

The Place to Be(er)

OUT AND ABOUT
IN LEUVEN

4KM • +/- 1H30M



OUDE MARKT

01

Since the year 1150, market days have been held here on this majestic, rectangular Leuven plaza. Parts of the market escaped the bombardments of the two World Wars. Yet, renovation was essential. The classical wing of the University Hall gives out onto the square, and the façade of Holy Trinity College is clearly visible at its southern end. But except for two chemists' shops, almost all of the properties on the Oude Markt are now being used as cafés or restaurants. It is no wonder that Leuven's Oude Markt is called Europe's longest bar. And, naturally, it is the most lively neighbourhood in the city. When the weather is nice, the Oude Markt feels like one immense terrace surrounded by 42 bars. In the middle of the square, sitting on a bench, is the Kotmadam; there she sits listening to the lively bustle and sometimes serious discussions around her. This statue is an homage to the landladies of yore - to those that lit candles for their students who were taking exams. And thousands of people cannot resist the temptation to sit on her lap. So this statue is an absolute crowd pleaser.

DID YOU KNOW...

that when the residents of Leuven agree to meet each other at the Oude Markt, they still say 'at the Kotmadam'?

BROUWERIJ DE HOORN

03

CORNER OF BURCHTSTRAAT - SLUISSTRAAT

Brewery Den Hoorn was sure to have existed as early as 1366. The proof of this is a notification in the Leuven city registry; excise duties for the brewery are registered there. Den Hoorn flourished for a period due to the presence of the students following the founding of the university in 1425, but this boom was also a result of the poor quality of the drinking water at the time. The company expanded in the 15th century to become one of the largest businesses in the city. At that time, the average inhabitant of the city drank between 300 and 440 litres of beer per year, since it was healthier than drinking water. With the excise duties that the sale of beer generated, Leuven was able to markedly improve its infrastructure. In 1537 Den Hoorn even became the most important business in the city. A success that the brewery could thank on the levying of import duties and the difficulties associated with transport. In 1708 Sébastien Artois became the master brewer at Den Hoorn. He took over the brewery nine years later and gave it his own name. Artois did keep the horn logo of the old brewery. So it is here that the very first Stella was brewed. For more than a century, Artois was passed down from father to son until outsiders took over the brewery. Today De Hoorn is the home base of creative companies.

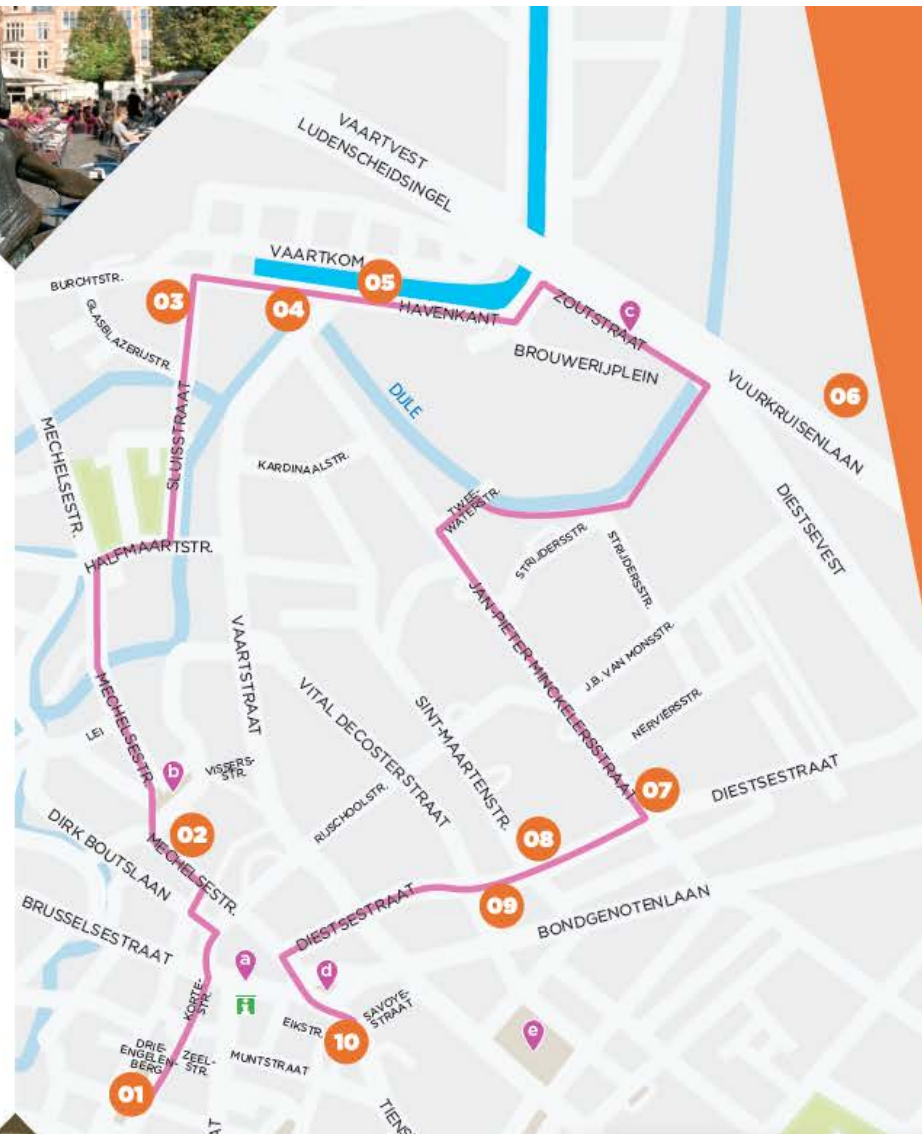
MECHELSESTRAAT

02

Leuven is irrefutably the beer capital of the world. The brewer's trade flourished here as nowhere else. At the beginning of the 20th century, there were more than 30 breweries active in the city. Unfortunately, most of these have disappeared.

During the Middle Ages and in the Modern Era, Leuven's city centre was littered with small and large breweries, especially on the banks of the Dijle, the source of their water. The memorial tablet that reads 'de Kruiwagen' - Mechelsestraat 37 - refers to the brewery named 'Den Grooten Cruywaeghen' and to the adjacent tavern named 'Den Cleynen Cruywaeghen', where beer was being brewed as long ago as the 15th century.

04



SQUARES

- a Grote Markt
- b Vismarkt
- c Joanna-Maria Artoisplein
- d Rector de Somerplein
- e Mgr. Lauzeplein



DE LANTAARN 04

VAARTKOM 18

How long De Lantaarn has existed can hardly be verified. In any case, in 1750 a great number of cafes opened in the neighbourhood of the Vaart, which was being excavated at the time. Breweries moved from the city centre to the immediate vicinity of this new traffic artery. Because they really wanted to ship out their products right in the shadows of their headquarters.

During WW II, the property in which De Lantaarn was located was heavily bombed and completely destroyed. After the war, it was reconstructed as part of the brewery. To the outside world, De Lantaarn became a sort of calling card for the Artois Brewery. The café was fitted with all the newest devices, and here the tapping of a pint was elevated to a high art form. Connoisseurs say that the best Stella

in the world was tapped in De Lantaarn, and they certainly weren't too far off target about that.

The café is located just a little way outside of the bustle of the city centre and therefore was less attractive to the local social life. In addition, the withdrawal of the industry around the Vaartkom started to take place with the accompanying degeneration of the neighbourhood. This turn of events did not do De Lantaarn any good either.

The café was renovated in 1993, and the current interior is very trim and sober. In the corner, several photos serve as reminders of the glory days of the Vaartkom and of the bombardments that flattened the quarter.

VAARTKOM

The Vaartkom was once the heart of the well-known industrial activities of Leuven. Breweries - Artois, for example - grain mills, timber yards and other industries flourished here like never before. But with the disappearance and relocation of these traditional industries at the end of the 20th century, the Vaartkom was transformed into a desolate, post-industrial neighbourhood. This situation came to an end in 2007 when a decision was made to convert the neighbourhood into a fully fledged, new quarter. It was also the largest urban renewal area in Belgium.

Once again, the Vaartkom exudes the glory of the old days. The old industrial site has expanded into a green, effervescent and stylish area with a great deal of space for creativity and social gatherings. The high-quality mix of residences, workplaces and recreation on the water, with their metropolitan allure, adds a new dynamic to the city centre.



DID YOU KNOW...

that in spite of the industrial character of this neighbourhood, herons can often be spotted here?

BROUWERIJ STELLA ARTOIS

VUURKRUISELAAN

Leuven is the home base of AB Inbev, the largest brewery group in the world. AB Inbev's roots lie in the brewery of Sébastien Artois, who became the master brewer of Den Hoorn in 1708. He later purchased the brewery and christened it 'Artois'. There, in 1928, a special Christmas beer was brewed, which was given the name 'Stella' because of its clarity. Stella means "star" in Latin. The beer was such a great success that it was soon available all year long. Stella became one of the most popular Belgian lagers, and at the end of the 20th century it also began to take off internationally. It is now available in 80 countries, where it is making a big splash as an international luxury beer.

JEEKESBOOM 07

DIESTSESTRAAT 149

There are always people to be found in Jeeskesboom, a great deal of people, you could say. It often happens that all of the chairs and benches here are occupied and people are standing up between the tables, with a double row at the bar. As if the beer was being served for free.

The origins of the name 'Jeeskesboom (tree of Jesus)'? According to a local historian, at the beginning of the 14th century, there was an oak tree on the corner of what is now the Diestsestraat and the J.P. Minckelerstraat. This tree probably served as a boundary marker. It is not clear whether the crucifix, which could be the reason behind the name, was already

hanging on the oak at that time or not. The oak tree did not survive throughout the centuries, and a linden tree stood on that spot until 1925. And when it, too, was felled during a storm, it was not replaced, but instead the statue, dating from the early 16th century, was placed in a niche in the façade of the adjoining house. Later, the original statue was replaced by a copy.

Just several years ago, George Merchez, the legendary patron of Jeeskesboom, passed away. He was fascinated by the North American Indians. So it's no wonder that most of the ornamentation in Jeeskesboom are beautiful portraits of these Indians.

DIESTSESTRAAT 08

Today it is primarily shoppers who frequent this area, but one hundred years ago, the Diestsestraat was the café street of Leuven. In 1910 there were more than 85 taverns here. At that time, the Oude Markt had only 16. In all of Leuven in that period, there were no less than 788 drinking establishments.



DID YOU KNOW...

that in the Middle Ages the Diestsestraat, together with the Naamse-, the Mechelse-, the Brusselse- and the Tiensestraat, were the five major roads of the city?

DE MARENGO 09

DIESTSESTRAAT 56

The Marengo is a rather narrow café with a row of benches and small tables running along the side walls of the interior. The bar takes up quite a bit of space, and when it is the least bit busy the journey to the toilet is just one long push and pull. Antique advertising signs showcasing Cardinal and Westmalle, and of course Artois, hang on the walls. The space between the windows is filled with the pen and ink drawings of P. Van Hove. A beast of a sound system is stationed behind the bar. A disco ball, a multi-coloured disc in front of a spotlight and a couple of serious-looking speakers provide all the evidence you need to know that the patrons of this place regularly put on their dancing shoes.

06



HUISBROUWERIJ DOMUS 10

TIENSESTRAAT 8

Domus is a small brewery located directly adjacent to its own café. Using small-scale machinery, Domus brews a good, old-fashioned beer here, without any added flavourings or colourings. Several naturally pure beers are the delicious result. They are tapped directly from the brewery at the café's bar, so you can taste them there under the perfect conditions.

At Domus, you can enjoy three different beers. The Con Domus and Nostra Domus are served throughout the year. In addition to those, a flavourful seasonal beer is also occasionally on tap.



Just as wine is an integral part of French cuisine, beer is inextricably bound to Belgian gastronomy. Beer lends dishes taste, aroma and character. Think of the many casseroles, the Flemish stews and rabbit with beer. For a number of years now, a new beer cuisine is causing a furore in our country. Renowned chefs integrate beer in mousses, soufflés and even in ice cream. If you would like to taste these wonderful dishes, then Leuven is the place to be. Because nowhere else can you find so many excellent restaurants in such a small area.

Bon appetit!