

CIRCUIT MECHELEN - LEUVEN

Time-honoured heritage & vital Dyle

For centuries, the River Dyle was the artery of Mechelen and Leuven. It was used by boats to transport goods from all over Europe. Merchants' houses, marketplaces and breweries sprang up along its banks. These days the Dyle is a leisure destination with outdoor cafés, colourful marinas and boat trips. Mechelen's floating Dyle path even allows you to walk on the water! Outside the city, the river valley attracts rare fauna and flora, making the meandering Dyle a truly beautiful link between the art cities of Mechelen and Leuven.

HIGHLIGHTS

1 MECHELEN: SURPRISING AND AUTHENTIC

In the sixteenth century Mechelen was the political and cultural capital of the Burgundian Netherlands and from 1556 it was an archiepiscopal city. Today that translates into over 300 listed buildings and five entries on the Unesco world heritage list. The real showpiece is St. Rumbold's Tower. Other attractions include the Hof van Busleyden Museum, the Palace of Margareta of Austria, Kazerne Dossin and Het Predikheren, one of the world's most beautiful city libraries.

2 DE NEKKER PROVINCIAL SPORTS AND LEISURE CENTRE

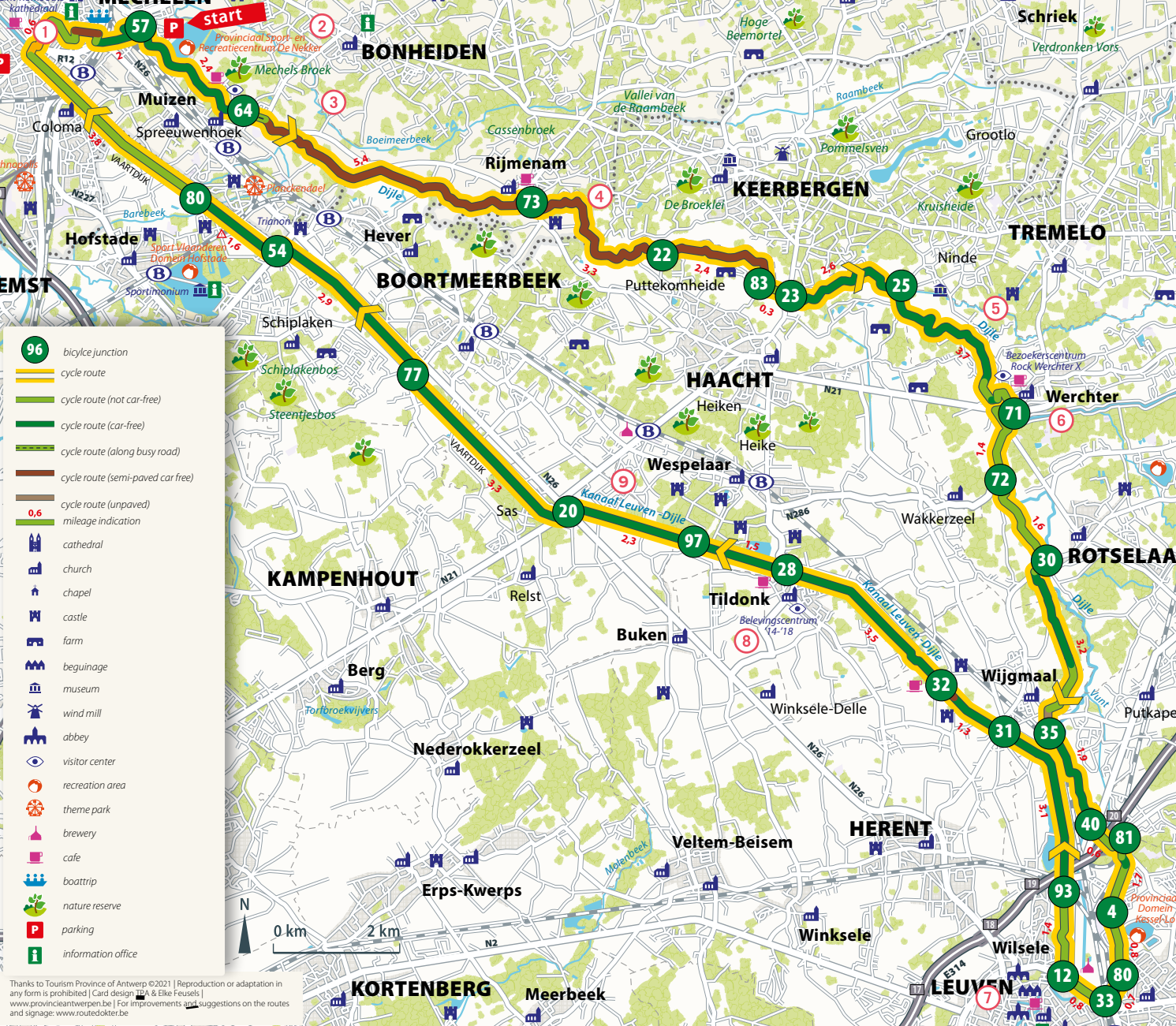
Here you can indulge in any number of indoor and outdoor sports. Take a dip in the lake or clock up lengths in the Nekker-pool swimming pool complex or simply lie back and sunbathe. In the meantime, the children can let off steam in the indoor and outdoor playgrounds.

3 MECHELS BROEK WILDLIFE AREA

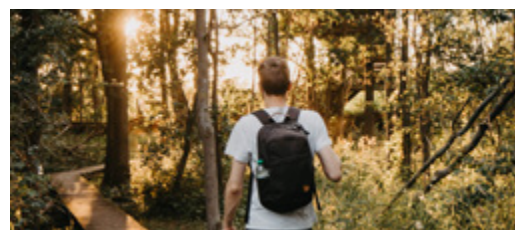
A patchwork of meadows, ponds and ditches, Mechels Broek is a popular stopping-off place for waterbirds. To appreciate this magnificent wildlife area to the full, plan a pitstop of your own here. A lookout hut and tower provide vantage points for spotting birds. In the visitor centre run by the nature conservation organization 'Natuurpunt', you can learn all about the extraordinary fauna and flora.

4 RIJMENAM

Rijmenam – a village in the municipality of Bonheiden – has its origins in the Frankish period. Both St. Martin's Church and the walled churchyard with pillory, are listed. Here you are not far from the 't Smiske local history museum and from the cafés and restaurants in the centre of the village, which make great refuelling stops.



Skywalk St. Rumbold's Tower, Mechelen



Mechels Broek



The Nekker Provincial sports and leisure Centre



⑤ & ⑥ FROM PATER DAMIAAN TO ROCK WERCHTER

The municipality of Tremelo and Jozef De Veuster, alias Father Damien, are an inseparable duo. Today the house where he was born at Ninde in Tremelo is the Damien Museum, a contemporary and interactive experience centre where you can follow the trail of this extraordinary man. The Rock Werchter X experience centre is an ode to the little village it has put on the world map and illustrates four decades of rock history, with a little help from music, of course.

⑦ LEUVEN: TIME-HONOURED AND VIBRANT

Leuven is unimaginable without its university, the oldest in the Low Countries (1425). Its impressive buildings are spread all over the city. The thousands of students from Belgium and abroad give the city its atmosphere, not least on the Oude Markt, better known as "The longest bar in the world"! The town hall and St. Peter's Church are fine examples of Brabantine Gothic. The M Museum houses early and modern art inspired by the city's versatility.

⑧ '14-'18 EXPERIENCE CENTRE IN TILDONK

How did people live under German occupation? To find out, head for the former Ursuline Convent in Tildonk, now a fascinating, interactive experience centre, which takes you back in time one hundred years. Anecdotes, photographs, objects and interactive displays tell an unforgettable story about people fleeing for their lives, from the First World War to the present day.

⑨ LEUVEN-DYLE CANAL

The Leuven-Dyle Canal is one of the oldest in Belgium. It connects the canal basin in Leuven with the Zennegat in Mechelen over a distance of 30 km. The five authentic locks - Tildonk, Kampenhout, Boortmeerbeek, Battel and Zennegat - and their surroundings are listed. The marina at the lock complex in Kampenhout reflects the growth and popularity of the canal among users of pleasure craft.

Practical info

STARTING POINT & CAR PARK

De Nekker provincial sports and leisure centre, Nekkerspoel-Borcht 19, 2800 Mechelen
Free parking.

FOLLOWING THE ROUTE

The route makes use of the national cycle network. Just follow the intersection numbers on the rectangular green and white signs, as shown on the little map in this flyer.

LENGTH

Route: 60 km

DESCRIPTION

The terrain is flat. Approximately 65% of the route is vehicle-free.

INTERSECTIONS

57 - 64 - 73 - 22 - 23 - 25 - 71 - 72 - 30 - 35 - 81 - 80 - 33 - 93 - 31 - 32 - 28 - 97 - 20 - 77 - 54 - 80 - direction 93 - center connection - 57

For information about possible diversions: routedokter.be

For more cycling and hiking ideas,
go to visitmechelen.be

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COLOPHON

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Dijle Valley Route

**CIRCUIT MECHELEN -
LEUVEN**

BICYCLE LOOP - 60 km

**VISIT
MECHELEN**