
Flanders
State of the Art
Micro-adventures in the Hageland
EXPERIENCE NATURE IN FLANDERS
© Lander Loeckx
VISITFLANDERS

Dear friends of Flanders,

Little adventures await you in the **Hageland**. Hidden among the rolling hills of **Flemish Brabant** lies this unspoilt part of Flanders, where nature and culture come seamlessly together. Surrounded by **Leuven**, **Aarschot**, **Diest** and **Tienen**, the Hageland is a paradise for nature lovers, culture seekers and micro-adventurers.

But what makes the Hageland so special? Is it the peace? Certainly! Away from the hustle and bustle of the city, you find an oasis of calm here. Or is it the adventurous side? Absolutely! With numerous cycle and walking routes, there is something for everyone.

Walk through rolling hills, cycle along winding roads, or just relax in a hammock under an ancient fruit tree. Seek out the peace in nature, discover hidden works of art or sample local wines and delicacies.

Or experience the Hageland much more intensely on a bike. Through picturesque villages, you ride along the most beautiful roads through breathtaking scenery. Smell the scents of nature and listen to the birds. Enjoy the beautiful picnic spots and cosy terraces that you find along the way.

So, what are you waiting for? Grab your bike, put on your walking shoes or just find a quiet spot somewhere in the nature.

There is so much to discover in the Hageland. Read on, be inspired, and experience the most wonderful micro-adventures yourself!

© Bram De Vrind

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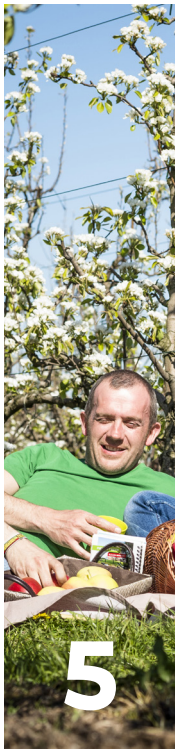
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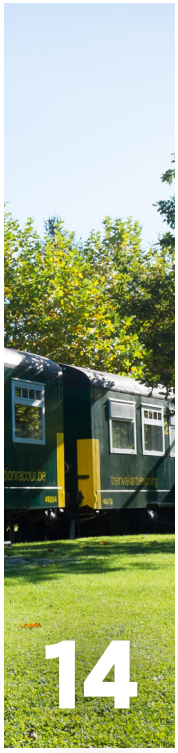
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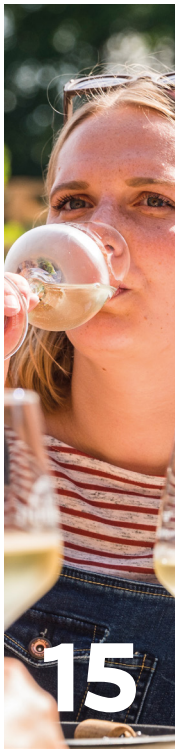
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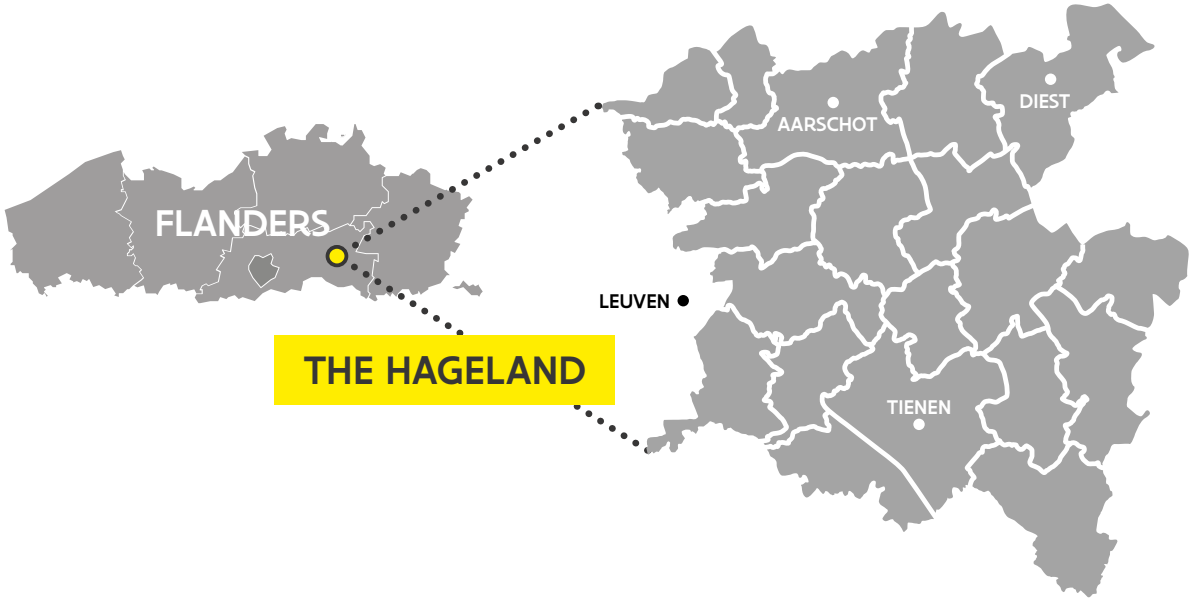


LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

Those who wish to explore the Hageland should head to the east of **Flemish Brabant**, where this **hilly** quadrangle unfolds between **Leuven**, **Aarschot**, **Diest** and **Tienen**. In this region, the Kempen, Haspengouw and the Brabant loam region come together, creating a surprising mix of landscapes. Picture gently rolling hills, winding sunken roads, fertile valleys and vast forests.

— Begin your adventure in:

- **Leuven**
  Be captivated by the vibrant student life in Leuven and then discover the tranquillity of the Hageland. A unique combination that you will not quickly forget.
- **Aarschot**
  Wander through the historic streets of Aarschot and discover the charm of this city. Then hop on your bike and explore the green heart of the Hageland.
- **Diest**
  Discover picturesque Diest, a hidden gem in the Hageland. Here you can find a perfect mix of culture and nature.
- **Tienen**
  Start your adventure in Tienen, a town with a sweet history. Sample the local specialities and explore the beautiful surroundings.



A whole day on a micro-adventure in the Hageland

Small but surprisingly large! A world of micro-adventures awaits you in the Hageland. Let your senses be tantalised by fresh flavours straight from the farm or at a bustling market. Wander through picturesque villages where centuries-old stories come to life. And there's more! Paddle on the beautiful waters, admire works of art that blend into the landscape or spread your picnic blanket amidst the blossoms. Whether you are in the mood for action or relaxation, every corner of the Hageland offers fresh surprises. What are you waiting for?

PICNIC AMONG THE BLOSSOMS

Enjoy an unforgettable picnic in the middle of nature. Between the green hills and vast vineyards, there are numerous places where you can settle down with a deliciously filled picnic basket. At a number of places in the region, you can order picnic packs, filled with local delicacies. Find out more **here**.

—Enjoy the blossoms

Experience the ultimate spring feeling in the Hageland. Lose yourself in a sea of pink and white blossoms on an unforgettable spring walk or bike ride. Or enjoy one of the atmospheric events. The choice is entirely up to you.

CYCLE TOUR ALONG THE FRUIT TREES

Explore seven blossom routes that vary from flat paths to more challenging stretches. Explore the picturesque orchards, enjoy panoramic views and admire works of art inspired by the blossoms.

WALK AMONG THE FLOWER BUDS

Choose from no fewer than 14 spring walks from 5 to 15 km through flowering orchards. Be sure not to miss the Meensel-Kiezegem walk, where you can enjoy works of art and endless seas of blossom.

ATMOSPHERIC EVENTS

April and May are full of atmospheric events! Enjoy blossom theatre walks, lovely picnics and family days. Make your evening extra special with nocturnal walks through illuminated orchards, complete with fire performances and live music.

Unique Blossom Nature in Het Vinne

Visit Flanders' largest inland lake and take in the tall-stem orchards with their tender blossoms.

Find out more **here**.

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Admire fruit-inspired works of art

Fasten your laces, venture out and discover all the fruit-inspired works of art in the Hageland. Walk or cycle along 11 unique works of art that depict blossoms and fruit growing in a surprising way. From a lookout tower made from apple crates to a bench in the shape of a pear, each stop is a surprising encounter with art and nature. Eager for more? These works of art are waiting for you:

PALLOX
@ Hoegaarden



A tower of stacked apple crates in corten steel that forms an impressive vantage point. The names of local fruits adorn the sides, while peepholes give you a beautiful panoramic view of the blossoms.

DE BIJÉÉNRAAD
@ Bekkevoort



These hexagonal beams, inspired by the structure of a beehive, create a cosy seating area overlooking the blossoms. A perfect place to unwind and to enjoy the nature.

CANAPÉER
@ Lubbeek



Sit down on a whimsical bench shaped like a pear and enjoy the breathtaking view of the blossoms. For a moment, this sculpture invites you to become the core of the pear!

SYMBIOSE
@ Glabbeek



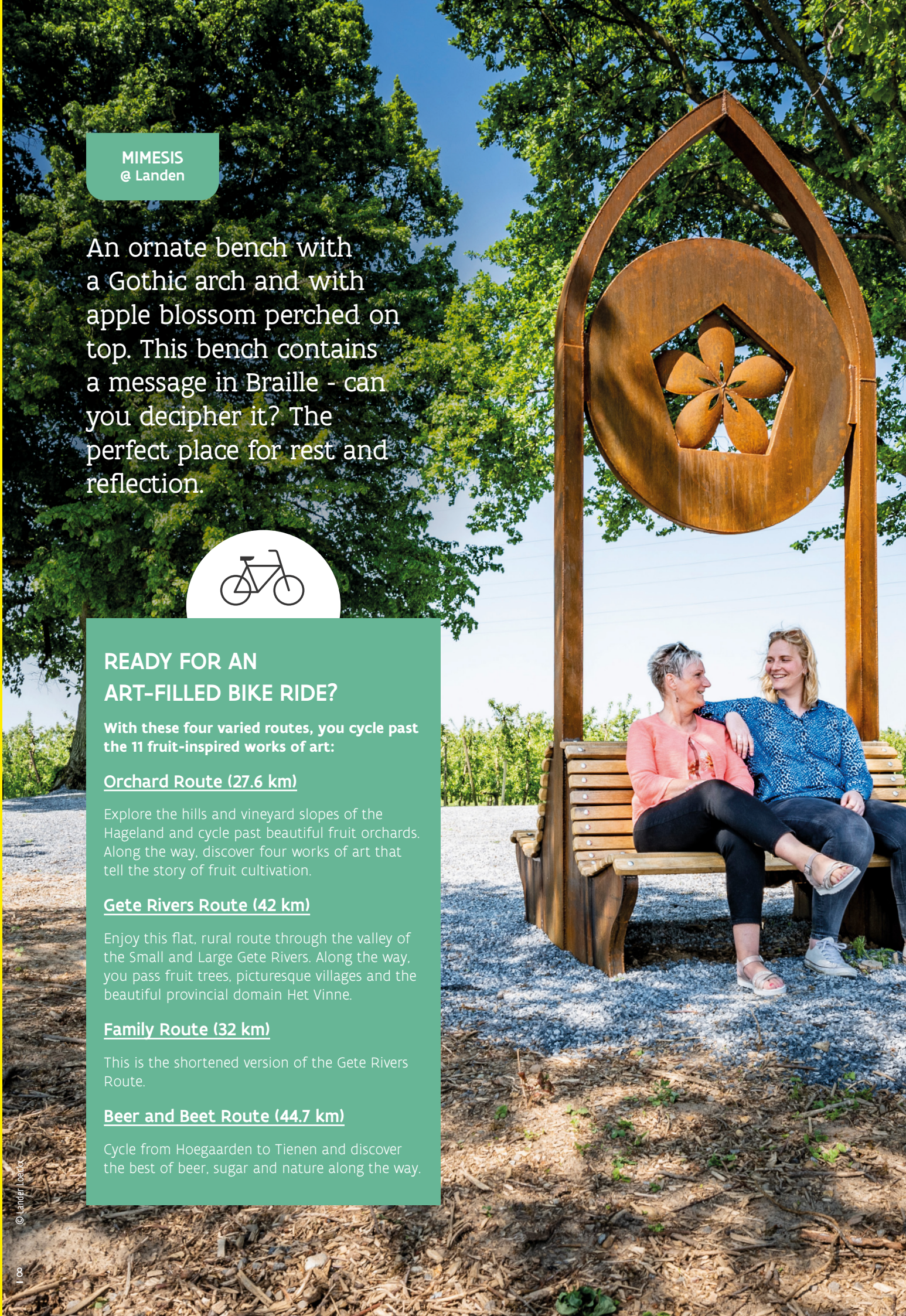
This work of art, an open house around a tree, symbolises the fruit growers who are bonded with nature and fruit growing. An ode to the connection between man and nature.

© Lander Loeckx



HELIXAGON
@ Linter

An ode to nature and the bee. Inspired by honeycombs and spirals, this hexagonal viewing tube offers a whimsical perspective of the landscape.



MIMESIS
@ Landen

An ornate bench with a Gothic arch and with apple blossom perched on top. This bench contains a message in Braille - can you decipher it? The perfect place for rest and reflection.

READY FOR AN ART-FILLED BIKE RIDE?

With these four varied routes, you cycle past the 11 fruit-inspired works of art:

Orchard Route (27.6 km)

Explore the hills and vineyard slopes of the Hageland and cycle past beautiful fruit orchards. Along the way, discover four works of art that tell the story of fruit cultivation.

Gete Rivers Route (42 km)

Enjoy this flat, rural route through the valley of the Small and Large Gete Rivers. Along the way, you pass fruit trees, picturesque villages and the beautiful provincial domain Het Vinne.

Family Route (32 km)

This is the shortened version of the Gete Rivers Route.

Beer and Beet Route (44.7 km)

Cycle from Hoegaarden to Tienen and discover the best of beer, sugar and nature along the way.

© Lander Loeckx

This bench, with a backrest made of perforated corten steel, casts a shadow of poppies and blossoms on the ground. A serene place to pause and reflect on the rich history of the landscape.



STIL
@ Tienen

A whimsical cottage that symbolises the feeling of coming home. With its open see-through sculpture, it invites you to explore the region from a dynamic perspective.



SHELTER
@ Kortenaken

An accessible blossom bench, integrated into the slope and fully accessible for wheelchair users. For the adventurous visitor: climb the pear opposite and engage with nature in a playful way.



PRETPEER & KROONZITJE
@ Geetbets

This tiny little house with its prominent bell shape alludes to both the stately St Odulphus chapel and church and the Dutch word ‘klokhuis’ which means ‘core’. A whimsical work of art that puts a smile on your face.



HET KLOKHUIS
@ Zoutleeuw

This work of art tells the story of the many journeys involved in fruit cultivation. With its stunning appearance, it does not attract bees but curious visitors.



DE REIS
@ Tielt-Winge

Four water adventures on the Demer

Fancy a unique experience? Explore the Demer in four different ways: go bike rafting, hike rafting, kayaking or just enjoy nature at one of the unique meeting points. Choose your adventure and explore the beautiful Demer Valley!

1. BIKE RAFTING

You begin with a relaxing bike ride through the Hageland countryside, carrying an inflatable boat a lightweight packraft weighing just three kilos - in your rucksack. Once you arrive at the bank of the Demer, you inflate the boat and attach your bike securely to the bow. You then cruise down the Demer, enjoying the water and the surroundings. Float through rapids and navigate the river's bends as you experience nature from a unique perspective. Perfect for adventurous water rats and cycling enthusiasts!

Find all the practical info **here**



2. HIKE RAFTING

Ready for a mini-expedition? Then combine a relaxing stroll through historic Diest with an adventurous trip on the Demer. Halfway through, relax with a convivial lunch in Zichem. Afterwards, packraft again and wander back to Diest via a scenic route. The perfect micro-adventure for those who like to combine walking and boating!

Find all the practical info **here**



3. KAYAKING

Explore the Demer Valley in a unique way. Hire a kayak or canoe and paddle through the beautiful countryside with your friends or family. Depart from Diest, Zichem or Aarschot and enjoy a day of relaxation on the water. Hire a boat, choose your starting point and paddle away!

Find all the practical info **here**











4. DEMER MEETING POINTS

At five spots along the Demer river, there are unique meeting points where you can take a break and leave your bike or car while you explore the area. All these spots have something to do with the Demer's past.

- **Demer meeting point Werchter**

A winding path leads you to the treetops of the oaks, at the former resting place for boat pullers. A quiet place to relax and explore the nature.

- **Demer meeting point Diest**

Enjoy the view of the Demer landscape from unique corten steel cannon seats. These cannons once served to defend the city from attackers.

- **Demer meeting point Zichem**

Here, you can find a converted flatboat that used to sail on the Demer. From the dike, you can reach the boat via a footbridge and onboard enjoy a picnic.

- **Demer meeting point Betekom**

The bridge over the Demer is decorated with Corten steel, on which a lasered illustration of the winding Demer can be seen. At night, this pattern is beautifully illuminated.

- **Demer meeting point Langdorp**

Here, there is an impressive 35-metre-long table with a view of the Demer landscape. Ideal for a barbecue, with two public barbecue grills nearby.

Seek out the peace in nature

Away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life, this is the ideal spot to recharge. Explore the many walking paths, hire a bike or just enjoy the peace and quiet in one of the many nature areas.Experience nature in:



WEBBEKOMS BROEK NATURE RESERVE

This beautiful are of 240 hectares is an oasis of reed beds, hay and grasslands, pools and poplars. From the ramparts, you have a great view of the wetlands and the city of Diest. Webbekoms Broek is designated as a special protection area because of its wide diversity of bird species.

Location: Diest, Leuven



WIJNGAARDBERG NATURE RESERVE

This 26-hectare nature area is part of the Wijngaardberg and is known for its beautiful walking trails. One of the highlights is the 1.5 km long Wijngaardmuur. The hill is 72 metres high and is home to a vineyard where grapes are still grown in the traditional manner; just like they were in the Middle Ages.

Location: Rotselaar, Leuven



MENE-JORDAAN VALLEY NATURE RESERVE

The 89-hectare Mene-Jordaan Valley is a must-visit for nature lovers. Here, there is an impressive biodiversity with shrublands, grasslands, marshy woodlands and reed beds alternating over the landscape. This area lends itself perfectly to long walks in peaceful surroundings.

Location: Hoegaarden, Boutersem, Tienen



DEMERBROEKEN NATURE AREA

The Demerbroeken is a vast nature area in the wide valley of the Demer, lying between Testelt, Zichem, Averbode and Diest. Here, thanks to the diverse soil types, you find a rich variety of plants. This area invites discovery and exploration.

Location: Scherpenheuvel-Zichem



PROVINCIAL DOMAIN HET VINNE

Het Vinne invites you for a relaxing walk around Flanders' largest natural inland lake. Looking for an adventure? Or do you just want to recharge? In Het Vinne, you can do both! Walk, cycle, play, explore, smell, taste... here you experience nature with all your senses.

Find out more **here**.

Explore the wonderful wine region

Choose from five cycle routes that take you past historic castles, green vineyards and breathtaking views.

HORST ROUTE (38.6 KM)

Cycle past Vlierbeek Abbey, moated Horst Castle and through beautiful forests such as the Chartreuzenbos and Kloosterbos. In Wezemaal, find out about the Hageland wine culture at the visitors' centre. Enjoy a drink or let the children play in provincial domain Kessel-Lo.

WINE LANDSCAPES ROUTE (50.6 KM)

Start your tour at Horst Castle and cycle through the rolling Hageland hills. Along the way, you pass the Vlooyberg Tower and the Hageland Wine visitors' centre.

WINE EXPERIENCE ROUTE (43.6 KM)

This route is full of variety. From Tielt-Winge, you cycle past the vineyards on the Houwaartseberg, where you can taste Hageland wines. You finish at the impressive Vlooyberg Tower, where you can enjoy the magnificent views.

LEUVEN-WEZEMAAL ROUTE (31 KM)

With a duo bike or wheelchair bike, cycle along the Vaart to the Hageland Wine Visitors' Centre in Wezemaal. Test your orientation skills on the accessible trail in provincial domain Kessel-Lo and then cycle back to Leuven.

DISCOVER THE SECRETS OF HAGELAND WINE

Want to know why Hageland wine tastes so special? Then go to the **Visitors' Centre in Wezemaal**. This is the place to learn all about the history of local viticulture and the unique characteristics of the soil.

© Lander Loeckx



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 Hageland and its vicinity, there are many original places to spend the night where you can dream away blissfully. Here are a few suggestions:

Sheep Inn

- Experience a unique stay in the heart of the Hageland
- Sleep among the sheep, pigs and mini cattle
- Choose a safari lodge tent or a wooden barrel
- Relax in the jacuzzi or hot tub

Station Racour

- Ultimate family accommodation
- Spend the night in the former work atelier or in one of the train carriages
- Everything is train-themed
- Cycle or walk along the old railway line, now part of an extensive network

B&B Karrehuis

- Enjoy a green oasis on the edge of the Hageland, close to Leuven
- Stay in the former coach house of Vijverhof Castle
- The perfect base for wonderful walking and cycling adventures

Tiny House Ferme Koer

- Large glass windows
- Enjoy the sense of sleeping in the midst of nature
- Relax in the sauna or jacuzzi
- Enjoy the cosiness of a wood-burning stove

Leybeeckhof

- Experience pure tranquillity and luxury
- Discover this hidden gem at the centre of the Hageland viticulture

Roos 14

- Stay in the heart of the rolling Hageland
- The ideal base for wonderful cycle tours and walks
- A stone's throw from Hermansheuvel

Villa Helena

- Enjoy a stay on the top of the Speelberg
- Admire the panoramic views over the open landscape
- Perfectly located on the node network for cycling and walking routes

Pluimpapaver Hotel & Glamping

- Stay in one of the 5 guest rooms or 4 glamping tents in the orchard
- Located in the green countryside of Aarschot

Glamping Mispelhoef

- Glamp among the donkeys
- Wake up to the sound of birds, grazing donkeys and grunting pigs
- Go on a multi-day donkey trek
- An unforgettable experience

Dutje in de wei

- Discover one of the most beautiful farm meadows in Flanders
- Spend the night in a charming converted cattle wagon
- Ideal for families
- Enjoy sweeping views over the Gete Valley

Glamping Eik en Droom

- Stay in a luxury glamping tent
- Sleep between the fruit trees on the edge of the Gete Valley
- Experience the magical sunset by the campfire

Glamp & Dine

- High-end glamping
- After a delicious dinner, enjoy a night under the stars
- Breathtaking view of the water

Vakantiewoningen "Bogaerde Winning"

- Square farm in the heart of the Hageland
- Perfect for families and groups (sleeps up to 12)

Find out about more great places to stay in the Hageland here.

TASTE THE NATURE

Combine nature and gastronomy in the Hageland. After a lovely walk or bike ride through the green hills, enjoy a well-deserved glass of the local wine or an artisanal beer. The perfect combination for an unforgettable day.

— Wine estates

Discover the passion of the Hageland winemakers! More than 20 unique domains invite you to take a look behind the scenes. From small, intimate vineyards to larger, renowned estates: each has its own story and character. Discover the secrets of wine production, taste the results of the craftsmanship and be delighted by the diversity of flavours. Book a tour and experience an unforgettable wine adventure.

Curious? **Here** you can find all wine estates in the region.

— Hageland beers and breweries

The Hageland is not only a paradise for wine lovers, but also for beer connoisseurs. Discover the rich tradition of artisanal brewing and taste the unique flavours each brewery has to offer. Several local pubs serve these regional beers, giving you the chance to taste the local culture and enjoy the convivial atmosphere.

Tiny Tip

Taste, experience and enjoy the unique Averbode products at **Het Moment**, the experience centre within the walls of Averbode Abbey.

© Lander Loeckx

TICKED OFF:
3 bucket list experiences

Sun on your face, wind in your hair and ready to explore. During a vineyard walk at sunset, experience the serenity of nature. The sun slowly setting, the grapes hanging heavy on the vines and the landscape painted in the most beautiful hues. But the Hageland has so much more to offer. In Het Vinne, you might spot a rare species of bird. And do you really want to get away from it all for a moment? Then climb the Vlooyberg Tower and enjoy the panoramic views.

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

Vineyard walk at sunset

Ready for an adventure? The Hageland shows its most beautiful side at dusk. The sky ignites in a palette of colours that you will not quickly forget, while the smell of ripening fruit fills the air. An unforgettable experience for every nature lover.

CHARTREUZENBERG WALK (6.9 KM)

Walk over the slopes of the Chartreuzenberg and enjoy a picnic with stunning views at wine estate Chartreuzenberg.

HOUWAARTSEBERG WALK (9.4 KM)

Enjoy panoramic views from the southern flank of the Houwaartseberg and take a break at the wine bench.

SPEELBERG WALK (12 KM)

Explore the wooded hills near Leuven, visit the Speelberg chapel and Vandeurzen wine castle.

WIJNGAARDBERG WALK (7.3 KM)

Walk along the vines of the Wijngaardberg and learn about wine production at the Visitors' Centre.

FROM BERG TO BERG WALK (10.7 KM)

Starting at the Church of Our Lady, explore the vines on the southern slopes of the Houwaartseberg.

Tiny Tip

Visit the tower early in the morning to avoid the crowds and experience the tranquillity of the nature.

Climb the Vlooyberg Tower

This impressive, floating flight of stairs seems almost to balance above the Hageland and it offers you a spectacular view of the surroundings. As you climb the steps, you can feel the excitement building - and once you get to the top, a breathtaking panorama awaits. Enjoy the views over the hills, fields and vineyards that stretch out before you. It is the perfect, adventurous pitstop for those who love nature and a touch of adrenaline. In short: a unique experience that you do not want to miss!

Bird watching in Het Vinne

Bird watching in Het Vinne? Yes please! Flanders' largest natural inland lake is brimming with our feathered friends. From the lookout tower, you have a front-row view of the most extraordinary birds. With a bit of luck, you might even spot a bittern or a penduline tit.

Explore the four signposted walks:

- **Red walk**: A short, fun 2km walk along the playground. Perfect for families with young children.
- **Yellow walk**: Explore the Vinne on a slightly longer route of 3 km. You walk along boardwalks and pass a birdwatching hide.
- **Blue walk**: For nature lovers: a 2.7 km walk along the herb garden.
- **White walk**: A relaxing walk around the pond. Ideal for unwinding.

Find out more about it **here**.

© Lander Loeckx

FOR CYCLISTS AND WALKERS: OUT AND ABOUT IN THE HAGELAND



The best way to explore the Hageland? 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

RECREATIONAL

Wine Landscapes Route

Cycle through the heart of the Hageland, past the historic Horst Castle, vast fields and countless vineyards. Explore the world of Hageland wine and enjoy magnificent views from the Vlooyberg Tower.

- **Distance:** 50.6 km
- **Departure point:** Sint-Pieters-Rode (Holsbeek)
- **View the route here**

Balenberg Route

Be surprised by the varied landscapes of the Hageland. The Balenberg route combines nature, culture and sport. Cycle along the Balenberg, visit the Northwest Walls and discover the world of Father Damien.

- **Distance:** 36 km
- **Departure point:** Sven Nys Cycling Centre
- **View the route here**

SPORTING

Sven Nys Cycling Route

Cycle in the footsteps of Sven Nys! This 93 km route with tough climbs takes you through the beautiful Hageland. Follow the signs and explore the cycling hero's training route. A must for every cycling enthusiast!

- **Distance:** 93 km
- **Departure point:** Sven Nys Cycling Centre
- **View the route here**

Eddy Merckx Cycling Route

Cycle in the footsteps of Eddy Merckx! This 70 km long route takes you through the Hageland, along hills and points of interest. Follow the signs and discover where the cycling legend rode his first kilometres.

- **Distance:** 70 km
- **Departure point:** Meensel-Kiezegem (Tielt-Winge)
- **View the route here**

‘Dwars door het Hageland’ Gravel Route

‘Dwars door het Hageland’ is a challenging gravel route with some tough climbs. Of the 75 km, 28 km are unpaved. From muddy trails and forest paths to some steep slopes: ‘Dwars door het Hageland’ is a challenge for any gravel rider.

- **Distance:** 75 km
- **Departure point:** Sven Nys Cycling Centre
- **View the route here**

Flanders’ Finest Cycle Routes

De **Flanders’ Finest Fietsroutes** brengen je langs al het moois dat Vlaanderen rijk is. Fiets door verrassende landschappen, langs uniek erfgoed en adem Vlaanderen in. Je vindt in het Hageland een aantal van deze themaroutes:

REYNVAERT ROUTE

This hilly cycling adventure through the Hageland starts and ends in Diest. The route takes us past the famous pilgrimage site in Scherpenheuvel, the Abbey of Averbode and the beguinage of Diest, a beautiful piece of UNESCO world heritage.

- **Distance:** 42 km
- **Departure point:** Diest
- **View the route here**

HORST ROUTE

Starting from the art and university city of Leuven, we discover the Hageland. This green, rolling region holds a lot in store for us: undulating landscapes, a beautiful abbey, a stately castle, breweries and a wine visitors’ centre.

- **Distance:** 38 km
- **Departure point:** Leuven
- **View the route here**

The Hageland welcomes everyone with open arms! Whether you have a disability or are travelling on a limited budget, here you can find plenty of activities and attractions that cater perfectly for your needs.

Everyone’s a tourist



Walking routes

Hermansheuvel Walk

This walk takes you over a typical Hageland hill with beautiful views. Choose from three routes, follow the nodes and discover the region’s rich history.

- **Distance:** 12.8 km
- **Departure point:** Assent
- **View the route here**

Linter Walk

Walk past the Geensmolen, where the Grote and Kleine Vliet rivers meet the Grote Gete. Cross the Gete via a spectacular suspension bridge and meet the Gete Dragon. Along the way, you pass the Doysbroek nature area, the charming Saint Lucia Chapel and Neerlinter Castle.

- **Distance:** 9.9 km
- **Departure point:** Linter
- **View the route here**

Mene-Jordaan Walk

Starting at St Ermelindis church in Meldert, walk via the Mene and Jordaan valleys to Hoksem. Be sure to bring your wellington boots for this nature area! Along the route, you come across the beautiful Carolushoeve.

- **Distance:** 9 km
- **Departure point:** Meldert
- **View the route here**

Alsberg Walk

Explore the Alsberg! This walk takes you through beautiful landscapes with sweeping views. Walk under the Vlooyberg Tower, the famous floating staircase, and discover the unique Walenbos.

- **Distance:** 6.4 km
- **Departure point:** Tielt
- **View the route here**

Flanders
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COLOPHON

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