



④ WATERBIRDS' PARADISE

This is a veritable paradise for waterbirds, but its ponds and expansive landscapes also make it a wonderful destination for walkers. From the kingfisher, spoonbill and lapwing to the Nile geese, the reed belts, sedge fields and numerous ditches are a paradise for waterfowl. You could almost describe it as an international airport for ducks and other birds, particularly in the winter! From the watchtower you can observe the wildlife undisturbed and view the magnificent area from a very different perspective.

⑤ GOOD-NATURED GALLOWAYS

Another notable animal species you may encounter here in the meadows at any time of the year are the Galloway cattle. This Scottish breed is highly independent, good-natured and unfussy when it comes to food. This makes them the ideal nature conservationists for the Mechels Broek. Indeed, they can take most of the credit for the variation in the landscape! The way they graze creates a grassland mosaic of short turf and patches of taller grass, providing ideal cover for plant and animal life.

⑥ BOMB CRATERS

The Dyle path affords a good view of the meadows dotted with beautifully round pools of water. They were bomb craters created in the Second World War when a number of bombs missed their target (Muizen marshalling yard) and exploded in the Mechels Broek meadows. The pools are now home to a great variety of water life. Northern crested newts, water frogs, dragonflies and sticklebacks have turned a battlefield into a peaceful habitat.

Practical information

STARTING PLACE

Tourist information office Visit Mechelen, Aldermen's Building: Vleeshouwersstraat 6, 2800 Mechelen

FOLLOWING THE ROUTE ON FOOT

The walk starts at the Aldermen's Building (Schepenhuis). You follow the IJzerenleen and cross the Grootbrug (Big Bridge) to the other side, where the steps on the left lead down to the Dyle path. Follow this duckboard walkway to the end. When you come up, cross the bridge over the Dyle and go straight into the Botanical Garden. Follow the GR footpath (red and yellow stripes), past the Thomas More college of higher education, under the railway bridges, over the lock and past the De Nekker provincial sports and leisure centre and eventually you come out at the Mechels Broek wildlife area. To stay on this walk, follow Natuurpunt's circular AS Adventure Walk through the wildlife area. You will recognise this by the AS Adventure signs along the way. After a nice loop through the nature reserve, you can return to the centre on the same route until you pass the De Nekker recreation area. Now follow the Dyle for a while until you cross the street at Nekkerspoel and Zandpoortvest and walk into the centre via Keizerstraat. Continue along Befferstraat until you reach the Grote Markt and then the Aldermen's Building.

The Natuurpunt visitor centre at Muizenhoekstraat 7, 2812 Mechelen will be happy to provide more information and answer questions about the wildlife area.



TERRAIN AND ACCESSIBILITY

Depending on the season, wear suitable footwear (muddy paths). The paths in the wildlife area are not accessible for wheelchairs or prams and buggies.

LENGTH

Standard route: 11 km

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, Stef Keynen, **R.P.:** Greet Geypen, VVV Mechelen vzw, Vleeshouwersstraat 6, 2800 Mechelen



**CIRCUIT MECHELEN -
MECHELS BROEK**

WALKING ROUTE - 11 KM

**VISIT
MECHELEN**

CIRCUIT MECHELEN - MECHELS BROEK

Among water, birds and a watchtower

In the shadow of St Rumbold's Cathedral, to the east side of Mechelen, is a magnificent meadow landscape that runs alongside the meandering Dyle: the Lower Dyle Valley, a ribbon of nature reserves where you can totally unwind, while walking or observing birds from a watchtower. This walk leads to the 'Mechels Broek' wildlife area, a green lung close to the city. You can walk there from the centre along the peaceful Dyle path.

HIGHLIGHTS

1 ALONG AND OVER THE DYLE

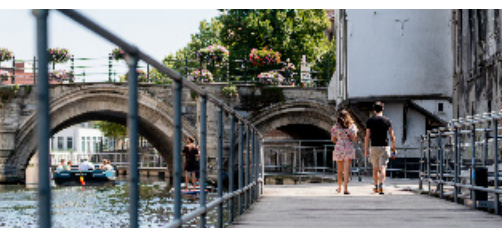
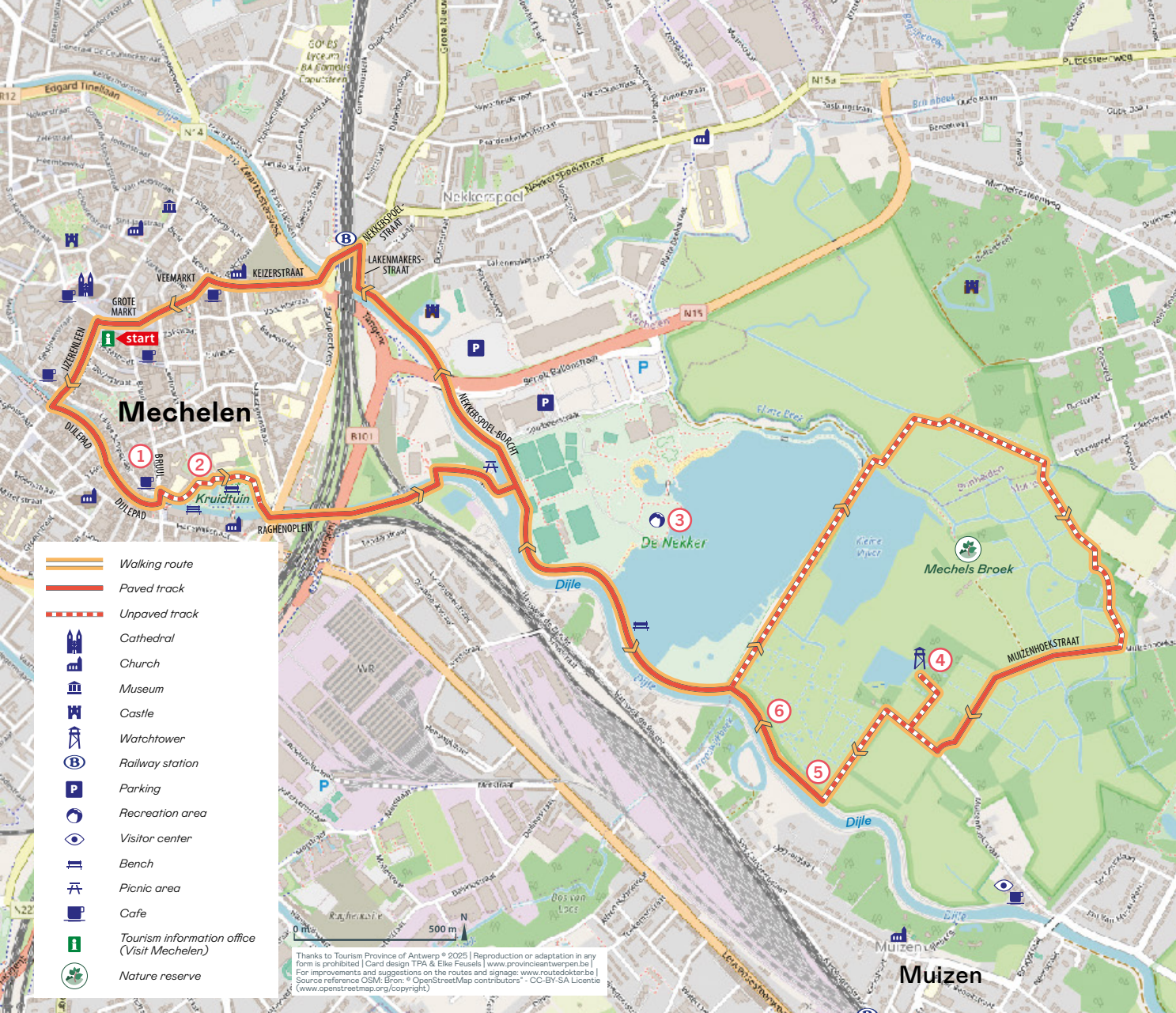
Walk along the IJzerenleen, cross the Hoogbrug (high bridge) and continue on your way along the floating Dyle Path. You may see a passing passenger boat or the odd energetic paddleboarder or canoeist. You can enjoy walking on and next to the water both in the city and just outside it.

2 BOTANICAL GARDEN

The first part of the walk leads through the Botanical Garden, a green oasis in the historic city centre. Known locally as "Den Botanique", this park owes its name to Rembert Dodoens. In the sixteenth century, this famous scientist wrote the 'Cruydenboek', the first work about medicinal plants and herbs. Around the statue of Rembert Dodoens you'll find 250 different types of herbs planted according to variety and colour.

3 DE NEKKER PROVINCIAL SPORTS AND LEISURE CENTRE

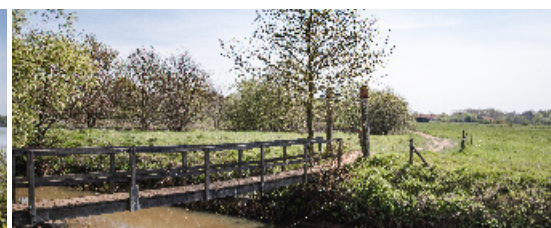
After crossing the lock, you come to the De Nekker Sports and Leisure Centre, where you can take your pick of any number of indoor and outdoor sports. Take a dip in the lake or clock up lengths in the Nekkerpool swimming pool complex or simply lie back and sunbathe. In the meantime, the children can let off steam in the indoor and outdoor playgrounds.



Dyle path



Mechels Broek



Mechels Broek