



AQUA LIBRA
EXCLUSIVE YACHTCHARTER



TOURIST SAILING GUIDE

AQUA LIBRA YACHTCHARTER

The Aqua Libra boat rental is located at the lovely home port of De Spaanjerd in Kinrooi, near Maaseik. From here, you can sail to the greatest variety of destinations. You can find peace in the expansive nature reserves where wild Konik horses and ancient Galloway cattle make their home. You can find haute cuisine and culture when you follow the Willemsroute (Zuid-Willemsvaart) south to the historic Bassin near the heart of Maastricht, or to Liège – the first French-speaking city along your route – in Belgium. Follow the Meuse as it meanders on to Namur, Dinant, and even to the north of France. Discover beautiful and historic locations along the Willemsroute, such as Oud-Rekem, declared the most beautiful village in Flanders, and the old garrison city of Leopoldsburg. You will also find wonderful outlet shops at Maasmechelen Village. Sail along the small transit marinas that connect with the renowned network of cycle routes. Relax at one of many outdoor cafés at the water's edge as you enjoy one of the seven hundred beers brewed in Belgium.

3000 HECTARES OF CONTIGUOUS WATER FOR RECREATION

Aqua Libra's home port is located at the centre of the Maasplassen (Meuse Lakes). Its 3000 hectares make this the largest contiguous water-sport region in the Benelux countries. You can sail north to Friesland or Zeeland in two or three days. Visit the church city of Roermond, hailed for having the most attractive city centre in 2009. See the Oolderhuuske Marina with its Mediterranean atmosphere. Or sail on Venlo to the Leukermeer and Mooker Plassen. The Belgian provinces of Limburg, Antwerp, Flemish and Walloon Brabant, and Liège invite you to discover the cities of Antwerp, Mechelen, Louvain, Brussels, and Charleroi on the Sambre river. All these places are waiting to welcome you in your "own" Linssen yacht.

Welcome to Maaseik! Enjoy its rich culture and the heartfelt hospitality for which Limburg is famous.

Arlette Casters and Luc Vanthoor



You have here Aqua Libra Yacht Charter's tourist sailing guide.





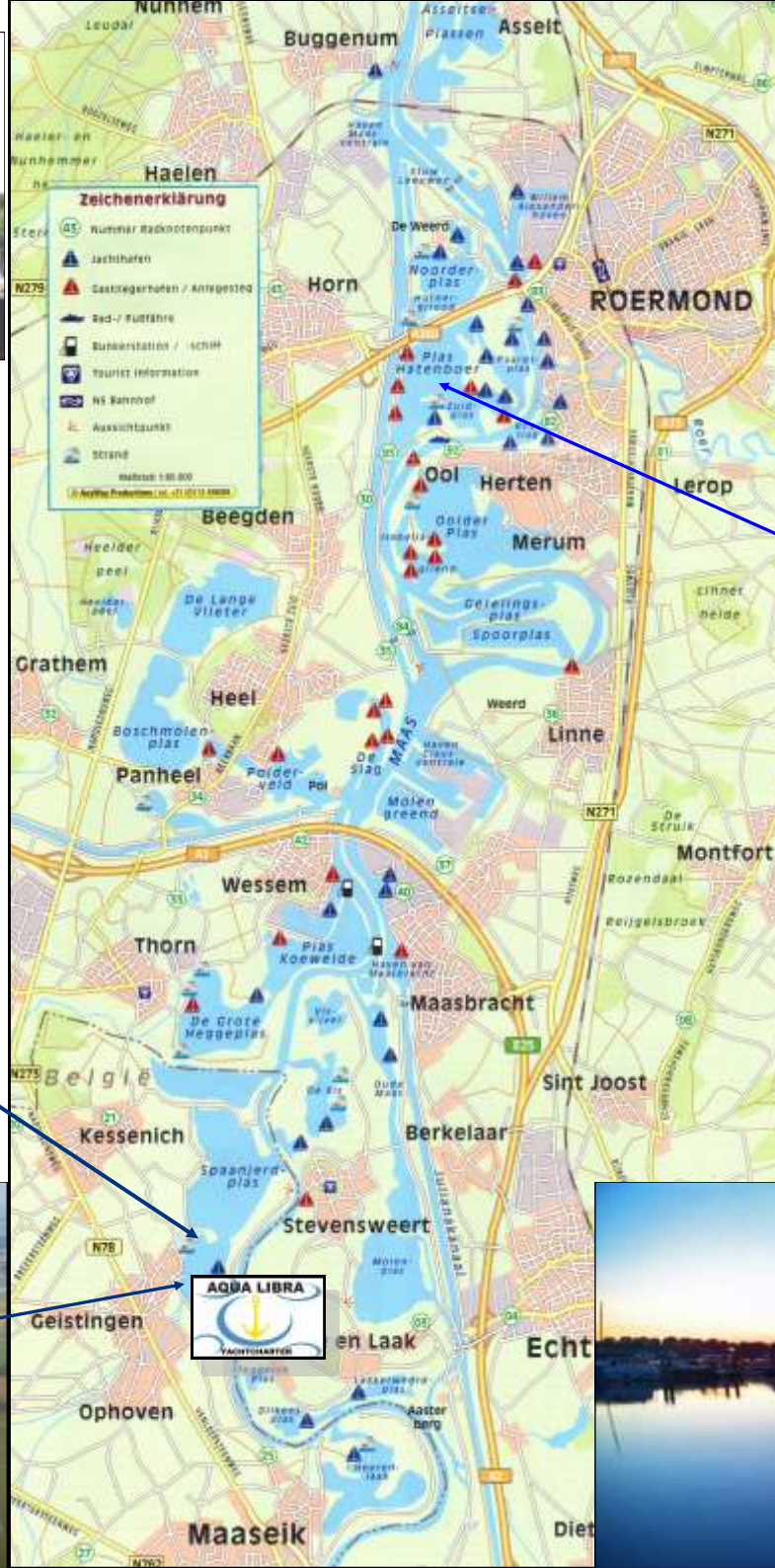
Marina

The Maasplassen – a string of lakes adjoining the Meuse river – comprise the largest contiguous watersport area in the Benelux countries. The “Meuse Lakes” have access to a great number of marinas, large and small, all outfitted for comfort and luxury.

De Spaanjerd Marina

De Spaanjerd Marina is the most modern and best-equipped yacht harbour in Western Europe. It is also the largest inland marina yet offers a remarkably welcoming atmosphere for families, where children and parents alike can relax and have fun.

www.marec.be



Discover the Maasplassen at the weekend

Roermond

Roermond has been a Catholic diocese since 1559. The city centre is home to a variety of historic churches including the St. Christopher Cathedral. On certain days of the week, visitors can climb its 86-metre-high tower, which offers an impressive view over the city and the neighbouring Maasplassen.

Roermond is also a fun shopping city complete with everything from small boutiques housed in historic monuments to the Designer Outlet Center with close to 200 brand name shops that attract just under four million visitors each year.



Marina “Oolderhuuske” Roermond.

<http://www.oolderhuuske.nl/>



A warm welcome to Limburg

The Limburg region is located in the heart of Europe on both sides of the Meuse river. Its diversity makes Limburg the perfect holiday destination for young and old. The region, which is flat and wooded in the north, grows increasingly hilly as it moves south, dotted with lush pastures, fruit orchards, impressive lakes, and winding waterways. Limburg has a mild, sunny climate, countless historic buildings, and a rich culture.

The people of Limburg are famed for their hospitality and their love of life, food, and drink.

Active in Limburg

When it comes to active holidays, Limburg offers a wealth of possibilities. The landscape, which varies from flat to hilly, invites walkers and cyclists to its relaxing surroundings. Watersports enthusiasts come into their own in the Maasplassen, the largest interconnected watersport area in the Benelux countries. The area offers 3000 hectares of water – impressive lakes connected by the Meuse river – surrounded by unspoilt nature populated by wild horses and Gallo-way cattle.



Walking ①



Network of cycle routes ②



A children's paradise ③



Beach Fun ④



Watersport ⑤

Limburg's Cuisine

Limburg's gastronomic tradition, both in Belgium and the Netherlands, expresses its love of the good life. The region offers a wide variety of culinary treats and restaurants offering innovative, international dishes. Many of the restaurants here can be found in the Michelin and Gault Millau guides.



700 types of beer ⑥



Leading Gastronomy ⑦



Enjoyment ⑧



Aldeneck wine estate ⑨



Romance ⑩

Culture

The Limburg region offers a wide variety of cultural and historic events. The Meuse Valley features a host of castles, churches and cloisters typical only to this area. Here you can experience the region's rich history first hand through its architecture, beautiful gardens and enchanting parks. Belgian and Dutch Limburg alike offer historic events such as the "Old Limburg Schuttersfeest" – a historical festival filled with pageantry and marksmanship – in the first and second weeks of July. And *Carnaval* – Mardi Gras Limburg style – is known and loved well across its own borders.



Roermond Outlet Center ⑪



Thorn ⑫



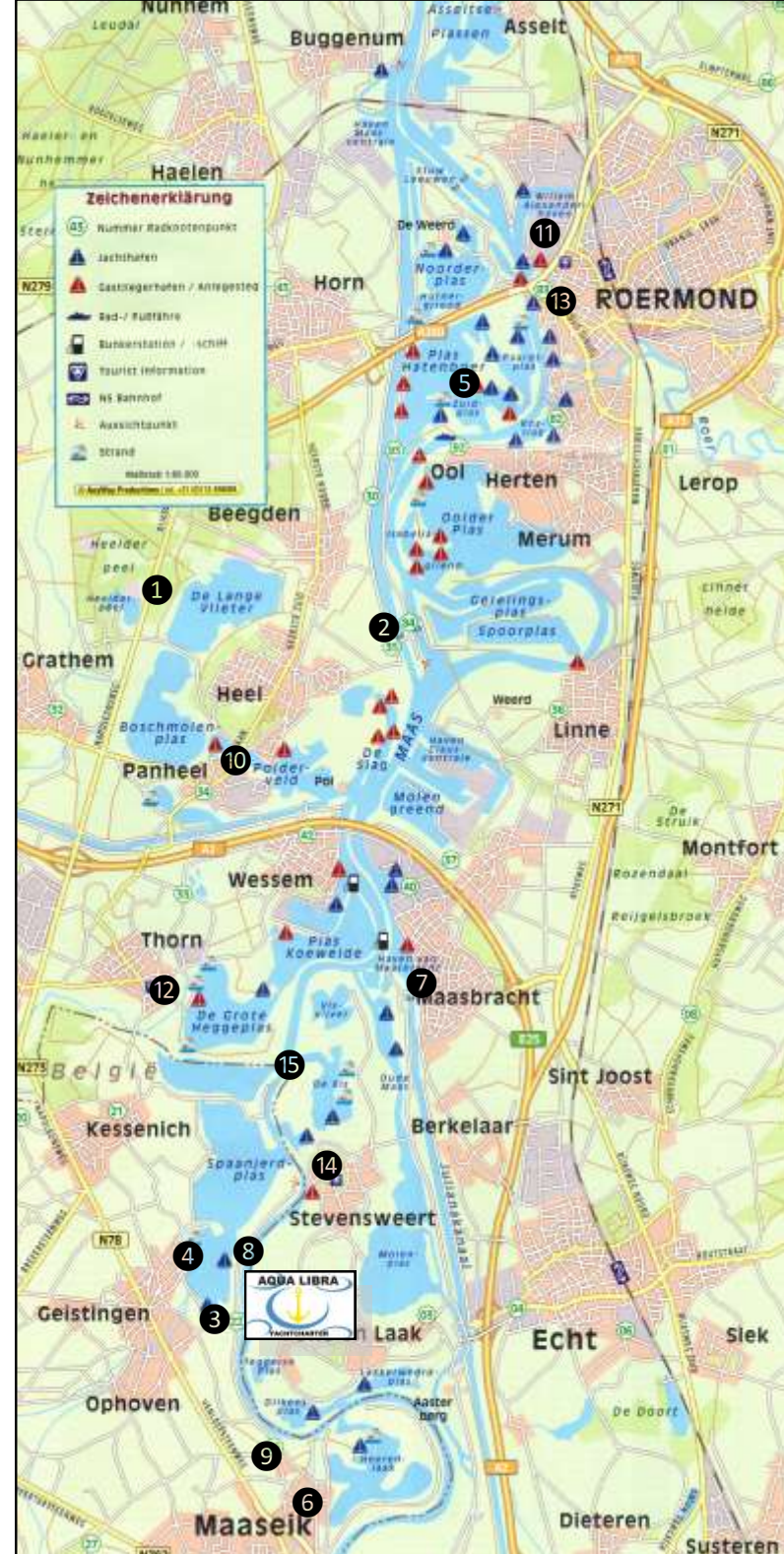
Roermond ⑬



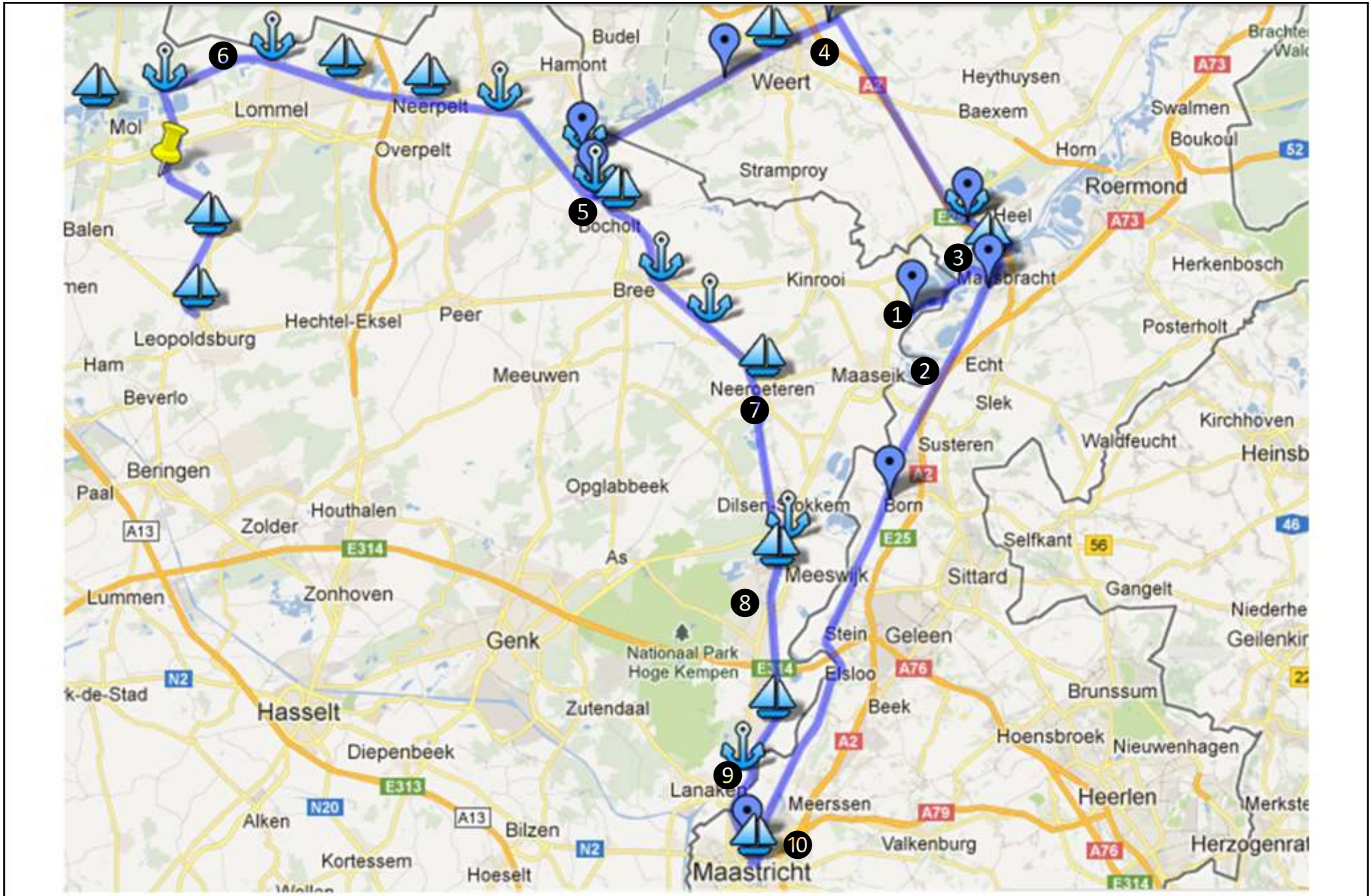
Stevensweert ⑭



Wild horses ⑮



The Willemsroute : Midweek(4— 6 days)





Lemmensmill



Lakes of the Meuse



Village Center Kessenich



Candlelight Tour



Kinrooi: 1

Our home port, De Spaanjerd, features the very latest technical and sanitary facilities. The marina features floating docks, secure parking areas, a petrol station, a launderette, and several brasseries complete with outdoor seating looking out over the water. Our home port is the ideal starting place for lovely, relaxed boat trips.

Kinrooi is the most north-easterly municipality in Belgium and comprises five parishes. From 2012 to 2014, Kinrooi is the culinary ambassador for Flanders. It is well known for its network of cycle routes, historic windmills, charming village centres, and “exhilarating quiet”.



Brothers “Van Eyck”



Vineyards



Wine Estate Aldeneyck



Market Place Maaseik



Market Maaseik



Oldest Pharmacy

Maaseik: 2

Maaseik is a small city with the largest historic market square in Belgium. Situated 4.5 kilometres from home port De Spaanjerd and just a kilometre from the marina in Heerenlaak. This is the birthplace of the famous Van Eyck brothers. Among Maaseik’s church relics you will find the oldest handwritten gospels in the Benelux countries, the Codex Eyckensis. Visit Belgium’s oldest apothecary or one of the museums in the city centre. In the immediate surroundings we can highly recommend a visit to the Aldeneyck wine estate.

From Heerenlaak, the Meuse is no longer navigable upstream. Boats must sail downstream towards the Netherlands. From Maasbracht, you can sail through the Maasbracht locks (equipped with floating bollards) into the Julianakanaal (Juliana Canal). This way, you can follow the Willemsroute in a clockwise direction. However, you can also sail through the Panheel locks into the Wessem–Nederweert canal and follow the Willemsroute in an anticlockwise direction.

If you sail into the Julianakanaal by way of Maasbracht, the first place to moor is Maastricht, between four and five hours’ sailing from the locks. If you depart from Panheel, the first place to moor is in Weert, one and-a-half to two hours’ sailing.



Sundown over the lakes of the Meuse



Petrified Forest in Stevensweert



Channel Wessem—Nederweert

Wessem: ③

Wessem is a historic city. Its streets are paved with Maaskeien – cobblestones from the Meuse river. In the city centre you can find trading houses built in the Guelders style and a Romanesque church built around the year 1000. Wessem also features a large marina equipped with the latest facilities. The Wessem “comfort park” is a wellness centre floating on the water



Wild Horses



Galloway



Belgian—Dutch border



Weert en Nederweert : ④

Nederweert lies on the border between the Dutch provinces of Limburg and Noord-Brabant, and the confluence of three waterways. It is a place of nature, rest, and space. Nederweert is a small place, but offers a centre of great character including historic buildings, picturesque cafés, and the Eynderhof open air museum.

Weert’s transit marina is just a few minutes’ walk from the town centre. You can do your shopping just a hundred metres from the marina. Weert is a medium-sized city which saw its heyday between the 14th century and 16th centuries when it was at the centre of the Peel region. At that time, the city even had its own mint, castle, and city walls. It still features a monumental church and cloister.

If you follow the Zuid-Willemsvaart towards Bocholt (Belgium), you will enter a peaceful nature reserve. Just beyond Weert, you will pass Lock 16 and enter Belgium shortly thereafter. Once in Belgium, Locks 17 and 18 are quite close to one another. At these locks, the lock keeper will gladly lend a hand.



Lock 17 in Lozen



Bunker in Bree



Marina Nederweert

Bocholt: ⑤

Bocholt (Belgium) is a convenient landing stage with shopping facilities just a hundred metres away. It is there that the Zuid-Willemsvaart and the Bocholt-Herentals Canal meet. Bocholt is home to Europe’s largest brewery museum, just a kilometre from the marina. Bocholt also features a number of charming cafés and restaurants. From there you can sail to Lommel and onward to Leopoldsburg, or otherwise towards Maastricht. If you sail to Leopoldsburg, you will pass through the charming canal to Beverlo. However, Leopoldsburg is the “end of the line”. From there you can only sail back north again.



Channel Beverlo



Brewery museum Bocholt

Lommel : 6

The city of Lommel is a tourist attraction in the north of Belgian Limburg. It is both a green oasis and a centre of trade. Unspoilt natural dunes make way for deep-blue lakes and expansive forests featuring numerous walking paths. De Meerpaal marina is about nine kilometres from the centre of Lommel, and is surrounded by nature. De Meerpaal is a particularly well-equipped marina and comprises forty berths. A tavern located right at the marina, complete with outdoor seating, invites you to stop for a drink or a bite to eat. The marina connects directly with a maze of walking paths and a network of cycle routes.



Channel Bocholt—Herentals



Lommel—city of Glass



Unspoiled nature



Dunes and Lakes



Marina “De Meerpaal”

Neeroeteren—Maaseik : 7

Just to the south of Neeroeteren you will find an especially charming marina called Het Eilandje (The Little Island). A tavern with outdoor seating and a playground offers you food and drink at reasonable prices. There are almost always a few berths free. The marina does not take reservations but, by phoning +32 (0)479 652 025, you can ask ahead if there is space. It is a ten-minute walk from Het Eilandje to the centre of Neeroeteren and its well-known café Oud Oteren.

Maasmechelen : 8

The city of Maasmechelen reflects a long history as a mining town. From its transit marina, it is less than a two-minute walk to the popular Maasmechelen Village complete with 170 brand name shops offering standard discounts of up to 70%. Maasmechelen is a melting pot of cultures demonstrated by the wide variety of restaurants and cafés. There is also a cinema located just next to the marina and the city offers countless options for entertainment and relaxation. From the base of the old mineshaft towers, you can walk along the kruinenpad, an elevated walkway that takes you through the treetops. It’s a special experience!



Water Mill Neeroeteren



Outlet Shopping Maasmechelen



Walking in the “National Park Hoge Kempen”



Mining Shaft towers

Rekem—Lanaken : 9

Lanaken lies at the very southern end of the Grensmaas (the area where the Meuse serves as the border between Belgium and the Netherlands) just five kilometres from Maastricht. Lanaken is the meeting point of four popular regions: Maasland, Haspengouw, Kempen and Mergelland. Since 2008 Lanaken has been home to “Flanders’ most beautiful village”: Oud Rekem. This historic village features its own landing stage and invites a visit.

Just next to the dock you can admire D’Aspremont-Lynden Castle. Oud-Rekem’s centre is just three kilometres from the dock. At the old tollhouse in Smeermaas, to the south, there is a landing stage just three kilometres from the centre of Lanaken. Neither of these docks offers any special facilities.



Hoge Kempen National Park



Oud Rekem



Walking in the treetops



Hoge Kempen National Park



D’Aspremont-Lynden Castle

Maastricht : 10

Maastricht is home to 1,666 historic buildings and numerous museums, in addition to impressive and highly varied architecture. This city, which straddles the Meuse river, offers a rich array for the culture lover. Maastricht is renowned for its vibrant nightlife and café society.

The city also offers multiple locations at which to berth. Just beyond Lock 19, you can sail into the historic Bassin. To enter the marina, it will be necessary to lower your mast and Bimini top. The Bassin is fairly narrow and can get noisy at night as it is located so close to the city centre. It is nevertheless a uniquely historic place to stay.

Upstream along the Meuse, you may prefer to berth at the Pietersplas Yacht Harbour. From here, public transport or a short taxi ride will bring you effortlessly into Maastricht’s centre. And, guests at the marina receive special taxi rates. The Pietersplas Yacht Harbour is well equipped and offers every convenience.



Maastricht's St. Servatius Bridge



Pietersplas Yacht Harbour



Vrijthof Square, Maastricht



Bassin Marina Maastricht

Anyone who loves food and drink – the good life in general – must not pass Maastricht by. From highly rated restaurants to charming bistros, Maastricht offers something for everyone.

The city is also connected to an extensive network of cycle routes. On Fridays from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, the city centre features a charming open air market.

A two-day visit to Maastricht is certainly worth the time.

For more information, visit

www.vvmmaastricht.eu.



Maastricht by Night



Vrijthof



Vrijthof by Night



From Maastricht you can sail north along the Julianakanaal by way of the Limmel Lock (which is open most days) to the lock at Born. There are berths at the villages of Born and Echt, though all the commercial shipping along this route makes them an ill-advised stay. At the end of the Julianakanaal you will return to the lock at Maasbracht, with its floating bollards. Before returning to the home port, you may find the Koeweide Marina at Wessem an attractive place to stop. The trip back to Aqua Libra is just a stone's throw from here.



Julianachannel Echt



Comfortparc Wessem



Cycling along the Willems Route



Koeweide Marina

The Willemsroute

The Willemsroute (Willems Route) is a good alternative for pleasure craft sailing from 's Hertogenbosch (also known as Den Bosch) or Roermond to Maastricht. As a result of construction on the locks along the Julianakanaal between 2008 and 2012, pleasure craft were diverted to the Zuid-Willemsvaart. However, the detour gained enormous popularity, not only as an alternative route, but because of its charm, peaceful surroundings, and safety.

For more information, visit

www.dewillemsroute.eu

www.vvmiddenlimburg.nl

www.toerismelimburg.be

Route Roermond—'s Hertogenbosch—Tilburg—Eindhoven (5— 7 Dagen)



Northern Route: Meuse to the Zuid-Willemsvaart

From our home port, De Spaanjerd, you will sail through the lock at Linne to Roermond. In high season, the lock keepers will offer assistance. The lock has a fall of four metres. Total sailing time is about two hours, including time at the lock.

Kinrooi to Roermond (20 km, 1 lock)

Roermond dates back to Roman times and has been occupied by a variety of rulers. All the different influences have left their mark on the city. The Rattentoren (Rats' Tower) is a reminder of Roermond's days as a fortified city. It now serves as an exhibition space. One important relic of Roermond's history as a bulwark of the Catholic Church is the Onze Lieve Vrouw in 't Zand (Our Lady in the Sand) Chapel dating to the 13th century. In the city's market square, you will find the St. Christopher Cathedral with a remarkable golden statue of the city's patron saint atop the spire. The cathedral dates to 1410. If you're in Roermond just before midday, be sure to visit the market square, listen to the carillon, and notice that life-sized statues in the city hall tower are dancing to the music. The statues represent a number of notable figures from the city's history. In less than three minutes you can walk from the city centre to Roermond's Outlet Shopping Centre. The Centre is renowned well across the borders and welcomes more than four million visitors each year! Roermond offers a number of marinas all with extensive facilities. Also be sure to visit the Oolderhuuske Resort Marina with its unique Mediterranean atmosphere.



Outlet Shopping Roermond



City center Roermond



"Tower of Rats" Roermond

Roermond—Venlo (30 Km - 2 Locks)

Venlo: The first mention of fortifications at the place now known as Venlo dates back to Roman times. At the time, the village of Blariacum – later named Blerick – was located on the west bank of the Meuse. It is now part of the city of Venlo just across the river. During the Middle Ages, Venlo was a walled trade city. Many historic buildings were destroyed during the Second World War. Nevertheless, a walk through the city will reveal numerous traces of its rich past. A few examples include the monumental city hall dating to the 16th century, the Huis Schreurs built in the Renaissance Guelders style, the Oude Weeshuis (old orphanage), the Martinuskerk (St. Martin’s Church), and the famed Romerhuis. The old buildings serve as a backdrop for the many charming cafés that are especially inviting in the summer months. There is lots of shopping to be found both in Blerick and Venlo. The largest shopping centre is on the east side of the river. Venlo offers a transit marina and a fully functional marina just downstream, north of the city.

:For more information, visit <http://www.lustforlimburg.com/>



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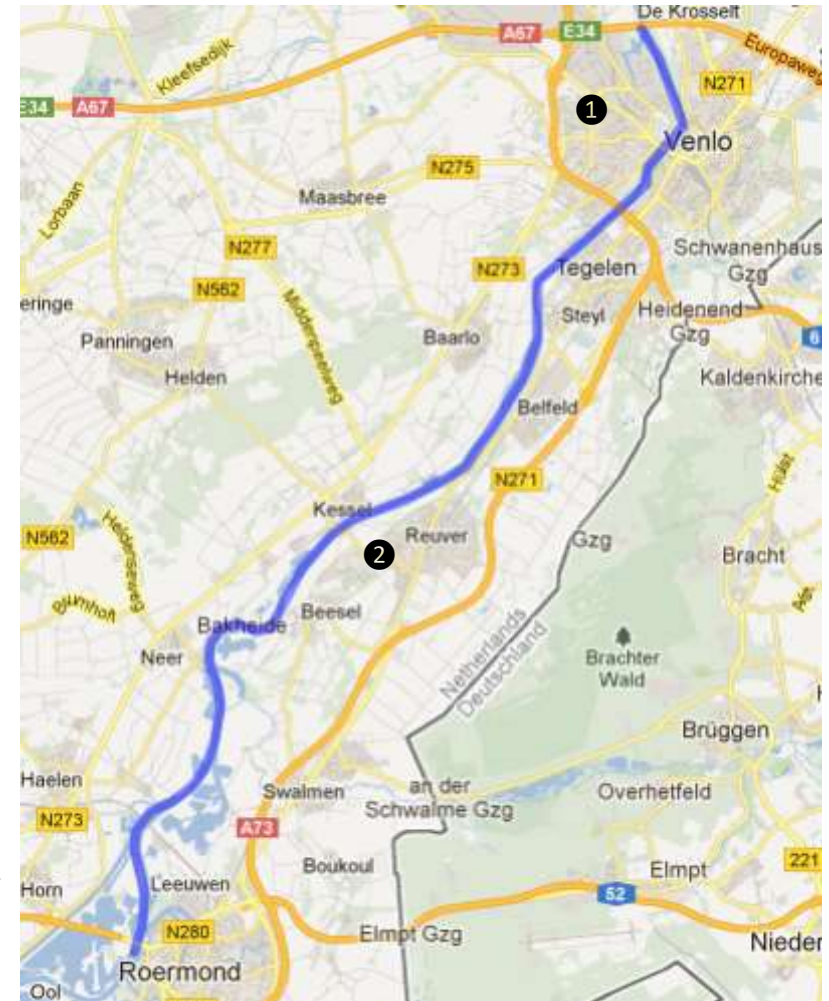


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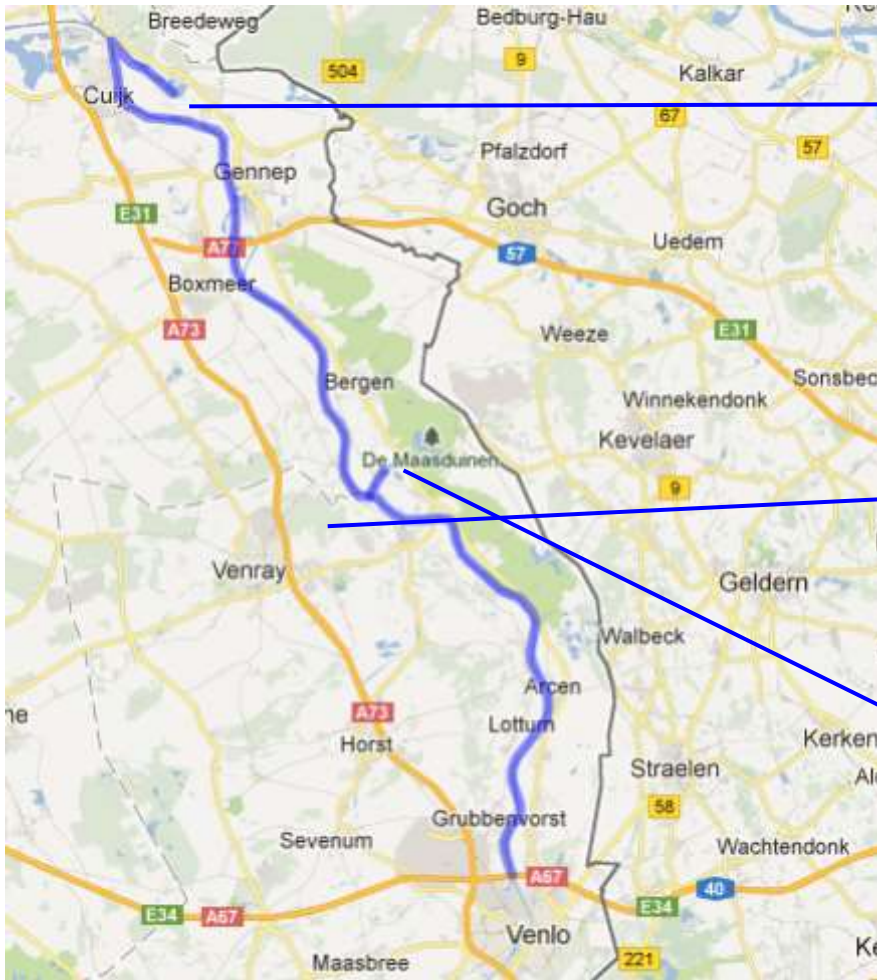


2

Kessel: During the Roman era, Kessel was a strategically important village on the Meuse. The Medieval fortress De Keverberg stands on a hill near the river in the town centre. At the end of the Second World War, the German occupiers blew up the fortress so completely that there was little to restore. However, a visit to the ruins will give you a good idea of the fortress’s impressive size. We advise that nature lovers pay a special visit to the Kesselse Bos (Kessel Wood) and the Heldense Bos (Helden Wood). These areas are known as “shifting dunes”. A quarter of a century ago, pine trees were planted in these woods to be used as shoring poles for the coal mines in the south of the country.



Venlo - Cuyck : (55 Km - 1 Sluis)



Mook to Plasmolen The Mookerheide (Mook Heath) is a fascinating nature reserve set about 60 metres above sea level. The nature reserves between Molenhoek and Plasmolen are located along a moraine – a ridge created during the last ice age. The Mookerplas (Mook Lake) is situated between Mook and Middelaar. Its Grote Siep Leisure Centre makes it an ideal location to sunbathe, swim, windsurf, sail, and fish. Two marinas, a variety of attractions, and numerous pleasant cafés and restaurants all bring the Plasmolen to life.

Venray to De Peel : The Peel Region is slightly off to the west of the Meuse. Between the Meuse Valley and the Peel Region, you will find the town of Venray, which features an attractive shopping centre. Venray’s St. Peter Church (Sint Petruskerk) features a collection of medieval paintings.

For more information, visit : lustforlimburg.com.

Port “t Leuken” in the middle of nature : de.maasduinen



Cuijk - 's Hertogenbosch (60 Km—3 Locks)



's Hertogenbosch : The city of 's Hertogenbosch also goes by the name of Den Bosch. It is the historic and cultural capital of the province of North Brabant. The city fortifications have played an important role in the history of the entire country. And much of its walls still stand today. Within the walls, the infrastructure of the medieval streets and alleys is still easily recognisable. At its heart you will find the triangular market square, the oldest place in the city. It features a beautiful city hall and the city's oldest brick building, De Moriaan. The most important historic building is the late-Gothic Sint-Janskathedraal (St. John's Cathedral), which was completed in the 16th century, during the city's political and financial heyday.

Den Bosch is rated fifth in the Netherlands as the most lively and friendly shopping city. If you like sidewalk cafés, there is no shortage of them on the market square and surrounding streets. A fun alternative to sailing in your own boat is a tour in a four-person electric boat (called "whisper-boats") on the Binnendieze, a small tributary of the Meuse that runs through the old city. In fact, you can even take the boat under the city!



Canals under Den Bosch



Cathedral Den Bosch

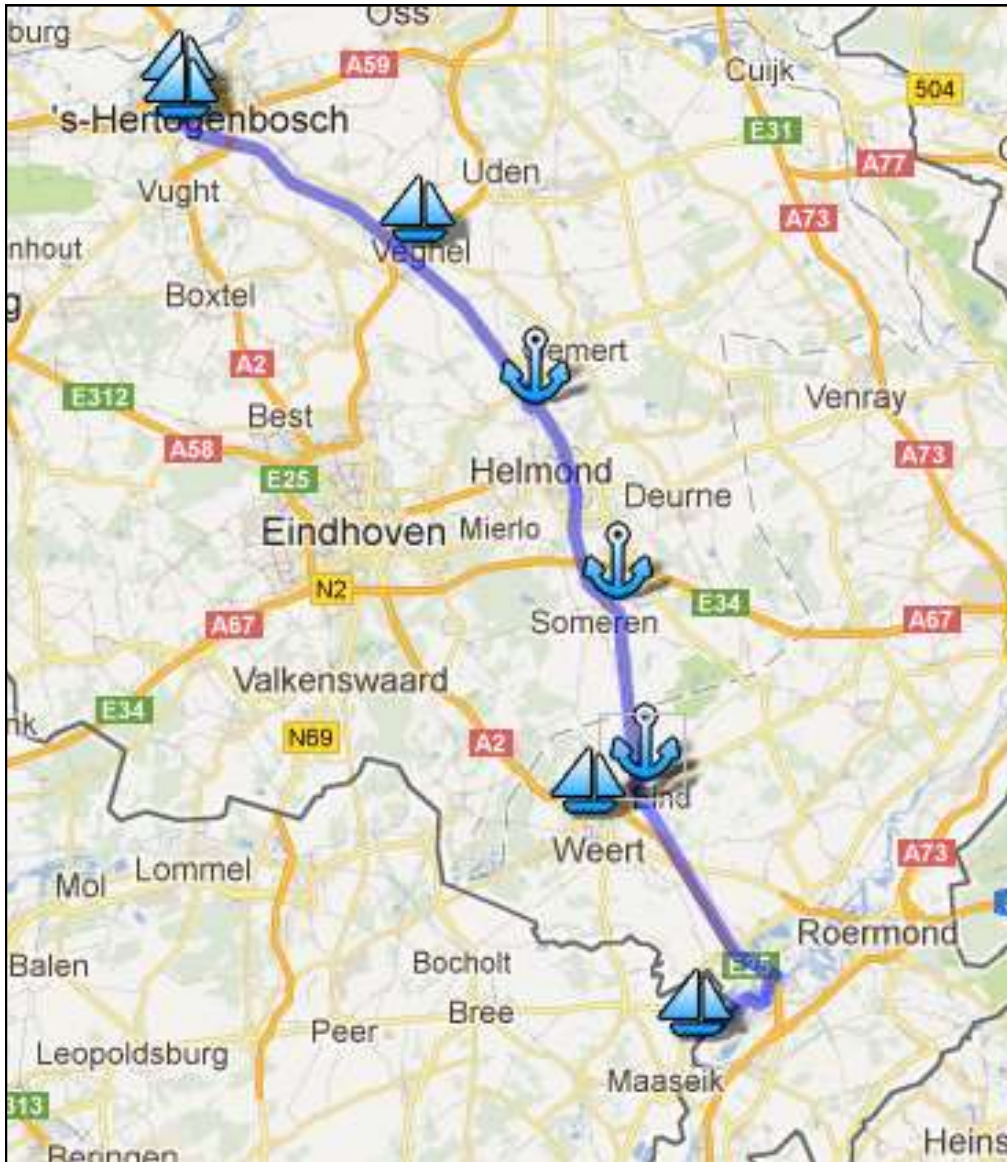


Binnendieze



From 's Hertogenbosch, you can return to De Spaanjerd in a day. If you choose not to take that route, we can suggest an alternative, which you will find on p. 17.

's Hertogenbosch - Helmond - Weert - Kinrooi : 85 Km - 12 Locks



The Zuid-Willemsvaart is a relatively calm and narrow canal. During peak season, there is less commercial shipping on the water and more space for pleasure craft. At the locks, there is sufficient attention for pleasure craft, although commercial shipping does have priority.

The Zuid-Willemsvaart makes its way through a varied landscape. Many of the locks feature places to berth. However, anchoring is prohibited along the length of the canal. You can do the entire trip in a single day. All of the locks (with the exception of Panheel) have a low fall. Take care when leaving 's Hertogenbosch (Den Bosch): before the first lock there is nowhere to moor and the canal is quite narrow. Keep an ear on your VHF radio at the first lock



S ' Hertogenbosch—Heusden—Biesbosch : 35 Km - 1 Lock

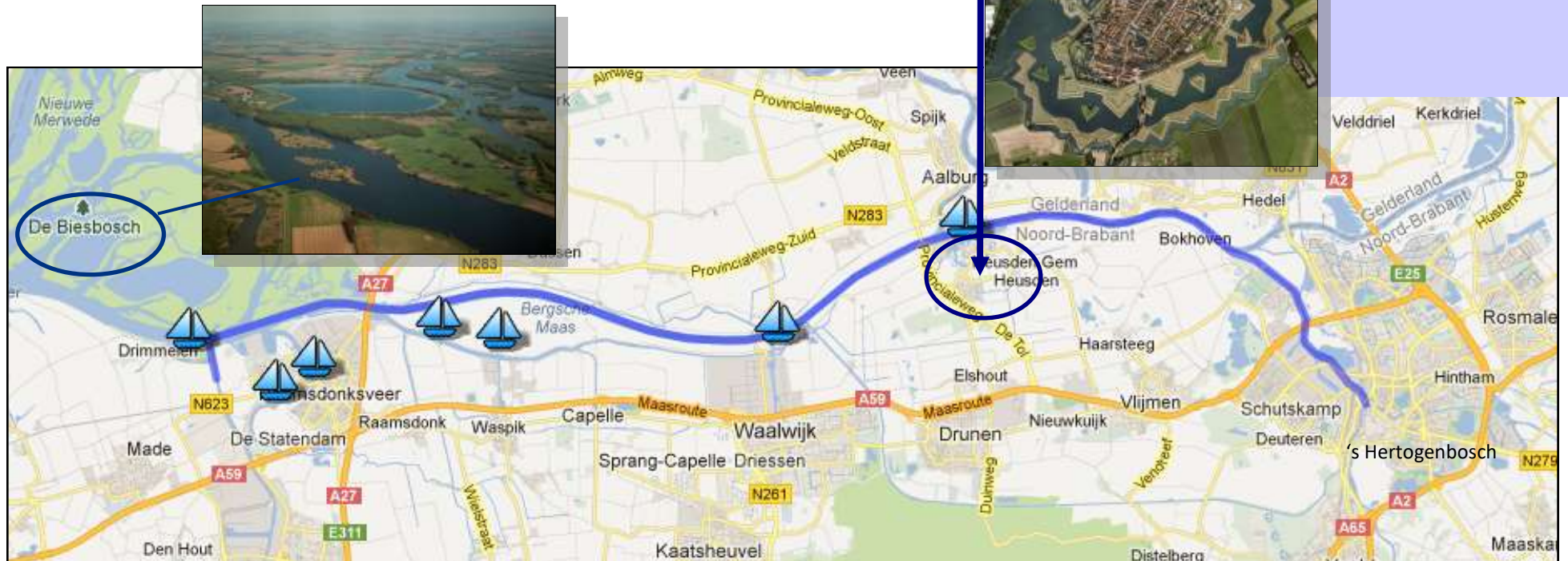


Biesbosch : The Biesbosch National Park is a freshwater tidal area with meandering waterways, marshy meadow landscapes, and exceptional flora and fauna.

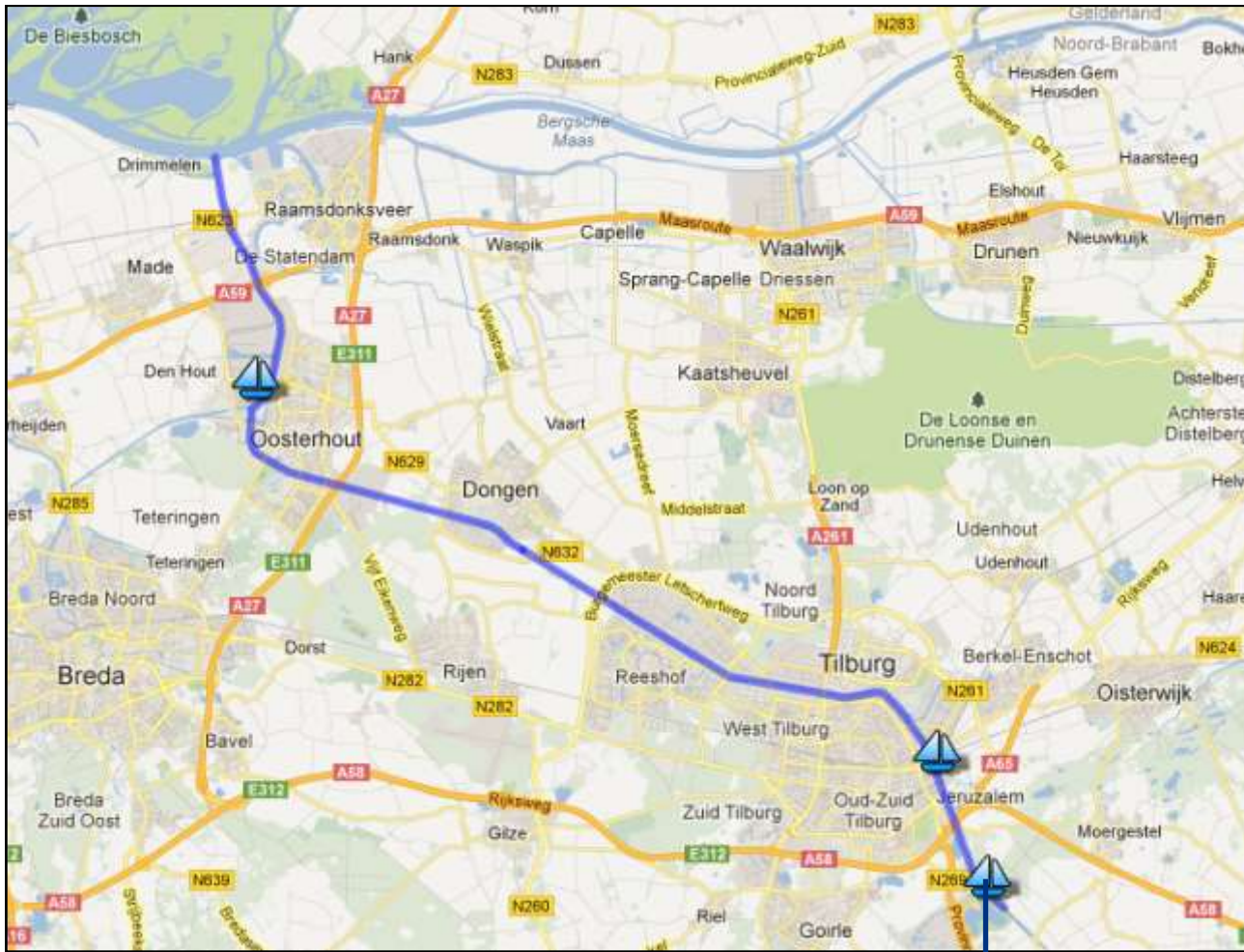
In the Biesbosch, the waterways are not marked. Here and there, sand banks are marked with sticks or twigs. The difference between high and low tide is about 35 centimetres, although it can increase to 70 centimetres at times. The Biesbosch is crisscrossed with waterways, some of which are extremely shallow. If you plan to sail through the Biesbosch, a recently updated map of the area is indispensable. Aqua Libra has a copy of the map on board all its boats. Be sure to keep it close to hand.

Heusden is a fully restored fortified city. The fortifications were restored according to the city blueprints drawn up in 1649. As a result of its favourable location close to the water, construction of the fortifications began as early as 1200. Over the course of three centuries Heusden was expanded into an impregnable stronghold including an octagonal tower with four-metre-thick walls. In 1680, lightning hit an armoury loaded full with gunpowder and the ensuing explosion destroyed the entire fortress. However, the original foundations are still visible. The old fish market, called the Visbank (and located on the Vismarkt), is the only building in the Netherlands dating to the Batavian Republic from around 1800.

The city centre's architecture attests to a rich and varied history. Once you have seen the many narrow alleyways and the city walls complete with stunning vistas, you can relax at one of the many outdoor cafés next to the marina.



Biesbosch - Tilburg - Beekse Bergen : 35 Km - 3 Locks



Safaripark und Jachthafen "De Beekse Bergen"

Wilhelminakanaal : This is a rectilinear canal with forested banks alternating with wide vistas over pastureland. There is little commercial shipping here, with the exception of the stretch between Tilburg and the Amer river, where it gets busier.

Tilburg : is the sixth largest city in the Netherlands. From far off, you will be able to see the Westpoint Tower, one of the country's tallest buildings.

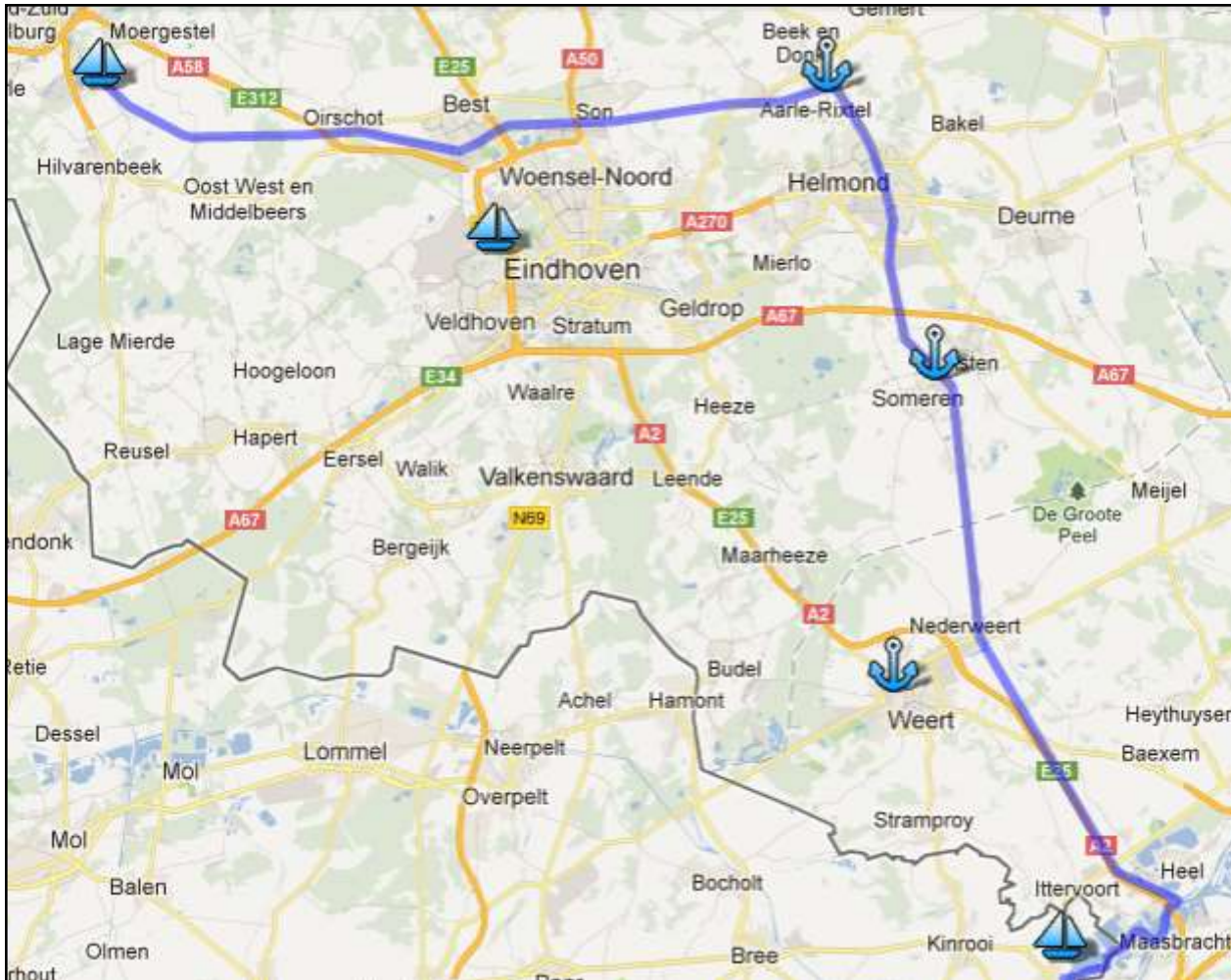
There's much to do and see in and around Tilburg. You might like to visit the Trappist cloister in Berkel-Enschot. It is only place in the Netherlands where Trappist beer is brewed. If you want to take a beautiful walk, visit the Loonse en Drunense Duinen National Park or see the Oisterwijkse wood.

"Safaripark Beekse Bergen" is an ideal destination for a family day trip. The Beekse Bergen Safari Park even has its own transit marina complete with forty berths and is located amid the greenery of the wildlife park. The marina is only accessible for a few hours each day from the canal past a drawbridge. It's advisable to check opening the times before you arrive.

www.beeksebergen.nl



Beekse Bergen - Eindhoven - Weert - Kinrooi 90 Km - 8 Locks



EINDHOVEN



Eindhoven's modern face distinguishes it from other cities in Brabant. This is a very open city. It is extremely international, young, and active. Over the years, it has grown to be one of the most modern regional capitals in Europe. Eindhoven can thank its fame to the fact that the Philips light bulb company was founded here in 1891.

There is an enormous variety of shops and stores in the centre. The Heuvel Galerij alone has more than a hundred businesses. Design and art shops are easy to find in two streets – the Grote Berg and Kleine Berg.

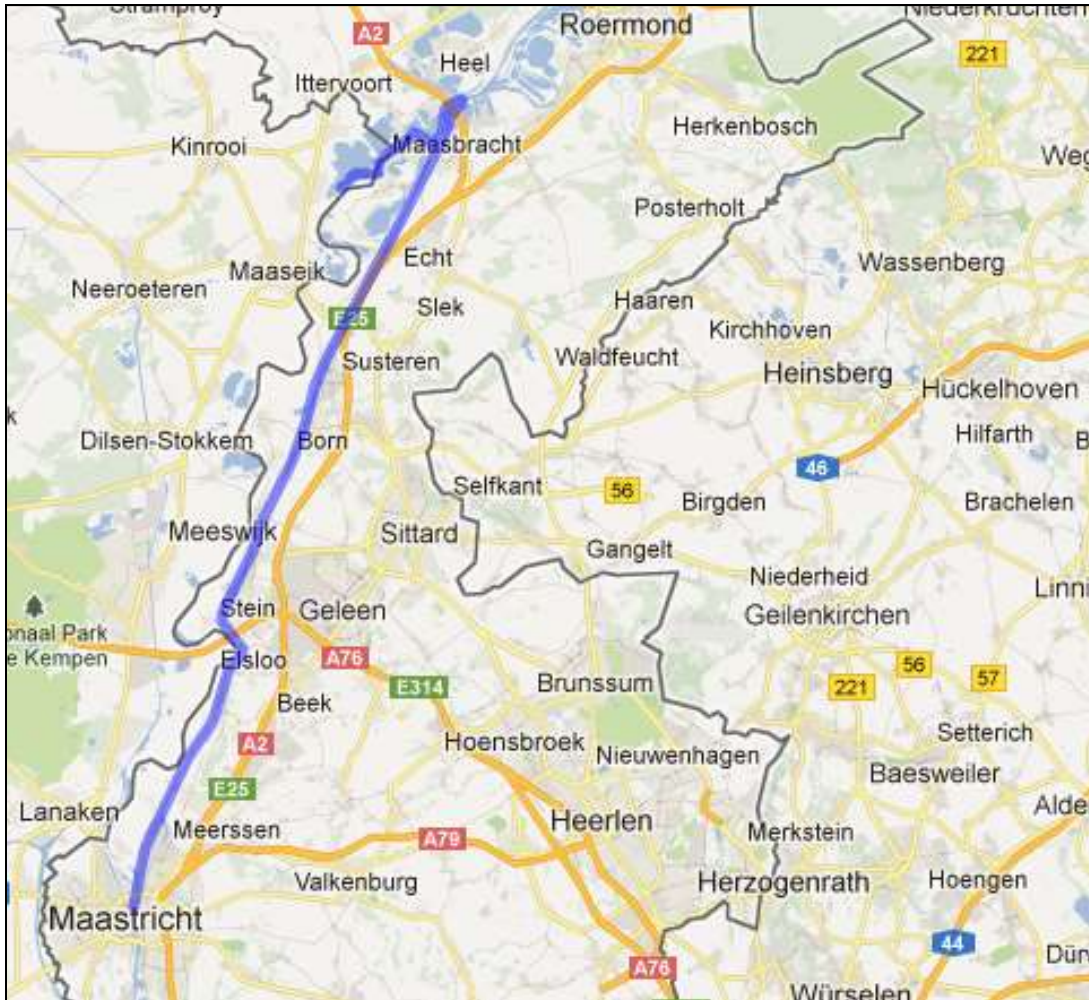
When it comes to culture, Eindhoven has much to offer. Numerous museums are well worth a visit. One such example is the archaeological open air museum, which offers a strikingly lively image of different aspects of the local history, from the Iron Age, to the Middle Ages, to the Industrial Revolution. A visit to the museum is highly recommended for families with children.

Route Maastricht - Luik - Namen - Charleroi - Brussel - Mechelen - Lommel (10–14 Days)



Kinrooi—Maastricht : 47 Km—2 Locks

From our home port, follow the Julianakanaal (Juliana Canal). Between Maasbracht and Maastricht, the Meuse serves as a natural border between Belgium and the Netherlands, with a fall of close to 23 metres. Because of this considerable fall, the Meuse was not channelled here. Instead, parallel to the river, the Julianakanaal was dug. It connects to the Meuse at Maasbracht and Limmel. There are locks at both connection points. The lock chambers have a fall of about 11.87 metres, the largest in the Netherlands. The locks make use of floating bollards which are very easy to operate. Another interesting aspect of the Julianakanaal is that it lies largely above the surrounding landscape. It is especially easy to see in the first section around Maasbracht. From the lock at Maasbracht to Born, the canal is broad and follows straight lines. The section between Born and Limmel is narrower and has a number of bends.



Pietersplas Yacht Harbour



Castle and home of André Rieu in Maastricht.

Maastricht : Description on page 8 en 9

and : www.vvmaastricht.nl

Maastricht—Luik : 28 Km—1 Lock

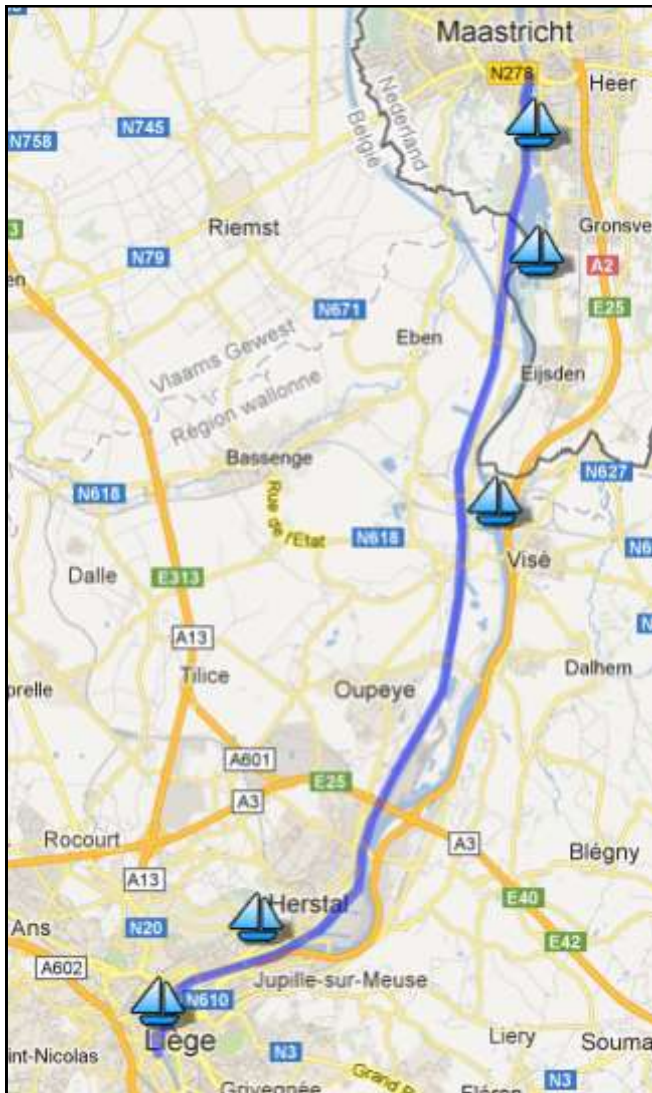
Liège is the cultural centre of Wallonia, French-speaking Belgium. It is also the capital – and gives its name to the province – of the Liège bishopric. It is home to 194,715 people and lies at the confluence of the Meuse and the Ourthe rivers. Liège has a beautiful and historic centre. Greater Liège comprises about 600,000 inhabitants. The city of Liège has much to offer. It is one of the most important tourist centres in Wallonia.

It is embraced by steep, wooded hills surrounding the banks of the Meuse, which cuts through the city from south to north. The city's varied geography adds to its unique charm.

The inhabitants have a good understanding of joie de vivre. They'll find any excuse for a party. Tradition and folklore are extremely important to the people of Liège. The restaurants of Liège are also a special asset for the city, to say nothing of its rich artistic and cultural history and its impressive architectural heritage.

There are also numerous attractive destinations surrounding the city.

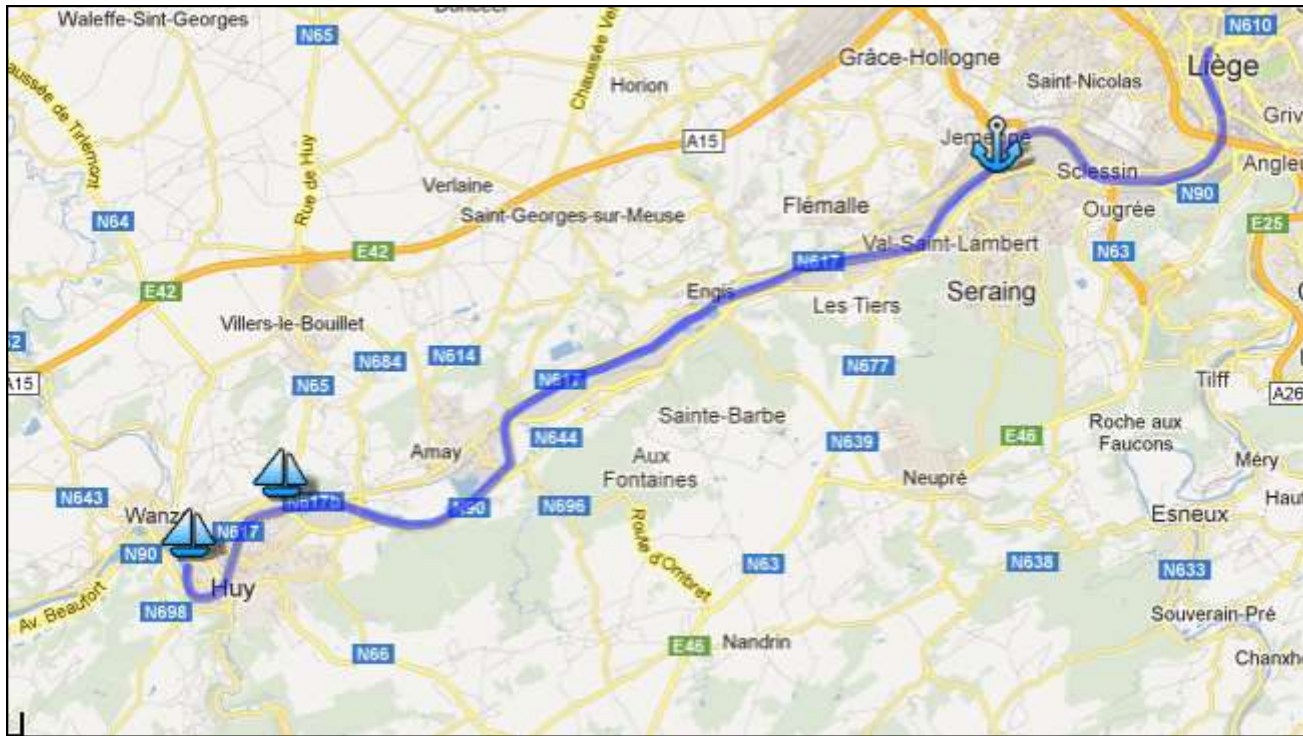
Visit : www.liege.be



Marina in the centre of Liège



Luik—Huy: 34 Km—2 Locks



Huy : The earliest mention of Huy dates back to the year 636. In the Middle Ages the municipality was an important centre of trade, especially for the wool industry.

In 1976, its complex of citadels was declared a protected location of cultural heritage. Since 1992, the complex has housed the Museum of the Resistance and Concentration Camps, which was built at the initiative of Belgian youth who wanted to keep its memory alive.

Cable car to the Huy Citadel



Citadel Huy

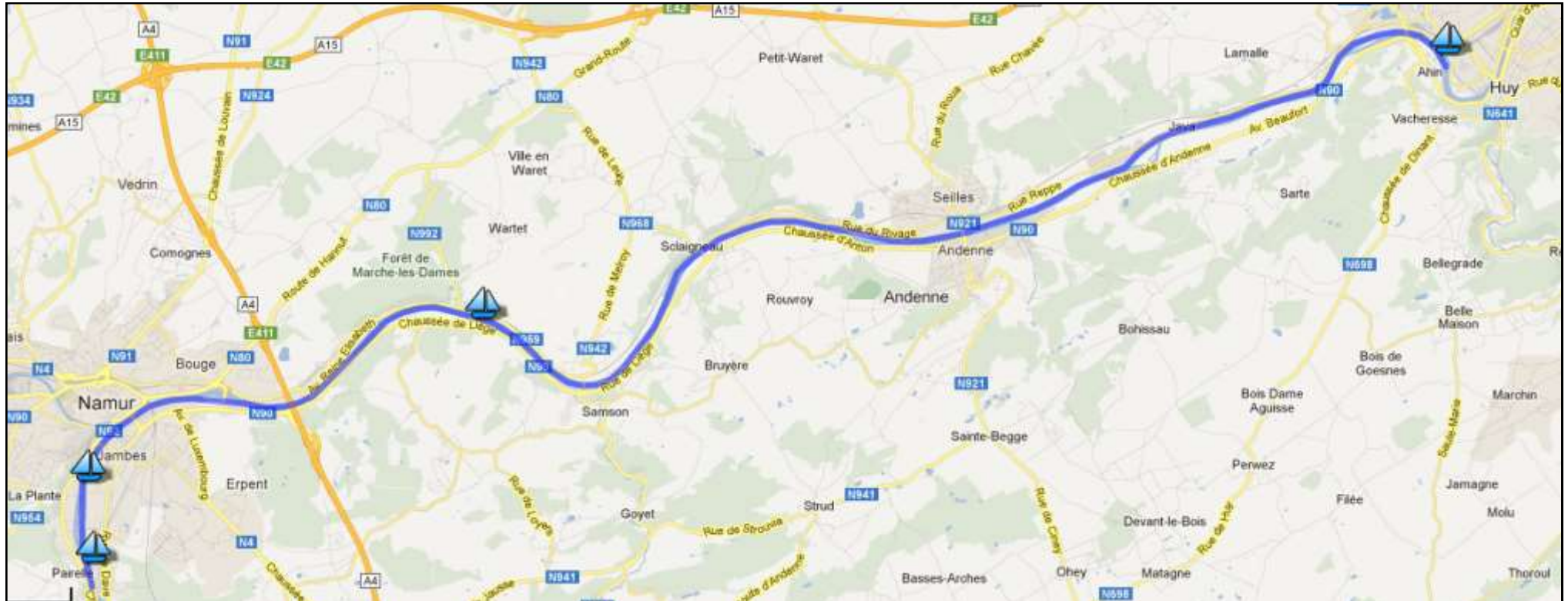


Centre Huy



Citadel Huy

Huy - Namur : 30 Km - 2 Locks



Namur : is the capital of Wallonia and the gateway to the Ardennes. It lies at the confluence of the Sambre and Meuse rivers. The confluence has created an impressive rock formation which sets the scene for everything to come. The Citadel of Namur stands atop the rocks. Namur's historic centre comprises a collection of buildings from the 18th century. The streets and alleyways are bathed in an atmosphere of peace, even during peak tourist season. Namur's citizens have a predilection for hospitality and the good life. On the way to Namur, you will pass the rock formation Marche-les-Dames, where King Albert I of Belgium fell to his death.



Marche Les Dames



Namur



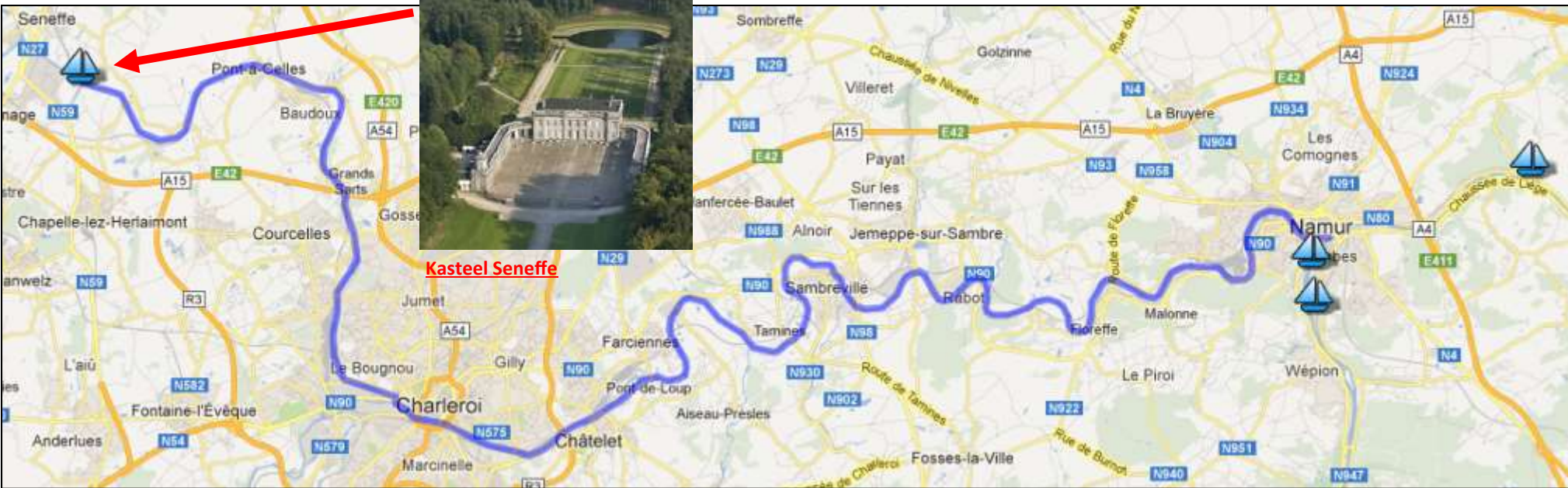
Namur's citadel by night

Namur's Citadelle



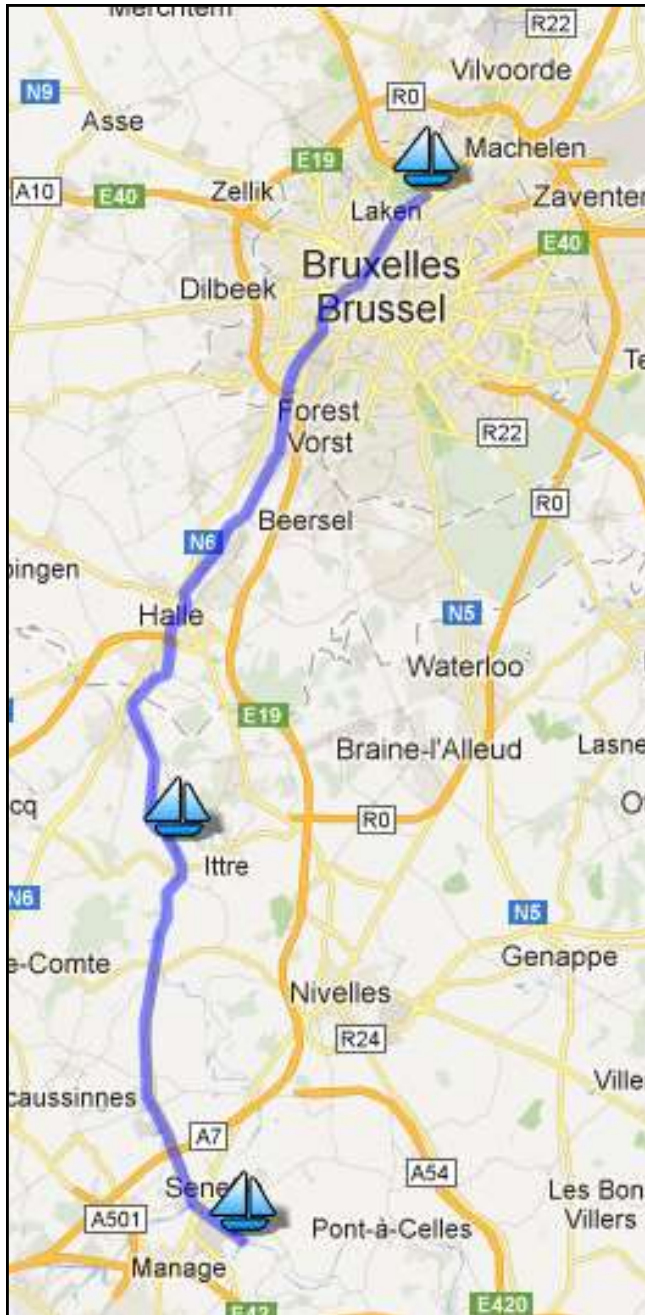
Tourist information namur : www.namurtourisme.be

Namur to Seneffe (via Charleroi) : 70 Km - 10 Locks



Seneffe Marina

Seneffe - Brussel : 47 Km - 5 locks and the Ronquières Inclined Plane



The ronquières Inclined Plane.

The Ronquières Inclined Plane. The world famous lift lock at Ronquières consists of a double caisson on an inclined plane with a length of 1432 metres and lifts boats through 67.73 metres.

The caissons – each 91 metres long and 12 metres wide – have a 5,200-tonne counterweight and each can move independently of the other. The caissons are connected to their counterweights by eight steel cables. Depth in the basin can vary from 3 to 3.7 metres.

At its top speed of 1.2 metres per second, it can move each caisson between the two canal levels in about 22 minutes. It takes 50 minutes in total to pass through the entire structure, including mooring, opening and closing the basin doors, and casting off.

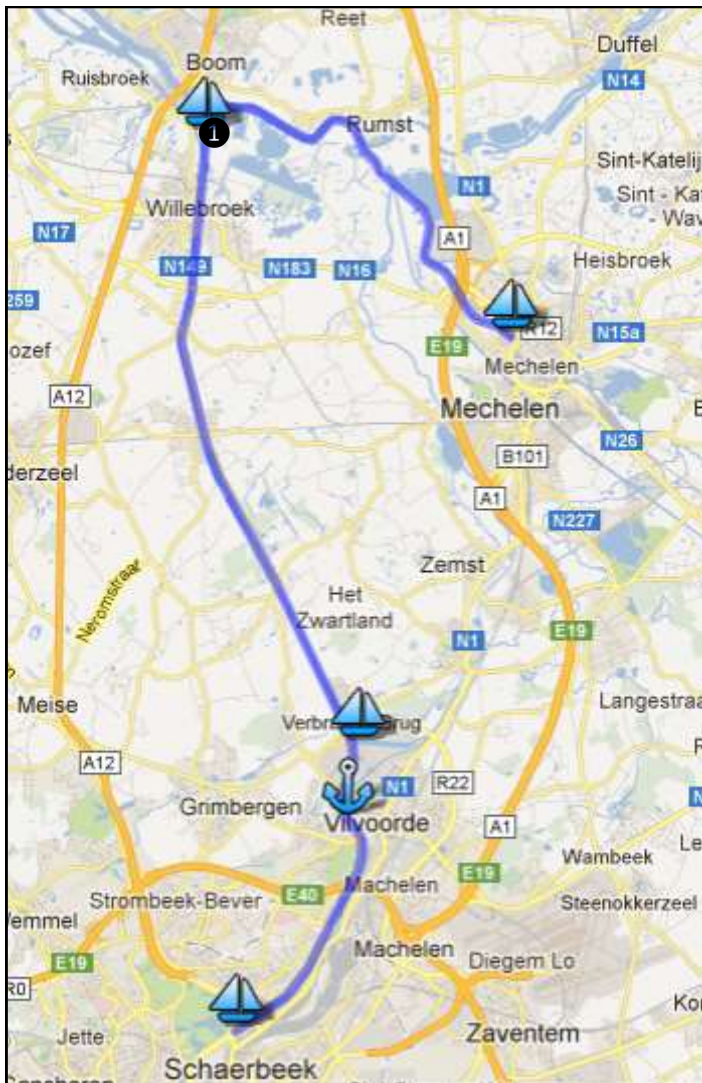


The ronquières Inclined Plane.



Brussels Royal Yachts Club

Brussels to Mechelen (35 km, 3 locks)



Brussels-Scheldt Sea Canal: This is a busy waterway, both for commercial shipping and pleasure craft. Pleasure craft are shunted into the locks alongside the cargo ships. Keep an eye out for the light signals at the locks.

For the lock at Klein Willebroek ① : Accessible just three hours before, and three hours after, low tide. There is a waiting dock at the lock.



Lock at Klein Willebroek ①

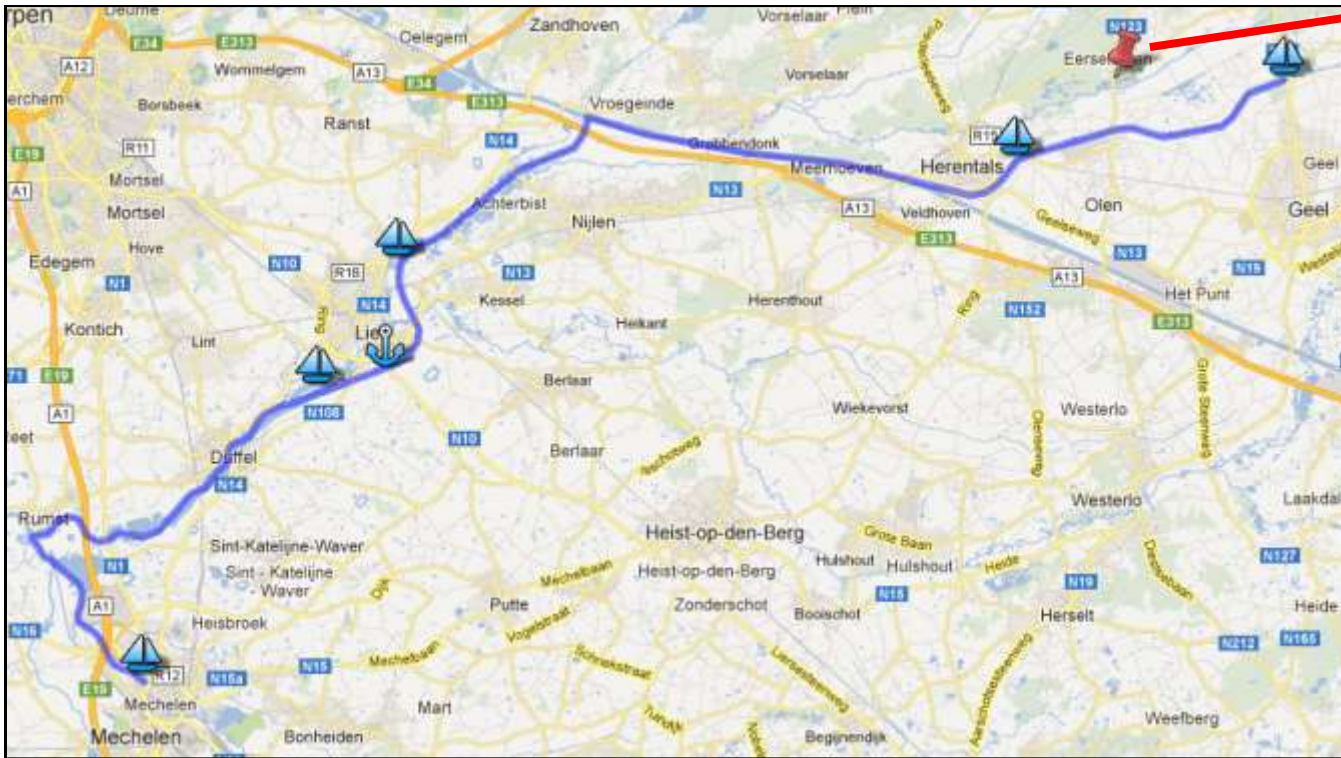


Marina Willebroek



Mechelen

Mechelen to Geel (55 km, 5 locks)



Bobbejaanland Lichtaart

Bobbejaanland theme park is walking distance from the transit marina at Olen. There are also several places to eat and drink close to the transit marina.



Mechelen

The centre of Mechelen (Belgium) is about a kilometre across and is almost perfectly round. The city centre features several beautiful squares, including the Grote Markt (Central Square), the Veemarkt (Cattle Market), and the Schoenmarkt (Shoe Market) with its statue of Margaret of Austria. Mechelen's centre features more than 300 protected monuments, including eight historic churches in a space of less than three square kilometres.

Mechelen's transit marina is located at the edge of the historic city centre. It is a small marina but there is always space for passing boats.



Geel– Bocholt : 46 Km—8 Sluizen



Bocholt

The trip from Geel to Bocholt follows the quiet Bocholt-Herentals Canal. The locks along the canal are easy to operate and have very little rise and fall. You will pass through a number of different nature reserves including the expansive Sahara reserve near Lommel. Lommel is known for its glass art and sand extraction. It has a charming marina, De Meerpaal, with forty berths and a great brasserie with a view of the marina.

Another hour-and-a-half further along, you will find the transit marina at Bocholt, where the Zuid-Willemsvaart meets the Bocholt-Herentals Canal. Most often, there is space available at the transit marina. Bocholt is home to a large brewery offering several types and brands of beer including Martens Pils, Sezoens and Limburgse Witte. It also features Europe's largest brewing museum which exhibits unique items from the brewing industry. Bocholt offers a number of good restaurants providing tasty food at reasonable prices.



Bocholt's Church

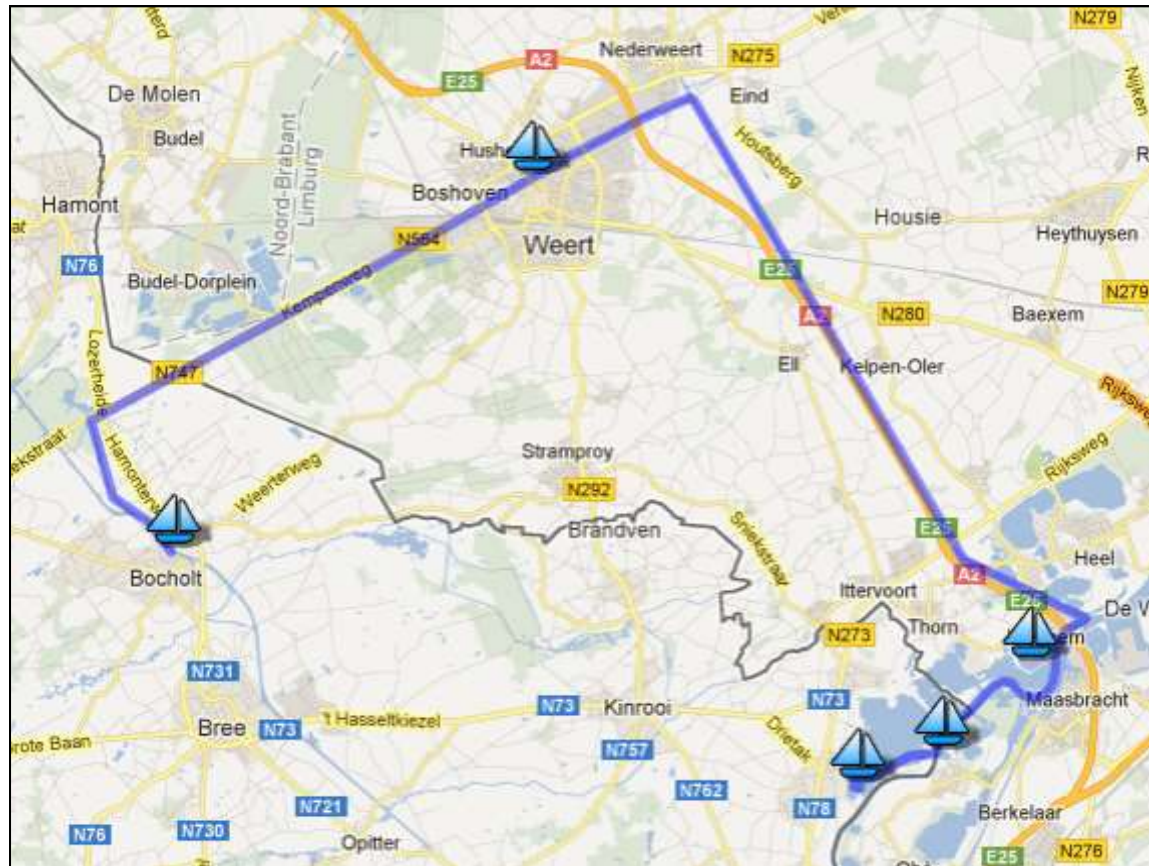


Bocholt's Transit Marina



Bocholt's Brewery Museum

Bocholt to De Spanjerd (44 km, 5 locks)



Useful websites:

www.nautiv.be : Flemish Marine Industries Association

www.hiswa.nl : association of Dutch watersports companies

www.vvvzuidlimburg.nl : tourist website

WILL BE CONTINUED !!!

