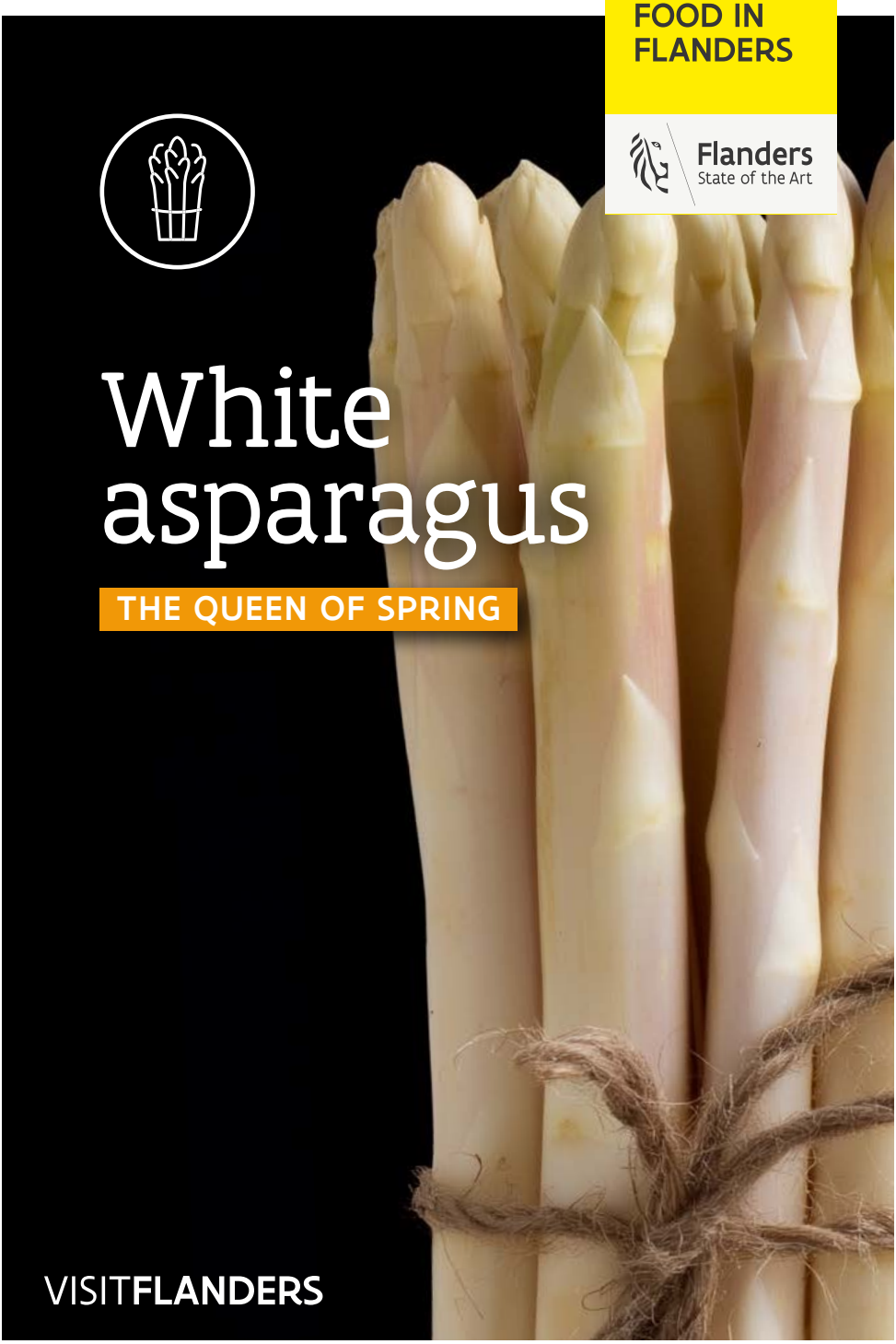
FOOD IN FLANDERS

Flanders
State of the Art

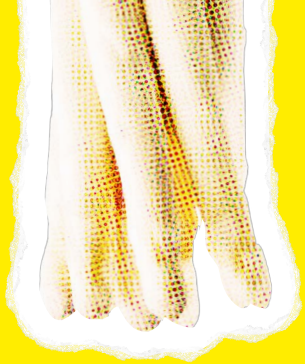
White asparagus

THE QUEEN OF SPRING



VISITFLANDERS





“

a truly world-class delicacy

A simple and sublime highlight of spring

Something extraordinary grows in Flanders, carefully hidden in the dark soil. White asparagus is a truly world-class delicacy. Every spring, we once again fall under the spell of this gem of Flemish cuisine.

This is all thanks to the precision and dedication of the growers. They cultivate their 'white gold' deep in the ground, covered with soil. The asparagus is carefully harvested as soon as it pokes its head above the ground.

Because it does not come into contact with sunlight, it retains its pristine colour, velvety texture and delicate flavour.

The asparagus season runs from April to June and is always a highlight of the Flemish culinary year. During this period, countless restaurants throughout Flanders serve a true classic: Flemish-style asparagus. This is a delicious dish of steamed or boiled white asparagus with melted butter, a soft-boiled egg and fresh parsley.

Simply sensational.



Fertile soil in Mechelen and Limburg

Mechelen was Flanders' unofficial asparagus capital for many years. The white gold was cultivated on a large scale in and around the city. Limburg also deserves a mention here. Especially in the north of the province, the sandy soil with deeper layers of gravel is perfectly suited to cultivation.

Both regions are immensely proud of their asparagus, but they also have a great deal more to offer. Mechelen is a historic, child-friendly city brimming with heritage. Discover highlights such as St Rumbold's Cathedral, the Burgundian city palace Hof van Busleyden, the cosy streets, charming little churches and beautiful Baroque façades along the banks of the river Dyle.

Limburg is also quite a special place. This charming province guarantees hours of walking and cycling pleasure through impressive nature parks or the fruit-growing region of Haspengouw. Go on an expedition through the region's mining past, explore our history, heritage, art, charming towns and much more.

© Eva Beeusaert

The asparagus route

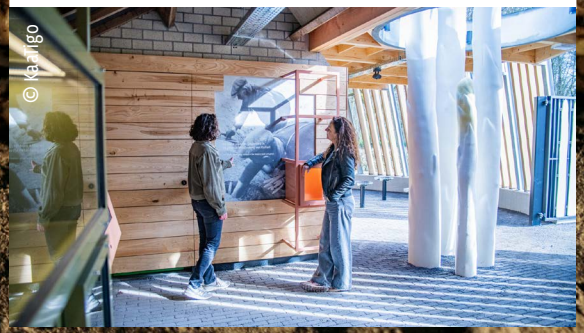
Have we mentioned how fantastic Limburg is for cycling? The town of Kinrooi combines a cycling adventure with our delicious white gold. This is where you can follow the asparagus route, a beautiful 41-kilometre tour past interesting sights and local growers.

www.aspergesuitkinrooi.be

Kalfort, birthplace of white asparagus

Our white asparagus was first sown in Kalfort, a hamlet in the province of Antwerp, back in 1885. The Asparagus Point celebrates this story. White asparagus is the star of the show at this unique experience centre, where you'll discover the history, cultivation and culinary possibilities of this remarkable vegetable. The interactive exhibition, workshops and events offer a great introduction for visitors of all ages.

www.aspergepunt.be/en


© Kanigo

HOEVE 'T BOMMESAARKE, KINROOI

Leo, Carine and their son Dries share the story of white asparagus in full detail. Your guided tour begins with a cup of coffee and ends with two delicious snacks. Guided tours in Dutch, for groups of 10 to 60 people.

Kessenicherweg 27, 3640 Geistingen (Kinrooi), T +32 494 87 17 91
www.hoevebommesaarke.be
carinesnijkers@telenet.be

JOHAN DRIESSENS, KINROOI

Johan welcomes guests with coffee and a slice of traditional vlaai, a sweet pastry tart and Limburg speciality. After an introductory film, you'll head out to the field together. This is followed by a cooking demonstration and a few tasty snacks. Guided tours in Dutch, for groups of 10 to 60 people. Bookings can be made via the website.

Haeldersheidestraat 6, 3640 Molenbeersel (Kinrooi), T +32 495 30 89 01
www.visitkinrooi.com/en/home

ASPERGEHOEVE LAVRIJSEN, HERK-DE-STAD

At one of the largest asparagus farms in Flanders, a film tells the story of asparagus cultivation and the origins of the business. After that, you can roll up your sleeves help out in the field. The visit ends with a bowl of tasty asparagus soup and a goodie bag. Guided tours in Dutch, for groups of 10 to 50 people.

Herkkantstraat 47, 3540 Herk-de-Stad, T +32 495 64 00 73
www.aspergehoevelavrijsen.be
info@aspergehoevelavrijsen.be



Experience our **white asparagus**

Flanders is justifiably proud of its white asparagus. Specialist growers happily share their love for their product with the world. You'll receive a particularly warm welcome during the asparagus season.

© Eva Beeusaert

KLEINE HAART, HAMONT-ACHEL

This family farm in the north of Limburg is located close to the Dutch border. The Beliën-Sevens family enjoys hosting educational workshops and guided tours, which are followed by a tasting of delicious asparagus soup and an asparagus croquette.

Kleine Haart 31 A, 3930 Hamont-Achel, T +32 11 44 87 27
www.aspergeboerderij.be

ASPERGES HERTENVELD, BILZEN

Koen, Sofie and their children warmly welcome visitors to their 7-hectare asparagus fields. They will tell you all there is to know about the asparagus season. After a tour of the fields and sorting area, you can enjoy a small bowl of asparagus soup and a glass of wine. Guided tours in Dutch for groups of 20 to 25 people.

Hertenweg 5, 3740 Bilzen, T +32 478 34 22 62
www.aspergeshertenveld.be
koendebusschop@gmail.com

BELMANS-LAMBRECHTS, BERLAAR

Jos and Frieda have been in the trade for decades: first for 25 years as tomato growers, and then expanding into asparagus cultivation in 2010. They do not host large groups, but individual visitors are always welcome to learn more about this wonderful product.

Brandestraat 33, 2590 Berlaar, T +32 477 32 63 78
www.aspergesvanbijons.be
info@aspergesvanbijons.be

DE POLKENHOEVE, STEKENE

A third-generation asparagus farmer, Jurgen tells the story of this white gold and takes everyone out to the field to harvest their own asparagus. This is followed by a delicious bowl of asparagus soup. The adjoining vegetable shop and cooking workshops are a nice addition. Guided tours in Dutch for 10 or more people.

Polken 95, 9190 Stekene, T +32 485 51 07 26
www.depolkenhoeve.be
info@depolkenhoeve.be

GOOSSENS - MALDEREN, BUGGENHOUT

At this family business, which has been going for over 35 years, Dominiek and Vincent tell you all about their wonderful product, the sandy loam soil and the different varieties of asparagus. You'll get to see all this for yourself in the fields and the processing areas. Guided tours in Dutch for up to 30 people.

Kruisheide 4/2, 1840 Buggenhout (Londerzeel), T +32 476 41 43 67
www.goossensmalderen.be
info@goossensmalderen.be

'T GROM VEGETABLE MUSEUM

't Grom is the official museum of the Groentestreek (the vegetable region). This region has always had fertile soil, nourished by the Grote Nete, Kleine Nete, Dyle, Demer and Rupel rivers. This river landscape's clay and loam soils make it perfectly suited for horticulture. The open-air museum shows you all that richness, with special attention to traditional craftsmanship and regional growers' varieties.

Midzelen 25a, Sint-Katelijne-Waver
www.tgrom.be



© Eva Beeusaert

White or green?

White asparagus is a speciality in Flanders. The rest of the world is much more familiar with the green variety of this vegetable. But what exactly is the difference?

In fact, both varieties are the same vegetable and come from the same plant. The difference lies in the cultivation. White asparagus grows underground in raised asparagus beds. This is how it retains its ivory colour and subtle flavour.

Green asparagus, on the other hand, is grown above ground. It is exposed to natural sunlight, which gives it its characteristic fresh green colour and a more pronounced flavour. Green asparagus is also often slightly smaller and thinner and has a more tender skin than the regal white variety.

© Eva Beeusaert

Flemish-style **asparagus**



In spring, white asparagus is the star of the fields. Both in restaurants and at home, we savour Flemish-style asparagus.

This method of preparation is as simple as it is brilliant. The asparagus is cooked al dente in lightly salted water, possibly with a squeeze of lemon juice added to maintain its pristine white colour. Once on the plate, it is sprinkled with crumbled hard-boiled egg and parsley. All this is then lavishly drizzled with melted butter to complement the creaminess of the asparagus.



TIP

For those who want an extra kick of flavour, a handful of freshly peeled North Sea grey shrimp takes this culinary delight to the next level.



From April to June, white asparagus is the star attraction at many restaurants in Flanders. The following are some of the very best places to enjoy it according to Gault&Millau.

West Flanders

Bistro Refter

The brainchild of top chef Geert Van Hecke, whose Michelin-starred De Karmeliet reached great heights. This contemporary bistro serves traditional, generous and refined dishes, with asparagus dishes adding a flavourful culinary sensation from April onwards.

GAULT&MILLAU SCORE
14 out of 20

Bruges **www.bistrorefter.be/en**

La Rigue

Restaurant of Hotel La Réserve. A classic menu full of timeless dishes, such as spit-roasted cockerel and vol-au-vent with veal sweetbreads. In spring, their Flemish-style asparagus is not to be missed.

GAULT&MILLAU SCORE
14.5 out of 20

Knokke-Heist **www.la-reserve.be/en/la-rigue**

East Flanders

De Savoye

An established name that charts its own course, independent of trends or hype. The varied menu starts from the product: fresh scallops, fresh fish and seasonal produce, such as white asparagus or hop shoots, are popular here.

GAULT&MILLAU SCORE
14 out of 20

Knokke-Heist **www.desavoye.be**

Tafeltje Rond

Atmospheric brasserie serving natural, classic cuisine. Minimal ingredients provide maximum flavour and allure. Their asparagus dishes have a subtle, personal twist.

GAULT&MILLAU SCORE
14 out of 20

Beveren-Waas **www.tafeltjerond.be**

Kelderman

Highly regarded seafood restaurant with a love of local, seasonal produce. Chef Peter Aesaert's kitchen serves balanced, delicious combinations in a knowledgeable and welcoming atmosphere.

GAULT&MILLAU SCORE
15.5 out of 20

Aalst **www.visrestaurant-kelderman.be**

Bacchus

Trendy, tranquil restaurant set amongst greenery and named after the Greek god of wine. During the season, the refined kitchen happily showcases its outstanding Flemish-style asparagus.

GAULT&MILLAU SCORE
13.5 out of 20

Aalter **www.restaurantbacchus.be**

Antwerp

De Eenhoorn

GAULT&MILLAU SCORE 13.5 out of 20

An established name on the border of East Flanders and Antwerp. De Eenhoorn has been serving Flemish classics for over 30 years. Besides Flemish-style asparagus, their home-made shrimp croquettes are also a highlight.

Kruibeke **www.deeenhoorn.be**

De Ceder

GAULT&MILLAU SCORE 14 out of 20

A fixture in Kruibeke, between Antwerp and Ghent, for well over 50 years. Featuring an intimate dining room, friendly service and delicious cuisine. Asparagus – both white and green – is a house speciality.

Kruibeke **www.restaurantdeceder.be/en**

Bistrot du Nord

GAULT&MILLAU SCORE 15.5 out of 20

Elegant bistro in the north of Antwerp. Simplicity, beauty and strength are the key words here. Their culinary journey of discovery also includes Flemish-style asparagus.

Antwerp **www.bistrotdunord.be/en**

Ciro's

GAULT&MILLAU SCORE 13.5 out of 20

So authentic that it has become hip again. This iconic brasserie in Antwerp serves classic yet confident cuisine. Pure craftsmanship.

Antwerp **www.ciros.be**

Limburg

InVINcible

GAULT&MILLAU SCORE 14.5 out of 20

Successfully serving classic cuisine for more than 20 years, unconcerned with passing trends. Specialised in spit-roasted and grilled dishes. Seasonal classics such as white asparagus are in expert hands here.

Antwerp **www.invincible.be**

Aux Vieux Port

GAULT&MILLAU SCORE 14.5 out of 20

Atmospheric bistro in Antwerp's old port district. Relax in its characterful interior and enjoy flavourful classics and an impressive wine list. When in season, Flemish-style asparagus is a highlight.

Antwerp **www.restaurantauvieuxport.be**

La Rosa

GAULT&MILLAU SCORE 14 out of 20

Charming restaurant in a former roadside café in Antwerp. Here you can taste classic yet original cuisine, with a strong focus on top-quality, seasonal local produce.

Antwerp **www.larosa.be**

The Thrill

GAULT&MILLAU SCORE 14 out of 20

An elegant restaurant with a grill hearth as its nerve centre. It is not only die-hard meat lovers who will be in for a treat here. The kitchen also focuses just as much on local seasonal produce.

Genk **www.thethrill.be**

De Goei Goesting

GAULT&MILLAU SCORE
12 out of 20

Pure and versatile cuisine in a cosy Limburg setting. The menu ranges from lobster dishes and Italian cuisine to Asian dishes. The delicious white asparagus will transport you right back to Flanders.

Hasselt **www.degoeigoesting.be**

Aux Armes de Bruxelles

This restaurant has been an institution in the historic heart of Brussels for well over a century. Every spring, Flemish-style asparagus is a highlight of their traditional repertoire.

Brussels **www.auxarmesdebruxelles.com/en/home-2**

Terborght

GAULT&MILLAU SCORE
15.5 out of 20

Located south of the capital, Terborght serves the very best quality produce. Freshly peeled North Sea grey shrimp add an extra dash of refinement to their Flemish-style asparagus. The excellent wine list completes the experience.

Huizingen **www.terborght.be**

Le Canterbury

GAULT&MILLAU SCORE
12.5 out of 20

A well-established name in the capital, located by the Ixelles Ponds. It has been serving the very best versions of our culinary classics for 30 years. The steak tartare is legendary, the asparagus irresistible.

Brussels **www.lecanterbury.be/?lang=en**

Les Eleveurs

GAULT&MILLAU SCORE
14 out of 20

Seasonally-driven, top-tier bistronomy. In spring, white asparagus has a starring role; in autumn, the focus shifts to classic game dishes.

Halle **www.les-eleveurs.be**



© Visit Mechelen

‘So unique, so complex’

Peter Goossens is the godfather of gastronomy in Flanders. Hof van Cleve, his three-Michelin-star restaurant in the Flemish Ardennes, stood at the pinnacle of European cuisine for decades. Key ingredients to his success included unimaginable technical expertise, endless creativity and an enormous passion for local and seasonal produce. In winter, that means chicory; in spring, it means white asparagus.

‘In spring, I could eat asparagus every day. It is such a rewarding product. You can prepare it in countless ways, but nothing beats Flemish-style asparagus, with a crumbled egg and melted butter. I get quite enthusiastic about it. Good asparagus is juicy and crisp at the same time. And the flavour is almost impossible to describe, so unique and complex. Our asparagus is the most aromatic in the world.’



Peter is passionate about this wonderful product, and he is not alone. Flanders has a small army of enthusiastic culinary ambassadors. GOESTING is a colourful collection of chefs, chocolatiers, brewers, hostesses and culinary makers all united by a common goal: to share the hidden stories of our food culture.

DISCOVER OUR AMBASSADORS AT
WWW.VISITFLANDERS.COM/EN/GOESTING

FOOD IN FLANDERS

Flanders
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www.visitflanders.com/en

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