

## CIRCUIT MECHELEN - DEN BATTELAER

# Verdant marshland and azure Zennegat

Follow the Dyle from Mechelen and discover the three-river point, where the Senne, Leuven-Dyle canal and the Dyle merge. This is where the picturesque valley landscape of Den Battelaer unfolds.

This walk takes you through an ancient floodplain where nature plays the leading role. Although the bustling city of Mechelen is nearby, with every step you will find yourself a little further away from civilisation.

## HIGHLIGHTS

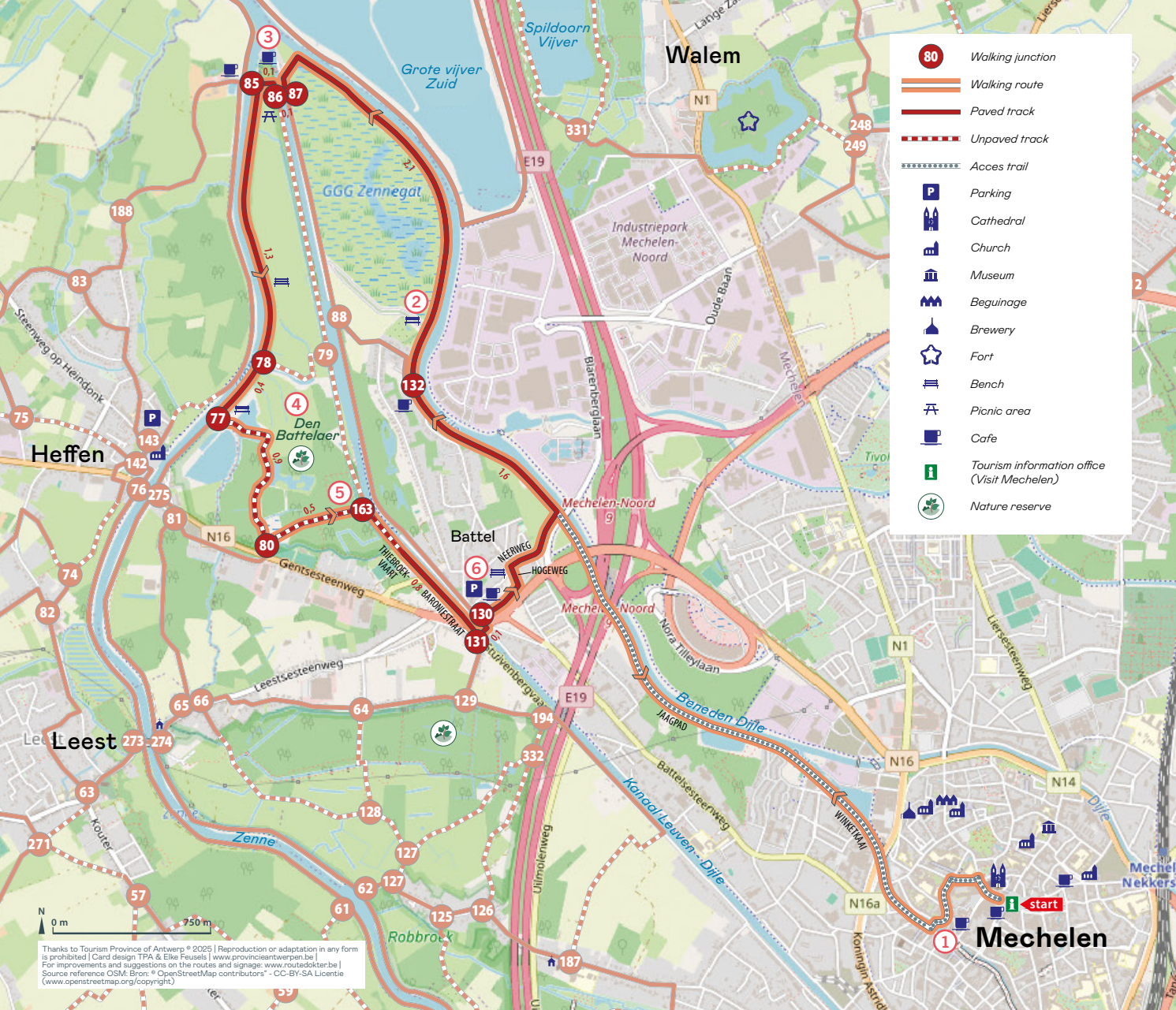
### 1 AUTHENTIC FACADES

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. The charming row of buildings from the 16th and 17th centuries tells three different stories. On the right is Het Paradijske, on the left is Saint Joseph house, and in the middle is De Duiveltjes (The Little Devils).

### 2 EB AND FLOW

Walk along part of the Dyle until you reach the middle of the flood plain. To understand the history of this place, we have to return to the 10th century. Then the Dyle and the Senne still flowed freely through the landscape between Mechelen and Rumst, where later the Nete also joined them and together formed the Rupel. From the 10th century, people began to dyke the rivers, thus creating the first polders.

Because the area was very wet and it was difficult for the water to escape, the tidal effect became increasingly powerful. It was further reinforced by the straightening of rivers and the construction of dykes. To limit the risk of flooding, the government intervened with the Sigma plan. The Sigma Plan helps to better protect Flanders against flooding from the Scheldt and its tributaries. At the same time, it aims to give the valuable river nature a boost.



Haverwerf



Zennegat



Den Battelaer

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Den Battelaer

Batteliek



### ③ 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 Dijklearn.

### ④ DEN BATTELAER

You will arrive at the enchanting Den Battelaer, an old flood plain between the Leuven-Dyle canal and the Senne. In Den Battelaer, you will be walking through a landscape where the past is still tangible. Remnants of the 19th-century liquefaction system – with historic locks and an authentic canal system – tell the story of centuries-old water management. Among the wet pastures, reed belts and swamp forests, nature comes to life again.

### ⑤ WATER-FORGET-ME-NOTS

Walking along the dykes, you will discover a unique marsh landscape full of ditches, mud flats and salt marshes. Rare plants and animals thrive here, from marsh marigolds and swamp-forget-me-nots to bluethroats and gadwalls. A place where you can completely unwind, in the middle of wild nature.

### ⑥ BATTELIEK

The Mechelen city brewery Het Anker's Batteliek is a brandnew 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, Aldermen's building: Vleeshouwersstraat 6, 2800 Mechelen

### FOLLOWING THE ROUTE ON FOOT

From the Aldermen's building, follow intersection number 97 on the national cycle network (sign for the Aldermen's building seen from the statue of Margaret 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.rlr.be](http://www.rlr.be).

### LENGTH

Standard route: 14 km

### TERRAIN AND ACCESSIBILITY

Not accessible to pushchairs and wheelchair users. The hiking trails in Den Battelaer can be muddy. Remember to wear appropriate footwear.



Go to [visitmechelen.be](https://www.visitmechelen.be) for more brilliant walking and cycling ideas!

### CONTACT

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### COLOPHON

**Text:** Visit Mechelen, **layout:** Visit Mechelen, **map:** Open Street Map, Elke Feusels, **photos:** Visit Mechelen, Aikon, **R.P.:** Greet Geypen, VVV Mechelen vzw, Vleeshouwersstraat 6, 2800 Mechelen



**CIRCUIT MECHELEN -  
DEN BATTELAER**

**WALKING ROUTE - 14 KM**

**VISIT  
MECHELEN**

