your walk will take you past architectural gems including Art Deco houses and stately castles. It's also an opportunity to learn about the (hi)stories of the (former) owners of the many centuries-old farmhouses and historical family homes in this region. By all means, do stop to sample some of the great traditional local produce and visit one of the many breweries.

There is so much to discover, experience and develop further in this region. We want to share these green and blue sights and attractions, which is why we have opted for sustainable, meaningful projects that contribute to society and benefit the well-being of the local population. In time, this will hopefully result in proud residents and entrepreneurs and a healthy environment where visitors will also feel at home.

Discover 'Flanders Naturally.'





# Flemish Ardennes

The Flemish  
Ardennes, the surprise  
package of Flanders,  
with breath-taking  
landscapes, legendary  
hills, picturesque  
villages and blissful  
nature.

## Access

The Flemish Ardennes are located in the south of the province of East Flanders. The region is easily accessed from Ghent, Bruges, Brussels, and Kortrijk.

### Treinstappers

'[Treinstappers](#)' are one-day hikes that introduce you to the various Vlaamse Grote Routepaden (Flemish Grand Routes). You can take public transport to the start of the trail and home again after your hike. The walks can also be shortened, ensuring they are also feasible for families with children. The length of the Treinstappers varies from 18 to 27 km (11 to 16 miles). Do you prefer a shorter walk? Most routes can be shortened by taking a bus or train midway.

There are various routes in and around the Flemish Ardennes:

- Oudenaarde – Ronse: 20,2 km (12.5 miles)
- Gontrode – Munkzwalm: 24,6 km (15.2 miles)
- Lierde – Munkzwalm: 19,6 km (12.2 miles)
- Ninove – Geraardsbergen: 26,2 km (16.3 miles)





## Nature reserves in the Flemish Ardennes

### Burreken

Nature and relaxation go hand in hand. In order to be immersed in fully green surroundings, head to the Burreken nature reserve in the heart of the Flemish Ardennes. Follow the 'Langs de bronnen van het Burreken' walking trail to explore the varied landscapes with its hills, meadows and forests.

The [Burreken](#) is one of a handful of quiet areas in East Flanders!

### Natuurgebied Grootmeers

If you enjoy peace and quiet, open grass fields as far as the eye can see and panoramic landscapes with the Scheldt as a backdrop, then you will love the [Grootmeers nature reserve](#). It is a breeding ground for thousands of migratory birds and waterfowl. Truly a paradise for birds!

### De Kaaimeersen

Immersing yourself in nature every now and then is a great idea. There's more to it, however, than just taking a walk in the woods. Looking for a place to go forest bathing? Kaaimeersen, a lush natural park full of magnificent trees and calming ponds, may be just the destination for you.

Time to press pause? Take a look here and enjoy some of the unique quiet places in the Flemish Ardennes.

## Walking inspiration

### Challenging walking trails:

Are you the kind of hiker that loves a tough and arduous challenge, a route that will test your resilience and your calves all with the reward of a delicious meal and thirst-quenching beer at the end?

If this sounds like you then why not try one of these 5 [challenging hikes](#) in the Flemish Ardennes?

- Flemish Ardennes Challenge
- Traversing the slopes of the Tour of Flanders
- Walking trail between hills & chapels
- Will-o'-the-wisp route
- Grote Routepaden region

### Slow Down walking trails:

Sometimes the daily challenges of life, work, family and long hours, can cause us to lose sight of ourselves. It is therefore important to take a step back now and then, to look around, enjoy life and slow down. These Slow Down walking trails will help you to slow down in harmony with nature, free from obligation.

You need to unwind now and then, so you can step up your pace again. The Flemish Ardennes are full of quiet beauty spots, amazing views and idyllic landscapes.

- Walking between De Helix and Bosberg
- Crucifixes walking trail
- Panorama walking trail
- 'Wannenlappers' (basket repairmen) walking trail
- Along charming villages walking trail



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## Walking in the forests

Do you find yourself stressed with too much on your plate and you can't stop worrying? Are you in need of some relaxation or a bit of romance? Then it is time for some peaceful, carefree [walking](#). With thousands of hectares of forests, the possibilities for a relaxing walk or bike ride in untouched nature are endless in this region. The 3 [most beautiful forests](#) are Kluisbos, Muziekbos and Brakelbos.

- Kordaal walking trail: forests and castles in Low and Central Belgium
- Cotthem walking trail: the perfect trail for passionate hikers
- Kluisbos walking trail: a hike in green surroundings along Belgium's language border
- On and around Berendries: a section of the Tour of Flanders for hikers

Looking for even more walking inspiration in the Flemish Ardennes? Be sure to take a look [here](#).

In the Flemish Ardennes, you can also enjoy the blooming hyacinths. Check [here](#) the most beautiful spots.





# Cycling

## Experience the Tour of Flanders

Do you want to follow in the footsteps of Tom Boonen, Philippe Gilbert or Fabian Cancellara? There's only one place to go for this amazing experience: the Flemish Ardennes, the heartland of the Tour of Flanders. Conquer the mythical slopes of the Tour of Flanders, step up the pace when it suits you, stay ahead of that imaginary support car and stake your claim to fame among the pantheon of cycling gods.



Here you can experience the Tour of Flanders in your own way – and at your own pace because let's face it, who can even keep up with Tom Boonen? Experience this cycling classic like you've never experienced it before.

- Visit the Tour of Flanders Centre: a unique visitor & cycling centre where you will be immersed in the history of this famous cycling race. You can visit the permanent exhibition, test a professional racing bike "Ride like a pro". Here you can enjoy the Tour of Flanders year-round – a boon for the most fanatical fans. Ambitious amateur cyclists are a familiar sight, much like lampposts and road signs. The Tour of Flanders cycling trail is permanently signposted, ensuring you'll never lose your way.
- The Strava Flandrien Challenge: complete the signposted sections on the road and online in less than 72 hours. If you pull this off, you will become a legend: with a personalised cobble on the wall of fame at the Tour of Flanders Centre in Oudenaarde.
- Visit a cycling café: You'll find cycling cafés everywhere you go in Flanders.
- Visit the Ronde van Vlaanderenstraat: The Ronde van Vlaanderenstraat is where the heart of road cycling in Flanders beats stronger and faster than anywhere else. A truly unique experience. Complete 59 iconic sections, across the bergs and cobbles of Flanders, to experience a piece of cycling history, in what is surely the most beautiful landscape of Flanders. You can find them all in Kwaremont. This is a tribute to the brave riders, the exhausting race, and all its fans. Here you can find an honorary gallery with 10 life-size portraits of cycling heroes. But along the 1.2-kilometre street, you will also find a list of names of all the winners of the Tour of Flanders and a mosaic with their photos.

Would you rather go **cycling with your family**? The Bidon cycling trail is the perfect choice for sporty cycling-mad families. This 42-km long cycling trail starts and ends in Geraardsbergen, the home city of the deliciously sweet mattentaart, a regional product. The trail offers a fun mix of sporting challenges, green landscapes and legendary cycling cafés. Because yes, people do get thirsty from all that cycling... The menu includes the infamous Wall of Geraardsbergen, Valkenberg and Berendries. A tremendously enjoyable experience!

**Iconic cycling routes**: 9 iconic routes for a cycling holiday in Flanders. These cycling routes connect some of the most picturesque Flemish landscapes with nice cycling trails and a specific theme. The iconic routes are all well-marked with signposts in both directions. You can choose which direction you want to cycle in, and where you want to start and finish.





## Mills

There still are several working mills in the Flemish Ardennes that are worth visiting. Munkzwalm is home to the Zwalmolen, Brakel has the Boembekemolen and in Etikhove you can visit the Bossenaarmolen.



## Heritage in the Flemish Ardennes

### Tiny villages and proud cities with a rich history

From a [city walk](#) in Oudenaarde and its [MOU museum](#), to the [MUST](#) in Ronse and the [Archeocentrum](#) in Velzeke. There is something for everyone who enjoys [finding out more about a place's history](#).



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### Experience the (hi)stories

Ronse, a city in the Flemish Ardennes, is home to several architectural gems, mainly Art Deco houses in the city centre. During this [themed walk](#) you can learn a great deal about the history of this city.

In addition to the many Art Deco dwellings, you can also visit [Villa Madonna](#), a beautiful Art Nouveau mansion.

Have the many stories in the region piqued your curiosity? In that case, add a visit to [Huis Beaucarne](#), the [Beguinage](#) in Oudenaarde and the [Geutelingen Museum](#) to your bucket list.



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# Castles

## Leeuwerger Castle

[Leeuwerger Castle](#) in Zottegem is one of the most important 18th century castles in Flanders. The country estate is best known for its park.

The coach house has since been converted into a holiday cottage.

## Hof van Lier

[Hof van Lier Farm](#) is located in the picturesque Dender Valley, on a privately-owned country estate. It was built in the 17th century to produce food for the enchanting Zandbergen Castle, the family seat of the 16th Count and Countess de Lalaing and their children. Today the farm is bustling again, with activities that bring people together so they can enjoy everything it has to offer, both in the old barn and the farmhouse which are available for hire for various events.

## Borgwal Castle

This is a place where a unique project came to life in the restored farm buildings of [Borgwal Castle](#). A project in which the keyword is inclusion. The result: a pleasant place to be, where everyone is welcome and no distinction is made between people. A lovely place to rest during a walk or bike ride.

## Lozerkasteel

A holiday cottage and B&B between the Flemish Ardennes and the Leie region: [the Castle of Lozer](#). Take a walk in Lozerbos, follow part of the GR129 walking trail, or take a bike ride in the area.



## Adventurous & active

### IJzerkotmolen

The [IJzerkotmolen](#), a water mill where they once again produce flour. Enjoy freshly baked bread, a snack and a drink after your walk in the Zwalm region of the Flemish Ardennes.

### EcoSnooze

[EcoSnooze](#) is located in a quiet area on the flanks of Berendries. The perfect place for a walk with alpacas, foraging with a herbalist, and so on. In addition to the oyster mushrooms and shii-takes they grow here, you can also enjoy Wellness in the Woods. A place where you can recover in the peace and quiet of the nature reserve.

### Hofke ter Musse

[Hofke ter Musse](#) is a 19th century farmhouse that is home to the local historical collection, old folk, café and board games, a typical wood-fired baking oven, vintage cars and traditional crafts such as straw weaving.

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### Road trip with a Citroën 2CV

Flanders' fine landscape becomes Flanders' fun landscape the minute you take a seat in a [Citroën 2CV](#). The iconic 'deux-chevaux' traverses the winding uphill roads of the Flemish Ardennes with all the ease of a mountain goat in spring.



© TOV

### Bushcraft with De Sjampetter

Bushcraft is the art of survival in nature. [De Sjampetter](#) sets off with his truck full of tasty products straight from nature. If you prefer to get stuck in yourself then De Sjampetter also organises workshops on foraging, open fire cooking, or spoon carving.



© De Sjampetter

### The Outsider

Are you a fan of adventurous sports experiences? [The Outsider](#) in Oudenaarde will tick all your boxes.





# By night

## SOME IDEAS

- [IJsmolenhoeve](#): lodges, adventure park, petting zoo, ice cream, etc.
- [Hotond Sporthotel](#): do you like long walks or are you more of a climber who loves click pedals and wet cobblestones? Explore the Flemish Ardennes after which you will be served a hearty meal.
- [Fiertelmeers Boutique B&B](#): a luxury boutique B&B and glamping in green surroundings with a spa.
- [Lozerkasteel](#): a B&B in the castle's renovated annex.
- [Kasteel van Leeuwergem](#): sleep in an 18th-century castle.
- [B&B Bosbaar](#): dreaming of trees, or vice-versa. Find total peace and quiet in Kluisbos. Add a packed picnic in a backpack for your walk, a donkey walk, etc.
- [Glamping Modest & Kamiel](#): an agro-ecological farm with free-range pigs among the field flowers and fruit tree as well as glamping on a farm.
- [De Gavers](#): holiday cottages and a campsite in Provincial Domain De Gavers.
- [B&B De Groene Weg](#): guest rooms and camping pods in Brakel.
- [Tiny Farm Nokere](#): relax among the cows and the vast fields at the foot of the Flemish Ardennes.
- [Hof Van Lier](#): an organic farm with regular and 'forgotten' vegetables, as well as other delicious products such as speculoos, cheese and artisanal bread. Here you can also spend the night in a slow cabin at secret locations around this country estate.





# Tasting nature

## SOME IDEAS

- **Fruit Picard**: pick your own apples and an apple vending machine.
- **Picking farm De Daalkouter**: a fruit picking farm with berries, apples, pears, plums, strawberries and more. Sample their delicious juices and ice cream in the fields after a walk or bike ride.
- **Farm 't Alkeveld**: a dairy farm which also produces its own farmhouse ice cream, farm experience....
- **Goat farm De Volle Maan**: a goat farm with more than 600 goats, cheese dairy and shop.
- **Farm De Vierhoekhoeve**: a farm shop with cheeses and pastries, etc.
- **Distillery Van Damme**: a farm distillery, the last distillery in the Low Countries where the entire production process takes place in-house, from grain to glass. The Balegem jenever they distill is the pride and joy of the village of Balegem where they are located. Distillery, B&B, coffee bar.
- **Geraardsbergse mattentaarten**: the Geraardsbergse mattentaart is one of the most famous regional products in Flanders. But not all mattentaarten are created equal. The Geraardsbergen variant is made from milk and 'mats' (curds) that are produced in the region.
- **Geutelingen**: a traditional regional product from the Flemish Ardennes, a thick, oven-baked pancake made with a simple yeast dough. Traditionally, these are baked in February, on the occasion of the feast day of Saint Apollonia. A warm geutelingen is said to protect you from toothache for a year.
- **Natuurlijk mineraalwater**: the Flemish Ardennes are home to several springs. The spring water of Ginstberg and Christiana Bronnen water are renowned for their very pure quality.
- **Liefmans Brewery**: the banks of the Scheldt as a natural breeding ground for Rosa Merckx's delicious fruit beers. Rosa Merckx was Belgium's first female brewer.
- **Roman Brewery**: the oldest family brewery in Belgium.
- **Van den Bossche Brewery**: Pater Lieven, Lamoral, Livinus and Buffalo artisanal beers.
- **Maison D**: a culinary restaurant in Ronse.
- **De Passage**: a place of and for foodies and people who love delicious and authentic things.
- **Klein Zwitserland**: a small area in the municipality of Zwalm. In 1910, the then lock keeper and miller called this place "Little Switzerland". In his mind, the place was comparable to Switzerland, with hills replacing the mountains, the pond reminding him of a lake, etc. These days there's still a tavern here.
- **Bistro Boekzitting**: bistro near Muziekbos.
- **Les Soeurs Louise**: restaurant in Louise-Marie, in the heart of the Flemish Ardennes.
- **Kasteel van Breivelde**: castle domain with park and arboretum in Zottegem. You can enjoy a snack and a drink in the castle.



## Are you organising a conference on nature? Welcome to Flanders!

As you will have read in this magazine, Flanders boasts several stunning natural gems, making the region a dream location for any conference on the theme. Here you can count on three rock-solid guarantees for a successful conference.

### The support of experts and partners for your conference

The VISIT**FLANDERS** Convention Bureau – the official convention bureau for Flanders and Brussels – works closely with several nature organisations, which are happy to welcome your conference, as your partner.

Experts from academia and industry are also happy to offer support. The presence of a committed audience of connoisseurs is a crucial factor for a successful conference. Find out more [here](#).

### Our unique conference venues will roll out the red carpet for you.

Your conference would be held one of our conference centres which are truly unique: the [Flanders Heritage Venues](#). These venues of exceptional architectural value are conveniently located near all the tourist, cultural and gastronomic assets of Flanders.

Some of these Flanders Heritage Venues are located near many of the most beautiful nature reserves in Flanders. One of them – Bokrijk – was even voted “one of the 100 world’s greatest places” by TIME Magazine.

If you organise your conference at the FMCCA, the Flanders Heritage Venue in the world-famous Antwerp Zoo, all of the proceeds of your conference will go to animal welfare, endangered species protection and scientific research.

### You will create an impact with your conference

The VISIT**FLANDERS** Convention Bureau prioritises the legacy of your conference. That is why we are strongly committed to conferences that have a positive impact on society – and that are also a milestone for your sector.

What impact can you create in Flanders with your conference? Our experts are happy to think about this with you, completely free of charge, as part of the extensive service which we provide.

**Want to know more?** Contact Gemmeke de Jongh, International Association Expert Nature: [gemmeke.dejongh@meetinflanders.com](mailto:gemmeke.dejongh@meetinflanders.com)





# Brabantse Wouden

Welcome to the [Brabantse Wouden](#). Here you will find the largest, ancient deciduous forests of Flanders where you can walk for hours on end, hearing only the sound of rustling leaves and whistling birds.

The [Brabantse Wouden](#) form a patchwork of ancient forests, meandering rivers, sunken lanes and open fields. A lush green region in the heart of the country spanning the Dijle and Zenne valleys.

Hallerbos, the Sonian Forest, Meerdaalwoud and the green valley of the Dijle, Laan and Ilse rivers form the natural backbone of the Brabantse Wouden. They are the oldest and most beautiful forests in Flanders, found in the heart of the country, between Leuven and Brussels. A picturesque green region where you can escape the hustle and bustle of the city and breathe easily again.



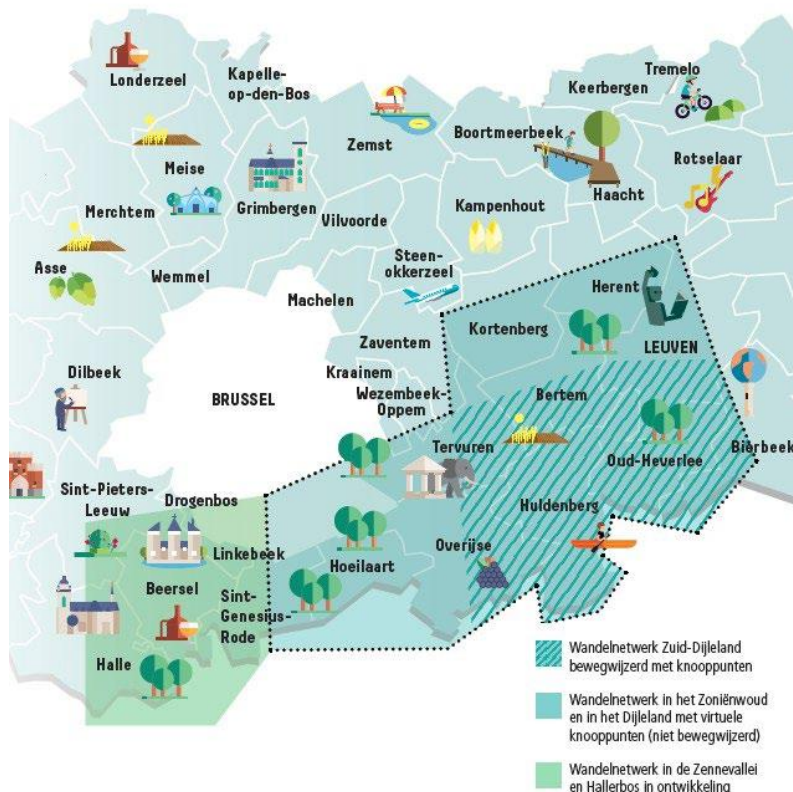
## Access

The Brabantse Wouden are situated in Flemish Brabant, on the outskirts of Brussels. You can easily get to this area from Brussels, Leuven and Halle.

## Treinstappers

'[Treinstappers](#)' are one-day hikes that introduce you to the various Vlaamse Grote Routepaden. You can take public transport to and from your hike. The walks can also be shortened, ensuring they are also feasible for families with children. The length of the Treinstappers varies from 18 to 27 km (11 to 16.7 miles). If you prefer a shorter walk, then most routes can be shortened by taking a bus or train midway.

- Sint-Joris-Weert – Leuven: 26,5 km (16.4 miles)
- Wespelaar – Leuven: 20,7 km (12.9 miles)
- Groenendaal – Halle: 22,8 km (14.2 miles)
- Groenendaal - Kortenberg: 32,9 km (20.4 miles)





A photograph of a forest path covered in a dense carpet of purple bluebells. Several people, including a woman with a backpack, a man, and a child, are walking away from the camera on the path. Tall trees with green leaves line the path, and sunlight filters through the canopy. The scene is vibrant and scenic.

## Hallerbos

[Hallerbos](#) is a vast forested area between the Zenne River and the Sonian Forest. In April, the bluebells flower, creating a dense purple carpet.

From mid-April you can take one of two signposted bluebell walks in the forest. The bluebells attract lots of visitors at this time of the year. Therefore, the walks and visits are always supervised and managed. At this time of the year, the town of Halle also organises its [Hyacintenfestival](#) for visits to the bluebell forest from the town.

### Reebok walk

The [Reebok walk](#) in Hallerbos is an active walk, signposted with yellow posts. You walk through three of the four valleys in Hallerbos. Just over half of this walk will take you through the bluebell forests.

› Distance: 7 km (4.3 miles)



## Walking inspiration

### Bertembos walking trail



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[Walk through Bertembos](#), Eikenbos and the fields to the north of the Voer valley. Stop at the 't Vossenhol forest playground and discover the sunken lanes and vast panoramic views. In spring, the forest is carpeted with white forest anemones.

This trail is part of the [Brabantse Wouden walking network](#).

› Distance: 9 km (5.6 miles)

### Schavaai walking trail

The [Schavaai walking trail](#) is another route of the Brabantse Wouden walking network.

During this hike, you get to explore the old village centre of Bierbeek and walk along the Mollenbeek. If you love forested walks, you'll be spoiled for choice as this route takes you through Mollendaalbos, which is part of Meerdaalwoud, and a remnant of Kolenwoud. Your hike even takes you across the language border with Wallonia. Start at In de Molen pub and end your walk over drinks in the café of the De Borre cultural centre.

› Distance: 7.8 km (4.8 miles)



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### Kesterbeek walking trail Beersel

The [Kesterbeek walking trail](#) is the perfect walk to learn more about Belgium's famous Lambiek beers (Geuze). A varied walking trail with a view of Beersel Castle and Brussels. The trail starts in Beersel, where the [De Drie Fonteynen Brewery](#) is located. Unfortunately, you cannot visit the entire brewery, but the brewery's visitor centre, the [lambik-O-droom](#), is located in Lot, in another other part of the brewery. You can, however, sample the brewery's traditional Lambic beers at [Restaurant 3 Fonteynen](#), in the square where the trail starts. The trail takes you past the [Oud Beersel Brewery](#) and its [Bierhuis](#), which is a good place to stop and sample an Oud-Beersel Geuze.

### Alambicwandeling

The [Alambic walk](#) is a non-signposted trail that starts in Lembeek, which is home to the [Boon Brewery](#). There are several pubs and cafés in the centre of Lembeek where you can order a Geuze from Boon. Start at Lembeek Station.

#### Need a guide?

The [Vrienden van Heverleebos en Meerdaalwoud](#) (VHM) and [Foundation Sonian Forest](#) are happy to help.



## Sonian Forest

The [Sonian Forest](#) is Belgium's largest beech forest. Some of the beech trees here are over 200 years old. The best protected parts of the forest have been included on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

During the [Groenendaal walking trail](#) you walk past the former Groenendaal racetrack with the Royal Enclosure, Galloway cows, the [Bosmuseum](#) and [B&B Hippo-Droom](#).

This walk is part of the digital walking network, but is also signposted with [wooden posts with an orange band](#).

› Distance: 6,8 km (4.2 miles)

The [Kapbos walk](#) starts in the centre of Tervuren. The De Warande Visitor Centre, the [AfricaMuseum](#), [St.Hubert's Chapel](#), Warande Park and the ponds are all within walking distance. At Dronkemansdreef you can enjoy beautiful views of Duisburg and Eizer. This walk is partly signposted with walking junctions.

› Distance: 7,1 km (4.4 miles)

The [Ijse walking trail](#) through the Ijse valley starts in Huldenberg.

› Distance: 8,9 km (5.5 miles)



## Cycling

**De Brabantse pijl cycling route:** [this sporty 98-km \(61 mile\)cycling loop](#) with 1,033 metres of elevation starts from Zoetwater in Oud-Heverlee or the station square in Overijse.

Ride your own Flanders classic in true Flandrien style, on the cobbles and gravel roads of the circuit of the [Brabantse Pijl](#). Negotiate legendary climbs such as Smeysberg, IJskelderlaan, Hagaard, Schavei and Moskesstraat, like the seasoned professionals do. Cycle over the lumps and bumps of Hertstraat and Postweg.

Battle the wind in the open fields and then race down only to ride uphill again at the other end of the valley, standing on your pedals.

Catch your breath at one of the many traditional cycling cafés such as [In de Congo](#) and ['t Klein Verzet](#).



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**ICOON FIETSRUTES**  
ICONIC CYCLE ROUTES  
IKONEN RADWEGE  
VÉLOROUTES ICONIQUES

### Icoonfietsroutes:

There are [nine iconic routes](#) which are perfect for a cycling holiday in Flanders. These iconic cycling routes connect some of the most picturesque Flemish landscapes with nice cycling trails and a specific theme. The iconic routes are all

well-marked with signposts in both directions. You choose which direction you want to cycle in, and where you want to start and finish.

**Fietzers welkom:** Holders of the '[Cyclists welcome](#)' label are doing everything they can to make cyclists feel at home, such as:

- You can request a first aid and bicycle repair kit.
- You can park your bike safely.
- You can consult the cycling map of Flemish Brabant.
- You can ask the owner for cycling recommendations in the surrounding area.

In short, you are always guaranteed a great cycling experience at businesses with the 'Cyclists welcome label'!

**Everyone Tourist:** In Flemish Brabant, [everyone is a tourist](#), regardless of their disabilities or budget. Cycling, walking, culture, nature, eating, drinking and spending the night are all assets to be enjoyed in this province.



## Adventurous & active

### Gateway De Torenvalk

The De Torenvalk gateway is situated between Meerdaalwoud and Heverleebos. Ad Wouters's giant wooden kestrel serves as the mascot of this area. Climb the wooden viewing and gateway tower and enjoy fun times in the forest playground and on the multimove path.

Natural obstacles and wooden structures challenge children to go on a journey of discovery together with their friends and family, practising the 12 fundamental movement skills as they go along. The multimove paths ensure an optimal (nature) experience in addition to getting children to move!

Another option is 'Rollen door de bossen', or Rolling through the forests, a wheelchair-friendly walk. The walk takes you past an accessible (bird) observation hut.

### Vogelparadijs

You can find various bird observation towers in the Brabantse Wouden. Check out these highly recommended towers near the following walking nodes:

- 133-125: an old ammunition depot, with wheelchair access, that can be easily accessed from the De Torenvalk and Speelberg gateways
- 10-62: at the ponds in Oud-Heverlee Noord
- 513-211: Langerodevijver observation hut
- 105-229: Grootbroek observation tower near the charming village of Sint-Agatha-Rode

### Outdoor

Are you a fan of outdoor sports? Then you have come to just the right place at [The Shelter](#), [Dijle Floats](#) and [Duckwing](#). Whether you feel like a fish in water and prefer a relaxing canoe trip or are more interested in adventures on wheels, mountain bike experiences, there is something to suit everyone's tastes.

Prefer to get to know the area by scooter? Then take a look [here](#).

### Water recreation

You can hire a rowing boat or a pedalo at Overijse Lake. From the lake you can also paddle into Flanders with a kayak.





## Heritage

### Minnebron

The Minnebron is one of the most famous sources in the Dijle valley. Legend has it that anyone who drinks the water from this spring will marry within the year. The spring is located near the chapel of Our Lady of Steenberg, near the [Zoet Water](#). People have been coming here for drinking water since time began.

### Geographical arboretum Tervuren

This is a unique [arboretum](#) in an extraordinary forest. Located in Tervuren and sitting like a crown on the head of the majestic Sonian Forest, is the geographical arboretum. In 1902, Leopold II ordered the construction of an arboretum (tree collection). The geographical arboretum is home to trees from the temperate climate region of the northern hemisphere. It consists of 2 parts: the New World (USA & Canada) and the Old World (Europe, North Africa & Asia). Can't wait? Take a virtual tour of the arboretum on the website.

### Royal Museum for Central Africa Tervuren



© AfricaMuseum

The [Royal Museum for Central Africa](#) in Tervuren, near Brussels, is both a museum and a research centre on all things Africa, with a focus on Central Africa.

The museum is located in Tervuren's Warandepark, the former hunting grounds of the dukes of Brabant. The park is also one of the gateways to the Sonian Forest. A walk you are guaranteed to enjoy!

### Herisemmolen

The [Herisemmolen](#) is a former cardboard factory in Alsemberg. The industrial heritage site is now home to a museum, tavern, meeting room and group residence.

Combine your visit to the site with the 7.4 km [Herisem walking trail](#).



© Lander Loeckx



## Art & culture

### Pad van Ad

A walk through an enchanting world with gentle bears, modern Neanderthals, very tall mushrooms and other playful figures. Discover the superb sculptures of local artist [Ad Wouters](#), which he creates from the trunks of dead oak trees.



### FeliXart – art & eco - Museum

The [FeliXart Museum](#) in Drogenbos is a green oasis where art and ecology are skilfully combined. The estate was formerly owned by Felix De Boeck, one of the pioneers of Belgian abstract art.



### Tuin der Onlusten

The [Tuin der Onlusten](#) in Alseberg is a unique, open-air art garden. Combine it with the [Kesterbeek walking trail](#).

### Huis van Herman Teirlinck

Herman Teirlinck was a versatile 20th century cultural figurehead. Today the House of Herman Teirlinck in Beersel is a meeting place for writers, artists, hikers, with temporary exhibitions and a view of the Zenne Valley where Herman Teirlinck used to live.

This stop is part of the [Kesterbeek walking trail](#).



### Paden van de Waaienberg

[Paden van de Waaienberg](#) is located in Tervuren and is the sculpture garden of Belgian sculptor Tom Frantzen.



## Religious heritage

### Abdij van Park

A small group of Norbertines continue to uphold the tradition of community life and pastoral work today.

[Park Abbey](#) is home to an extraordinary art collection, a beautifully preserved interior, a library with over 6,000 old books and a magnificent archive. The abbey is surrounded by walls and gatehouses, a water mill, a superb farmhouse and the tithe barn.

The abbey site is a public domain and therefore always accessible. Individual visitors can take a guided tour of the abbey buildings on Friday, Saturday or Sunday at 2 p.m.

- [Basilica of Saint Martin](#) in Halle
- Late Gothic [Church of Our Lady in Alsemberg](#)
- [Baroque church in Jezus-Eik](#), a gateway to the Brabantse Wouden
- Romanesque church [Sint-Verona](#)
- Romanesque [Saint Peter's Church in Bertem](#)
- Romanesque Saint Lambert's Chapel in Arenberg Park



## Castles

### Beersel

During your walk along the Kesterbeek walking trail, you can make a stop at [Beersel Castle](#). A water fortress with a fascinating history.

### Neerijse Castle

[Neerijse Castle](#) is located in Huldenberg.

The castle has been a listed monument since 1979. The water mill near the castle dates back as far as the second half of the 18th century.

The castle is located on the route of the [Doodse Bemdewandeling](#).

### Ice house of Harcourt Castle

The former ice house of Harcourt Castle was given a new lease of life several years ago as a place for bats to hibernate.



# By night

## SOME IDEAS

- [B&B Baron's House Neerijse](#): this B&B is located in the coach house of Neerijse castle park of Neerijse. This coach house boasts a rich history and a unique location, in the heart of the vast De Doode Bemde nature reserve.
- [The Lodge](#) Heverlee: The Lodge Group is synonymous with atmospheric, contemporary living in historic houses, often near a cosy brasserie.
- [De Kluis](#): the oldest youth hostel in Flanders.
- [B&B Hallerbos](#): a B&B near the Hallerbos.
- [Bosnest](#): a holiday home in a former forester's house on the edge of the Hallerbos.
- [La Vista](#): relaxing near the Tervuren arboreatum.
- [B&B Vallis Dyliae](#): this B&B is located in the hiking area of the De Doode Bemde nature reserve.
- [B&B Miranoza](#): a good base for all your walks and bike tours in the Brabantse Wouden.
- [Park 7](#): a luxury B&B located in the private castle park in Huldenberg.
- [Cow-cooning](#): 'glamping with a view' in the Brabantse Wouden.
- [Sint-Alpaca-Rode](#): glamping among the alpacas (and activities with alpacas).
- [B&B Hippo-Droom](#): B&B Hippo-Droom is located in the heart of the Sonian Forest, just a stone's throw from Brussels, in a charming, restored Belle Epoque mansion.
- [A cottage in Huldenberg](#)
- [Bivouac de Steenberg](#) and [bivouac het Spoor](#)
- [Villa Servais](#): an exclusive B&B in Halle in the former home of musician François Servais.
- [Bertem Natuur](#): a B&B in Bertem, a mix of design, nature, tranquillity and cosiness.
- [B&B Aline Florentine](#): a B&B situated between Leuven and Brussels, near Tervuren in the Green Belt of Brussels.
- [Camping Druivenland](#): this camp site is located in Overijse, among the grape growers in green surroundings.
- [Trekkershutten Provinciedomein Huizingen](#): there are 2 hikers' cabins along the Molenbeek watercourse on the Huizingen Provincial Domain.
- [Joly Tiny House](#): a tiny house immersed in nature and where you can taste their home grown grapes.



# Taste nature

## SOME IDEAS

- [Den Herberg](#) in Buizingen
- [Geuzestekerij Hanssens](#) in Dworp
- [Drie Fontein Brewery](#) with their [lambik-O-droom](#) in Lot
- [Bierhuis Oud Beersel](#) in Beersel
- [Boon Bar](#) in Lembeek
- [Biercenter De Lambiek](#): once a month you can learn more about how lambic beers are brewed here.
- [De Kroon Brewery](#): one of the last artisanal breweries in Flanders. Take a guided tour of the site, enjoy a snack and beer.
- [Groenendael Brewery](#): Hoeilaart-based brewery.
- [Boerenerf Eylenbosch](#): an organic farm and brewery in Beersel.
- Herberg De Zwaan: traditional pub in Dworp with an extensive beer menu.
- [Ruisbroek Mill](#): a listed water mill and brewery, workshops, café and B&B. Located along the Schavaai walking trail.
- [Druiven](#): the table grapes of Flemish Brabant are a delicious local speciality. The result of the craftsmanship of the greenhouse growers of the grape region of Flemish Brabant. Go on grape walks and grape bike tours for a taste of nature.
- [Chardonnay Meerdael](#): a vineyard Brabantse Wouden.
- [Sonien wijnkelder](#): a wine cellar of artisanal and sparkling wine
- [Grapes Dewit](#): during the grape season (July to October) you can take a guided tour of the greenhouses and sample the delicious table grapes.
- [Farm Shop Huldenberg](#): here you can taste sheep's cheese and ice cream made from the farm's own sheep's milk.
- [Barons Brasserie](#): enjoy a meal in the renovated farmhouse, after which you can spend the night at the Baron's House B&B.
- [Restaurant Sonian](#): in the heart of the Sonian Forest, near Groenendaal Priory. It is the perfect place for a break in the Groenendaalwandeling.
- [Restaurant 't Kriekske](#): the perfect base for a walk in Hallerbos.





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