

From the Meuse to the Lesse Valley

Fairytale Castles

Driving, walking and cycling routes



By car



© OPT - S. Wittenbol

Fairytale Castles from the Meuse to the Lesse Valley

Straight out of a storybook set off on the discovery of four fairytale castles. They dominate the valleys of the Lesse and the Meuse, among the most serene and romantic landscapes in the whole of Wallonia.



Lavaux-Sainte-Anne



Freÿr

Km 50



1

Château de Lavaux-Sainte-Anne

Erected between the 15th and 16th centuries, the *Château de Lavaux-Sainte-Anne* (castle) is one of the loveliest castles in Wallonia. Moats, round towers and loopholes echoing the Middle-Ages, harmoniously stand alongside the bulbous domed roofs, stringcourses and pilasters of the Renaissance. Built initially to watch over the border with the Duchy of Luxembourg, it became a manorial residence in the 17th century. Today, young and old can come and experience what it was like to live the life of a Lord. Its three museums allow you to explore the castle, from the cellars to the keep, but also the rural activities and nature which preside over the daily life of the Famenne region. An educational trail allows you to discover the natural environment of wetlands, the typical landscape of the region.

Open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 7 days a week from 1/06 to 30/09 and throughout the school holidays. Only from Wednesday to Sunday the rest of the year.

Rue du Château, 8
5580 Lavaux-Sainte-Anne
+32(0)84 38 83 62
www.chateau-lavaux.com



© WBT - P. Pauwelyn

2

Château de Vêves

Proud of its ideal proportions, Vêves, founded by "Pépin de Herstal" in the 7th century, is a superb example of a fortified castle. When you walk inside the symmetrical towers and on its parapet walk, you can almost hear the clinking armour of the watch soldiers. For eight centuries, the "Liedekerke-Beaufort" line has watched over Vêves, a longevity which is rare in history and absolutely adds to its magic. Extensively restored in 1969, the medieval era is still very present in its walls with its sumptuous hall of arms and large kitchen.

April-October: open on weekends and public holidays;
mid-July - end of August, Easter and All Saints
holidays: open every day. 10 am-5pm (last visit).

Rue de Furfooz, 3
5561 Celles
+32(0)82 66 63 95
www.chateau-veves.be



© WBT - J. Merfort

Dinant - Daughter of the River Meuse

Daughter of the River Meuse like Liège, Dinant linked its destiny with this princely city for better or for worse... In the Middle-Ages, Dinant was immensely prosperous and an annual trade fair was organised here, markets were established, brass was hammered... This prosperity came to an abrupt end in 1466: "Charles the Bold", the eternal enemy of Liège and hence Dinant, wreaked bloody havoc on the latter. The town never got over it. But even if the medieval town has disappeared, the chancel and the transept of *Collégiale Notre-Dame* (Collegiate Church) still bear witness to Dinant's heyday. The 12th - century baptistery is evidence of the stonemasons' admirable work of the time.



© WBT - S. Wittenbergh

3

Citadelle de Dinant

Nowadays, there are no remains of the fortified castled erected here in the 12th century by the Prince-Bishop of Liège. The Citadelle - designed by Vauban, stands in its place. A tour of it immerses the visitor in military history, when our country was still dominated by Holland and the House of Orange, including the sacking of the town by "Charles the Bold" to the Second World War. This journey through time has many surprises in store for you... Finally, the view at the top is worth the detour alone.

Open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 7 days a week from 1/04 to 30/09. From 10 a.m. to 5.30 p.m., from 1/10 to 15/11. Open daily (except Fridays) from 10 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., from 15/11 to 30/03. Open on weekends and during school holidays in January.

Chemin de la Citadelle, 1
5500 Dinant
+32(0)82 22 36 70
www.citadellededinant.be



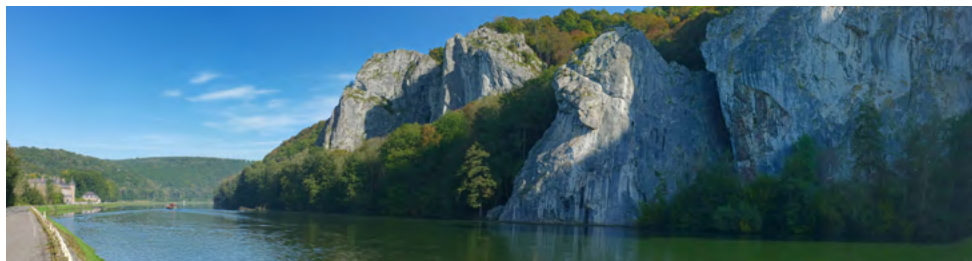
© WBT - P. Pauquay

Navigation on the River Meuse

In the Middle Ages, the River Meuse was the cheapest and safest means of transport compared to tracks in the Ardennes. The riches of Mosan towns were exported throughout the world and were transited on flat-bottomed boats (the part of the boat that was submerged glided without much resistance on the water). Their form made it possible to run aground and to be able to do without quays and piers. Carried by the current, they travelled more than 100 km a day.



© WBT - P. Pauquay



4

Château de Freÿr

While the majority of the Meuse Valley's fortified castles stood on rocky spurs, the *Château de Freÿr* (Castle), on the banks of the River Meuse, protected the ford which acted as a border between the Prince-Bishopric of Liège and the County of Namur: two states that were consistently quarrelling. It was destroyed in the 16th century by the French. In the 16th and 17th centuries, tired of these feudal wars, the lords yearned for the sweet dream of "living nobly". The architecture of the fortresses changed... Windows opened, ornamental gardens replaced the defensive walls. Freÿr was no exception to the rule – it was rebuilt into a residential house in 1571. On the banks of the River Meuse, the Renaissance-style *Château de Freÿr* has been illuminating the valley for more than 400 years. Its garden is an ode to the French formal garden. Its rigour breaks with the rugged landscape of the surrounding area. During the summer months, the orange trees which are more than 250 years old, spill over from the orange grove and take pride of place along the paths of the landscaped garden. Visiting the *Château de Freÿr* is an absolute pleasure for the senses.

From 1/04 to 30/06 and from 1/09 to 15/11, on weekends from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. From 1/07 to 31/08, daily except Monday, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Freÿr, 12 - 5540 Hastière

+32(0)82 22 22 00 • www.Freÿr.be



The Village of Celles

In the past, a seigneurie dependant on the Principality of Liège, "Celles" has retained the charm of its bygone days and is one of the most beautiful villages in Wallonia. This charming little village with buildings of blueish limestones and natural slate harbours that appeal to the curious and keen eye (original locks, ornaments, etc). The *Collégiale Saint-Hadelin* (Collegiate Church) is one of the most beautiful representations of Mosan architecture and seems to have tele-transported itself straight out of the Middle Ages. It has reached our era intact and is a real gem of Romanesque architecture.

On foot



© wapiature.be - Coralie Caréon

Around the *Château de Vêves*

From **Celles**, it's possible to reach the **Château de Vêves** on foot by following a delightful walk, waymarked with a red triangle. From the village, you climb straight away towards the hermitage by following the steps of the "Chemin de Croix". It offers a view of Celles, ranked one of the "**Plus Beaux Villages de Wallonie**" (The Most Beautiful Villages of Wallonia).

The walk follows the crest line before going down again into the vale, at the foot of the castle. The itinerary then reaches **Boisseilles** before taking a path covered with limestone leading to **Celles**.

Upon arriving at the village, it is lovely to stroll amid the walls of the limestone houses and their façades covered in flowers.



© WBT - Bruno D'Almonet



© WBT - Hike Up/Railtrip Travel

Starting point

From the Rue de la Cachette, 5561 Celles, steps lead to the Hermitage.

Car Park

In the centre of Celles village.

Km 6,5



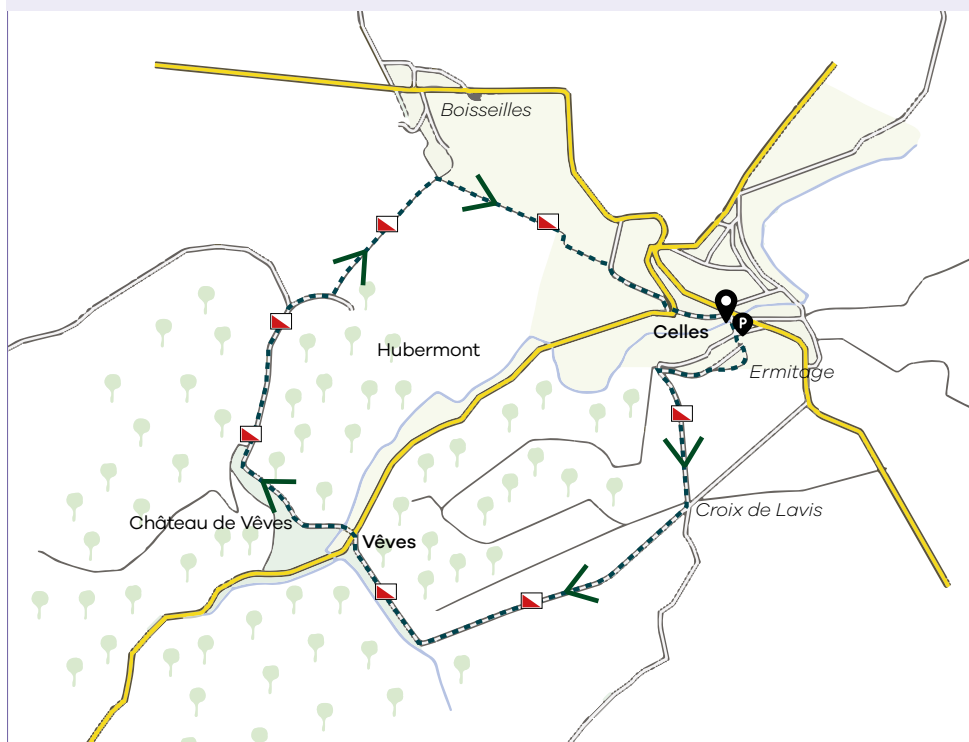
2H

MARKINGS

Red triangle



DIFFICULTY



View and download the route on [visitwallonia.be](https://www.visitwallonia.be)

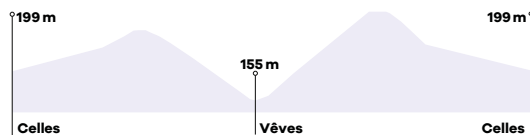
Tip

The walk runs alongside the *Château de Vêves*, which is a must-see.

Difficulty

Little difficulty with this scenic walk, except the hill at the *Château de Vêves*.

Gradient gain



By bike



Around *Château de Lavaux-Sainte-Anne* (Castle)

Starting at **Han-sur-Lesse**, a lovely route crosses the village of **Eprave's** plain which is encircled by hills shaped by the River Lesse. You then join the RAVeL network (safe cycling path) where you can enjoy a stop at "Li P'tit Bambou" offering refreshing drinks in a lush setting.

At **Wanlin**, leave the RAVeL tracks to go up towards the crests. A little before the main road (la Nationale), the road goes to the left to join the village of **Lavaux-Sainte-Anne**. At the top of the hill, turn right to approach the castle from the west. In the village, a small road on the left leads to the magnificent countryside of the Caletienne, which is punctuated here and there by charming knolls – hills that have become nature reserves.

In the descent to **Lessive** and **Éprave**, the scents of pine perfume the winding road.



Starting point

Église de Han-sur-Lesse
Place Théo Lannoy,
5580 Han-sur-Lesse.

Car Park

Nombreux parkings au centre de Han-sur-Lesse au niveau du terrain de football.

Km

37

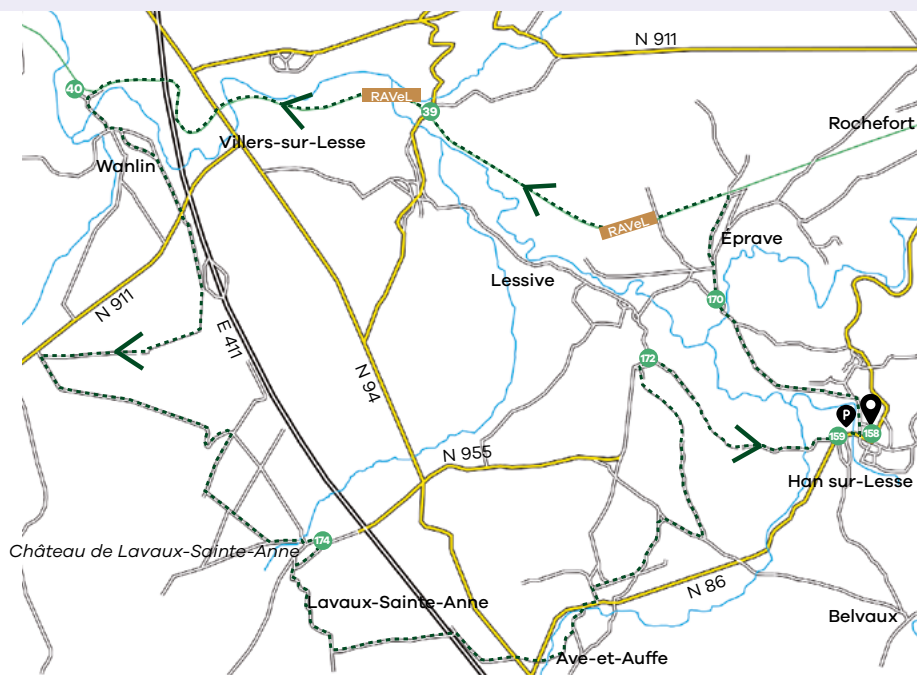


2H30



HYBRID BIKE

DIFFICULTY



View and download the route on visitwallonia.be

Type of Route

RAVeL and country roads. Short passages on stony tracks.

Markings

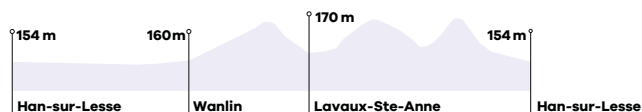
follow the points-noeuds (intersecting routes) 158, 170, 39, 40, 174, 173, 172, 159 and 158.

Note the temporary absence of markings between the points 40 - 174 and 174 - 173.


Difficulty


There is a hill to reach the crests of the Focant Plain. The track on top of Ave-et-Auffe village is stony.

Gradient gain



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The Ultimate Belgian Getaway

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