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The Ultimate Belgian Getaway

Walking in Wallonia

What's on the menu?

SLAB OF ROCK, a slather of peaty soil, the crunch of gravel path, earthy smells of heather on misty moors with a pinch of fresh pine forest. If walking in Wallonia were a meal it would be a wondrous array of courses, with a little something to tempt every palate.

Factor in the sense of familiarity and comfort of the temperate green landscapes – Wallonia is after all less than a 2-hour drive from Calais, and you have a comforting recipe for success. Not only that. It's peppered with colourful culture and quirky customs you won't see anywhere else.

Whilst one of its abbeys reveals championship racecourses and exquisite museums behind its ancient walls. Elsewhere, gnomes and innovative monks busy themselves producing award winning beers and other gourmet delights.

Ancient rock formations, haunting plains, deep dense forests or fast flowing rivers, there is a trail to feel the full flavour of our region whatever your age, interest or walking level.

This brochure is just a taster - a few routes and highlights that you can do by car or on foot with the option to research the full range of itineraries on visitwallonia.be/hiking including maps and routes to download free.

C'mon then, lace up your boots. Let's see what's on the menu?

MAIN COVER IMAGE: WBT - DOMINIK KETZ

COVER INSETS: WBT - DOMINIK KETZ, WBT - DAVID SAMYN

WBT - BRUNO DALIMONTE

BACK COVER: WBT - OLIVIER BOURGI





REGION OVERVIEW

Mystical moors and epic views

Discover medieval magnificence around Malmedy and Reinhardstein.

PIC LANDSCAPES, WILD mystical moors, medieval magnificence and military memorial define this route. Medieval magnificence in the form of castles and fortresses that set the dramatic backdrop for tales of feuding families, making modern day soap operas look like a fairytale. Think Prince Charming on steroids and you get the picture. Oh - did anybody mention climbing over Napoleon's nose after a spot of skiing (yes you heard), or how about wild swimming or F1 championship racing?

A little about the region: The 'Hautes Fagnes' (High Fens) is an otherworldly place. Its wild moors and forests sit on the borders of Germany, radiating pastel mists and soft light, creating an ethereal and calming beauty, which captivate walkers in all seasons. This protected nature reserve is also the highest point of Wallonia up to 672m above sea level. Ok – we know it's not super high but its misty, poetic qualities more than compensate.

All along these magnificent routes, the dark forest of Hertogenwaldin in the 'L'Ourthe valley' cloak and caress you with dark firs, revealing medieval magnificence and amazing cultural experiences and adventures. People often hail the wellbeing benefits of hugging trees. On this Eastern Canton route, however, it's the trees that hug you.





Medieval magic

So much to detail but let's mention the halfway point of this car route - Reinhardstein. It sits beautifully in the deep gorge of the Warche Valley in the little village of Ovifat. Reinhardstein castle has been through the mill since it was first built in 1354. Sitting on a rocky outcrop as if between heaven and earth. It now stands today in a perfectly restored state thanks to the Willy Wonker-esque 'Professor Overloop'. He saved its patrimony in the 1970s by using old 14th century documents to successfully reconstruct towers and parapet walks with stunning results.

If you want to make an outing of its fully restored grandeur you could spend a day there immersing yourself into the life of a medieval lord or a lady. A guided tour allows you to admire the castle's fabulous tapestry and weaponry collection. Try your hand at a spot of medieval archery or treat yourself to the castle's very own Reinhardstein amber beer or soft cheese. Your feast awaits.

Lest we forget – wartime memories

Another historical stop off further along the route is Malmedy. It's not just that it's charismatic with exceptional heritage and epic views, it's also an important place in terms of World War II history. A place to learn about the ill-fated Malmedy massacre in the war.

The Baugnez 44 Historical Centre is a fascinating little museum dedicated to the Battle of the Bulge. It tells the poignant tale of a convoy of German Panzer tanks commanded by Joachim Peiper who ploughed through the freezing Ardennes in an ill-fated offensive against the allied troops.

ATHE BAISERS DE MALMEDY

A local treat invented in the 19th century made of two little meringues

CORALIE GRASSIN

◆FASCINATING MUSEUMS

The Baugnez 44 **Historical Centre** is dedicated to the Battle of the Bulge WBT - DAVID SAMYN



Steeped in war history Wallonia may be, but it isn't all doom and gloom. Just like many towns in the region, Wallonia wholeheartedly enjoys celebrating quirky festivities. Malmedy's very own is referred to as the 'Cwarmê d'Mâm'dî' where everyone speaks Walloon for the occasion - usually around February/March. 'Haguètes' (masked figures in red robes and striking plumed hats) wander through the town, grabbing onlookers with their 'hape-tchâr' (a type of wooden tongs) until they kneel and ask for forgiveness. All in good spirits, of course.

Poetry and motion - three museums. one unexpected venue

If you are looking to pack a holistic Wallonia experience into your trip with the best the region has to offer, then Stavelot is the place. Beautiful timbered buildings and quaint narrow streets, and the jewel in the crown - Stavelot Abbey - will thrill thrice over. Contrary to the image of a peaceful haven of monastic silence, this abbey is filled with sound and motion. It houses not one but three museums, including the exhilarating Spa Francorchamps Track Museum, dedicated to the most beautiful racetrack in the world. For over 14 centuries, the abbey has always been a lively place: monks in the 8th century, revolutionaries, master tanners, municipal administration, museums... The place hasn't stopped buzzing since.

"Castles and fortresses set the dramatic backdrop for tales of feuding families."



▲ BUZZING WITH LIFE

Stavelot and its Abbey are the place to be for lively entertainment.

ABOVE LEFT: LABOUREURPHOTOS

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What lies behind the deep dark woods

On foot around the Château Reinhardstein.

Distance: 7km

HÂTEAU REINHARDSTEIN IS a stop on your car route, allowing you to combine this walk as part of your visit. It's one of the biggest and best fortresses in Belgium. Explore its medieval artefacts and archaeological excavations surrounded by stunning green scenery. It's also great for a picnic so don't forget to stock up on some regional amber beer and local cheese.

On foot around the Chateau you'll discover undulating paths with different gradients, eventually leading to the 'Nez Napoléon' (or Napoleon's Nose) – a steep promontory high above the valley of the Warche. It's a spectacular viewing point and a perfect picture opportunity. From here, it winds down into the valley along the course of a bubbling, wild river Warche. Near the banks of the river, the trail enters a valley which becomes narrower and narrower. The trail now climbs uphill. This slope offers the opportunity, one last time, to enjoy the view over the wild valley, which is marked by this mighty fortress.



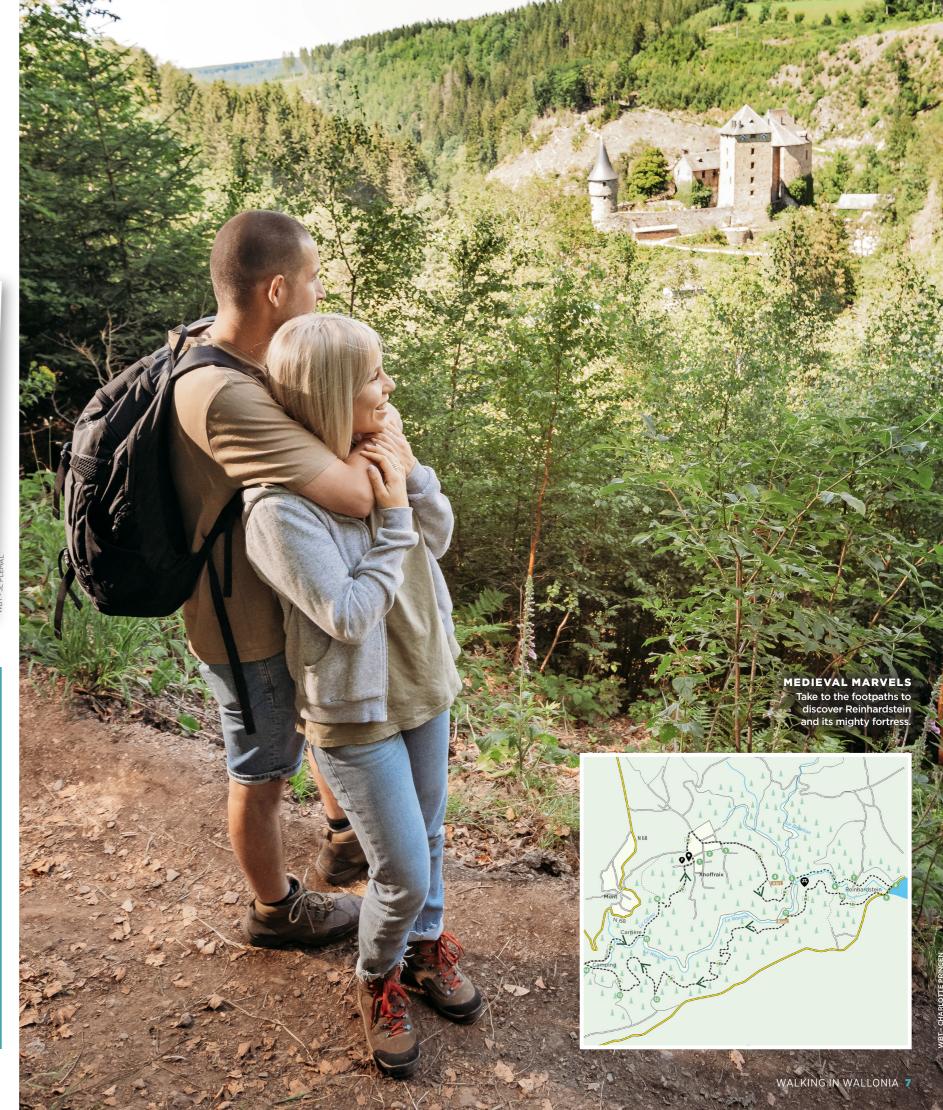


OFF THE BEATEN TRACK



Waterfalls and wild swimming - Wallonia wellbeing

If you're tempted by a short detour, you should grab a picture opportunity at the highest waterfall in Belgium, which falls beside the Château into the Warche valley from a height of 60 metres. The impressive structure of the Lac du Robertville Dam is also en route. It's the perfect place for relaxation and for a chance to go 'wild' swimming, which is currently enjoying a moment, as well as offering some excellent hiking trails.



REGION OVERVIEW

1y kingdom or a castle

Living like a Belgian lord: feuds, fallouts and fairytales.

OMANTIC, MAJESTIC, WARRIOR-LIKE, ancient... these routes in the Lesse Valley bare all about castles and kings, lords and ladies, family feuds and fallouts. Each has its own dramatic tale to tell of love, passion, murder and mystery. Think Cinderella takes part in WWF wrestling or I'm a knight in the Ardennes forest... get me out of here. Each has its own distinctive character and beauty and there are definitely a few phantoms in the mix too. What they all have in common are dramatic river settings and wild verdant nature - perfect for weaving in some water activities such as kayaking and river cruising.

Château Lavaux Saint Anne - it's a lord's life

The starting point of the car route is Château Lavaux Saint Anne: the castle with more to it than meets the eye. It has been a fortress since 1244 with beautiful bell-shaped roofs, renaissance gates, stone turrets and a compact little moat. Not only is it picture-perfect but it's also home to three museums where you can realise the life of a lord or lady with music and costume and learn all about rural life over the centuries. A true jewel in the Famenne region, it is run by a welcoming team of people including 'Cecile' the fairy who keeps the castle in its impeccable state. The deer park and a wetland zone filled with rare flora and fauna are a must for nature lovers and a nice picnic stop.

Château de Vêves - perfectly proportioned

Proud of its perfect proportions and halfway along the route is the fortified Château de Vêves. It was first founded by Pépin de Herstal in the 7th century and is considered one of the best examples of 14th century architecture in Belgium. When you walk inside the symmetrical towers and on its parapet walk, you can almost hear the clinking armour of the watch soldiers. The same family Liedekerke-Beaufort line has watched over Vêves for over eight centuries, a longevity which is rare in history and adds to its magic. Extensively restored in 1969, the medieval era is etched everywhere you turn. Its five pentagonal shaped pepper pot towers are straight out of a Rapunzel fairytale. The distinctive 1418

timbered galleries, sumptuous hall of arms, rare china, paintings, furniture and large kitchen are all a sentinel of the Middle Ages. Château de Vêves is without a doubt an important part of the major heritage of Wallonia.

Dinant Citadel, beermaking and all that jazz Dinant is a proper picture postcard town often

called 'the Daughter of the Meuse', its silvery flow hugging and framing the rocks and city, ribboning pretty houses and shops. Lift your gaze towards the towering Citadel and the onion domed roof of the Collegiate Church. The Medieval Citadel has its very own cable car to zip up to see the epic view over the city. It also has a famous son, the father of the saxophone - Adolph Sax. Dinant in summer is a fabulously authentic way to enjoy regular jazz weekends that brings us naturally to beer. Wallonia wouldn't be complete without some kind of beer experience and the Leffe Brewery more than meets expectations. Leffe was born in 1240 and initially brewed by monks for hygiene (water wasn't sanitary) and of course hospitality, since duty dictated monks welcome travellers and pilgrims. Maison Leffe will stimulate your senses with interactive experiences and tastings, exploring eight centuries of beer making. Don't forget there are nine kinds of Leffe beers to try. Cheers!







The final stopping point is Château de Freyr. Unlike many of the Meuse Valley's fortified castles, Freyr doesn't sit on a rocky spur but right on the banks of the River Meuse. Likened often to a mini Versailles, it illuminates the valley with its ode to the French formal garden in the style of 'Le Notre'. It exudes sparkling elegance with bubbling fountains and ponds sitting like a jewel encased in wild and untouched nature of the surrounding countryside accentuating its beauty. The 300-yearold orange trees ooze citrus scents lining the paths of landscaped gardens and a 6km maze.

For the best experience of Château de Frevr Castle and its surroundings walk along the road 'Dinant - Beauraing' on the right bank for some of the best views of the castle and the gardens. On the left bank, you'll discover prehistoric caves, musical birdsong, subtropical plants and former vineyards to add to the pleasure of your visit.

"What they all have in common are dramatic river settings and wild verdant nature."

▲ PICTURE POSTCARD

Dinant Citadel sits among pretty houses and shops.

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WBT - ARNAUD SIQUET

THE CITRUS CASTLE Château de Freyr

boasts a stunning formal garden with a 6km maze.



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Fairytale perfection

On foot around the Château and a glimpse of one of Wallonia's most beautiful villages.

Distance: 8.6km

N CELLES, ONE of the prettiest villages in Wallonia, it's possible to take a break from the car route to walk around the Château de Vêves. From the village, you climb towards the hermitage by following the steps of the Chemin de Croix (Way of the Cross). It offers a view of beautiful Celles, with its Romanesque church and pretty streets. The walk follows the crest line before going down again into the vale, at the foot of the castle. The itinerary then reaches the hamlet of Boisseilles before taking a limestone path leading back to this charming village. It's lovely to stroll amid the walls of the limestone houses that are typical of the area and enjoy their scented flower-covered façades.

"Take a break from the car to enjoy Celles, one of Wallonia's prettiest villages."





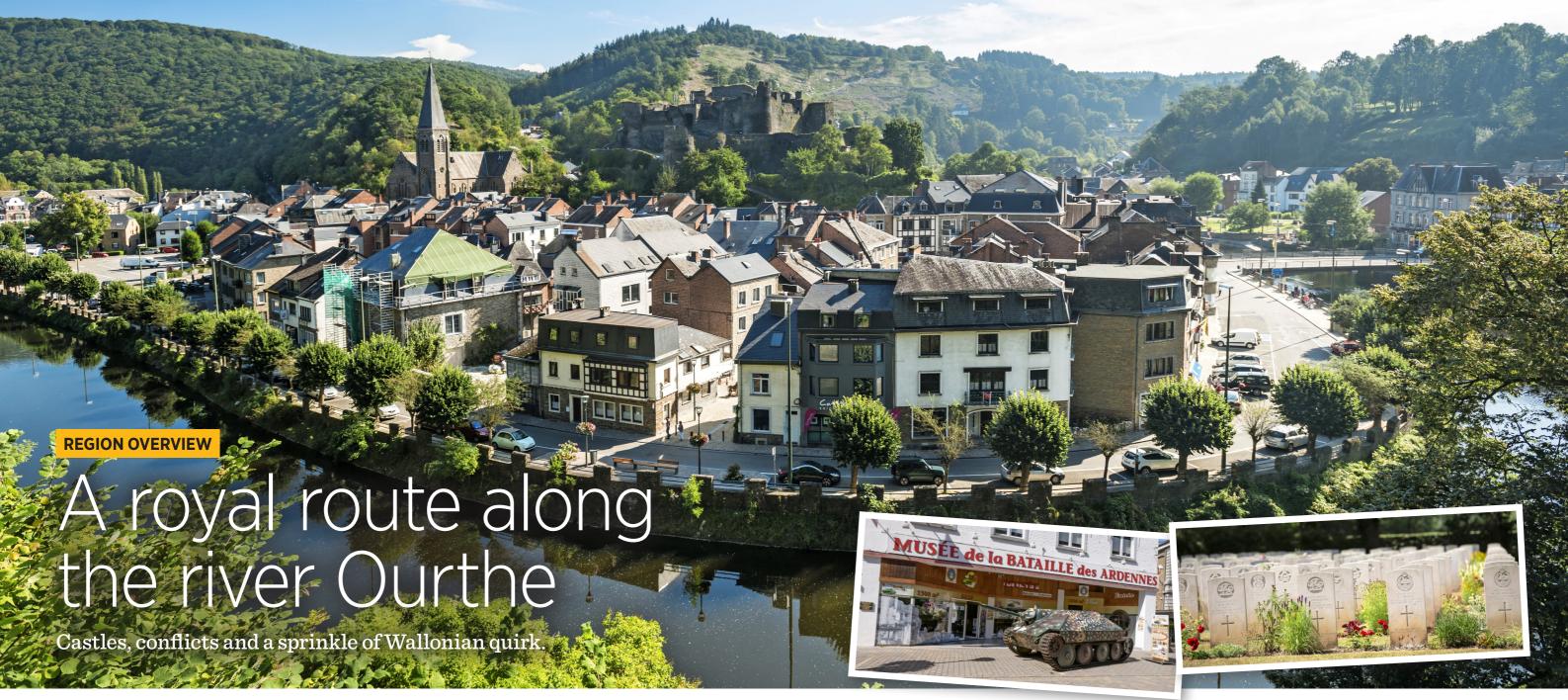
Domaine des Grottes de Han (Caves of Han)

It's a little off the castle trail but on a rainy day you could go off piste to see this spectacular light and sound show 'Origin' in the ancient Caves of Han. The special sounds and light techniques transform the space into a kind of subterranean nightclub (minus stilettos) to recreate the story of past times. Visiting these magnificent chambers formed over millions of years is like taking a journey to the centre of the earth. The strangely formed cave walls are a reminder of the tropical ocean of creatures that once swam through these vast spaces. The caves have fascinated since time began, first by prehistoric tribes for shelter and now as a wondrous tourism attraction that has earned it 3 green Michelin stars.









ROM LA ROCHE-EN-ARDENNE via
Hotton to Harzé, this region has known
violence and bloodshed in more than one
era, the most recent conflict being the
Battle of the Bulge. In the Ardennes,
several fortresses were erected along the Ourthe
Valley, some ending in tragedy, whilst others
assumed the role of elegant, manorial residences.
A wealth of military cemeteries and memorial sites
can also be found along this route. These can all
be done on foot or by car. And of course Wallonia
wouldn't be Wallonia without a few quirks, so don't
miss the local beer from gnomes – (yes really).

Château de la Roche-en-Ardenne

Starting from this charming little Ardennes' town with its fortified castle blending into the landscape you'll recognise a picture postcard image of the Ardenne. A castle has stood in this spot since the 12th century on the ruins of a Roman camp when Henry the Blind Count of Namur built one to protect the passage of goods transiting on the English Wool route to Lombardy. It has since taken

on many guises. At some point it fell to ruin and was even used as a stone quarry. When the railway arrived in La Roche, the ruins presented an alluring tourist attraction. Miraculously, they survived the destruction of the town, which was 90% destroyed during WWII in the terrible winter of 1944-1945. If you fancy a stop off, a tour takes you back to how it was back in the day. Highlights include falconry demonstrations, reenactments, medieval fairs and feasts.

Battle of the Ardennes Museum – lest we forget

Before setting off you, explore this fascinating museum. Privately run, it's the brainchild of Michel Bouillon and his son Gilles. What started

THIS CHARMING

La Roche-en-Ardenne boasts a fortified castle hosting tours and events.

WBT - DOMINIK KETZ

Hotton Military Cemetery Halfway along the route lies (CWG

'Enigma' cypher machines...

Halfway along the route lies (CWGC) Hotton War Cemetery. Most of the Commonwealth troops who died in the battle of the Ardennes are buried here. It sits 5km north-east of Marche-en-Famenne on the N86. The cemetery is close to the western limit of the German offensive of December 1944 – 666 men are resting there: 340 foot soldiers and 325 airmen. The site is meticulously maintained with

off as a modest hobby collecting artefacts relating

to the battle, after the war that just grew and grew;

objects that in 1993 they decided to open a museum.

This has grown dramatically so that it now covers

The dioramas and showcases display more than

100 mannequins of soldiers donning equipment

weapons room where some 90 rifles, pistols and

revolvers are displayed, as well as one of famous

in the end, the two men accumulated so many

1,500 square metres spread over three floors.

and weapons, as well as uniforms donated by

veterans who fought in the battle. Visit the

colourful flower arrangements between graves and an abundance of bees and butterflies in summer months. Slightly removed from the others lies the grave of Jimmy Short, who was the principal Hotton Gardener for many years. He asked to be buried alongside the warriors whose graves he attended.

Château de Harzé - the giant of stone

Final stop but what a finale. A presence established on a hillock. This manorial residence dominates the little village of Harzé. The 17th-century main building offers a stone façade, interspersed with high windows where the rooms of the castle turned hotel are located. If you are staying as a guest, you can immerse yourself in the architecture and culture of the Renaissance period. The superb façade of the courtyard, considerably pierced with bay windows, opens on the ground level onto a typically Renaissance gallery with Tuscan order columns... A stone bridge crossing the old moats leads to a large farmyard surrounded by buildings and towers which house the Milling and Baking Museum.

LEST WE

The region's wartime history is evident from museums filled with artefacts to well-kept cemeteries.

ABOVE LEFT: WBT - K. FOUCART

"Wallonia wouldn't be Wallonia without a few quirks - don't miss the beer from gnomes."

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The Iull of the lake

Peace and serenity on the banks of Nisramont: a union with wild nature.

Distance: 14.7km

F YOU REALLY want to immerse yourself in wild nature then Lake Nisramont is just the place. Fed by the river Ourthe it's a spiritual, magical and mysterious place. The perfect solution if you're searching for a little peace and solace. This exceptional hike follows the banks of Lake Nisramont. From there, you can see the confluent of the two Ourthe rivers and even glimpse, with a little luck, beavers, cormorants and kingfishers. It's a full immersion in nature, which at times veers away from the banks with soft undulating paths and stairways past rocks and woodland landscape. Nisramont Dam is also impressive, providing drinking water for the region. If you fancy making a day or two of it there are various water activities to enjoy here including kayaking, fishing, canoeing or simply kicking back for a lakeside picnic with a regional beer like Achouffe and some Ardennes cheese and hams.

ATRANQUIL SHORES

Lake Nisramont plays host to both wildlife and water activities.

TOP: WBT - OLIVIER BOURGI ABOVE: WBT - PÉRIPLÉTIES

STAY A WHILE FOR SOLACE

A hike around the lake's shore gives a chance to connect with a nature and enjoy spectacular

WBT - CHARLOTTE PRINCEN

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

Achouffe - beer from gnomes

Just a few kilometres from La roche-en-Ardenne, the Ardenne brewing world opens its doors to reveal a world of gnomes, elves and other mysterious creatures that often feature in the tales and legends of the local industry. It's no surprise to find that they feature on the labels of the different brews. Enjoy the various types of beer at the tastings and tours they offer including the 'McChouffe' - a dark beer similar in flavour to the Scottish-made tipple. Hence its nickname of 'Scotch of the Ardenne'.





REGION OVERVIEW

Small but perfectly formed

The charm of the Condroz: romance and simplicity.

HE CONDROZ REGION intersperses romanticism and simplicity, passing from villages with grey stone to serene nature and residential castles, all punctuated by a succession of ridges between fields and wooded areas. These itineraries treat you to the calm of the Condroz region - in car or on foot. En route, you'll find the mini jewel - Durbuy, reputed to be the smallest city in the world, tugging further at the heartstrings with its cobbled streets, quaint shops, charming eateries, parks and gardens. It's not all sweetness and light though. Be careful not to end up lost in Durbuy's 6km labyrinth or to lay down on the Devil's bed!

Château Modave

Standing high on a rocky crag overlooking the Hoyoux River the castle was first mentioned in 1233 as a small fortress defending the town of Huy. The current Château was built in the late 17th century by the Count of Marchin, with two distinctive towers, mansard roof and classical façade which transformed the fortress into an elegant country house. The castle is set at the heart of a 450-hectare nature reserve that can be viewed from the recently restored terrace overlooking the river.





Durbuy – smallest city in the world

Durbuy - otherwise known as 'the smallest city in the world' is a treat so make sure you explore well before you set off. Compact and bijoux, it was once an important hub for commerce and industry in medieval times, the town was elevated to the status of city by John I, Count of Luxembourg and King of Bohemia in 1331. These days this teeny city is abuzz with cultural and touristic activity. One of the reasons that the city has stayed small is its geological positioning between the river Ourthe and the anticline of the Falize rock. It means it gives easy access to riverside walks, forest hikes, mountain bikes tours, kayaking and rock climbing. Its idyllic location also attracts artists and artisans who create amazing works from wood, stone, glass and paper making exhibitions and interesting installations are a regular occurrence. And if that's not enough, Durbuy is widely reputed for its fantastic gastronomy – a few with Michelin ratings, all using exciting local produce including its famous Ozo cheese, St Amour Jams, Markloff beer and Grandhan tarts.

OLD TOWN CHARM

Durbuy's cobbled alleys are all part of its old-world charm.

WBT - DOMINIK KETZ

for its fine dining using the best in local produce.

WBT - DOMINIK KETZ

Lie down with the Devil- the Wéris megaliths

"The Condroz region intersperses

romanticism and simplicity -

villages to castles.

Continuing on, rows of megaliths in Wéris add a surreal touch to the landscape. They catch you by surprise and yet they have been there since around 3,000 years BC. This incredible alignment of dolmen and menhirs in Wéris are made of giant slabs of conglomerate stone (nature's own version of concrete) but date back to the Neolithic era. Well anchored to the ground they are an unusual sight in Belgium. The influence of the megalithic monuments on the local life in Wéris can be witnessed in the local folklore, legends and traditions that still live on to the present day. Since ancient times people have sought meanings for the existence of these stones are giants, dwarves, fairies, witches or even the devil himself a part of these mysteries. Many have nicknames due to their unusual shape, exciting the imagination of those who see them: Bayard's front step, the Devil's bed and so on.

ATHE SMALLEST CITY

Sandwiched between the river and rocks, Durbuy is a city buzzing with culture and temptation for tourists

WBT - DOMINIK KETZ

OVER THE HEDGE

The topiary gardens feature over 250 hedge-based sculptures.

WBT - BRUNO D ALIMONTE



in hedge form

If you are into a bit of topiary then this is the place for you. The largest of its kind in the smallest city Durbuy's topiary gardens have over 250 topiary sculptures from jockeys and horses to topless ladies and lifesize elephants. Nearby a 6km labyrinth also adds a touch of magic with themed characters meandering through the paths, delighting the children in the summer months. Take a 'leaf' out of our book, the kids will love it.

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Modave around the castle

Change pace and time zone in the peace of the Condroz.

Distance: 8km

ROM THE CASTLE, walk along this superb alley of beech trees, a natural extension of this gem of Walloon heritage. You then cross the wood that leads you to Petit-Modave, a village that has disappeared. Thanks to King Leopold II, reservoirs were ordered to be drilled in the surrounding area to provide Brussels with particularly healthy and pure water, and the hamlet was destroyed as a result. The walk follows the nature reserve via a beautiful path lacing through an alder undergrowth: the area is humid, the soil rich. At the top, you walk along a large farm, isolated from the world but right in the heart of its land.

At the bottom of the descent, 'Val Tibiémont' gives the impression of time standing still. This forgotten hamlet, surrounded by woods and bathed by the Hoyoux river, represents one of the most beautiful images of the Condroz region: nothing here seems to disturb the absolute calm. A feeling that you will undoubtedly find when visiting the Château de Modave.

CASTLE ON A ROCK

Vyle-et-Tharoul

Château Modave is set in an expansive nature reserve.

WBT - DOMINIK KETZ

TAKE A STROLL

...through treelined alleys in picturesque surroundings.

WBT - BRUNO D_ALIMONTE



Modave



OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

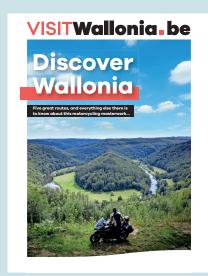
Adventure Valley Durbuy – the largest adventure park in Belgium

Another optional detour, in the exceptional green setting of the Ardenne, sits the Adventure Valley Durbuy. A natural theme park playground offering the perfect day out with friends and family. If you're not afraid of heights try the tree top trails via ferrata, click & climb, speleobox, extreme jumps, net trails and tubing slides. A day ticket allows you to try all the attractions of the park as many times as you want. Kayaking and a Tourist Train are also part of the thrill.



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Think motorcycling events, Spa-Francorchamps Racetrack and worldclass beers... Wallonia is one of motorcycling's best kept secrets. visitwallonia.be/bike



20 UNFORGETTABLE HIKING TRAILS

Castles, quirky places, fascinating heritage, breathtaking landscapes in fresh air and wide-open space... as many themes as itineraries. visitwallonia.be/hiking



CAR FREE STYLE

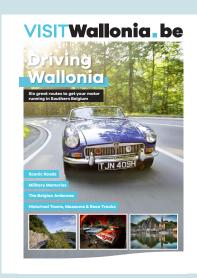
Short break getaways 100% zen, 0% car... Each itinerary begins and ends at a station. Between the two stopover stations, you connect on foot or by bike. visitwallonia.be/carfree





23 CHARMING **TOWNS & CITIES**

Discover our towns and cities. Each has its own identity, treasures, charms, curiosities... and all have unexpected surprises in store. visitwallonia.be/destinations

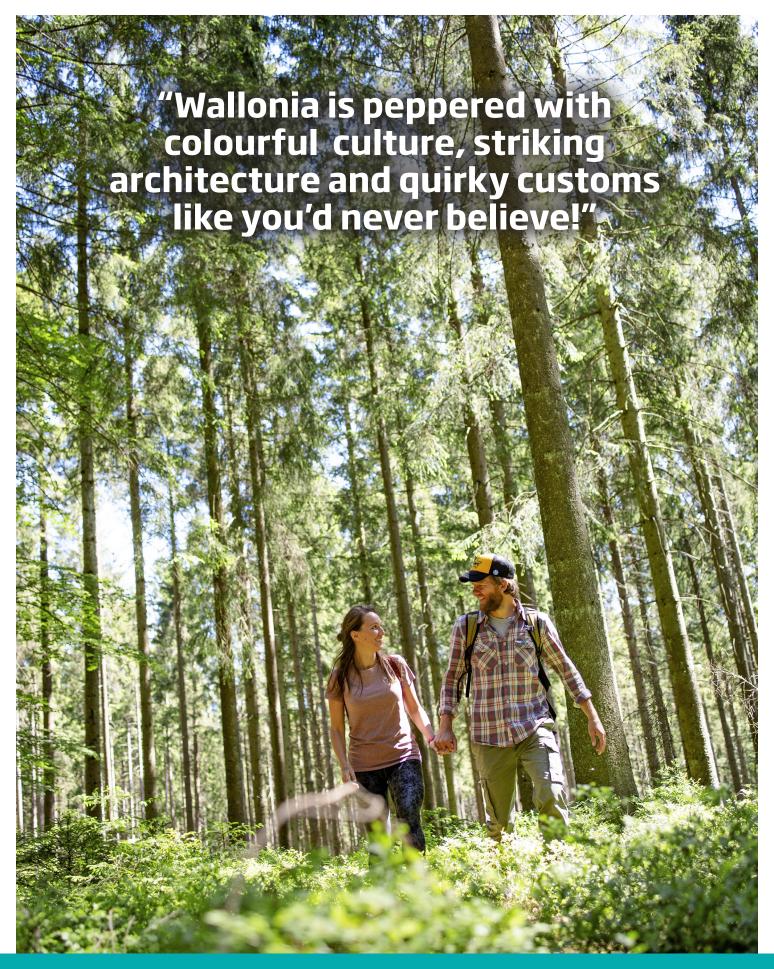


DRIVING IN WALLONIA

Cruise along scenic roads amidst the epic Ardennes, hiding endless surprises: military memories, historical towns and impressive museums. Our in-depth guide introduces you to it all.

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