
Flanders
State of the Art
Micro-adventures in Landscape Park Flemish Ardennes
EXPERIENCE NATURE IN FLANDERS
© Bjorn Snelders
VISITFLANDERS

Dear friends of Flanders,

Small adventures await you in **Landscape Park Flemish Ardennes**.

Hidden away in the south of East Flanders, there is a surprising landscape, where forests, grasslands and winding paths weave their way through hills and valleys. Between springs, characterful villages and old mills, a paradise for cyclists, walkers and true micro-adventurers unfolds.

What makes the Flemish Ardennes so special? Is it the iconic cycling tradition? Certainly! The Muur van Geraardsbergen, the Koppenberg and the Oude Kwaremont await for those who consider themselves to be true Flandriens. Or is it the tranquillity of the nature? Absolutely! Visit one of the five unique quiet spots, enjoy a wellness moment surrounded the greenery, or admire the blooming bluebells in the spring that turn the forest into a purple wonderland.

And that is only the beginning. Extended walking trails for the avid trekkers, adventurous water activities and legendary calf-burning climbs are waiting for you. Whether you are conquering the famous cobblestones, walking through peaceful forests or spending the night in a cosy nature cottage, there is so much to discover in the Flemish Ardennes.

Read on, be inspired and experience the most wonderful micro-adventures there yourself.

© Bjorn Snelders

Contents

LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY 4

A WHOLE DAY ON MICRO-ADVENTURE IN LANDSCAPE PARK FLEMISH ARDENNES 5

- Through forest and field: routes for trail runners
- The art of forest bathing
- Water fun & forest adventures
- Enjoy the tranquillity: 5 unique quiet spots
- Sitting with a plus

SPEND THE NIGHT IN NATURE 14

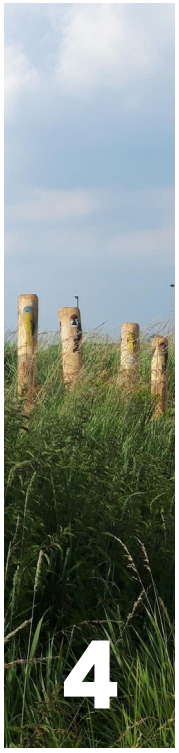
TASTE THE NATURE 15

TICKED OFF: 3 BUCKET LIST EXPERIENCES 16

- Wellness in the forest
- Off we go!
- Spot the bluebells

FOR CYCLISTS AND WALKERS 18

- Cycle routes
- Walking routes

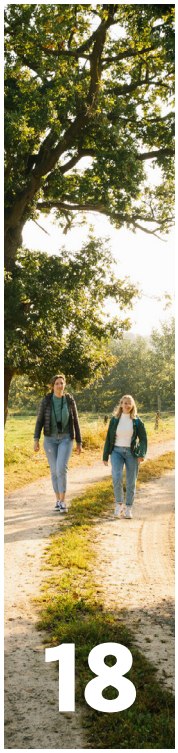










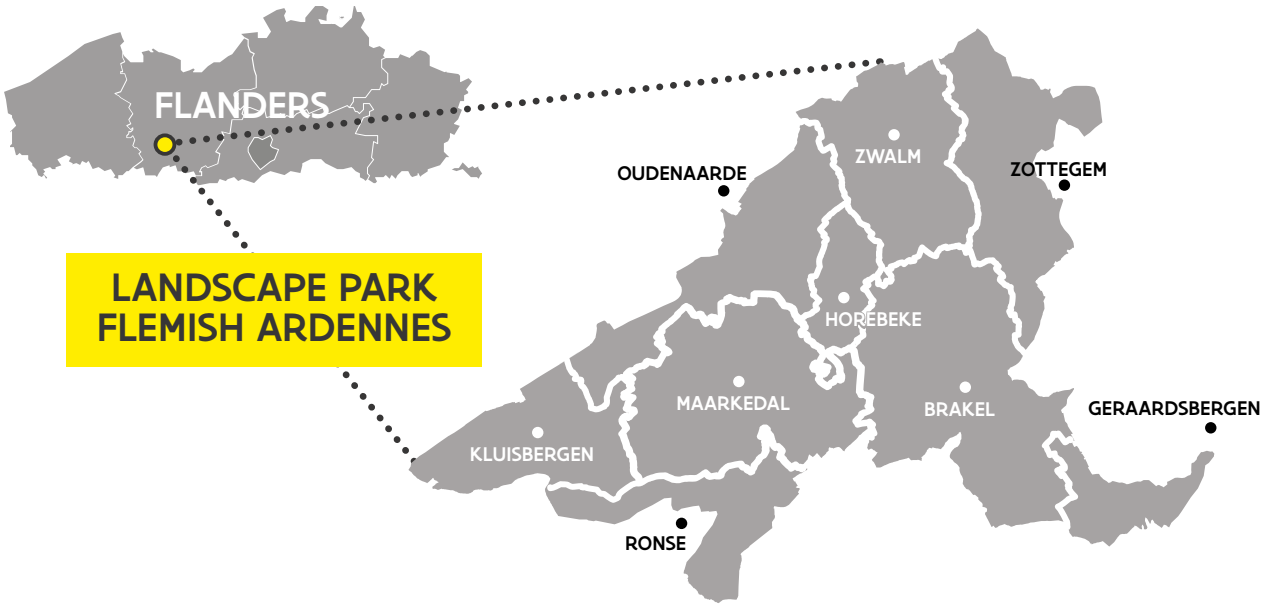




LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

Landscape Park Flemish Ardennes is located in the south of East Flanders, a stone's throw from major cities such as **Ghent**, **Bruges**, **Brussels** and **Kortrijk**. There are seven municipalities that belong to the core area: **Ronse**, **Geraardsbergen**, **Horebeke**, **Maarkedal**, **Oudenaarde**, **Zottegem** and **Zwalm**.

Jump on the train to Oudenaarde, Geraardsbergen or Ronse and discover the tranquillity of the nature. In next to no time, you are surrounded by rolling hills, forests and picturesque villages.



Experience nature in these forests

Kluisbos

The **Kluisbos** is the largest and most diverse forest in the Flemish Ardennes! This impressive forest stretches out to the top of the Kluisberg, where you can enjoy **breathtaking views** and rich flora and fauna. At **141 metres of altitude**, the Kluisbos is the crowning glory of the region, ideal for walkers, cyclists and nature lovers.

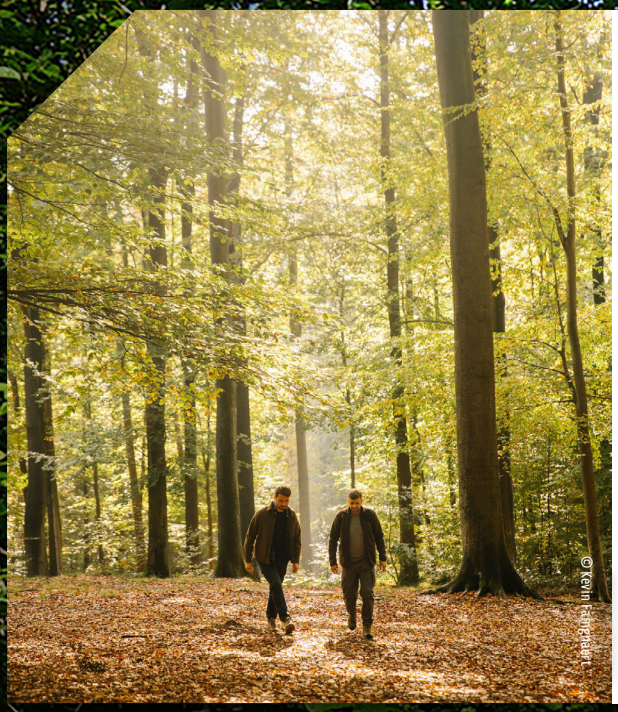
Furthermore, part of the forest has been designated as a forest reserve, where nature can take its own course. Fallen trees are left to become insect hotels, which in turn supports a growth in the bird population, including rare species like the tawny owl and the marsh tit. This ecological richness makes a walk in the Kluisbos not only beautiful, but also educational!

You can explore the Kluisbos via the **Kluisbos walking route**.

Tiny Tip

During your walk, take a break at Peetje and Meetje, two impressive boulders that are remnants of an ancient sacrificial altar. They are not only a great photo op, but also a unique piece of history!

© Toerisme Oost-Vlaanderen

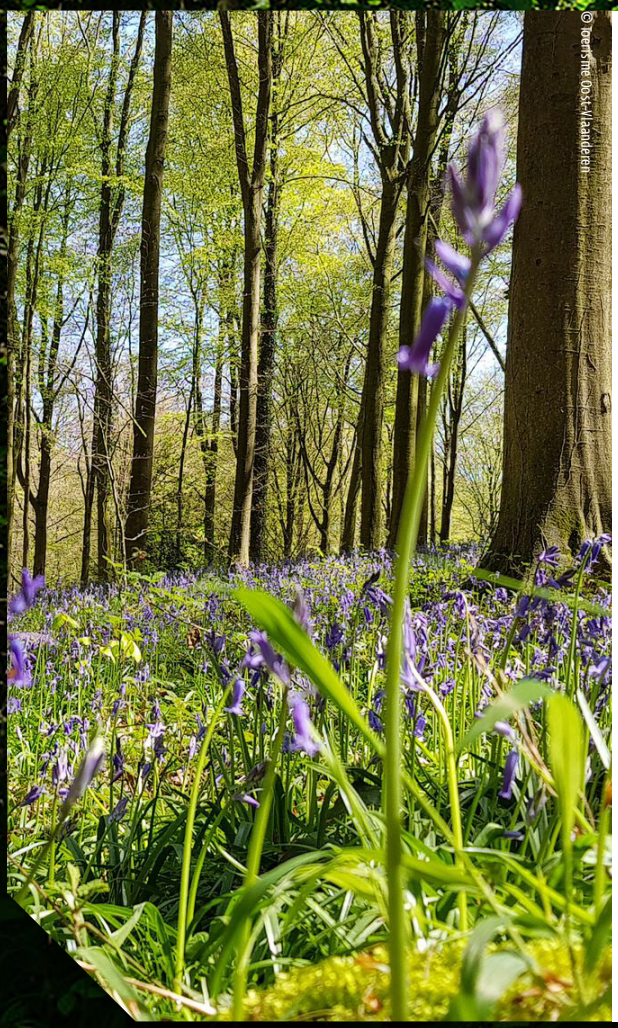


© Kevin Faingnaert

Muziekbos

The **Muziekbos** in Ronse is more than just a forest. It is a place where history, nature and myths come together. Wander past the mysterious **Geuze Tower**, where the name 'Flemish Ardennes' was coined, and be enchanted by the purple sea of the bluebells in the spring. Although you might think otherwise, the name Muziekbos has nothing to do with music. 'Muz' is actually a Celtic word for 'swamp', a reference to the marshy ground that used to be found here.

Sounds like music to your ears? Follow the **Muziekbos walking route** using the walking nodes.



© Toerisme Oost-Vlaanderen

Brakelbos

Together with Bos ter Rijst and the Pottelbergbos, this hidden gem forms an **impressive whole covering more than 200 hectares**! **Brakelbos** forest is perched on the flank of the decapitated 'Mont de Rhode' (Modderode). Beech and holly predominate here, with some trees already more than 100 years old.

And that's only the beginning! As you wander through the forest, you might spot some majestic deer or playful squirrels. Indeed, there is an abundance of them here. And who knows, if you look carefully, you might stumble upon some juicy blueberries!

During your walk, you will undoubtedly hear the babbling of the **Sassegembeek** as it meanders through the forest. Hundreds of springs provide a constant supply of fresh water that rushes as a vibrant stream through steep ravines and an idyllic brook valley to the Zwalm.

Are you curious? Walk the beautiful (and tough) **Will-o'-the-wisp walking route** in one go - or in stages, as you prefer.

© Rudy Vande Voorde

Nature areas

BURREKEN

- Located on the border of Brakel, Maarkedal and Horebeke
- One of the most picturesque spots in the Flemish Ardennes
- Think: flower-rich spring forests, babbling brooks, meadows and sunken roads that interspersed with each other

Explore Burreken via the
'T BURREKEN WALKING ROUTE

GROOTMEERS

- A nature reserve in the middle of the Scheldt valley
- Discover the many grassy landscapes and wide vistas with the Scheldt in the background
- A breeding ground for thousands of migratory birds and waterfowl

Explore Grootmeers via the
WANNENLAPPERS WALKING ROUTE

DE KAAIMEERSEN

- A nature reserve on the edge of the Flemish Ardennes
- A lush nature domain full of magnificent trees and soothing water scenes
- Spot a pintail, teal or grey heron

Explore the area via the
VILLAGES OF THE ZWALM VALLEY WALKING ROUTE

A whole day on micro-adventure in Landscape Park Flemish Ardennes

Are you looking for a good dose of adventure, relaxation or a pure nature experience? Landscape Park Flemish Ardennes has it all! This breathtaking region offers a wealth of micro-adventures that will get your heart beating faster and awaken your senses. Whether you are an avid trail runner, a peace seeker who wants to enjoy forest bathing, or an adventurer ready for water fun, you are sure to find something to suit you here.

What are you waiting for?

Through forest and field: routes for trail runners

Trail running is more than just running; it is an adventurous exploration of nature. Away from the hustle and bustle of the city, explore dirt tracks that take you past lush forests, over rolling hills and through flowering fields. Each run is a unique experience, full of surprises and challenges that invite you to push your boundaries. Feel the wind in your hair, the earth beneath your feet and the freedom you experience as you run through the landscape. Whether you are an experienced runner or just starting out, trail running offers an exciting way to exercise and enjoy the beauty of nature. Discover the Flemish Ardennes in an entirely new way and be surprised by the variety of the trails.

Discover 9 routes through the Flemish Ardennes here

© Lander Loeckx

The art of forest bathing



Forest bathing in the Flemish Ardennes is a unique way to unwind completely and connect with nature. This Japanese concept, also known as 'shinrin-yoku', is all about immersing yourself in the serene atmosphere of the forest. In the Flemish Ardennes, with its vast forests and rolling landscapes, forest bathing is a real treat.

Imagine walking slowly through the forest, breathing in the fresh air and listening to the gentle rustle of the leaves and the birdsong. You feel the stress slip away from you as you open your senses to the natural environment. It is an experience that benefits both body and mind.

Whether you opt for a guided session or explore on your own, forest bathing in the Flemish Ardennes offers the perfect escape from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Let yourself be embraced by the peace and serenity of nature and reconnect fully with yourself. Sounds like music to your ears, right?

Water fun & forest adventures

Are you adventurous? Then the outdoor park at the Donkvijvers in Oudenaarde is an absolute must. This 40-hectare leisure park, operated by **The Outsider**, promises not one, but seven high points: the 'Seven Summits'. A total experience for the whole family, a stone's throw from the town centre.

- **Heights course**: Challenge yourself on the impressive heights course with ropes and obstacles
- **Swamp course**: Balance and agility are crucial as you navigate through the swamp
- **Barefoot trail**: Feel nature under your feet on this unique trail
- **Kayaking & pedalo**: Explore the waters of the Donkvijver by kayak or pedalo
- **Speleo temple**: Crawl and climb through the underground speleo temple
- **Off-road scooters**: Race through the terrain on off-road scooters
- **SUPping**: Stand-up paddle boarding for a fun challenge on the water





Enjoy the tranquillity: 5 unique quiet spots

The Flemish Ardennes are the perfect 'refuge' for those looking to escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Do you ever feel like it is time to hit the pause button? Visit Flemish Ardennes has selected five unique quiet spots where you can really unwind. Each spot is accessible via a relaxing walk that takes you past the most beautiful nooks and crannies of the area.

1. **RASPAILLEBOS**: A vast forest area full of diverse flora and fauna, with a walking route to the nature education centre De Helix.
2. **BURREKEN NATURE RESERVE**: This area features an observation tower, a blackberry garden and a hugging forest, with several walking trails.
3. **GROOTMEERS**: A peaceful nature zone created by the widening of the Scheldt, with rich birdlife and walking routes through the area.
4. **DUIVENBOS**: A mysterious forest area with springs and an adventurous walking route, perfect for those looking for quiet and nature.
5. **PETEGEMBERG**: A hill with panoramic views, accessible via a walking route that leads you to the top where the view is breathtaking



Sitting with a plus

Discover the Flemish Ardennes in a whole new way with Z+. Z+ stands for 'sitting with a plus'. Walk past 6 instagrammable locations on the Maarkedal and discover unique rest stops with a story, designed by designers and realised by local makers. Among other things, you pass a cast of Tom Boonen's legs at the top of the Taaienberg. Nice bonus: you are treated to magnificent views along the way.

YOU CAN FIND THE WALKING ROUTE HERE



Spend the night in nature



From the first rays of the sun slipping through the leaves to the song of birds greeting the day: nothing is more relaxing than waking up in the midst of nature. In the Flemish Ardennes, there are many original places to spend the night where you can blissfully dream away.

© Bioboerderij Modest & Kamiel - Jens Mollenvanger

HERE ARE A FEW SUGGESTIONS:

Ijsmolenhoeve (Ronse)

- Sleep in a safari tent, lodge or holiday home
- A unique spot for families with an adventure park
- Children's farm

Hotond Sporthotel (Kluisbergen)

- Ideal for walkers or adventurous climbers
- Accessible brasserie with adapted sanitary facilities
- Great location with stunning views



Fiertelmeers Boutique Hotel (Ronse)

- Located at the foot of the Hoogberg-Hotond
- 5 unique rooms and private wellness
- Option to enjoy 'boutique' glamping
- Green environment & slow living

B&B Lozer Kasteel (Kruisem)

- Exclusive Bed & Breakfast
- In the castle's renovated annex
- Ideal for cycling, walking and horse-riding enthusiasts

B&B Castle of Leeuwergem (Zottegem)

- Unique stay in an 18th century castle
- Vast domain
- Beautiful orangery

BosbĀĀr (Kluisbergen)

- Enjoy absolute peace
- Surrounded by forests
- Walk with donkeys
- Also larger holiday homes for families

Glamping Modest & Kamiel (Oudenaarde)

- Agroecological organic farm
- Glamping among the pigs and fruit trees
- Enjoy the tranquillity of farm life

De Gavers

- Holiday homes and a campsite
- On Provincial Domain De Gavers
- Ideal for families

B&B De Groene Weg (Brakel)

- Renovated square farmstead
- Guest rooms with views of nature
- Camping pods near the orchard



Holiday home Op 't Roth (Oudenaarde)

- Holiday home with hot tub
- Within cycling distance of Oudenaarde town centre
- Surrounded by greenery with a view of the Scheldt



Hof ter Heidje (Maarkedal)

- 18th-century square farmstead
- Beautiful surroundings
- Ideal for cyclists

TASTE THE NATURE

Taste the different flavours that nature has to offer in and around Landscape Park Flemish Ardennes. Here are some suggestions:

Regional products

GERAARDSBERG MATTENTAART

The famous mattentaart gets its name from the special ingredient 'matten': raw, curdled and strained cow's milk. A unique flavour that you should definitely try. During your walk, stop by a local bakery and find out for yourself why this pastry is so popular.

GEUTELING FROM ELST

Geuteling is an ancient regional product from the Flemish Ardennes. The appearance of a geuteling is somewhat similar to that of a thick, fluffy pancake. However, the texture is airy and frothy.

Are you curious? Find all sales outlets **here**.

BALEGEM JENEVER

Pay a visit to **Stokerij Van Damme**, where you can taste their traditionally distilled jenever. Enjoy the different variants while you indulge in a generously-sized sweet pastry. This is a unique opportunity to enjoy local produce in an atmospheric setting.



© Bjorn Snelders

VIEW FROM ABOVE THE KOPENBERG



© Breandán Kearney of Belgian Smaak

GERAARDSBERG MATTENTAART



© Brouwerij Liefmans - Toerisme Oost-Vlaanderen

BROUWERIJ LIEFMANS







Farm products

- **Organic goat farm De Volle Maan**: Visit this charming farm, where you can taste artisanal organic cheese made from raw goat's milk. Check out the farm shop and spend the night in the convivial B&B.
- **Farm shop De Vierhoekhoeve**: Discover home-made and hand-made products such as cheeses, jams, cold cuts and honey.
- **Ferme du Paillart**: This farm shop offers a wide range of artisanal cheeses from different farms in the region.
- **Hof ter Roode Zee**: Here you can find fresh dairy products, potatoes, honey and eggs! An ideal place to experience the local farm produce.

Breweries

BROUWERIJ ROMAN

This family-run brewery, Belgium's oldest, has been brewing beers with a rich history since 1545. Taste the timeless flavour of Oudenaards Bruin and discover the secrets behind the traditional brewing process on a guided tour.

BROUWERIJ LIEFMANS

Enjoy the unique craft and fruit beers with their sweet-and-sour taste, brewed in Oudenaarde. Renowned for its respect of tradition, this brewery combined that it with innovative techniques.

BROUWERIJ VAN DEN BOSSCHE

In the mood for an unforgettable beer experience? Then be sure to visit Brouwerij Van Den Bossche in Herzele. Taste their delicious beers, such as Pater Lieven and Buffalo, and discover the passion behind each glass. Sign up for a tour and dive into the world of brewing!

BROUWERIJ DE RYCK

Discover the local flavour of this family-run craft brewery. Taste their various beers, each with its own story and a touch of local tradition.

Tiny Tip

Proef hier het 'Steenuilke'. Dit Dit ambachtelijke bier, ontstaan uit een samenwerking ter bescherming van de steenuil, combineert lokale kruiden met een lichte moutsmaak en subtiele fruitigheid.

TICKED OFF:
3 bucket list experiences

The Flemish Ardennes await at your feet. Whether you choose for pure relaxation during a wellness afternoon in the greenery, a stroll among the blooming bluebells or an adventure in a classic 2CV - the choice is entirely up to you.

Discover our bucket list experiences, tick them off one by one and create your own unforgettable memories.



1. OFF WE GO!

Jump in an iconic 2CV and take off on an unforgettable road trip through the rolling countryside of the Flemish Ardennes. Follow one of the carefully mapped out routes that take you along the banks of the Scheldt, through lush forests and over legendary cycling hills. Along the way, choose additional activities, such as a stop at a cosy village pubs, a picnic in the greenery, or a short walk to experience nature up close. Get swept away by the charm of the region, the freedom of the road and the nostalgia of the 2CV.

More information **here**

2. SPOT THE BLUEBELLS


© Rudy Vande Voorde

Many people think you have to head to the Hallerbos in Halle to enjoy the colourful spectacle of bluebells in full bloom. Nothing could be further from the truth because, also in the Flemish Ardennes, the purple carpet covers several forests in a floral blanket each spring. Fortunately, there are many quiet spots in the region where you can admire this spectacle in the best possible way.

Here are **some of the most beautiful walking routes** that you can take to make the most of this blooming spectacle:

- **Will-o'-the-wisp walking route**: A hilly route through blossoming forests with a stunning view from Chapelle Saint-Christophe. (16.6 km)
- **Between De Helix and Bosberg walking route**: A relaxing walk past brooks and wildflowers, with scenic views over the Dender and Mark valley. (20 km)
- **Kluisbos walking route**: A short route past majestic beech trees, the artists' village of Kwaremont and the legendary spring, the Liefdesbron. (6.4 km)
- **The inclines of the Tour of Flanders walking route**: A challenging route for adventurers, with steep slopes and historic trenches. (15.5 km)
- **Muziekbos walking route**: A family-friendly route with playgrounds and a climbing of the Muziekberg. (11 km)

3. WELLNESS IN THE FOREST


© Toerisme Oost-Vlaanderen

In the serene quiet area of **EcoSnooze**, a vast 12-hectare domain at the Berendries near Brakel, you can find an escape from the hustle and bustle and immerse yourself in unique wellness activities. From a walk with alpacas to a herb walk with a herbalist - there is something for everyone.

Take a refreshing dip in the spring water pond and then enjoy the sauna, hot tub or a relaxing massage. End the day with calming yoga nidra or challenge yourself with an invigorating ice bath.

FOR CYCLISTS AND WALKERS: OUT AND ABOUT IN LANDSCAPE PARK FLEMISH ARDENNES

Tiny Tip

Not afraid of a challenge? They why not take on the Flemish Ardennes Challenge and discover what makes the Flemish Ardennes so special.



The best way to explore the Flemish Ardennes? By bike or on foot. Fill your lungs with the fresh air and enjoy the most beautiful spots and most spectacular views along the way. To get you started, we have some great cycle and walking routes ready for you.

© Lander Loeckx

Cycle routes

Scheldt cycle route between Oudenaarde and Kluisbergen

On this cycle route along the Scheldt, you cycle mostly on the towpath. Occasionally, there is a deviation so that you can explore the most beautiful nature by the river, such as the Avelgemse Scheldemeersen, the De Ghellinck domain and the Donkvijver.

- **Distance:** 42.8 km
- **Departure point:** Oudenaarde
- **View the route here**

Geraardsbergen cycle route

The Dender is at its most beautiful between Ninove and Geraardsbergen. But before coasting along the flat towpath next to the riverbank, you first have to undertake a modest climb through the rolling Flemish Ardennes landscape.

- **Distance:** 38.7 km
- **Departure point:** Geraardsbergen
- **View the route here**

'Land van Rode' route

On this cycle route, you get to know the Land van Rode, with its picturesque villages, breathtaking viewpoints and old windmills.

- **Distance:** 43.6 km
- **Departure point:** Sint-Lievens-Houtem
- **View the route here**

Between Kruisem and the Scheldt cycle route

Cycle through the gently rolling countryside between Kruisem and the Scheldt, with a tough climb here and there.
On your route: authentic Flemish roads, castles surrounded by magnificent parks, stunning vistas and cosy eateries to satisfy any hunger and quench any thirst.

- **Distance:** 55.6 km
- **Departure point:** Kruisem
- **View the route here**

Tiny Tip

The rolling landscape of the Flemish Ardennes offers numerous opportunities for the mountain or gravel biker. Check out the best mountain bike routes here.

Experience your own Tour of Flanders

Tourism East Flanders has created 3 superb loops for sporty cyclists, inspired by the route of the Tour of Flanders. Perfect to fill three days.

- **Blue Loop**: The shortest route, but certainly not the easiest. A ride with climbs such as the Oude Kwaremont and Koppenberg.
- **Red Loop**: The longest and toughest route. With classics like the Muur van Geraardsbergen and the Bosberg.
- **Yellow Loop**: Cycle through the rolling Zwalm region. Fewer climbs, but still a challenging ride of 102 km.



ICONIC CYCLE ROUTES

The iconic cycle routes are **long-distance routes** that traverse Flanders and connect with other countries such as the Netherlands and France. Long distances, making them ideal for a multi-day cycling holiday. Each iconic cycle route connects some of the most picturesque parts of the Flemish landscape via attractive cycle paths and a central theme.

The toughest of those long-distance routes is the **Hilly Route**. This route crosses Flanders from west to east. The route starts in Poperinge in West Flanders, crosses the Flemish Ardennes, and ends in Homburg.

Walking routes

Cotthem and Oude Heerweg walking route

Country and forest paths, along with sunken roads, guide you through the Cotthembeek valley, the green heart of Sint-Lievens-Houtem – perfect for nature lovers seeking peace.

- **Distance**: 10.8 km
- **Departure point**: Sint-Lievens-Houtem
- **View the route here**

Kordaal walking route

Interested in a walk that doesn't take too long, but serves up the perfect mix of nature, culture and a beautiful picturesque village centre on the edge of the Flemish Ardennes? Look no further!

- **Distance:** 6.3 km
- **Departure point:** Nokere
- **View the route here**

Hills and chapels walking route

Wooded hills, rolling farmlands, cobblestones, Tour villages, and hidden paths – the Flemish Ardennes reveal their charm on foot. This route near Oudenaarde features famous Flanders' Finest climbs and three chapels where devotion thrives.

- **Distance:** 13.1 km
- **Departure point:** Oudenaarde
- **View the route here**

Panorama walking route

The villages of Kwaremont and Zulzeke, the Paterberg, sunken roads, unpaved paths, forests, streams and a range of views make this adventurous trip along the roof of East Flanders unforgettable.

- **Distance:** 15.8 km
- **Departure point:** Kwaremont
- **View the route here**

TREINSTAPPERS

With the Treinstappers (train walks), you walk from station to station over the Flemish GR trails. Sounds good? It gets even better! There are also Treinstappers that lead you through the Flemish Ardennes; we want to highlight one of these:

Oudenaarde – Ronse

Wander from Ronse over Maarkedal via the fairytale Muziekbos and rolling landscapes to the historic heart of Oudenaarde.

- **Distance:** 20.1 km
- **Departure point:** Ronse
- **View the route here**

Flanders
State of the Art

COLOPHON

RESPONSIBLE PUBLISHER

Peter De Wilde, VISIT**FLANDERS**,
Grasmarkt 61, 1000 Brussels, Belgium

LEGAL DEPOSIT

D/2024/5635/63

MORE INFORMATION

nature@visitflanders.com
www.visitflanders.com

COPYRIGHTS

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a database or retrieval system, or be published in any form or in any way (electronically, mechanically, by print, photoprint, microfilm or any other means) without prior written permission from the Publisher.

VISIT**FLANDERS**