

CIRCUIT MECHELEN - DEN BATTELAER

Verdant marshland & azure Zennegat

Follow the water from Mechelen and you come to the aptly named 'drierivierenpunt' - the point of three rivers -, for it is here that the Zenne, Leuven-Dyle Canal and the Dyle meet. The valley landscape and the old flood plain, Den Battelaer, are your destination. Though vibrant Mechelen is nearby, each step takes you a little further away from human habitation.

HIGHLIGHTS

1 AUTHENTIC FACADES

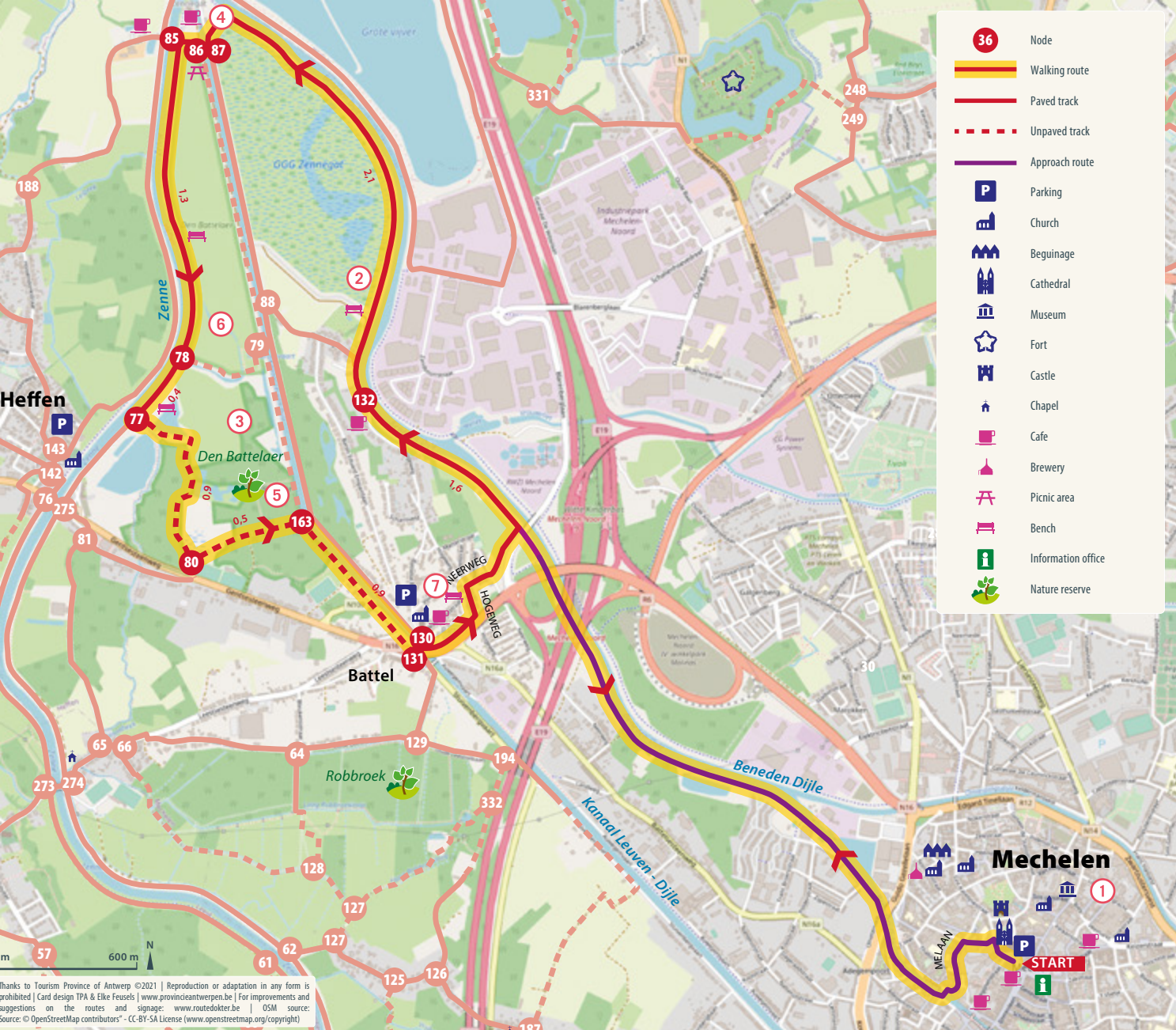
To reach the verdant valley of Den Battelaer, first walk alongside the Melaan, one of the city's many inlets, continuing until you can cross the Dyle via the Kraanbrug (Crane Bridge). Stop for a moment to enjoy the view: these three houses on the Haverwerf are the most photographed in Mechelen.

2 EB AND FLOW

Follow a stretch of the Dyle and you come to the high point of this walk: Den Battelaer. Let's take a brief look at the history of this area. The Dyle and the Zenne flowed through the countryside between Mechelen and Rumst before being joined by the Nete and eventually becoming the Rupel. In the tenth century, people began damming the rivers and creating polders. The land was very wet and water-logged. Gradually the ebb and flow strengthened, an effect exacerbated when the river was straightened and dykes built. Eventually, after a succession of serious floods, the government intervened and in 1977 launched the Sigma Plan.

3 OUDE DIJLEARM

A cut-off bend at the Zennegat was created when the Dyle was straightened – the Oude Dijlearm. Work on the Sigma Plan to turn this whole area into a controlled flood plain is now under way. By giving the river more room, the peaks at high water are reduced, along with the risk of flooding. At the Oude Dijlearm, water will flow in through large pipes twice a day, creating an area of mudflats and salt marshes - a paradise for water- and marsh-loving birds.



Den Battelaer



Leuven-Dyle Canal

Flood zone



The Dyle



4 ZENNEGAT

On this walk you come to the Zennegat, a picturesque spot where the Zenne and the Leuven-Dyle Canal flow into the Dyle, discharging further along into the Rupel with the Nete. At the junction of the rivers is a collection of old houses. This is the perfect place for a rest, while taking a good look at how the different waterways intersect. Moreover, you can reach all the dykes via the bridges, with a magnificent view of wildlife areas like Den Battelaer and the Oude Dijlearn.

5 WATER-FORGET-ME-NOTS

This walk leads via the Leuven-Dyle Canal to the beautiful Den Battelaer, an old flood plain located between the Zenne and the canal. The channels, mudflats and salt marshes have attracted a rare fauna and flora, including the bluethroat, the gadwall and water forget-me-nots.

6 A MILLION MILES FROM THE CITY

There is no doubt that Den Battelaer with its extraordinary mudflats and salt marshes is a glorious area for walking. Exploring it brings you closer to nature and gives a sense of peace. And it's not hard to imagine that you are a long way from the city centre, mid-way between Antwerp and Brussels.

7 BATTELIEK

The Mechelen city brewery Het Anker's Batteliek is a brand-new microbrewery, distillery and 'limonaderij' (producing non-alcoholic drinks) housed in the former church in Battel. You can follow brewing workshops here or simply chill out in the restobar with a drink and perhaps a dish conjured up with local products. You are nearing the end of the walk. So are you going to hang out here for a while or finish the circuit?

Practical information

STARTING PLACE

Tourist information office Visit Mechelen, Schepenhuis: Vleeshouwersstraat 6, 2800 Mechelen.

FOLLOWING THE ROUTE ON FOOT

From the Schepenhuis, follow intersection number 97 on the national cycle network (sign for the Schepenhuis seen from the statue of Margareta of Austria). After 3.5 km you come to cycle intersection 97. After that, follow cycle intersection 94 and you automatically come to walk intersection 132. From now on you can follow the hiking nodes, you return to the center via the same route: 87 - 86 - 85 - 78 - 77 - 80 - 163 - 131 - 130 - 132.

The walking intersections are managed by Wandelnetwerk Rivierenland, www.rlrl.be.

LENGTH

Standard route: 14,8 km

TERRAIN & ACCESSIBILITY

Accessible for prams and buggies.

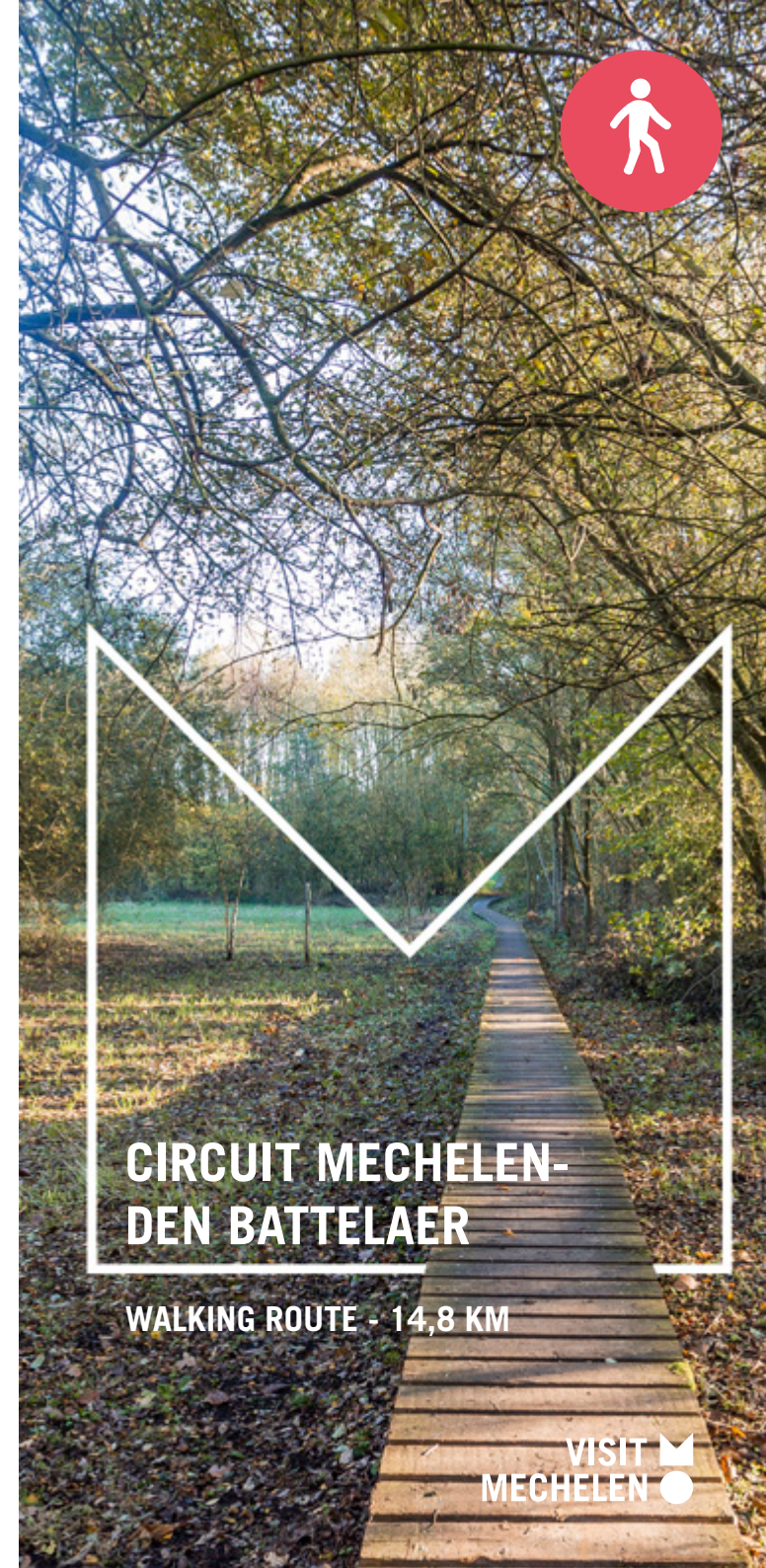
Go to visitmechelen.be for more brilliant walking and cycling ideas!

CONTACT

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COLOPHON

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WALKING ROUTE - 14,8 KM

VISIT
MECHELEN