



Flanders
State of the Art

Micro-adventures in the Hageland

EXPERIENCE NATURE IN FLANDERS

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VISITFLANDERS



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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

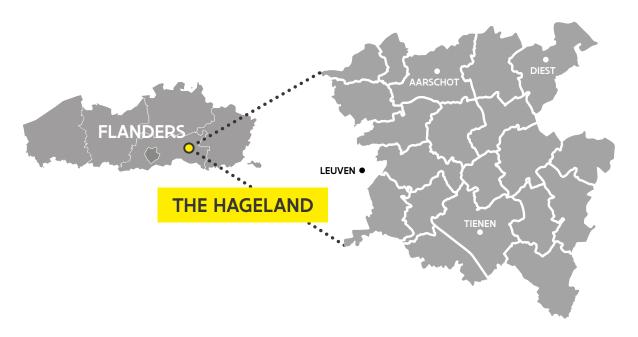
Wander through the historic streets of Aarschot and discover the charm of this city. Then hop on your bike and explore the green heart of the Hageland.

• 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 <u>here</u>.

__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:



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.



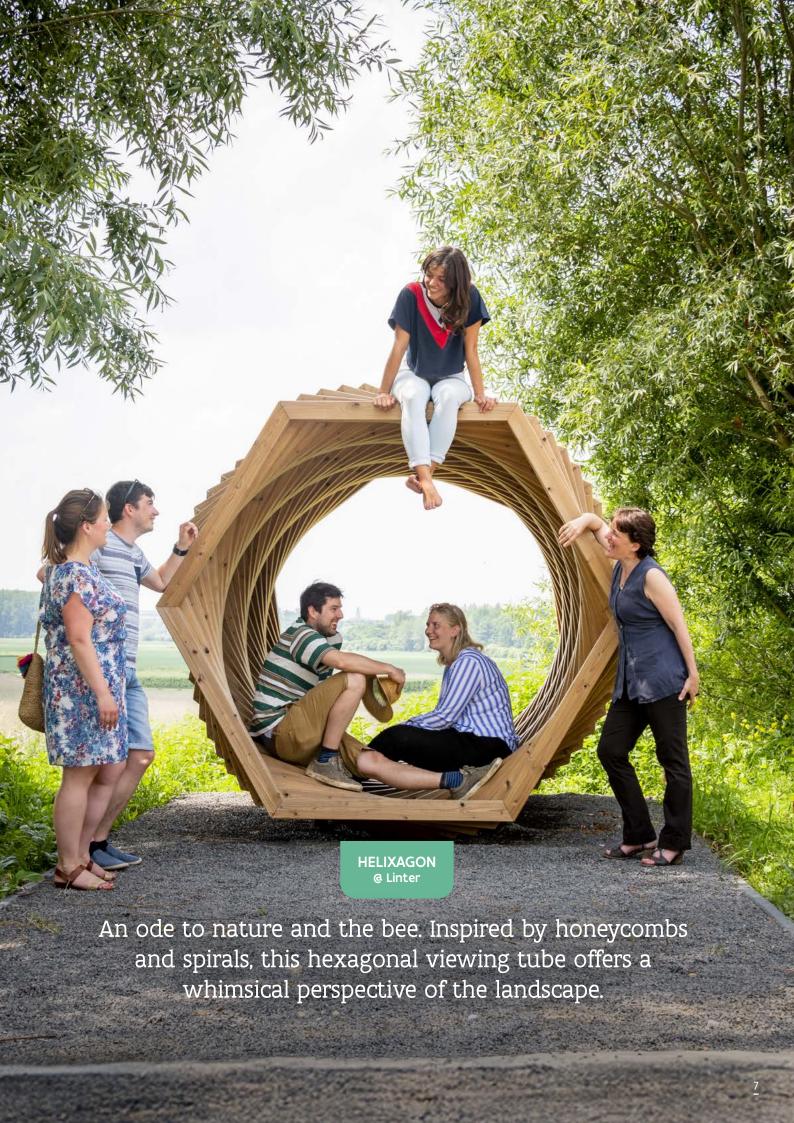
These hexagonal beams, inspired by the structure of a beehive, create a cosy seating area overlooking the blossoms. A perfect place to unwind and to enjoy the nature.

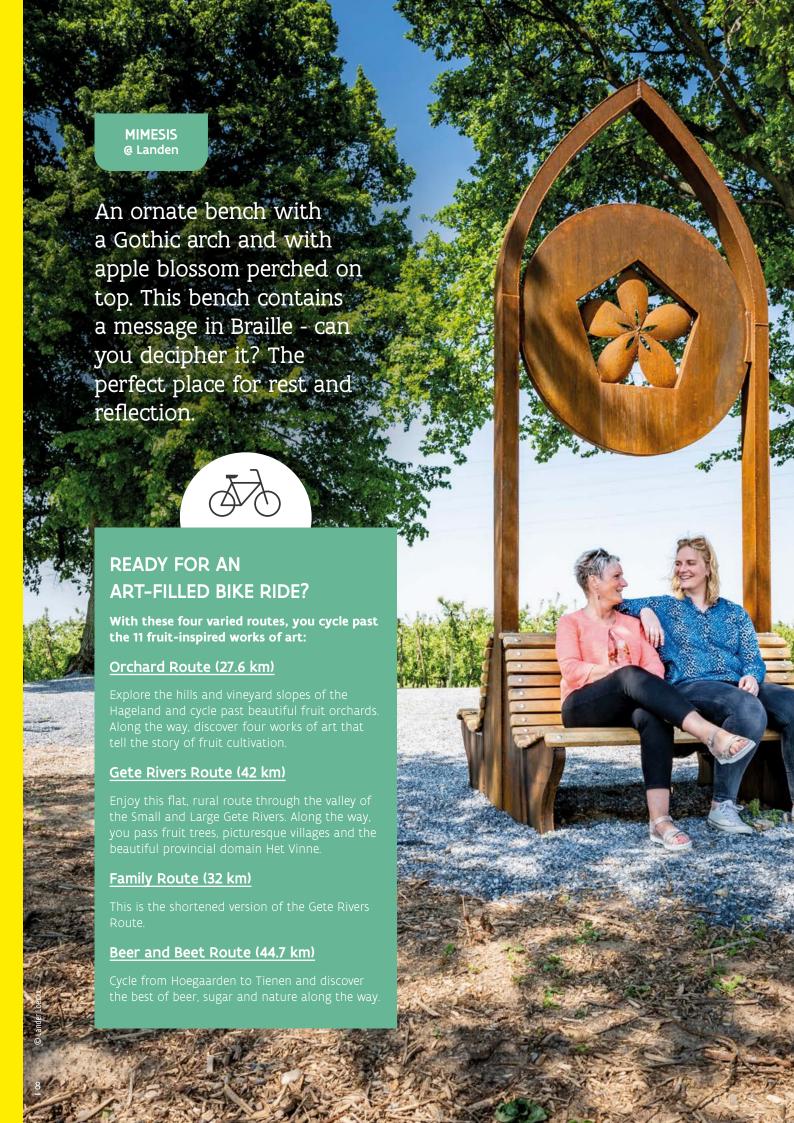


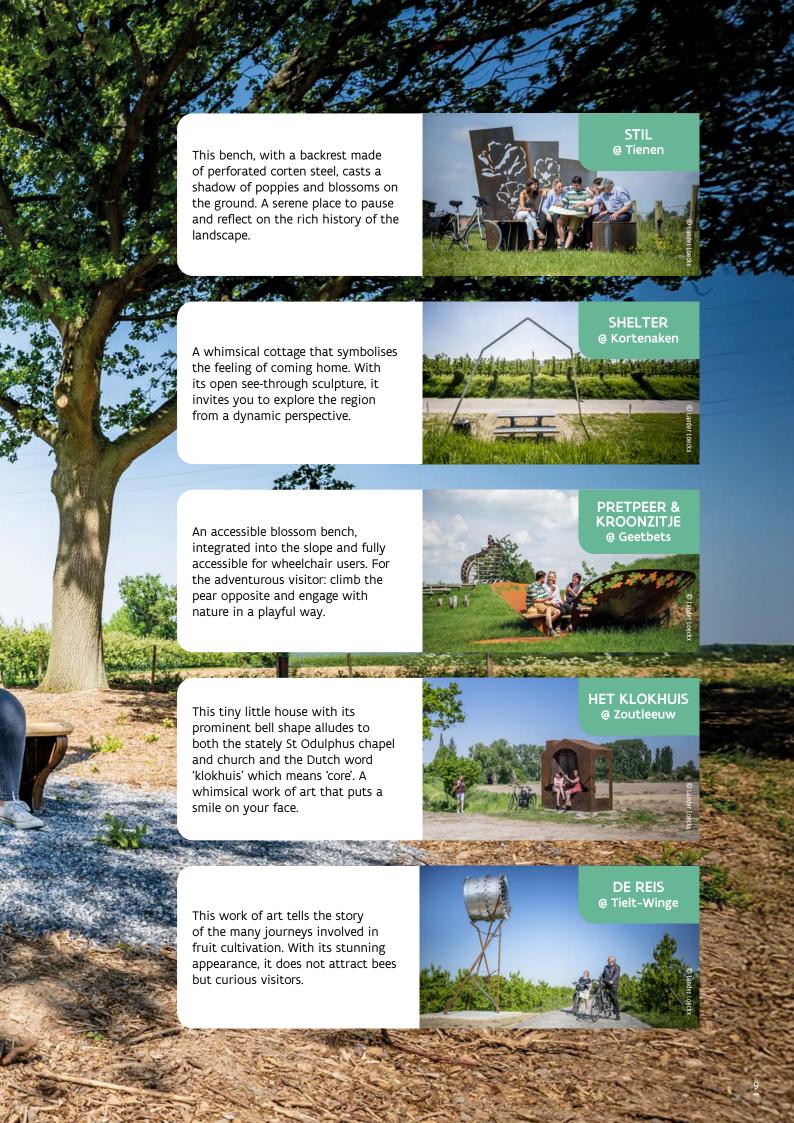
Sit down on a whimsical bench shaped like a pear and enjoy the breathtaking view of the blossoms. For a moment, this sculpture invites you to become the core of the pear!



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.







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:



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



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



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



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



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**.





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 woodburning 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.



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.

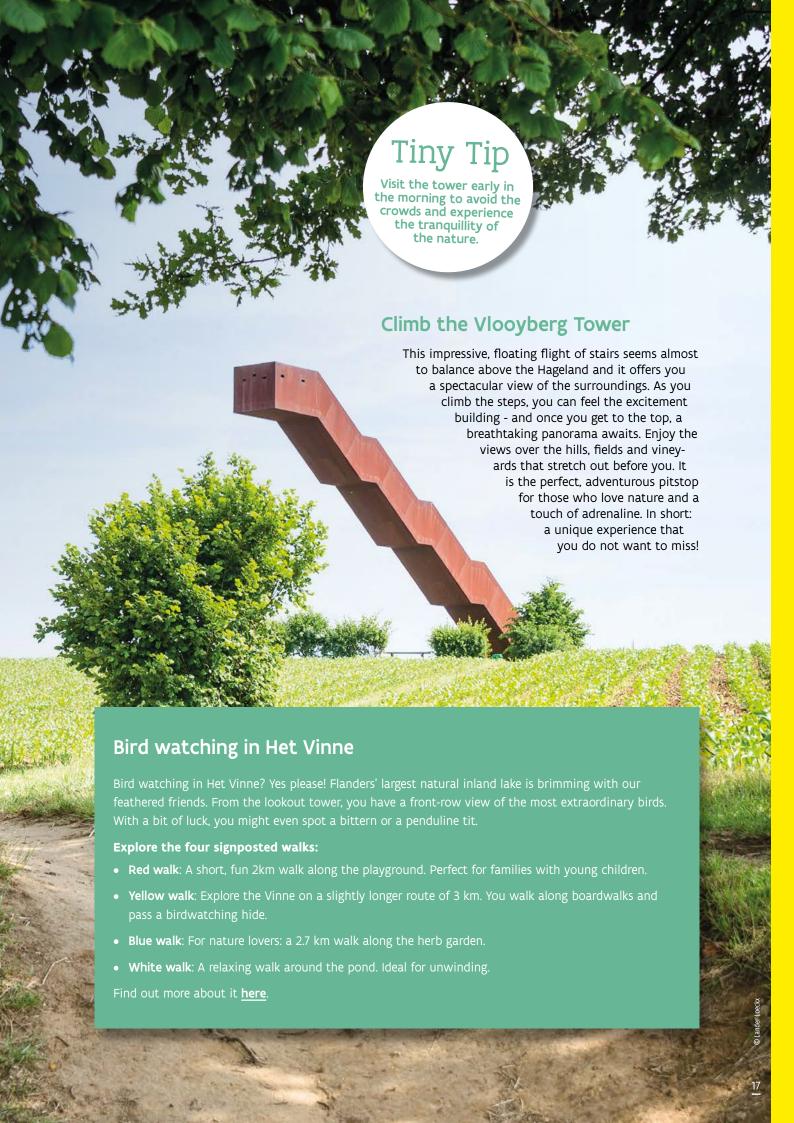
WIJNGAARDBERG WALK (7.3 KM)

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.









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: DiestView 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: LeuvenView the route here

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



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: AssentView 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 <u>here</u>

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 <u>here</u>

Everyone's a tourist





COLOPHON

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LEGAL DEPOSIT

D/2024/5635/58

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