



VISITOR'S ²⁰²¹ GUIDE



Inspiration & information | Tips for day trips | Seasons in the National Park
Calendar Ranger activities | Gateways | Top six picnic spots
Hiking – Cycling – Mountain biking – Horseback riding



AREAS IN THE PICTURE [p. 6 >](#)

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WITH A RANGER [p. 34 >](#)

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CHILDREN IN CHARGE [p. 38 >](#)

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2 - The Hoge Kempen National Park



BY BIKE [p. 40 >](#)

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THE NATIONAL PARK, SO SPECIAL

10 REASONS WHY

1. Unique geological backbone

Whether you're cycling or hiking, you'll certainly notice that you have to go up some steep slopes from time to time. The landscape takes a dip from the Kempen Plateau to the Maas Valley, which is located 30 m lower. This 30 km-long steep edge is a well-preserved backbone in the landscape.

2. Candidate UNESCO World Heritage

The original forests became grazing areas for sheep, creating large heath plains. The advent of the mining industry disrupted a delicate balance between man and nature, but added many exciting extras, such as slag heaps, garden cities and pit heads in return. All this has been preserved, unique in Western Europe, and will hopefully be allowed to bear the stamp of UNESCO World Heritage in a few years' time.

3. Seven thousand plant and animal species

They are all counted and every year, their numbers increase. Some species only exist here and are threatened with extinction elsewhere in Flanders or Europe. The National Park is a treasure trove for biodiversity.

4. The largest gets bigger still

As of this year, the National Park covers no less than 127 km², more than doubling its surface area. This makes the National Park by far the largest nature reserve in Flanders.

5. Diligent administrators

The Agency for Nature and Forests, Natuurpunt vzw, Limburgs Landschap vzw and Orchis vzw are committed to the management of their sites on a daily basis. With a great deal of knowledge, experience and dedication, they work on a more and better nature reserve in the National Park. Species that are finding it difficult to thrive are given a boost, while unwanted intruders are kept at bay.

6. Everyone welcome

Since the National Park is there for everyone, more than 1 million people come to visit every year. Extensive high-quality networks for cyclists, hikers, riders and mountain bikers ensure that visitors do not get in each other's way, or nature's way for that matter.

7. Six gateways with their own story to tell

Six gateways set you up for your visit to the National Park. 'Terhills' is the main gateway. The other gates take you into a more specific story of stars and planets ('Kattevennen'), the coal track (As Railway Station), bees and insects ('Lietenberg'), the rich heritage ('Pietersheim') or the purple heathland ('Mechelse Heide'). Three new gateways will be developed in the future: Duinengordel (Commandery Gruitrode, Oudsbergen), Bergerven ('t Eilandje, Maaseik) and Thorpark (Thor Park, Genk).

8. Enthusiastic Rangers are ready

Often born and raised here, all of them know the National Park like the back of their hand. After training to become a Ranger, they take groups into the park and show them nature in a different way. No uninspiring talks, but active walks with tasks, stories and even tastings!

9. Own maintenance team

A team of 10 workers from a social-economy enterprise help maintain the National Park. The team mow the paths, collect litter, empty bins and leave the signposts and benches in tip-top condition.

10. Together under the umbrella

The National Park is a team effort of many partners who each want to achieve the best possible results in their own particular fields of work. The National Park thus becomes a success story in terms of nature, tourism, heritage, spatial policy and science.



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TERHILLS

Surprising landscape of “hills and lakes”
Slag heaps with panoramic views

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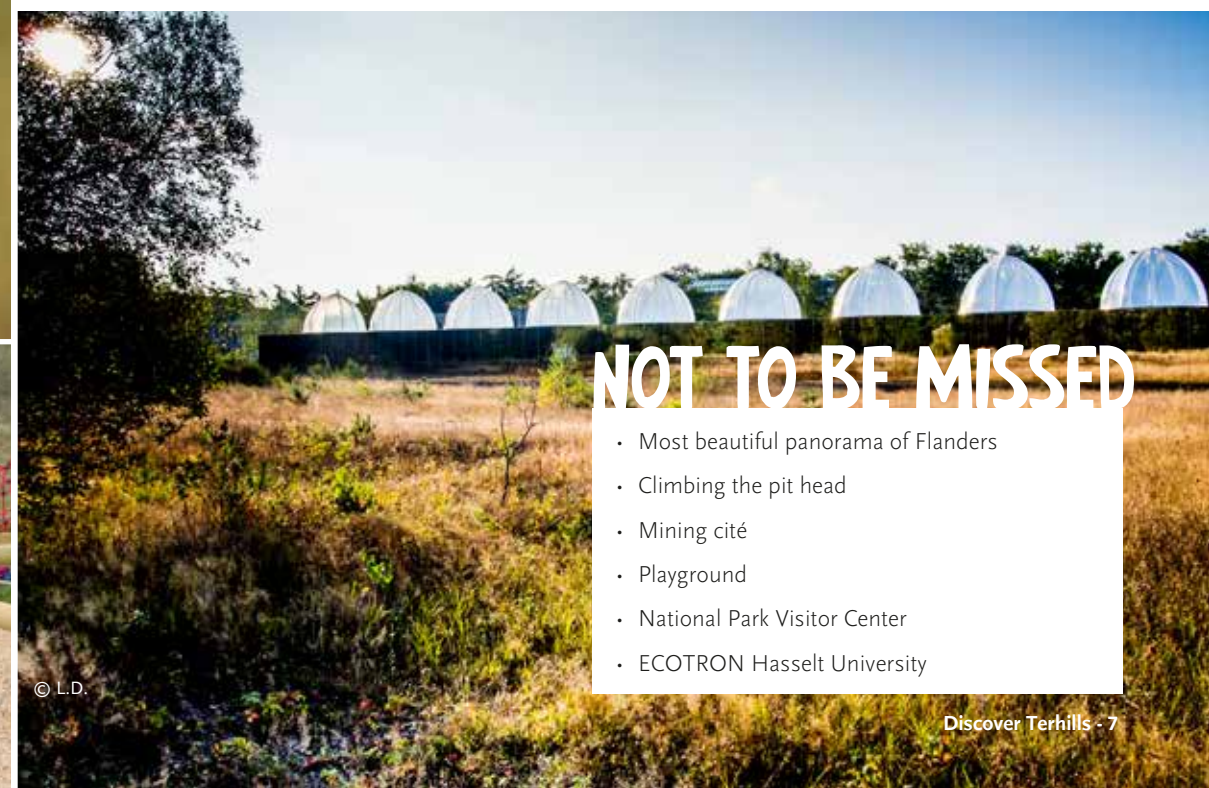
6 - The Hoge Kempen National Park



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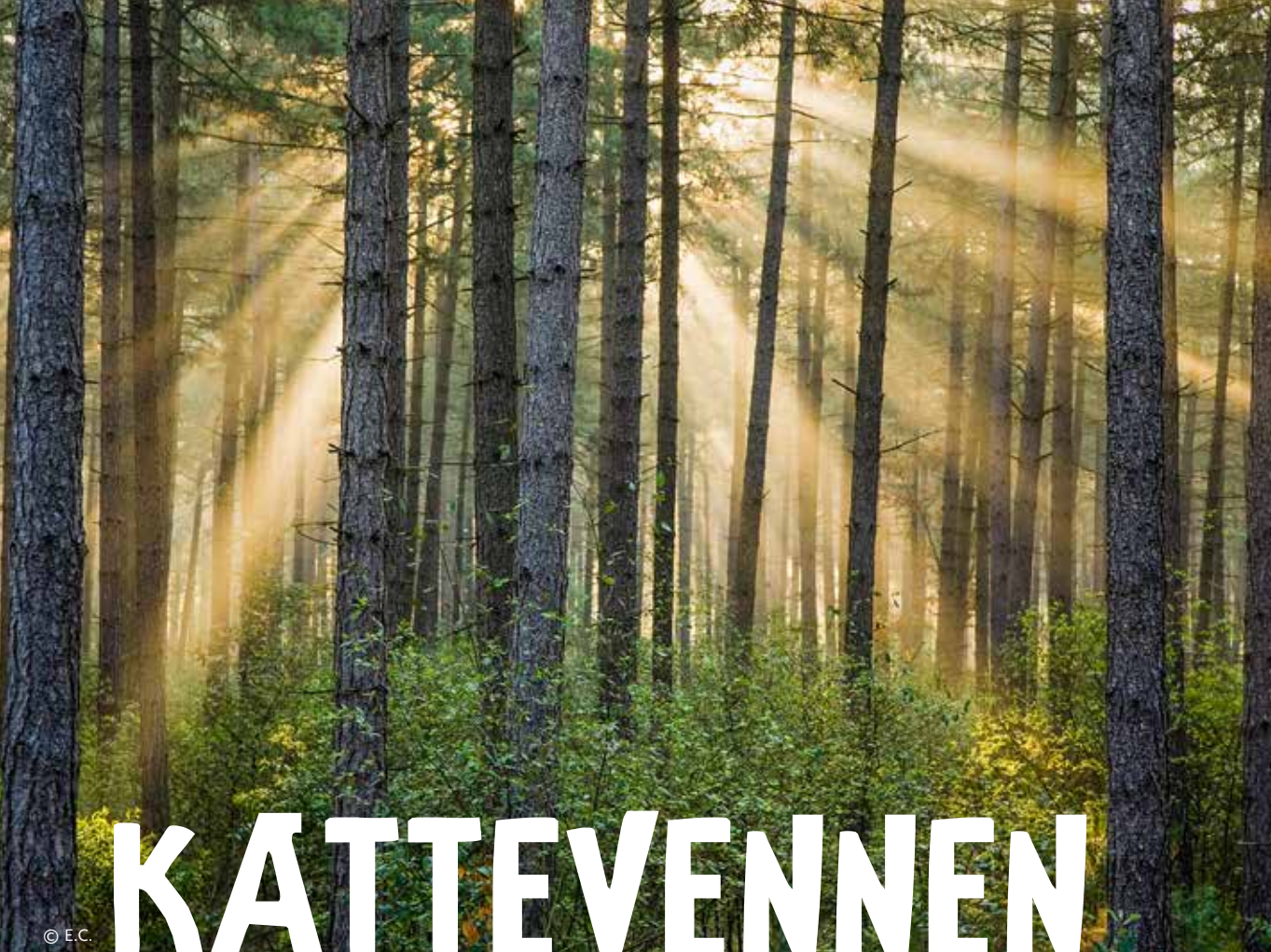
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NOT TO BE MISSED

- Most beautiful panorama of Flanders
- Climbing the pit head
- Mining cité
- Playground
- National Park Visitor Center
- ECOTRON Hasselt University



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KATTEVENNEN

Forests | Patches of heathland | Hidden gem gravel lake 'Papendaal'

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© G.v.G.



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8 - The Hoge Kempen National Park



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NOT TO BE MISSED

- Cosmodrome
- Mini-golf
- Stone path
- Playground
- Heempark
- Unique picnic spot 'Corpus'
- New: Stokkenmannenroute
- Watchtower (from autumn)

Discover Kattevennen - 9



© E.C.

LIETEBERG

Forests on a gentle slope | Patches of heathland
Juniper berries | Silence

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10 - The Hoge Kempen National Park



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NOT TO BE MISSED

- 'Blotevoetenpad' (Barefeet Path)
- Entomopolis
- Butterfly Dome
- Insect path
- 'Zwarteput' quiet area
- Recreation area Papendaalheide

Discover Lieteberg - 11



MECHELSE HEIDE

Top spot for heathland | Highest natural point of the National Park [p. 58 >](#)



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12 - The Hoge Kempen National Park



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NOT TO BE MISSED

- Walking through heathland
- 'Zandloperpad' (Tiger Beetle Path)
- Wide panoramic views
- 'Kikbeekbron' (source of the Kikbeek)
- New from spring 2020: Beestige Boelbos



PIETERSHEIM

© K.V.

Majestic beech-lined lanes
Forests where you can hear a pin drop | Mirroring bogs

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© A.M.

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NOT TO BE MISSED

- Historic 'Waterburcht' (moated castle)
- Petting zoo
- Lotte & Giel's House
- 'Kabouterpad' (Gnomes' Path)
- Playground
- Two Premium walks



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Discover Pietersheim - 15



AS RAILWAY

Vast forests | Fields
Kempen plateau slopes | 'Bosbeek' Valley

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STATION



NOT TO BE MISSED

- Watch tower
- Miniature train
- Geological wall
- Play Woods
- Cycling from gate to gate



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Discover Station As - 17



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DUINENGORDEL

Panorama from the tallest land dune | heathland | fens | forests

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© KDL



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18 - The Hoge Kempen National Park



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NOT TO BE MISSED

- Oudsberg, tallest land dune
- Joekelbos
- Pole camping
- Picnic decks at the water's edge
- Ford for horses
- Mountain biking and nature runs



© K.T.

Discover Duinengordel - 19



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BERGERVEN

ponds | large grazers | steep slopes-canal
pine forest

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NOT TO BE MISSED

- Kapel van de Weerstand (chapel)
- Volmolen (mill)
- Dorpermolen (mill)



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20 - The Hoge Kempen National Park

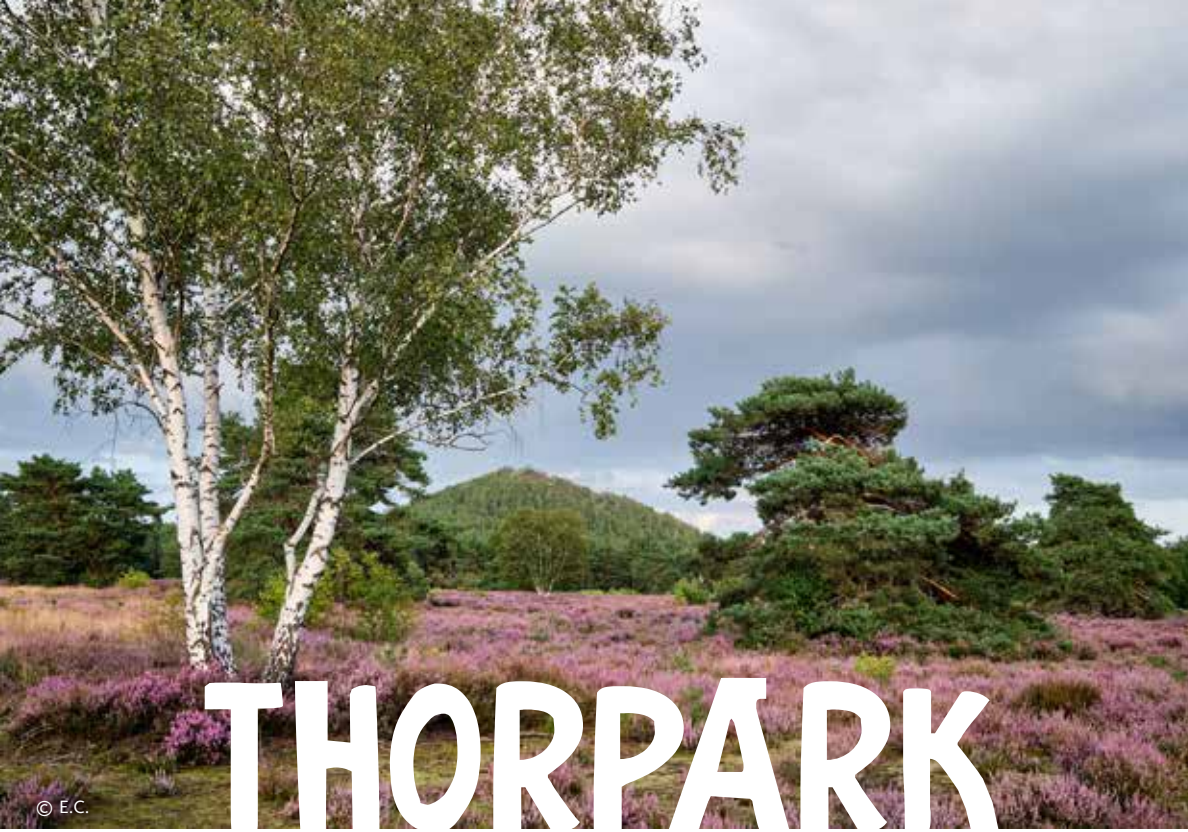


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Discover Bergerven - 21



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THORPARK

mine spoil tips | the heath | land dune
largest juniper thicket | brook valley

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NOT TO BE MISSED

- Imposing mine buildings
- Renewed Steenmannetjespad (path), incl. app
- Heiderbos (forest)
- Mine depot
- Stiernerbeekvallei (valley)
- LABIOMISTA

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Discover Thorpark - 23

MUST DO'S

SPRING

1. Crispy green forest hikes in 'Pietersheim' or As Railway Station
2. 'Connecterra' spoil tip walk: don't miss the blossoming of the colourful flowers
3. Horseback riding trips

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AUTUMN

1. Autumn walk in 'Pietersheim', including a visit to the historic 'Waterburcht' (moated castle)
2. Picking mushrooms in 'Kattevennen'
3. Indian summer and panoramic views in 'Thorpark'

© J.M.

SUMMER

1. Hike on the 'Mechelse Heide' heathland in August/September
2. An invigorating walk on the 'Blotevoetenpad' (Barefeet Path)
3. Cycle ride through the cool forests of the National Park

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WINTER

1. Watching a film in the Cosmodrome and gazing at the stars
2. Entomopolis: learn interactively about the fascinating life of insects
3. Top season for mountain biking

Must do's - 25

HIKING

"THERE IS NO WIFI IN THE FOREST
BUT WE PROMISE
A BETTER CONNECTION"




HIKING 1-2-3

- 1 Select one of the set-distance loops
- 2 Create your own hike with the hiking switches
- 3 Select the long-distance trail for a multi-day hike



The National Park invites you to walk: dark green forests, vast heathland, mirroring fens, no wonder hiking is so healthy! Depending on the season or conditions, you can choose one of the 51 signposted loops and set off without a care in the world. If you want to combine loops, the hiking switches allow you to do just that.

Walking in the National Park is a breeze. At each starting point, you will see signposted routes that give you one last nudge in the right direction. Each loop has its own symbol that is displayed on wooden posts en route. Sometimes, you have to follow a connection piece  to your chosen loop first. Although a hiking map is not really necessary, we can only recommend one! This way, you are well informed about the area you explore and you can see where you are walking at any time. It is impossible to get lost!

If you want to choose particular trails, then visit www.wandeleninlimburg.be

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Changing loops thanks to the hiking switches

If you prefer all the freedom of choice, you can easily combine the loops thanks to the hiking switches. These mark the places where loops cross each other. These intersections have their own numbers, indicated both on the wooden pole and on the walking map. To walk up to another hiking switch loop, simply choose the coloured symbol of a hiking loop, in the direction of that switch. In this way, countless options arise in one large network, beyond the boundaries of the various hiking areas. A walking map of the area is an indispensable guide then.

TIP

Purchase the regional map of the Hoge Kempen (€ 8) which shows all areas of the Hoge Kempen, incl. the hiking switches.



PREMIUM!

All areas of the National Park have their particular charm, but two trails deserve special attention. In 'Pietersheim', two hiking trails were awarded a premium label by the German Wanderinstitut. Allow us to introduce them to you.

'Pietersheim' Wood

Start: Gateway 'Pietersheim'

Symbol: 

Distance: 11,4 km

Not to be missed: spring blooms in the castle park

The red walk takes you across the site of the historic 'Waterburcht' (moated castle) and castle park, past majestic beech-lined lanes to the vastness of 'Pietersembos'. The delightful 'Asbeek' brook adds extra variation and the newly constructed timber path allows you to explore this piece with dry feet. Don't forget to take a break in the original woodland lounge ...

DID YOU KNOW

Sweet gale: leaves were used as a substitute for hops in beer. Rub the leaves against each other and smell the fine fragrance they release.

'Pietersheim' Heide

Start: starting point Hostellerie La Butte aux Bois

Symbol: 

Distance: 11,4 km

Not to be missed: Flowering heathland

Attention: dogs not allowed

In the north of 'Pietersheim', you come to the valuable areas 'Zijpbeek' Valley and 'Neerharerheide'. You can expect fragrant sweet gale shrubs, beautiful views, peace and quiet, as well as space in one of the quietest and most beautiful spots of the National Park. The heathland blossoms burst open from mid-August onwards.









TAKING THE DOG



Dogs are welcome in the National Park! With a few exceptions, they can join you on all trails. In addition, there are eight dedicated dog play areas where they can come off the leash and let off steam. These are enclosed areas located along the signposted hiking loops.

WHERE?

Wandelgebied Mechelse Heide

- Gateway 'Mechelse Heide'
>> Between hiking switches  and 
- Gateway 'Mechelse Heide'
>> Between hiking switches  and 
- Starting point 'Kikmolen'
>> Between hiking switches  and 





Hiking area 'Pietersheim'

- Starting point La Butte aux Bois
>> Between hiking switches  and 



Hiking area Bergerven

- Starting point Kapel van de Weerstand
>> at the car park

Hiking area Oudsberg:



- Starting point Cemetery Opglabbeek
>> between hiking switches  and 
- Starting point Phil Bosmansplein
>> between hiking switches  and 

Hiking area Donderslag:

- Starting point Donderslagweg
>> between hiking switches  and 

WHERE NOT?

A number of areas are grazed by horses and cattle. Therefore, the caretakers do not allow dogs to enter those areas (not even on a leash).

- **'Mechelse Heide'** – Starting point 'Kikmolen' campsite: green and blue walks
- **'Pietersheim'** – Starting point La Butte aux Bois: purple walk
- **Bergerven** – Starting points Ketelstraat and Kapel van de Weerstand:
>> between hiking switches  and 
(Ruige laarzenpad)



TIP

The dedicated dog play areas are also indicated on the hiking maps of the 'Mechelse Heide' and 'Pietersheim' hiking areas.

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NO LONG-DISTANCE PATH IN FLANDERS IS ASPHALTED LESS - TREKKINGS.BE -

LONG-DISTANCE HIKE

The long-distance hike, which connects five gateways over a 75K distance, can be spread over three or four days.

The walk will allow you to explore the National Park and its spacious surroundings. In 'Pietersheim' and 'Mechelse Heide', you walk in the heart of the National Park with its forests and heathland. At As Railway Station, you only walk in the National Park for some of the distance, but you will be able to enjoy the beautiful Bosbeek Valley. In 'Lieteberg' and 'Kattevennen', you can admire the beautiful southern edge of the Hoge Kempen. The trail is signposted with the National Park symbol in two directions. Use the regional map of the Hoge Kempen as a guide. Thanks to the hiking switches and the other hiking trails, you can make your hikes as long or as short as you like!

Staying overnight within walking distance?
On our website, you will find a handy overview map of the accommodation options.

SAVE THE DATE!

Save the date! In 2022 we will extend the long-distance hike to a trail of 100km. You can come and hike it during the Hiking Festival from 3 to 6 June.

DID YOU KNOW

We have deliberately chosen not to have litter bins in the National Park, except at the gateways. You can do your bit by keeping your waste on you and throwing it away at the starting points. That saves us on maintenance costs!

TOP SIX PICNIC SPOTS

It is wonderful to discover a bench on a bike or hiking trip and to rest your limbs, enjoy the view or have a picnic. Along all trails, you will find benches and picnic tables and beautiful views all thrown in for free. For a picnic in style, we suggest the following places:

- **'Connecterra'**
At the top of the 'long' spoil tip, you will not only have lunch overlooking the most beautiful panorama of Flanders, but it is also the highest picnic spot of the National Park.
>> Between hiking switches **4** and **6**
- **'Kattevennen'**
In the picnic place Corpus, designed by the nature artist Will Beckers, you are seated in a large open circle in the woods, nicely and closely together, surrounded by a sculpture overgrown with wooden branches. You can even order a picnic basket
>> Right behind the tourist reception
- **'Pietersheim'**
A place that exudes history is undoubtedly the 12th century 'Waterburcht' (moated castle) of 'Pietersheim'.
>> Between hiking switches **77** and **75**
- **'Mechelse Heide'**
Before you take to the heathlands, you can have your sandwiches on the picnic meadow at the starting place. There are even several benches, which is handy if you are in a big group!
>> At hiking switch **39** or cycling junction **60**
- **'Lieteberg'**
At the foot of the heather-rich 'Bezoensberg', you are in the shade of the trees. Also look out for the big silence stone for a poetic message.
>> Between hiking switches **97** and **99** or between junctions **532** and **62**
- **'Duinengordel'**
At the Ruiterskuilen fen, a wooden deck suspended above the water from the shore. As you can enjoy the silence here, this is the ideal stopping place during a hike or cycling tour.
>> between junctions **33** and **70** or via the yellow and blue walking loop in the Donderslag area (Op-glabbeek).



NATURE FOR EVERYONE

It's the National Park's mission to make nature experienceable and accessible to everyone, including those who, because of a disability, are dependent on wheelchairs, or families with small children in a stroller.

'Mechelse Heide'

- Zandloperpad (Tiger Beetle Trail): a paved path of 1.5 km that guides you through a former sand quarry converted into a mini-national park with all kinds of biotopes, including a bird watch wall and a wooden deck

'Duinengordel'

- Joekelbos (750 m)

'Pietersheim'

- 'Kabouterpad' (Gnomes' Path) (2.8 km, provided you just follow the green trail between hiking switches **65** and **77**)
- Green walk (3.7 km)
- 'Waterburcht' (moated castle)
- Playground with a few adapted devices

'Connecterra'

- Paved 1.5K path to the large pond
- Reception desk

'Lieteberg'

- Entomopolis

'Kattevennen'

- Cosmodrome
- Reception desk



DID YOU KNOW

The Ranger activity 'Nature experience for people with disabilities' is tailored to everyone's needs.



WHERE TO GO FOR?

Silence

- **'Lieteberg'**: blue walk, 8.1 km (Gateway 'Lieteberg')
- **'Oudsberg'**: yellow walk, 10.5 km

Heathland

- **'Mechelse Heide'**: yellow walk, 5.5 km (Gateway 'Mechelse Heide')
- **'Pietersheim'**: purple walk, 11.4 km (Starting point La Butte aux Bois)

Water and views

- **'Connecterra'**: yellow walk, 10.9 km (Gateway 'Connecterra')
- **'Mechelse Heide'**: blue walk, 5 km (Starting point Kikmolen campsite)
- **'Duinengordel' (Donderslag)**: yellow walk, 11 km (starting point Leemkuilstraat, 3660 Oudsbergen (Opglabbeek))

Fragrant pine forests

- **'Bergerven'**: blue walk, 7 km
- **'Kattevennen'**: yellow walk, 11.5 km (Gateway 'Kattevennen')

Spoil tips

- **'Connecterra'**: blue walk 3.9 km (Gateway 'Connecterra')
- **'Thorpark'**: blue walk, 7.6 km
TIP: follow the Steenmannetjespad to the top of the spoil tip.

Dunes

- **'Duinengordel' (Oudsberg)**: blue and yellow walk, 7,6 km
TIP: follow the yellow route that leads you over the Oudsberg between hiking switches 194 and 198.
- **'Thorpark'**: purple walk, 8,5 km (starting point Moorsberg)

More info about the trails can be found on www.wandeleninlimburg.be.





BOOK YOUR RANGER

CALENDER

Together with the Rangers, you can discover the National Park in a relaxed, sometimes active, but always surprising way. Most activities involve hiking, but you can also book a cycling Ranger or one on horseback. For people with disabilities, there are adapted activities.

As long as you book three weeks in advance, you can determine the date, time and location yourself. Ticket prices vary from € 60 to € 90 per Ranger (except GPS treasure hunt), depending on the activity selected. Each Ranger can take a group of about 25 people.

On www.nationaalpark.be, you will find a complete overview of what's on offer, and you can also make your reservation online.

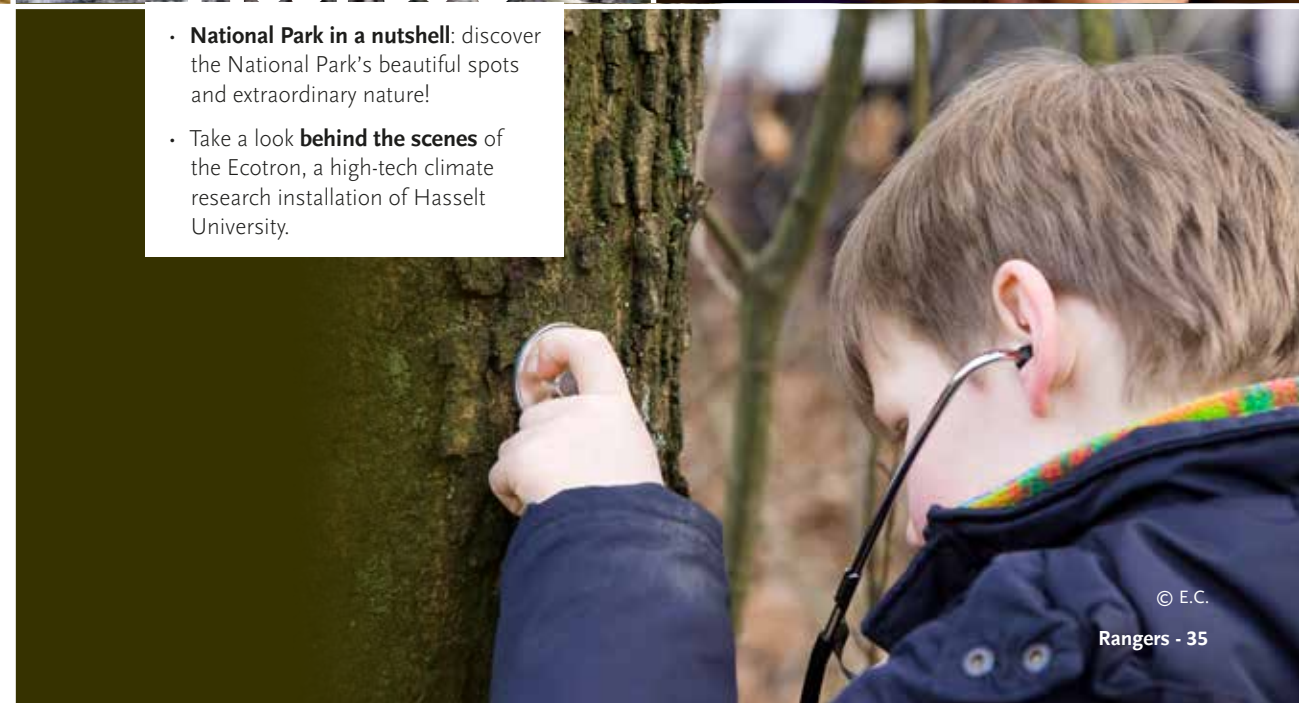
If there are not enough of you to form a group, no problem, because every 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month, a Ranger waits at one of the gateways*. You only pay a small participation fee of € 2 per person or € 5 per family. Advance registration is required (Dutch spoken).

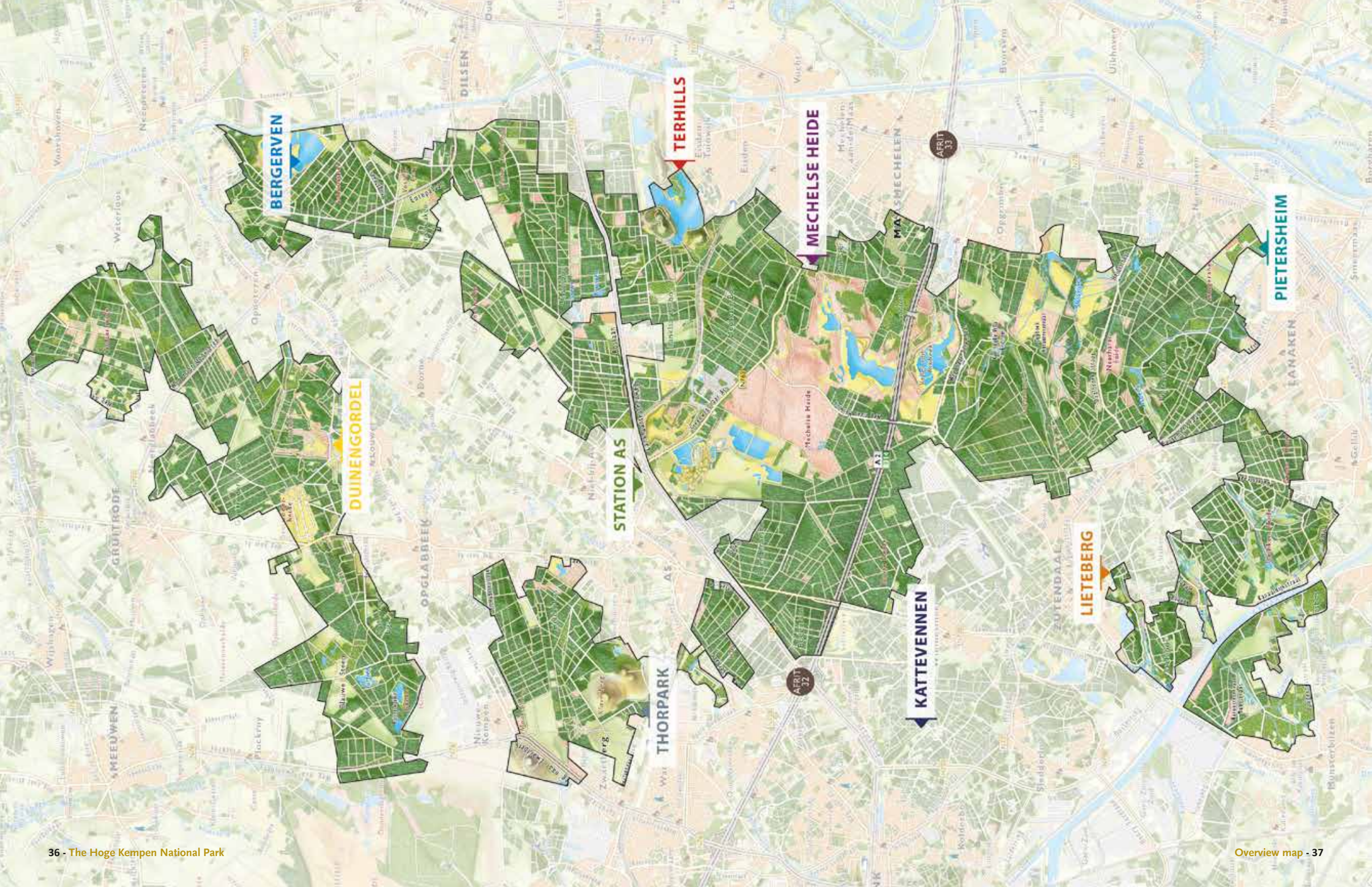
Go to www.nationaalpark.be/kalender for an overview of all activities and register!

* subject to the applicable corona measures

MUST DO'S

- **National Park in a nutshell:** discover the National Park's beautiful spots and extraordinary nature!
- Take a look **behind the scenes** of the Ecotron, a high-tech climate research installation of Hasselt University.





CHILDREN IN CHARGE



© Stad Genk



© A.M.



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38 - The Hoge Kempen National Park

Long hiking and biking tours may be less exciting for children, but at each gateway, there is plenty to do for children of all ages.

'Terhills'

- Play pit

'Pietersheim'

- Petting farm
- Lotte & Giel's House
- 'Kabouterpad' (Gnomes' Path)
- Playground

'Kattevennen'

- Playground
- Mini-golf
- Cosmodrome (all-weather attraction)
- Stokkenmanroute

As Railway Station

- Play Woods
- Miniature train
- Watch tower

'Lieteberg'

- 'Blotevoetenpad' (Barefeet Path)
- Entomopolis (all-weather attraction, Dutch spoken)

'Duinengordel'

- The Oudsberg game: free smartphone game with activities
- Multimovepath park Itterdal



TIP

Have you heard of the B'Oscars? This is the main prize for natural talents from 7 years upwards in the National Park! You can win this prize by taking the IZI.TRAVEL app and the special B'Oscar booklet with you on your hike. A booklet costs €2.50 and is available at the gateways Lieteberg, Pietersheim, Kattevennen, Station As, Terhills and Mechelse Heide. More info can be found at: www.nationaalpark.be.

Play zones

Playing in nature, what's not to like, right?! The Agency for Nature and Forests has designated play zones in the National Park, where you can stray from the paths and play freely. You can even build camps or ropes courses, as long as you remove all constructions after the activity and restore the forest to its original state.

Two of these play zones are extra fun and allow children to get to know the National Park and its inhabitants in a playful way.

Joekelbos

The Joekelbos in Duinengordel is the largest adventure forest in Flanders: 10 game modules, wooden animals, play dunes with water and shelters waiting to be explored! The paved path is wheelchair- and stroller-accessible.

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Beestige Boelbos

In the Beestige Boelbos on the Mechelse Heide, children (and their parents) can get to know some of the animal species of the National Park and their typical behaviour on a short 2 km walk.

By means of seven game modules, they will be challenged to crawl like snakes, jump like deer and waddle like lizards, ... A climbing tree and water feature will complete the fun!

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Ranger for children (Dutch spoken)

- Junior Ranger: carry out all assignments and become a Junior Ranger
- National Park Safari: Play and explore to your heart's content in hidden spots in the National Park
- Experience nature at its best: learn to discover nature with all your senses.

Info & reservation: www.nationaalpark.be



© A.M.

TIP

Book a Ranger for a perfect birthday party!



Thanks to the cycling route network, you can easily work out a route yourself. The network stretches well beyond the Hoge Kempen. The tracks are of a high quality and car-free wherever possible. The clean air in the woods is thrown in for free. Why not stop at one of the gateways or a welcoming terrace on the way?

Suggested Route National Park

This long route is the best way to discover the different landscapes of the Hoge Kempen. In addition, it passes five of the six gateways. The share of car-free cycle paths over the former railway line from As to Maaseik, or the towpath along the Zuid-Willemsvaart canal, among other things, is definitely an advantage. Although the route mainly runs through woodland areas, you can catch a glimpse of the open heathland here and there. This is certainly the case when you cycle along the ‘Kik-beek’ source, between junctions 61 and 550.

Junctions: 41 – 501 – 42 – 44 – 48 – 55 – 60 – 61 – 550 – 252 – 62 – 532 – 64 – 251 – 534 – 29 – 30 – 535 – 565 – 41

Distance: 58,7 km

Recommended starting point: Station As 41



For more track suggestions, consult the National Park's themed bike map. When you book a cycling package, you will receive this map for free!

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MOUNTAIN BIKING

The ‘Hoge Kempen’ lives up to its name and offers the sporty cyclist plenty of options. The steep edge, the transition between the Meuse Valley and the Kempen Plateau, means that there are often challenging climbs and slopes with a difference in altitude of up to 45 m. Mountain bikers have a choice of 10 sign-posted loops, with routes ranging from 16 to 80 km in varying degrees of difficulty. With the 80 km marathon route, most of which is unpaved, the advanced cyclists are certainly well catered for. You can also easily join the northern routes of the National Park in Duinengordel.

Plot your unpaved course via two loops around the Oudsberg or the steep edge of the Kempen Plateau. The Duinengordel course is 40 kilometres long in total, but with all the loops in the rest of the National Park, you can do rides of up to 200 km.

More information can be found on www.nationaalpark.be.

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**NEW:
CYCLING THROUGH
THE HEATHLAND!**

From this summer on you will be able to cycle right through the National Park on the renovated route between junctions 550 and 551 (Maasmechelen). A monumental bridge of almost 300 meters long - made of durable wood - allows you to enjoy beautiful views over the heath landscape and ensures a safe crossing of the ‘Weg naar Zutendaal’.



EXPLORE THE AREA ON HORSEBACK

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42 - The Hoge Kempen National Park



© A.M.

The National Park boasts 140 km of track, specifically dedicated to horse-riding and horse-drawn vehicles, and 85% of which is unpaved. These tracks link into a network via junctions, which makes it easy to create your own trip. From the riding schools in the area, you can set off on your own tailor-made trip. En route, you will find the necessary resting points and accommodation options.

The equestrian route network of the Hoge Kempen National Park fits seamlessly into the equestrian network of the Limburg Kempen. This way, you can extend your trip effortlessly. The Limburg equestrian map includes no less than 550 km of equestrian track, including the equestrian network of the Hoge Kempen. On www.paardenprovincie.be, you will find all the information for a carefree trip on horseback.

Suggestion:

Junctions: 10 – 108 – 41 – 121 – 39 – 32 – 52 – 135 – 10

Distance: 24,1 km

Starting place: Orshof, Heymansweg 2, 3670 Oudsbergen

Trot through woods and fields and give your horse a unique barefoot experience at the ford (between 10 and 108)

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TIPS

- Riders and drivers of horse-drawn carriages are welcome on all tracks. Only where there are lock systems, only one pair of horses can pass.
- Since tracks can be swampy in winter, some driver experience is needed.
- Due to forest exploitation, agricultural use, and suchlike, diversions and adjustments to the routes on the map are possible. Please visit www.nationaalpark.be to avoid unpleasant surprises.
- If you still encounter any problems along the way, please report them on info@nationaalpark.be.
- The equestrian track does not, or very rarely, overlap with walking and/or cycling paths. If they do, always give priority to walkers and cyclists, because not everyone feels safe near a horse.
- Would you like a Ranger to come along on horseback? No problem! You can take a guided day trip through the National Park with a Ranger on horseback (Dutch spoken).

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AWAITING RECOGNITION

READ HISTORY

In certain places in the Hoge Kempen, you can see thousands of years of history in one glance. Because man has always had a great influence on the landscape, what you see today is never 'pure nature'. Centuries of farmers scraping off the top soil and sheep grazing ensure that you can still admire vast purple heathland during your trip through the Hoge Kempen. Mining has also left its mark on the landscape. From the spoil tips, you can enjoy a beautiful panorama of the garden cities. Be surprised by this patchwork in which geology, historical land use and industrial development can be read as an open book. The pages are all still visible, and that's what makes the Hoge Kempen unique in a densely populated Western Europe.

WHAT PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE?

In January 2018, an elaborate application file was submitted to UNESCO for the first time. This proposal was assessed in 2019 by experts from all over the world. This resulted in a wealth of information that is currently being processed. We will examine how to best address the comments of these experts.

They were already very impressed by the great care that the region takes of its heritage, and the determination of the municipalities and nature heritage associations to manage this exceptional story.


It is difficult to predict what the outcome will be, but, with or without recognition, the area is well worth a visit! We have already selected some highlights that you can't afford to miss. On www.nationaalpark.be, you will find a broader overview of the relevant heritage sites.




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MUST DO



• Heritage walk in Thorpark

 - 11 km - starting point Thorpark, André Dumontlaan 67, 3600 Genk



• Oudsberg Walk

 - 7,1 km - between hiking switches 194 and 198, follow the yellow route - starting point Zavelbos, Kruising Weg to Opoeteren and Bergeindestraat, 3660 Opglabbeek


• Dorpermolen

 May, June and September: every 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.
1 July to 31 August: Saturday and Sunday from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.
 toerisme.maaseik.be/watermolens

• Garden district Walk Eisden

 - 5 km - starting point 'Connecterra' gateway From May onwards, you can use the heritage app on your walk through the garden suburb! 

• Museum Mine worker's cottage

Marie Joséstraat 3,
3630 Maasmechelen (Eisden)
 from April to September: Saturdays and Sundays from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. / October to March: only Sundays from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. / closed on public holidays
€ Free admission - Groups: possible to book a guide (groups of up to 15 people)



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MANAGEMENT FOR MORE

The National Park is a large and diverse area, and home to over 7,000 plant and animal species. And yet, many can use a boost. That is where the Agency for Nature and Forests comes in, which looks to improve nature and takes many initiatives to achieve exactly that.

Felling trees for better forests

Don't be alarmed when you see trees being felled. Many forests in the National Park were created for, among others, the mining industry. They are actually monotonous plantations, not so interesting for nature. Targeted harvesting makes these forests more varied, so that, for example, more birds can come to nest.

In addition, some species, such as the Black Cherry and the Northern Red Oak, are a true scourge in the Hoge Kempen. By felling these exotic species, indigenous trees can prevail once more. The presence of common oak, Rowan or mountain ash and birch also bring additional plant and animal species back into the forest.

The forest roads often suffer a lot during felling, especially in wetter periods. Not pleasant for walkers, but this damage is always repaired after the work is completed.

Dead wood generates life

Even trees don't live for ever. Sooner or later, they die. Nevertheless, a dead tree is invaluable to the forest since many animals find their home, breeding place and food there. Also mushrooms are usually found on dead wood. Branches broken off by the wind or dead trees are often deliberately left where they belong: in the forest.

Counting sheep?

Don't be surprised when you see a herd of sheep grazing on the 'Mechelse Heide' during your walk. The shepherd and his dog will be nearby. Sheep move from place to place and graze until all the grass is gone. That is where new heath and other plants will grow. Otherwise, lots of trees and tall grass would grow there, which is not very useful to many species. The sheep have food in abundance, even in winter.

AND BETTER NATURE

Help, there's a fire?!

The controlled burning of heathland is a useful technique to prevent pests and rejuvenate heather. Early spring is the best time to do this. A slow fire means that animals can flee and species continue to live in the wet soil. Fire is a natural process in nature and makes a lot of new life possible. A controlled fire never lasts longer than 3 hours and the fire brigade is always present.

Attention: heathland and woods are very sensitive to fire and an uncontrolled fire can cause a lot of damage. Extra caution in dry periods is called for.

Other management works to rejuvenate the heathland occur mainly in winter, such as mowing, chipping or scraping off top soil. In order to prevent heather from growing dense, spontaneous tree storage must be reduced on a regular basis.

Large grazers!

To increase the variety in the landscape and thus the number of plant and animal species in the National Park, the manager calls on Norwegian fjord horses,

Angus cattle and even donkeys. They are self-reliant breeds that can live in the area all year round without much help. They look dangerous, but if you stick to a few basic rules, you have nothing to fear: don't challenge the animals, keep enough distance and don't feed them. Dogs are not allowed on walks in grazing areas.

Wildlife management

The main reason for hunting is to keep wildlife populations under control and prevent damage. In the National Park, the hunt is mainly focused on wild boar and deer. Hunting is subject to strict conditions, so for example, hunting is not allowed in large areas or is only possible for a short period of time.

More information about management can be found on www.nationaalpark.be



Vlaanderen
is natuur

AGENTSCHAP
NATUUR & BOS





SCIENCE IN THE NATIONAL PARK

ECOTRON & THE FIELD RESEARCH CENTRE

In 'Connecterra', together with the brand new ECOTRON, the Field Research Centre forms Hasselt University's scientific base in the Hoge Kempen National Park. Here, national and international scientists conduct research into the effects of climate change on our environment and our biodiversity. After all, in the 12 domes of ECOTRON, the climate of the future is simulated to see what the effects are on our unique and native heathland vegetation. Particularly what is happening underground is of great scientific importance.

The Field Research Centre is also an educational meeting place for students, pupils and visitors to the Hoge Kempen National Park alike.

Want to know more? Discover the **"Ecotron behind the scenes"**-activity with a Ranger. The Ranger will take you along and let you in on the secrets of this unique climate research installation of Hasselt University.

MAPPING SPECIES

Of course, the National Park is also the ideal place to explore biodiversity, or the richness of species. Research in the National Park is currently focusing on a number of well-known and lesser-known key species of this region, such as the European nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*) and the wild boar (*Sus scrofa*).

Little is known about the behaviour of the nightjar, which lives in the Limburg heathland in summer. Researchers, therefore, study the breeding behaviour, habitat use and migration routes of this protected species. Thanks to initiatives like these, the European conservation objectives of this species can be achieved. This will ensure not only the survival of this vulnerable species, but also that of other plant and animal species that occur in the same area of the nightjar.

SCIENCE EVERYWHERE!

Science occupies an important place not only in 'Connecterra', but at the other gateways, too!

For example, a measuring tower on the **'Mechelse Heide'** permanently collects data on the weather conditions and the composition of the air. More specifically, the concentrations of substances (such as CO₂) responsible for climate change are measured. This measuring tower is part of a European network (ICOS) of almost 100 such measuring stations. The measuring tower in Maasmechelen is the only measuring point in Europe that is situated in a heath biotope.

Moreover, **'Lieteberg'** has been recognised as a knowledge centre for beekeeping. In addition to providing advice to both novice and experienced beekeepers, the centre is also designed to build a scientific bridge between research centres and beekeepers in the field. For more information, please visit www.lieteberg.be

In **'Kattevennen'**, you can find all kinds of fun science/technology/engineering/maths-related workshops where astronomy and space travel are central. For more information, please visit www.kattevennen.be

The wild boar is everywhere nowadays in Flanders, including the National Park, which contains a protected area of nature in a very densely populated environment. There are several parties involved in the presence and management of the wild-boar population in the National Park, such as managers, farmers, hunters, nature lovers, etc. By using traps and examining their traces, researchers map the distribution and behaviour of the wild-boar population, and it is possible to study the impact of, among others, hunting and recreation on the behaviour of this species.



© K.V.L.

Fancy heading out?
In addition to this guide, there are also plenty of maps to guide you through the National Park. An overview! The maps can be ordered via www.nationaalpark.be or for sale at from the reception desk at the gateways.

HIKING

Hoge Kempen National Park: 400 km | 88 loops | 1 long-distance hike



— Duinengordel —

INDIVIDUAL HIKING MAPS

Scale: 1:15 000

Price: € 2,50



HIKING BOX

Scale: 1:15 000

Price: € 16,00



REGIONAL MAP

(overview map including long distance walk)

Scale: 1:38 000

Price: € 8,00

The individual hiking maps and hiking box are only available in Dutch.

CYCLING

300 km | 3 themed trails

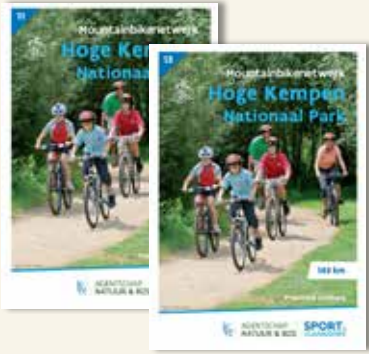


CYCLING MAP

Price: € 3,00

MOUNTAIN BIKING

200 km | 10 loops

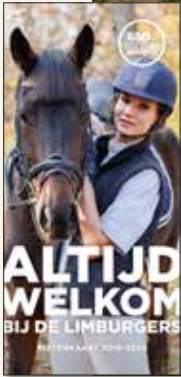


MTB MAP (only available in Dutch)

Price: € 6,00

HORSE-RIDING

200 km | 85% unpaved track



HORSE-RIDING MAP (only available in Dutch)

Price: free



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ACCESSIBILITY RULES

By following these simple instructions, you, too, can give nature every chance!



Hikers are welcome on roads and paths, unless otherwise indicated.



Dogs are welcome on a leash, unless indicated otherwise.



Mountain bikers, horseback riders and drivers of horse-drawn carriages are only allowed on the paths marked for them.



Motorised vehicles are not allowed.



Fire (camp fire, flame torches) does not belong in nature, is dangerous and therefore forbidden.



Do not pick plants and mushrooms. Do not disturb animals.



Keep away from semi-wild large grazers. Do not pet or feed them.



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'TERHILLS' MAIN GATEWAY

Zetellaan
3630 Maasmechelen (Eisden)

Terhills, main gateway to the National Park was formerly known as Connecterra. Climb the mining-stone hills and enjoy the "most beautiful panorama in Flanders".

National Park Visitor Center

In this visitor centre, you can ask all your questions about the National Park. The children can have fun in the playground while you enjoy a drink.

Climb the stairs of the shaft tower. The reward is a unique view of the surroundings. On the ground floor you can find the photo exhibition that gives you a glimpse into the past of the mine site.

Opening hours

April to September: every day from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
October to March: Tuesday – Sunday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Closed on Monday

Closed on 01/01, 24 - 25/12 and 31/12

More information

T: +32 89 44 04 44
E: terhills@nationaalparkhogekempen.be
www.terhills-nationaalparkhogekempen.be

TIP

Want to know more about the Ecotron?
Book a ranger for a behind-the-scenes visit!

Ecotron Hasselt University

When you visit the main gate, you can't miss the Ecotron Hasselt University! Here, scientists study the impact of climate change on biodiversity, among other things. Not coincidentally, because the Field Research Center of Hasselt University is also located here.

More information

National Park Visitor Center

Terhills

Besides the special hiking area and the National Park visitor centre, there are other great attractions to discover at Terhills. Whether you come for nature, relaxation or adventure. You will find it all here!

More information :

www.terhills.be

Terhills Cablepark & Aquapark

Terhills Cablepark: open from Easter holidays to the autumn half term break

Terhills Aquapark: open May to September

For exact opening hours, please check on www.terhills-cablepark.be

More information:

Nationaal Parklaan 5, 3650 Dilsen-Stokkem
E: info@terhillscablepark.be
www.terhillscablepark.be

Terhills Hotel

More information

Zetellaan 68, 3630 Maasmechelen
T: +32 89 73 09 09
E: info@terhillshotel.com
www.terhillshotel.com

Terhills Resort by Center Parcs

More information

Nationaal Parklaan 1, 3650 Dilsen-Stokkem
www.centerparcs.be/terhills-resort

Terland Restaurant & Beach

More information

Nationaal Parklaan 1, 3650 Dilsen-Stokkem
www.terland.be

Elaisa Energetic Wellness

Opening hours

every day from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., reservation required

More information

Nationaal Parklaan 7, 3650 Dilsen-Stokkem
T: +32 (0) 89 39 09 96
E: info@elaisawellness.com
www.elaisawellness.com

Maasmechelen Village

More information

Zetellaan 100, 3630 Maasmechelen
T: from Belgium: 0800 40236,
from the Netherlands: 0800 1011771
E: info@MaasmechelenVillage.com
www.maasmechelenvillage.com



GATEWAY 'KATTEVENNEN'

Planetariumweg 19
3600 Genk

Reception desk 'Kattevennen'

Opening hours

Monday-Thursday: from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Friday: from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (april-october: from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.)
Saturday^(*), Sunday and public holidays: from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

(*) Closed in November, December, January, February and March

More information

T : +32 89 65 55 55
E: kattevennen@genk.be – www.kattevennen.be

Cosmodrome

Please visit www.kattevennen.be for the 360° show programme and rates.

Stokkenmanroute

The Stokkenmanroute (4.2 km) introduces you to the mysterious Stokkenmen in the forest with the help of an app, game booklet or story booklet and takes you past the most beautiful places in Kattevennen.

The route, the storybook and app are available at the Kattevennen visitors' centre (€5) - only available in Dutch.

Watching stars, spotting comets

From 1 October to 31 March, you can find out everything about stars, planets, crater strikes and other celestial bodies in the observatory every clear Saturday evening at 8 p.m. You'll discover everything there is to know about big and small crater strikes. Explore the sky through a super-long telescope. Check the website because the activity only takes place in clear weather.

Price:

€ 3 p.p.

Mini-golf

Opening hours

April, May, June, and September: weekends and public holidays from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesdays, school holidays from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m.
(till closes at 5.30 p.m.)

July and August: every day from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. (Till closes at 5.30 p.m.)

October: Sunday from 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.
(till closes at 3.30 p.m.)

Ticket prices

Adults:	€ 4 p.p.
Children up to 12 years of age:	€ 3,50 p.p.
Groups (from 10 people onwards):	€ 3 p.p.
(group visits by appointment, +32 89 65 55 55)	

Bicycle rental

Bicycle rental

From Easter to September, during the opening hours of the reception desk.

Charges

€ 10 per bike, € 25 per electric bike
€ 5 per child's bike, € 1 per child seat,

More information

www.fietsparadijslimburg.be,
online reservation is required

Riding stable - Eetcafé Kattevennia

Here, you can charge your electric bike at the designated charging station while recharging your own batteries with a snack or a drink.

More information

Kattevennen 12, 3600 Genk
T +32 89 35 49 66,
E: willy.hellings@hotmail.com – www.ruiterclubgenk.be

Opening hours

Weekdays: from 10 a.m. to midnight,
Weekends: from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Closed on Mondays

Bikepark Kattevennen

The bike park is for top-class sports mountain bikers, recreational mountain bikers and BMX riders. The high-level training suit, the asphalt pumptrack or the beginner's trail? You choose what suits you best.

Taverne De Krater

Take a rest over a snack and a drink while the children romp around on the playground.

More information:

E: info@dekrater.be
www.dekrater.be

'Heempark'

Halfway between the station of Genk and 'Kattevennen' is 'Heempark'. Here, you can stroll peacefully between the various gardens. The playground and farmyard animals will delight the children.

Opening hours

'Heempark':
Mo - Thur: 9.00 a.m. - 12.00 p.m. and 2.00 p.m. - 5.00 p.m.
Fri: 9.00 a.m. - 12.00 p.m. and 2.00 p.m. - 4.00 p.m.
From 12/07 to 15/08:
Mon-Tue-Wed-Fri: 8.30 a.m. - 1.00 p.m.;
Thur: 9.00 a.m. - 12.00 p.m. and 2.00 p.m. - 5.00 p.m.

For the opening hours of the cafeteria, please visit www.heempark.be

More information

T: +32 (0)89 65 46 15
E: heempark@genk.be – www.heempark.be

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LIETEBERG

POORT TOT HET NATIONAAL PARK HOGE KEMPEN



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GATEWAY' LIETEBERG'

Stalkerweg
3690 Zutendaal

'Lietenberg' Reception desk

Opening hours

From 14/03 - 07/11:
daily from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

From 02/01 - 13/03 and 08/11 - 30/12:
daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

More information

Vzw De Lietenberg
T: +32 89 25 50 60
E: info@lieteberg.be
www.lieteberg.be

'Blotevoetenpad' (Barefeet Path)

Opening hours

From 14/03 - 07/11:
daily from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The 'Blotevoetenpad' (Barefeet Path) is open during this period under all weather conditions.

Last ticket sale at 5.20 p.m.

Ticket prices

Adults: € 6 p.p.
Children under 120 cm: € 4,50 p.p.
Groups from 20 persons: € 4,50 p.p.

Combination ticket 'Blotevoetenpad' (Barefeet Path) + Entomopolis + Butterfly Dome:

Adults: € 9 p.p.
Children under 120 cm: € 6,50 p.p.
Groups from 20 people: € 6,50 p.p.

Advance booking is required.

Entomopolis

Opening hours

From 14/03 - 07/11:
daily from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Last ticket sale at 6.00 p.m.

From 02/01 - 13/03 and 08/11 - 30/12:
daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Last ticket sale at 4.00 p.m.

Ticket prices

Adults: € 6 p.p.
Children under 120 cm: € 4 p.p.
Groups from 20 persons: € 4 p.p.

Combination ticket Entomopolis + 'Blotevoetenpad' (Barefeet Path) + Butterfly Dome:

Adults: € 9 p.p.
Children under 120 cm: € 6,50 p.p.
Groups from 20 people: € 6,50 p.p.

Advance booking is required.

Butterfly Dome

Entrance: € 2 p.p.
Groups from 20 people: € 1 p.p.

The presence of butterflies is seasonal.

Advance booking is required.

Cafeteria with garden terrace

Opening hours

From 14/03 - 07/11: daily from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

From 02/01 - 08/03 and 08/11 - 30/12: daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Bicycle rental

Opening hours

15/03 - 15/10, during the opening hours of the 'Lietenberg' reception desk

Rates

Bicycle: € 10
Children's bike: € 5
Child seat: € 1
Co-pilot tandem (from 5 years): € 20

Reservations: www.fietsparadijslimburg.be

DO NOT MISS!

Looking for additional hiking opportunities near Lietenberg? Then you should not miss Papendaalheide and Munsterbos.

Recreation area 'Papendaalheide'

Today, this former mining area is a special place where fishermen, divers and BMXers feel at home. This area is located right between 'Kattevennen' and 'Lietenberg', making it an ideal stepping stone between these two gates.

Address: Sellerveldstraat, 3690 Zutendaal

Free access from sunrise to sunset

Munsterbos

Just across the Albert Canal in neighbouring Bilzen lies the Munsterbos. This southern spur of the Kempen, with rich oak forests, ponds and reed beds has been part of the National Park since 2020.

The colleagues of the Regional Landscape Haspengouw & Voeren have marked out 2 walks:  - 6,3 km;  - 9,7km

Start: Leroyplein, 3740 Bilzen

www.wandeleninlimburg.be



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MECHELSE HEIDE

POORT TOT HET NATIONAAL PARK HOGE KEMPEN



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GATEWAY 'MECHELSE HEIDE'

Joseph Smeetslaan 280
3630 Maasmechelen

More information

Zetellaan 35, Eisden - Maasmechelen
T: +32 89 76 98 88
E: visit@maasmechelen.be
www.visitmaasmechelen.com

Beestige Boelbos

In the Beestige Boelbos on the Mechelse Heide, children (and their parents) can get to know some of the animal species of the National Park and their typical behaviour on a short 2 km walk.

By means of seven game modules, they will be challenged to crawl like snakes, jump like deer and waddle like lizards... A climbing tree and water feature will complete the fun!

Salamander campsite Cafeteria 't Salamanderke

Fully accessible for people with disabilities - Free Wifi - Charging point for electric bikes

For mountain bikers: possibility to shower after the trip (price: € 0.50), mountain bikes can be rinsed free of charge.

Opening hours

15/01 - 15/12: weekdays: from 11.00 a.m., during weekends, holidays and public holidays: from 9.00 a.m.

More information

J. Smeetslaan 280,
3630 Maasmechelen
T: +32 476 20 46 99
www.campingsalamander.be

Visit Maasmechelen

Opening hours

Weekdays: from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.,
Weekends & public holidays: from 9.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m.

Closed on 24 December (afternoon), 25 December,
31 December (afternoon) and 1 January.

Kikmolen campsite

Kikmolenstraat 3,
3630 Maasmechelen
T: +32 89 77 09 00
www.kikmolen.be

Brasserie Aen 't Venne

Kikmolenstraat 3,
3630 Maasmechelen
T: +32 89 77 09 09

Opening hours

01/05 - 30/09: Tuesday to Sunday from 11.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m.

Café De Statie

Spoorwegstraat 10,
3630 Maasmechelen (Eisden)
T: +32 493 33 57 12

Opening hours

01/04 - 30/09: every day from 9.00 a.m. - 9.00 p.m.
closed on Wednesdays

01/10 - 31/03: every day from 10.00 a.m. - 6.00 p.m.
closed on Wednesdays and Thursdays

Holiday home Fabiola

Weldoenerslaan 5,
3630 Maasmechelen
T: +32 89 77 41 50
E: info@vakantiehuisfabiola.be
www.vakantiehuisfabiola.be



© K.V.

GATEWAY 'PIETERSHEIM'

Petting Farm Car Park:
Neerharenweg 12, 3620 Lanaken

'Waterburcht' (moated castle) Car Park:
Waterstraat 52, 3620 Lanaken

Reception desk 'Waterburcht Pietersheim' (moated castle)

Opening hours

After autumn holiday until Easter holidays: weekends and public holidays: 12 p.m. to 4 p.m., closed on weekdays

Easter holidays until and inclusive of 1 May and September until and inclusive of the autumn holidays: daily from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

May until and inclusive of August: daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Ticket prices

Entrance 'Waterburcht' (moated castle): Free

Guided tour: 1 hour 30 - max. 25 persons per group - € 60 per group - subject to reservation.

More information

T: +32 89 77 25 34
E: waterburcht@lanaken.be
Hotel - www.pietersheim.be

Hotel Kasteel Pietersheim

Koning Albertlaan 255, 3620 Lanaken

More information

T: +32 89 21 72 07
E: info@pietersheim.com

Petting Farm & Playground

Opening hours

Every day from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Secretariat: weekdays from 8.30 a.m. to 12 p.m.,
from 1 p.m. until 4.15 p.m.

More information

T: +32 89 71 71 21 20
E: pietersheim@lanaken.be - www.pietersheim.be

Pony rides

Children can enjoy tours of the 'Pietersheim' estate on the back of cute ponies.

Opening hours

From Easter holiday until and inclusive of September: every Sunday from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Price

€ 3 per ride

More information

T: +32 89 71 21 20
E: pietersheim@lanaken.be - www.pietersheim.be

'Kabouterpad' (Gnomes' Path)

Ticket price

Free

More information

T: +32 89 71 21 20
E: pietersheim@lanaken.be - www.pietersheim.be

Café - restaurant Hoeve Pietersheim

While enjoying a snack or a drink, you can also recharge your electric bike at the dedicated charging station.

More information

T: +32 89 72 14 61
E: info@traiteurjaco.be - www.traiteurjaco.be

Holiday home with self-catering formula or full board

Ticket prices

Adults from € 26 pp/pn in high season and from € 13 pp/pn in low season. Special rates apply for children.

More information

T: +32 89 71 21 20
E: pietersheim@lanaken.be - www.pietersheim.be

Bicycle rental

Rental of bicycles, e-bikes and children's bikes.

Opening hours

Pick up bicycles during office hours:

Mon – Fri from 8.30 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 4.15 p.m.

From 1 April to 30 September: also during weekends and public holidays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (no time limit)

More information

T: +32 89 71 21 20
E: pietersheim@lanaken.be - www.pietersheim.be

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STATION AS

POORT TOT HET NATIONAAL PARK HOGE KEMPEN



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AS RAILWAY STATION

Stationsstraat 124,
3665 As

Take a journey through the fascinating past of Station As thanks to the new information panels with fun facts and photos. With the help of the Erfgoedapp you can also listen to the texts on your smartphone.

Free access all year round.

Reception desk As Railway Station

Opening hours:

April to September:

Every day from 10h – 12u and from 13u – 16u

More information

T: +32 89 39 10 86
toerisme@as.be
www.stationas.be



Watch tower

This 31-metre tall tower is a replica of the drilling tower which André Dumont used when he discovered coal in Limburg in 1917. Climb the tower for a breathtaking view, look through the 3D-viewmasters and discover how the landscape used to look like!

Freely accessible all year round.

Mini-train

The 1,300 m long narrow railway track takes you on a miniature train through the beautiful scenery of the 'Driebankenbos'.

For timetable, please visit www.stationas.be

Graffiti art on the station site

During a graffiti jam spree, 15 graffiti artists transformed several trainsets into colourful eye-catchers. This beautiful art project 'The Yard' is free to visit on the station site

Geological wall

Free access. Guided tours are also possible, subject to reservation.

Play Woods

Follow the green walk (3,4 km) and stop halfway the play wood. Tip: this is also a very nice picnic place!

Bicycle rental

Rental of bicycles, e-bikes, and children's bikes.

Rental period

From Easter to September, during office hours at Tourism As, subject to reservation.

More information & reservation:
www.fietsparadijslimburg.be

Taverne 't Stasjon

The oldest station building in Limburg is a pleasant stop.

Opening hours

Closed on Mondays

Tuesday to Sunday: 10 a.m. – 11.00 p.m. (open kitchen until 9 p.m.)

More information

T: + 32 89 23 52 45
E: info@stasjon.be - www.stasjon.be

Hotel - Restaurant Mardaga

Opposite the gateway Station As is Limburg's oldest hotel!

More information

Stationsstraat 121, 3665 As
T: +32 89 65 62 65
www.hotelmardaga.be

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DUINENGORDEL



© K.V.

COMMANDERY GRUITRODE (OUDSBERGEN)

The Teutonic Order of Knights, mainly known from the land commandery of Alden Biezen in Bilzen, also settled in rural Gruitrode. From the beginning of the 15th century, they built a second base here, under the supervision of the country commander. The Commandery of Gruitrode is not open to the public today. The entire site underwent a thorough overhaul to form a fully-fledged 'Gateway to the National Park'. It will be the ideal base from which to explore the DUINENGORDEL, the Itterbeek valley and the nearby Opitter.

TIP

If you would you like to discover Duinengordel on horseback, then set off from the Orshof or Sentower Parks.

Reception points

At the moment, there are 4 reception points where you can go as a visitor for more information about Duinengordel and from where you can start your visit to the area:

Orshof Reception Point

A restaurant and seminar centre are located in this Kempen farmhouse on the edge of Duinengordel. You can also spend the night in the welcoming guest rooms.

It is an ideal base for tours on foot, by bike, by horse and carriage or by mountain bike. The various routes can be picked up right in front of the door.

More information

Heymansweg 2, 3670 Neerglabbeek (Oudsbergen)
T: +32 89 81 08 00
E: info@orshof.be – www.orshof.be

Opening hours

Open every day

Zavelbos Reception Point

Camping Zavelbos is nestled between Duinengordel's woods and fens. The ideal starting point for a hike to the Oudsberg, but also for different cycling and mountain biking routes. Or just relax and unwind at the campsite with its beautiful pond.

More information

Kattebeekstraat 1, 3680 Maaseik, T: +32 89 75 81 46
E: zavelbos@limburgcampings.be - www.zavelbos.be

Opening hours

Open every day

Sentower Park Reception Point

This equestrian centre connects directly to the woods and fens of Ophovenderheide. The Oudsberg is just a stone's throw away. The spacious car park is the ideal starting point for horsemen. Here, you can also recharge your bike or enjoy a snack and a drink in the equestrian café in the central hall or on the terrace during events.

More information

Leemkuilstraat 21, 3660 Opplabbeek (Oudsbergen)
T: +32 89 36 43 17
E: info@sentowerpark.com – www.sentowerpark.com

Opening hours

Open during training sessions, competitions and events.

De Kastelein Reception Point

Bicycle and eatery café De Kastelein is located in Cultuur-punt, which also houses Oudsbergen's Tourist Office. Located in the centre of Gruitrode, near the Commandery of Gruitrode in fact, you can taste numerous local products and buy route maps. Several signposted routes start from here, either on foot or by bike. You can also recharge your electric bike at this reception point.

More information

Phil Bosmansplein 1, 3670 Gruitrode (Oudsbergen)
T: +32 89 85 76 50 – https://de-kastelein.business.site

Opening hours

Closed on Wednesdays

Joekelbos

Covering 12 hectares, this is the largest wooded adventure playground in Flanders. The paved path is wheelchair- and pushchair-accessible.

Access via Speeltuinstraat in Opplabbeek or by bike between junctions 526 and 527.

More information

Download the map via duinengordel.be/joekelbos

New! Multimovepath Park Itterdal

This multi-move path challenges children (3 - 12 years of age) to move through numerous natural obstacles and wooden play constructions. The path is 1.7 km long and clearly signposted.
(Opening planned for 2 June)

Address:

Opitterkiezel 240 bus B, 3960 Bree

Pole camping

Pole campsites Itter and Solt are located in the middle and on the edge of the woods in Solterheide. These are equipped with a tent site, a water pump, a picnic bench and shelter.

Accessible via Grote Routepad (GR) 561 Kempen-Maas path between Opitter and Neeroeteren. Both zones are only 700 to 800 meters apart via forest paths.

GPS-coordinates

Itter: N 51 06.283 E 5 39.200 - Solt: N 51 05.983 E 5 39.183

Picnic decks by the water

Near the walking and cycling route network:

Ruiterskuilen (Opplabbeek): between junctions 33 and 70 or via the yellow and blue walking loops in the hiking area Donderslag.

Bosbeek (Opoeteren): between junctions 37 and 38.

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THORPARK



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THORPARK (GENK AND AS)

While the Waterschei coal mine operated here at full capacity between 1924 and 1987, Thorpark is now a hotspot for technology, energy and innovation, accommodating new companies, training and research institutes alike. But it is also the ideal base from which to discover the Hoge Kempen National Park! Through the Stiemer Valley and the beautiful neighbourhood park that has recently been completed here, you will find yourself in one of the most special landscapes of the Hoge Kempen surprisingly quickly. The view from the spoil tip across the entire Hoge Kempen is unrivalled! In the coming years, this new 'Gateway to the National Park' will be further developed with all partners.

Address: André Dumontlaan 67, 3600 Genk

Thor Central

Thor Central is, with its two eateries, the perfect meeting place in Thorpark.

You can visit Thor Central freely or with a guide. And the latter is highly recommended, in fact, as it not only introduces you to this new location, the guide also tells you interesting stories about the time when the building was used as a mining building.

Charges

€ 70 per guide
(duration: 1.5 hours - max. 15 pers. per guide)

More information & reservation

E: visit@genk.be – www.visitgenk.be

Steenmanneljespad



The stone men or stone stacks of basalt stones show you the shortest way (2 km) to the top of the old coal mountain. Via the ErfgoedApp you discover the story of

Steenman, a fictitious Steenmannelje who takes you into the wonderful world of the Steenmanneljes. Moreover, Steenman knows everything about the heritage and nature in the area.

Waterschei mine depot

Former miners have transformed the former warehouse of the Waterschei coalmine into an exhibition space that gives an overview of the history and working in this coalmine. They invite you for a visit and a fascinating guided tour. You can also go there for a drink and in the summer, you can even enjoy a drink on a terrace among Genk's most striking monuments.

Opening hours

Every day from 1 p.m. – 5 p.m., except for public holidays and Mondays

Museum:

April to oktober: Tuesday – Sunday from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m., Monday closed
November to march: only on Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Closed on 25/12 and 1/1

Museum visit prices

Children < 6 years: free
Children from 6 to 12 years: € 3 p.p.
Adults: € 5 p.p.

More information

T: +32 89 73 18 34 / +32 475 82 08 26
E: mijnverleden@telenet.be – www.mijnndepot.be

Restaurant Partaasch

Opening hours

Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday; from 6 p.m.
Friday: from 12 p.m.
Sunday: vanaf 11.30 a.m.
Closed on Monday and Tuesday

More Information

T: +32 89 69 95 90
E: info@partaasch.be – www.partaasch.be

Brasserie Lampada

Opening hours

Monday - Friday: 11.30 a.m. – 2.30 p.m.
Saturday - Sunday: closed

More information

T: +32 89 69 95 91
E: info@thoratering.be – www.lampada.be

LABIOMISTA

On the foundations of the mining past and the old zoo of Zwartberg (Genk), the artist Koen Vanmechelen introduces you to his life's work in terms of identity, fertility & biocultural diversity. Enjoy a walk through the 24 hectares park with several of his (living) artworks and installations.

Opening hours

Open from 1 April 2020 to 8 November 2020.

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01/04-30/09: Tuesdays to Sundays and public holidays: from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. (last admission at 5 p.m.)

01/10-08/11: Tuesdays to Sundays and public holidays: from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (last admission at 4 p.m.)

Charges

Adults: € 10,00
Children < 18 years: free of charge
Students (on presentation of valid student card): € 6,00

Adults > 60 years old, people with disabilities & caregivers, teachers (on presentation of valid teacher card), Group of minimum 10 people (price per person): € 8,00

More information

Marcel Habetslaan 60, 3600 Genk
E: info@labiomista.be
T: +32 89 65 55 90 – www.labiomista.be

Taverne De Kolonie

'Taverne De Kolonie', a project of non-profit organisation Arbeidskansen, is one of the starting points of the Thorpark walking area. It is a friendly tavern where anyone is welcome for a cup of coffee and piece of cake, snack, a slightly more elaborate dinner or just for a nice glass of wine or a regional beer.

Opening hours

Monday - Saturday: 11 a.m. – 8 p.m.

More information

Bilzerweg 88, 3665 As
T: +32 89 59 23 62
E: info@arbeidskansen.be – www.arbeidskansen.be

TIP

Asch Airport

Leave De Kolonie with an app and discover the history of the old airport. Along the way, you will pass various historical features that bear witness to Asch's war past.

BERGERVEN



'T EILANDJE NEEROETEREN (MAASEIK)

The Zuid-Willem Canal, built in 1825, is an attractive canal that connects Maastricht with Weert. When in the 1930s, near Neeroeteren, a bend in the canal was shortened, an 'island' was created. This is already an ideal stopping place for the many cyclists on the towpaths, but in the coming years, a new 'Gateway to the National Park' will be developed here. Although it is still waiting game for a bicycle and walking bridge across the canal to open up the new wilderness of BERGERVEN behind it.

Kapel Van De Weerstand

Starting place Kapel van de Weerstand is the most central starting point for an exploration of the Bergerven nature reserve, where the Limburg Landschap nature association has been managing the area for many years.

Brugstraat, 3650 Dilsen-Stokkem

Recreatiedomein Warredal

Years ago, Warredal started out as an equestrian centre, which enjoys a lot of acclaim to this day. This was complemented by an Adventure Park, an Adventure mini-golf and real Forest Camp, where you can spend the night in cosy cabins that take you all the way back to basics. From here, you can also go for walks in Bergerven.

More information

Ketelstraat 77, 3680 Maaseik (Neeroeteren)
T: +32 89 85 23 16
E: info@warredal.be – www.warredal.be

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Volmolen

The Volmolen is a 17th-century water mill, which has been renovated into a unique, hospitable place. You can stay in the Volmolen B&B, where sustainability, along with peace and quiet, reign supreme. The flamenco dance studio with organic tapas and wine bar and shop is a special meeting place where everyone is welcome.

Holiday home

Volmolenstraat 10, 3680 Maaseik (Opoeteren)
T: +32 493 79 23 31 – +32 89 86 64 67
www.facebook.com/vakantieverblijfvolmolen

Danshuis Volmolen

Volmolenstraat 11, 3680 Maaseik (Opoeteren)
T: +32 473 59 37 11
<https://danshuis-volmolen.business.site>

Dorpermolen

Be sure to pay a visit to the Dorpermolen! This buckwheat mill, restored in 2017, is the oldest mill in Opoeteren.

Opening hours

June and Sept.: every 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

1 July - 31 August: every Saturday and Sunday from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Free of charges

More information

Toerisme Maaseik
T: 089 81 92 90
E: toerisme.maaseik@maaseik.be
www.toerisme.maaseik.be/watermolens



© K.D.L.

TIP

Got too many ideas for one day? Find accommodation at www.visitlimburg.be and feel free to stay a bit longer!

Colophon

Photography: Buiten-beeld.nl – Els Branderhorst (cover), Kristien Wintolders, Erwin Christis, Anneleen Mengels, Misjel Decler, Koen De Langhe, Krist Van Laere, Stad Genk, Raymond Lambie, Jorien Swinnen, Myriam Arits, Henry Peters, Luc Aerts, Kristof Vrancken, Jody Steyls, Kris Thijs, Peter Baas, Gemeente As, Onroerend Erfgoed - Kris Vandevorst, UHasselt - Liesbeth Driessen, Vilda - Yves Adams, Vilda - Jeroen Mentens, Vilda - Lars Soerink, Vilda - Rollin Verlinde, Hugo Thomassen, Luc Daelemans en Rudi Van Beek, Stories by light, Studio Leyssen, Visit Maasmechelen, Katrijn Vranken, Toerisme Lanaken



Verantwoordelijke uitgever:

Regionaal Landschap Kempen en Maasland vzw,
Ignace Schops, Winterslagstraat 87, 3600 Genk

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This visitor guide was realised with the financial support of:



magjezien

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New and not to be missed!

The **'Magjezien'** is a free magazine that gives you a taste - you can take this literal! - of three special regions: Hoge Kempen National Park, Grenspark Kempen-Broek and RivierPark Maasvallei in the Regionaal Landschap Kempen and Maasland.

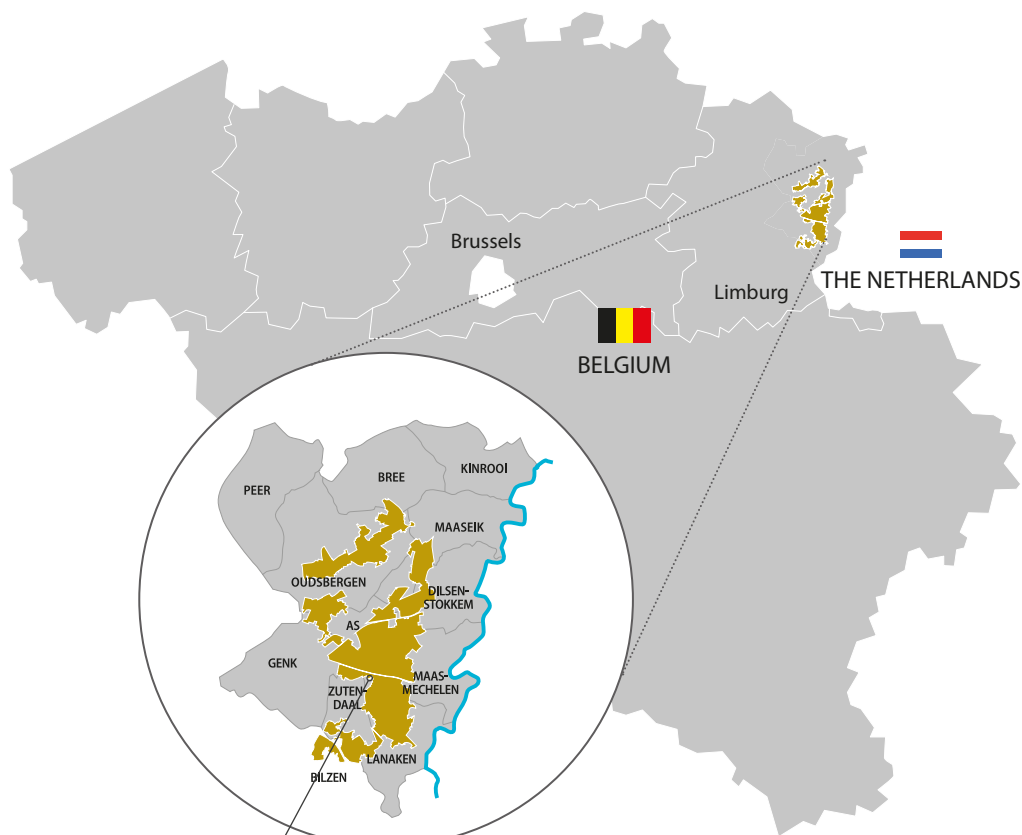
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Nationaal Park Hoge Kempen

Hoge Kempen National Park offers nature in all its glory! The National Park in the Belgian Province of Limburg is an area of outstanding natural beauty where over 12 000 ha of forest and heathland are managed and protected. The area extends over the municipalities of As, Bilzen, Bree, Dilsen-Stokkem, Genk, Lanaken, Maaseik, Maasmechelen, Oudsbergen and Zutendaal.

Extensive pine forests are interspersed with purple flowering heather, shifting dunes and mirroring fens; large lakes bear witness to the former gravel and sand-extraction activities; high peaks offer great views, ... Numerous rare and unusual animals live in this natural setting.

Everyone is welcome to relax in whichever way they like, whether it is hiking, cycling, horseback riding, mountain biking ... or just enjoying all this beauty while doing absolutely nothing. The gateways and reception points are the ideal starting point for your visit.

This visitor guide, packed with tips, inspiration and information, will help you on your way!



For more information, please contact:
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