

10 summertime tips for just beyond Brussels

Welcome to Flemish Brabant

► Still up in the air about this summer's best day trips? These ten activities are a stone's throw from the capital and 100% bucket list-worthy. Good times await!

Rose Garden Coloma

Sint-Pieters-Leeuw



At the heart of Sint-Pieters-Leeuw, the sprawling 15-hectare Coloma estate beckons you to explore its exceptional rose garden. Over 3,000 rose varieties from every continent – 300,000+ roses all told – put on a splendid show. However, summertime is when they capture hearts by the hundredfold. Nothing beats the fragrance, colour, and velvety texture of these roses in full bloom. And the best part? There's no entry fee!

Canoeing the Zenne

Lot - Drogenbos



Nothing quite beats the heat like water. Time to head south-west of Brussels for a unique canoe trip on the Zenne River. Hop in a three-seater (family) canoe for an exciting ride with up to two other people. For an hour and 15 minutes, you'll sail the 6.3 km course between Lot and Drogenbos.

Here's when you can book your summertime canoe adventure: 14/07, 28/07, 11/08, 25/08, 08/09, 22/09. Cast off is at 10 am and 1 pm.

[More info](#)

Gaasbeek Castle



Gaasbeek Castle might just be the prettiest castle in the country. At least, that's how we see it... Nestled among the Pajottenland hills, this majestic building has stood the test of time for 800 years. But this isn't just any castle. It's also a cultural hotspot, hosting all kinds of spectacular exhibitions. For instance, the Rebels Echoes expo is on display until 3 November. Finish off your castle tour with a stroll through the lovely museum garden.

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Bike rides and tasty bites Halle

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Vilvoorde by boat

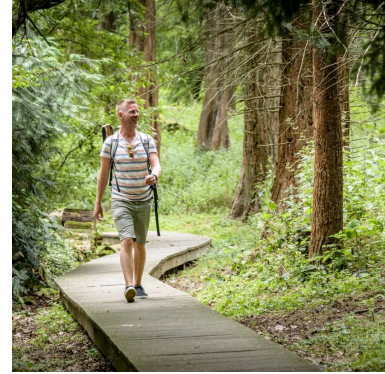


Enjoy the good life and board the water bus in the heart of Brussels to sail your way to Vilvoorde. While this trip is worthwhile in itself, a visit to the trendy town of Vilvoorde is an absolute must! Back in the day, it was all grey, grind, and heavy industry. But Vilvoorde has radically transformed itself into a city full of good vibes and promise in recent years. Just visit Asiat Park. Once a military site, it's now a hub for circular business, creativity, sports, and fun.

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Hiking in the Doode Bemde Neerijse

Sonian Forest



The Sonian Forest is a lush and varied slice of UNESCO World Heritage just outside Brussels. Disembark at Groenendaal Station and step straight into the heart of this primaeval forest, which is also Flanders' largest stretch of woodland. Some of its trees even exceed the ripe old age of 2,000! While you're there, look for the remains of the old horse racing track near Groenendaal and marvel at the Royal Lodge that's still intact.

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Follow the Zenne River to cycle the straight and narrow through Brettanomyces Bruxellensis and Lambicus' breeding grounds. Say what? These wild yeasts have twirled and danced through the air on the riverbank for centuries, the perfect catalyst for spontaneous fermentation. It's the secret to lambic beer's heady goodness. Well, that and the hearts, heads, and hands of Pajottenland's genius lambic brewers. This bike route introduces you to the fascinating world of lambic and geuze.

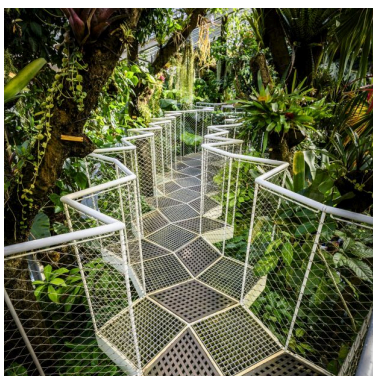
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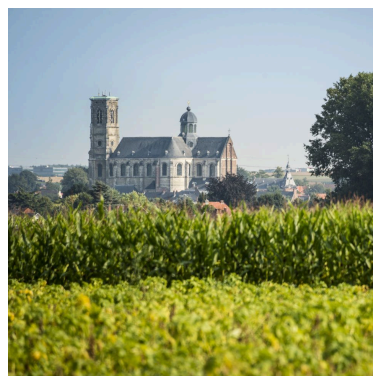
Ready to disconnect and escape the city? Take a deep breath and head to the Doode Bemde Nature Reserve in Neerijse. This nature reserve is a beautiful patchwork of small fields, poplar plantations, wetland forests, meadows, brushwood and reed beds, ponds and canals. Don't forget to take your wellies or waterproof shoes. It can get pretty soggy out there. All set to reconnect after a perfect day? Enjoy a local craft beer on the cozy terrace of De Kroon Brewery (Brouwerij De Kroon).

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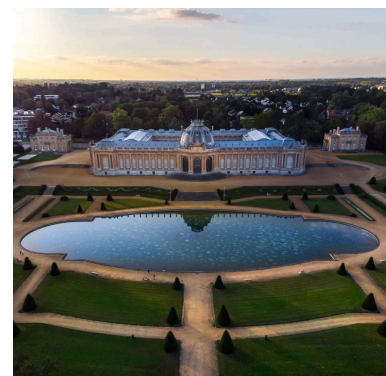
Meise Botanic Garden



Grimbergen Abbey Brewery



A day in the life of ... Tervuren



Meise Botanic Garden is another one of Flemish Brabant's dream day trips. It's one of the world's largest botanical gardens with plants from every continent. Journey from the savannah flats to tropical rainforest and everything in between. And don't forget the garden's latest marvel: the castle pond's new island garden. New worlds await behind every bend.

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Grimbergen's new abbey brewery blends the best of historic, tried-and-true brewing traditions with new, innovative techniques. What's in it for you? One-of-a-kind, premium beers in limited editions. You get to be your own guide on your journey of discovery into Belgian beer tradition, brewing techniques, and the genius gears that make Grimbergen tick.

[More info](#)

Start with the AfricaMuseum. Learn all about the rituals, languages, art, and geography of the entire continent! Feeling peckish? Savour some fresh air and picnic in the serenely beautiful Warande Park. Ready to move on? The Warande Walk whisks you through the park – once the hunting grounds of the Dukes – and treats you to its most beautiful spots.

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Colophon

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Gunther Coppens

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