

## Car Free Style



**By train, by bike or on foot**

**From Charleroi to Erquelinnes**

© WBT - David Samyn



In collaboration with

**Railtrip.travel**



© WBT - J.P. Renard



© WBT - Denis Ervoux

Here you have a ready to go itinerary for a nature themed getaway for a few days in Wallonia without a car.

It is part of a series of interconnectable itineraries (amounting to an itinerary of around two weeks in total). By combining these short stays, you have the chance to spend a fabulous sustainable holiday in Wallonia. This roaming escapade starts from a rail station, where you will have the option of either doing the route by train and bicycle, or by train and on foot. Set off in **slow tourism** mode and take the time to enjoy the landscapes, nature, local products, cultural and historical visits and of course the welcoming accommodation in each place.

Embrace the **slow tourism** experience.



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© WBT - Hike Up/Port de Trade



# From Charleroi to Erquelinnes, ...

## a river runs through it...

During this escapade, you go up the **River Sambre from Charleroi to Erquelinnes**, the first Belgian town crossed by this Franco-Belgian river. The Sambre was, in its rich past, an obligatory passage for any army wishing to circumvent the Ardennes; which explains the eventful history of 'Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse' (Between the Sambre and the Meuse Rivers). It is about 180 km long and starts its journey in France, in the little wood of 'La Haie-Equiverlesse'. It runs into the town of Fontenelle, near 'Nouvion-en-Thiérache' and flows into the River Meuse at 'Namur' after crossing 'Erquelinnes', to go through various towns (Merbes-le-Château, Fontaine-Valmont, Lobbes, Thuin, Charleroi, Sambreville and Floreffe).

Departure town for this route: **Charleroi**. Once dismissed and often criticized, this town has succeeded in an offbeat re-incarnation. Boasting a rich industrial past, it is now a cool destination. It combines various facets. On the one hand, the heritage of heavy industry, the cradle of the black country with its dark chimneys, factories and slag heaps juxtaposed with working-class houses in a joyous anarchy. On the other, **comics, street art** and creative alternative culture. With its **Museum of Photography** and the **Bois du Cazier Mining Site** - justifiably recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site Charleroi now enjoys an increasingly international renown.

The town of **Thuin**, owes its charm to the traces of its medieval past: its **Belfry** classified as World Heritage by UNESCO, its **alleys** and its **Hanging Gardens** recognized as an Exceptional Heritage of Wallonia... But **Thuin** is also all about current art, especially with its art route, nestled in the entire town, energizing its historic heart by shaping a new vibe. The hanging gardens offer lovers of green space and fresh air an original walk and are a real little Eden where vineyards have recently been growing.

Finally, discover the region of **Erquelinnes**, in the south-west of the Hainaut province. For a long time, the Haute Sambre valley was considered to be an exclusively industrial region. Today the Sambre valley preserves 60 ha of **nature reserves**. Agricultural and forest region, Erquelinnes offers a lesser known diversity of landscapes and architectural richness.

The Haute-Sambre Valley... a place full of unexpected surprises.

## The concept of this car-free route?

A combination of train journeys and sections to be done on foot or by bicycle. In the following pages, discover the different options we offer...

Have a nice trip.



# General map & itineraries

Find all our car-free itineraries on  
[visitwallonia.be/carfree](https://visitwallonia.be/carfree)





Railway Lines



Walking Sections



Cycling Sections



Stations



Camping



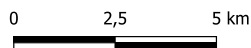
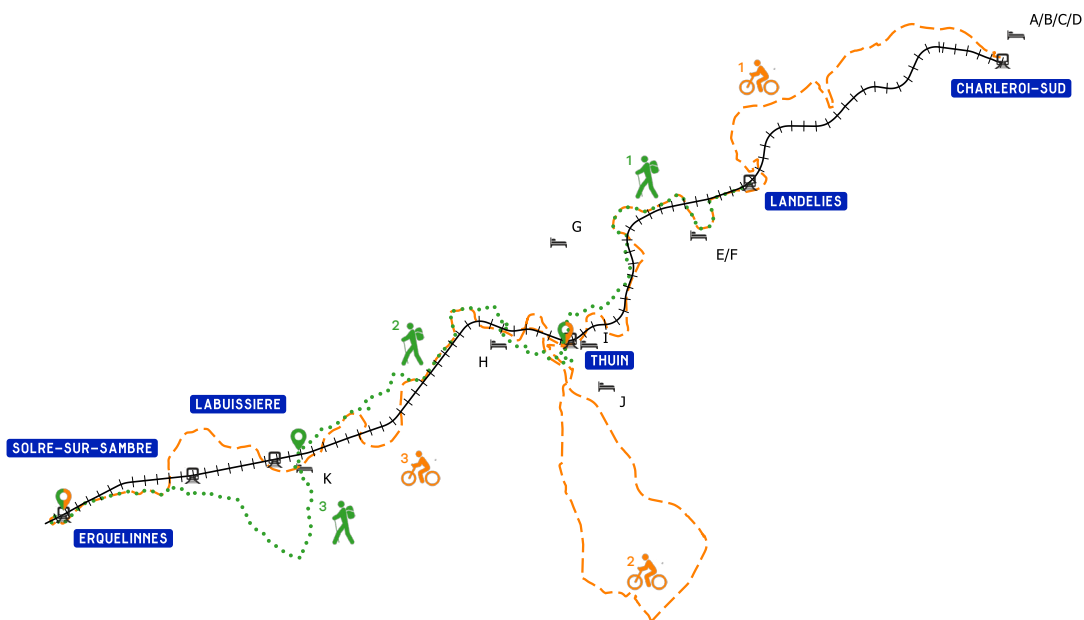
Accommodation



Picnic



Must See





# By train

## Sections by train

For this route, **line 130A** connects the starting point, Charleroi-Sud station to Erquelinnes Station the arrival point. The intermediate stops on this line are located at the junctions with the cycling and / or pedestrian routes: Landelies, Thuin, Labuissière and Solre-sur-Sambre.

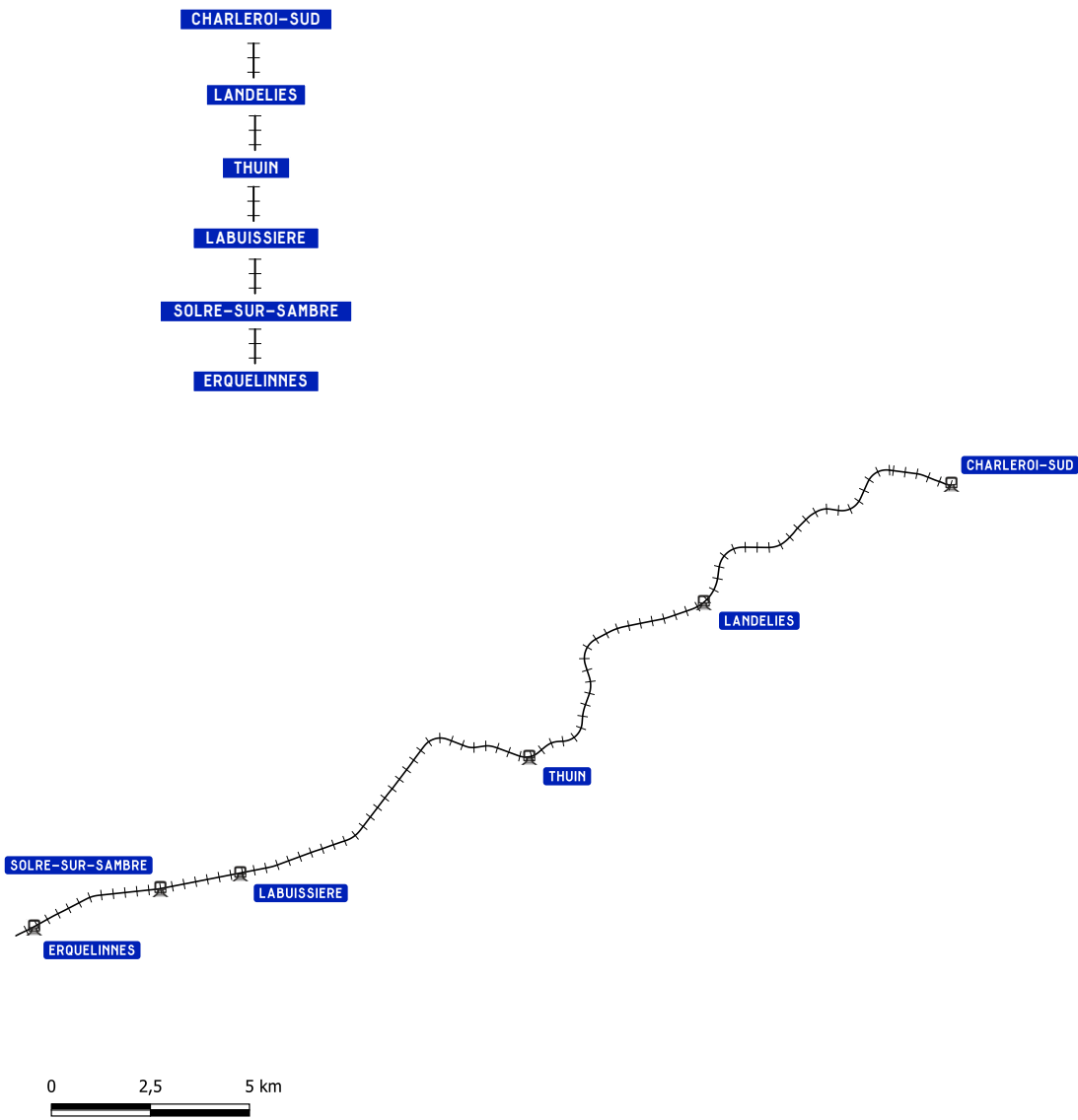
It is therefore possible for you to design the route to suit your needs.

## PRICES & INFO

On all these rail journeys, it is possible to embark with your bikes: €4/bike/trip + ticket price.

Find more information, timetables and prices on [www.belgiantrain.be](http://www.belgiantrain.be)







# On foot

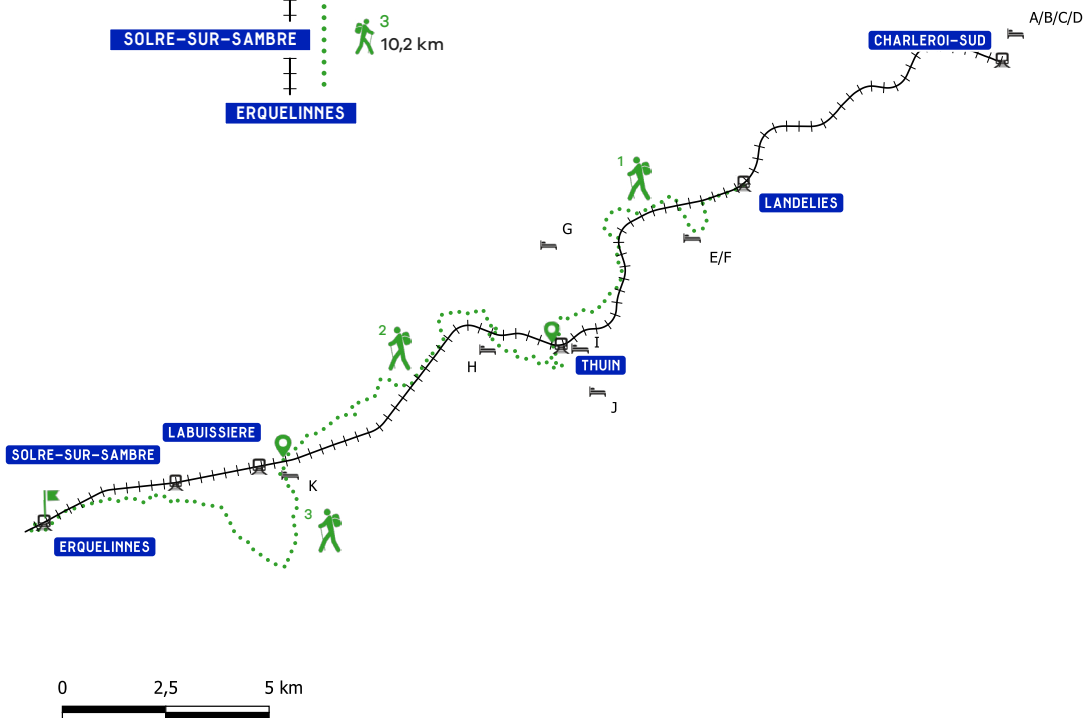
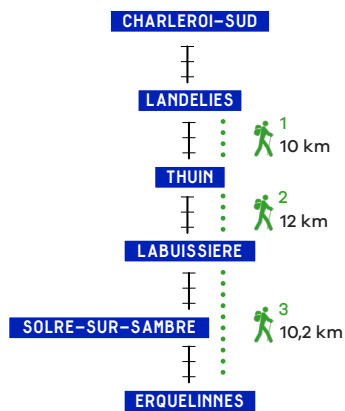
## HERE'S HOW TO FOLLOW THE GUIDE

Download the GPX file or the guidance application for your mobile phone from [www.cirkwi.com](http://www.cirkwi.com).

You will find the different stages (on foot and by bike) of this route (GPX files, activities, accommodation, etc).

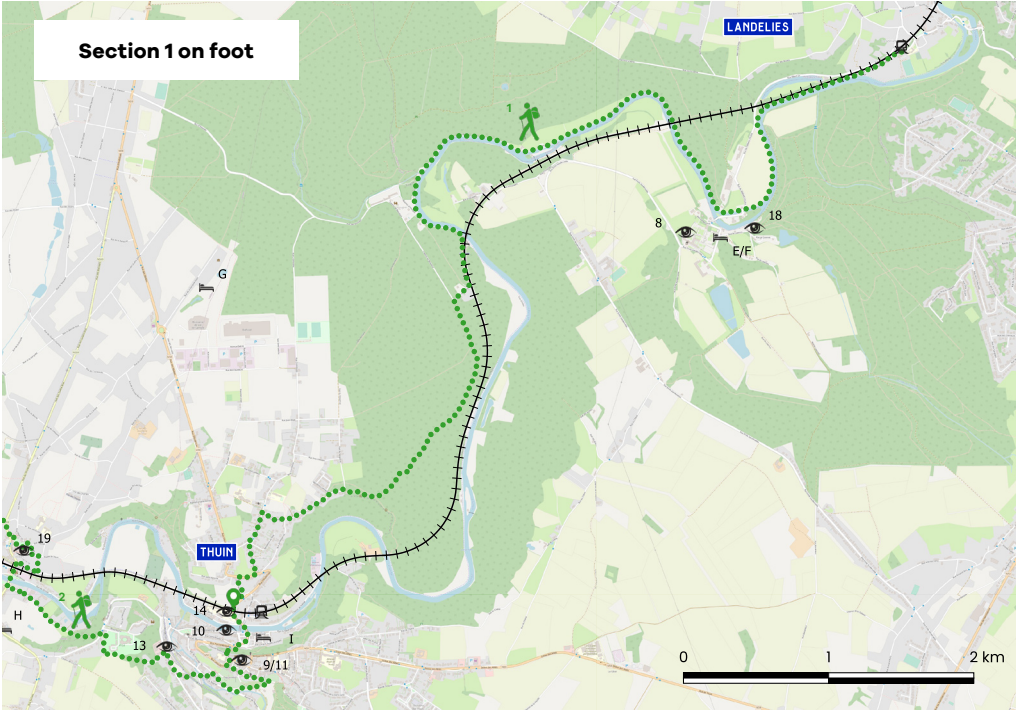






Find **accommodation** on **page 31**  
and **activities** on pages **24-29**

Section 1 on foot



Km

10



2H30

SIGNPOSTING

RAV@L





## On foot



### 'Gare de Charleroi Sud' (Station) – 'Gare de Lanelies' (Station) by train then Lanelies - Thuin Station on foot

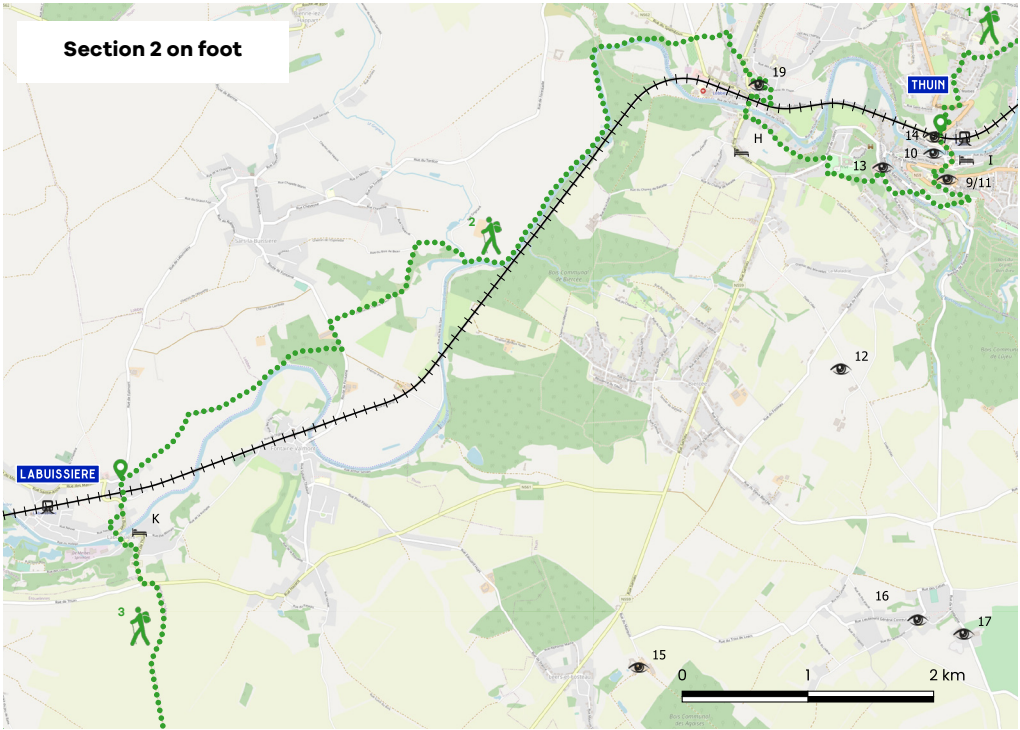
#### Signposting

RAVeL + GR 129 + Green and blue

Before taking the train to Lanelies, it's worth taking a little time to discover the surprising town of Charleroi.

- 1 At Lanelies Station, take 'Rue de l'Ecole' (Ecole Street) (Rue de Cousoire) and go down to towpath of the River Sambre.
- 2 Take the towpath in the direction of Thuin and Erquelinnes. After less than 2km, you will see Aulne Abbey. To visit it, go to the other side of the bank.
- 3 After your visit, return to the other bank again to follow again the towpath for 3.6km to the second railway bridge (km 5.5).
- 4 Take the path to the right that goes up to the Hourpes Station just along the bridge.
- 5 Continue on the path that runs alongside the station and the railway line. As you arrive in front of houses it veers off to the right.
- 6 200 m after the first house, you will find the entrance to a forest path. This is the start of the GR 129 trail. Follow the GR for 2.5 km.
- 7 You then arrive towards Thuin by the 'Rue du Nespériat' (Nespériat Station).
- 8 When you are at the crossroads with 'Rue du Cromboul' (Cromboul Street), take this street on the left. You no longer follow the GR 129 signposting but a blue and green marker which makes the junction with the GR trail by allowing you to cross the beautiful town of Thuin.
- 9 When you reach the square take Tienne Saint-Hubert which goes down to your left and follow the blue and green markings to the famous *Hanging Gardens* of Thuin.





Km

12



3H00

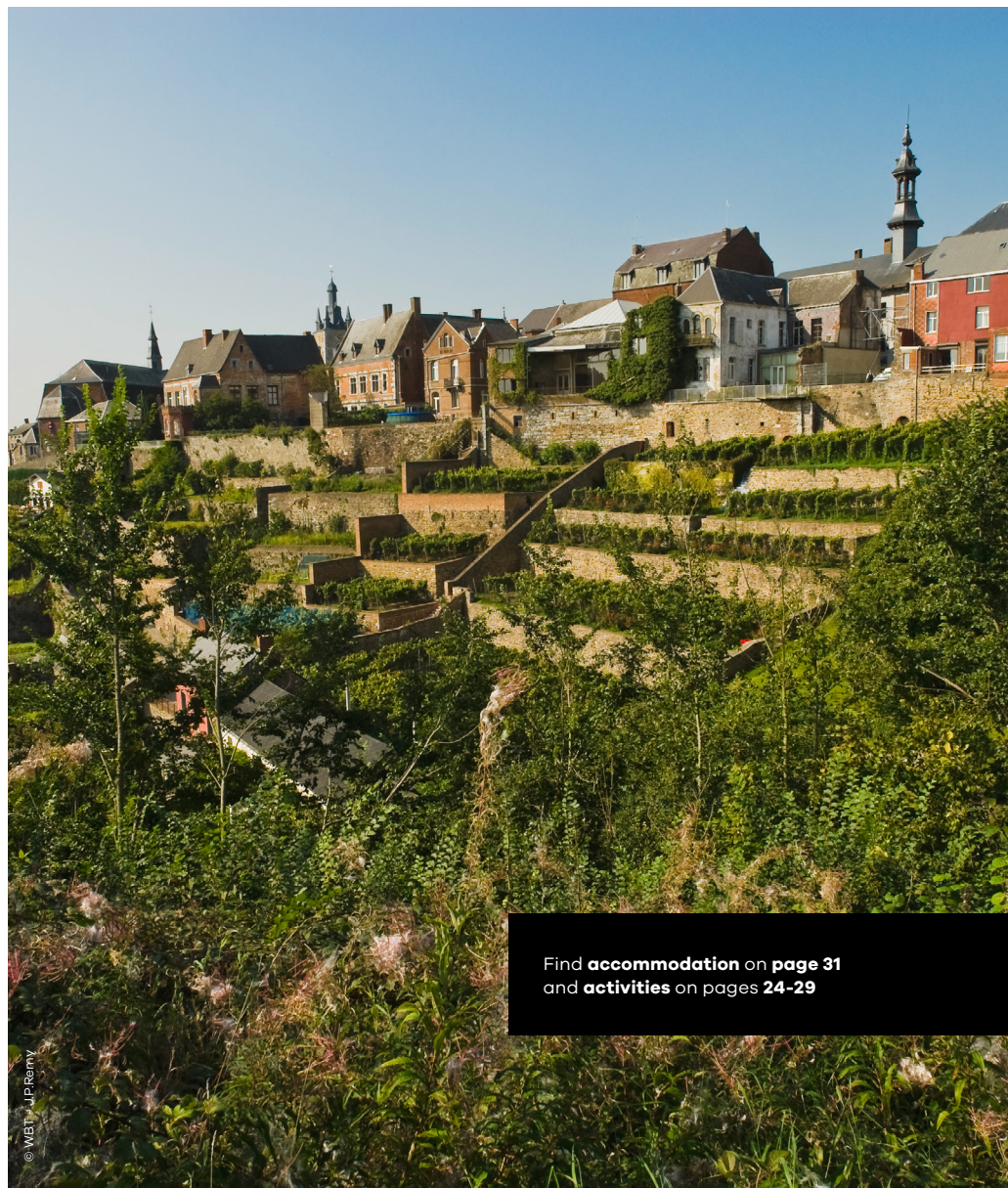
SIGNPOSTING





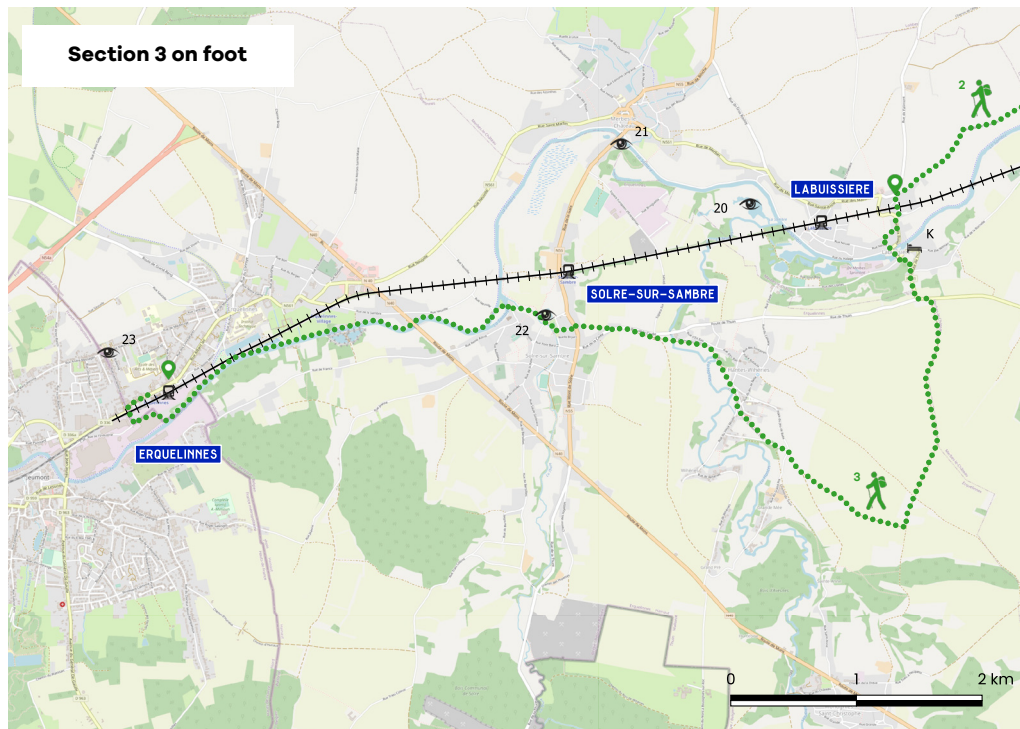
## Thuin (Hanging Gardens) - Labuissière

Follow the green and blue marked path to 'Rue Albert 1<sup>er</sup>' (Albert 1st Street) in front of the Collegiate Church of Saint-Ursmer where you follow the GR 129 markers again.



Find **accommodation** on **page 31**  
and **activities** on pages **24-29**

### Section 3 on foot



Km 10.2



3H15

SIGNPOSTING





### Labuissière - Erquelinnes Station

Follow the GR 129 markings to the passage above the Sambre River (lock) after the 'Château-fort de Solre-Sur-Sambre' (Soire-Sur-Sambre fortress).

After the lock, turn left and follow the towpath towards Erquelinnes.







# By bike

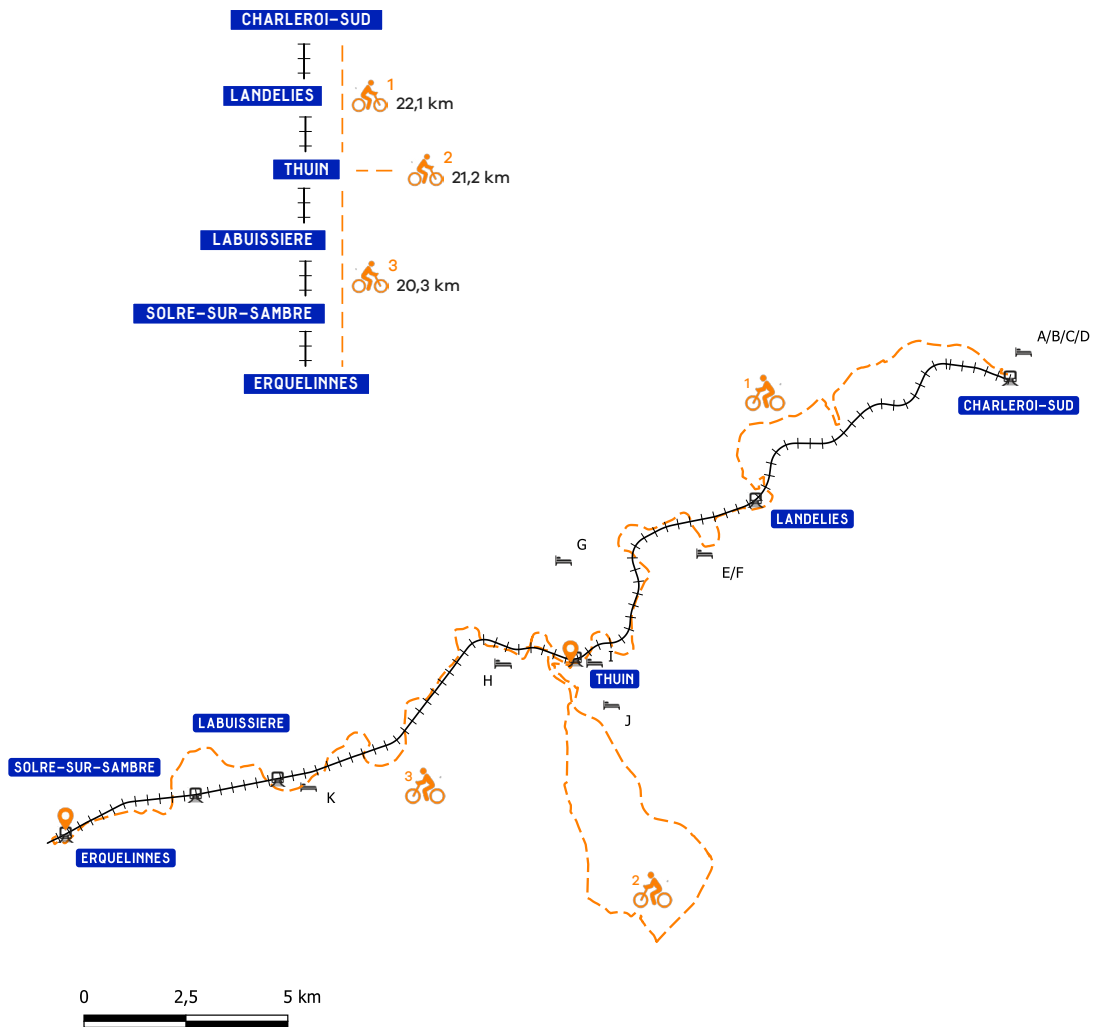
## **Gare de Charleroi-Sud (Station) – Gare de Erquelinnes (Station)**

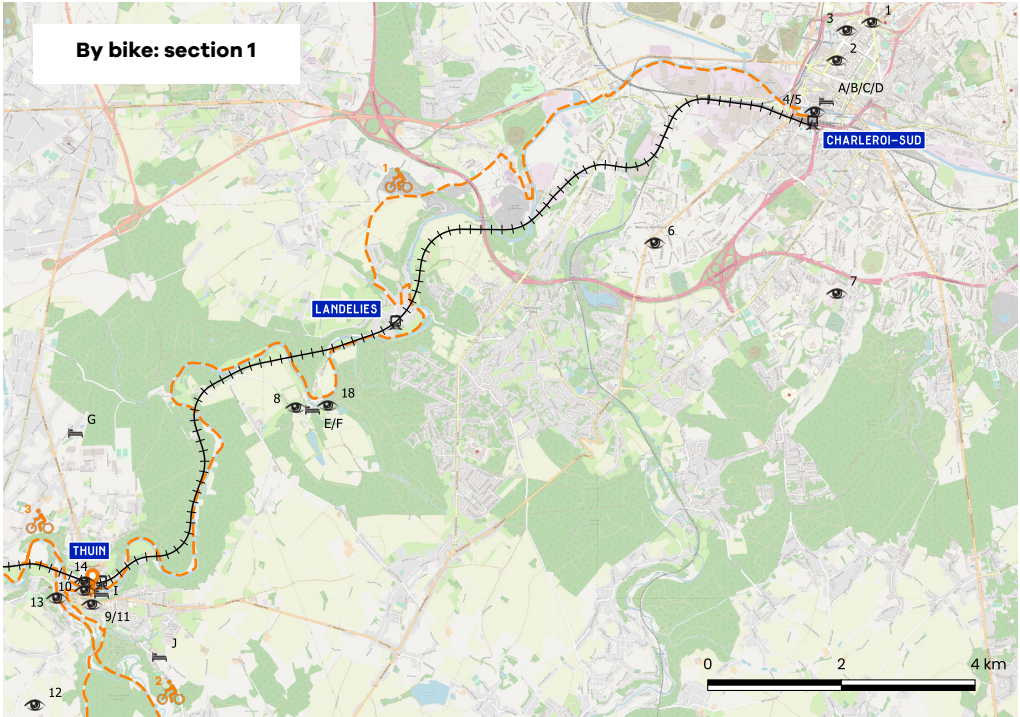
**Km : 63,6**

**Signposting: RAVeL 6 + RAVeL 3**









Km 22.1



2H00

SIGNPOSTING RAVeL

## By bike



### Charleroi- Sud - Thuin Station

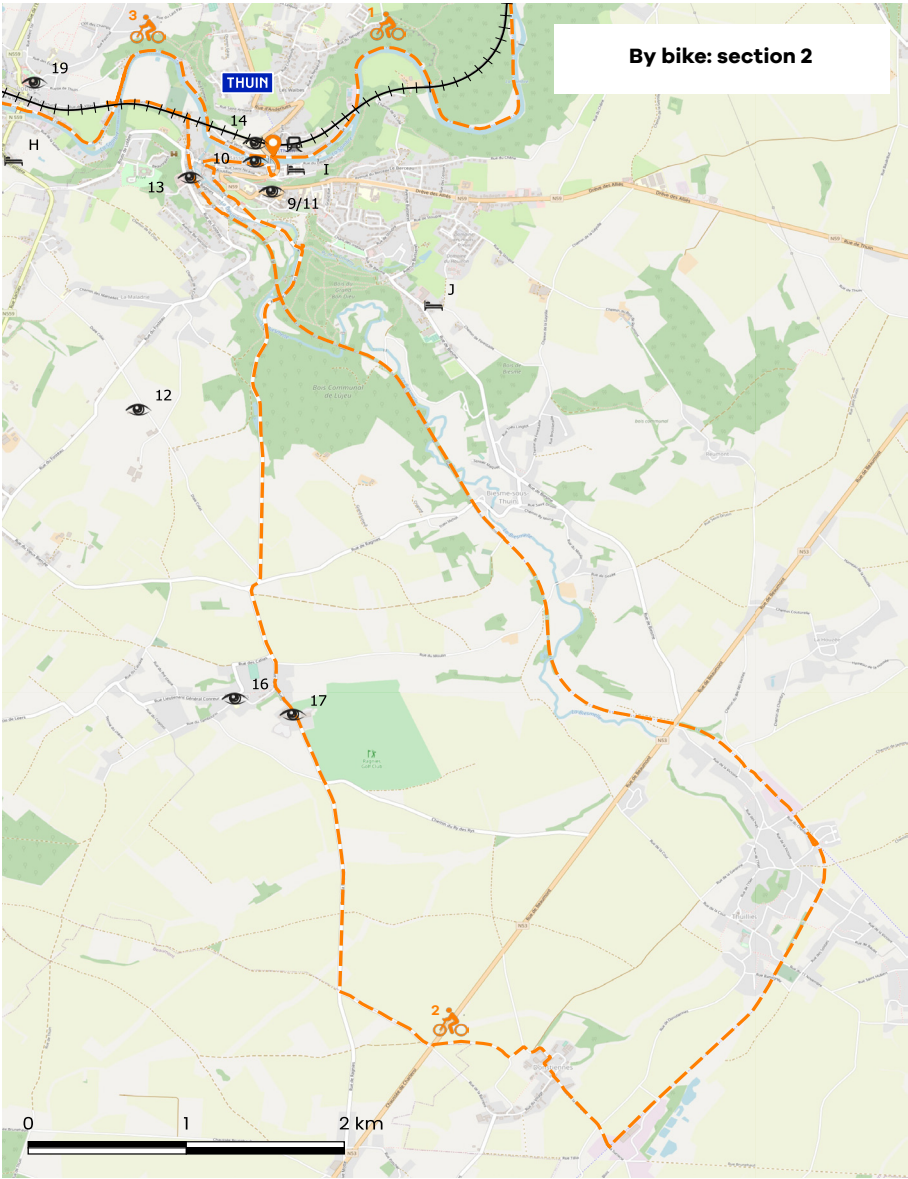
#### Signposting

RAVeL 6

- 1 **Km 0:** join the road opposite the station and head left until you reach the roundabout. When you get to the roundabout, take the exit reserved for bikes and join the RAVeL trail along the River Sambre (**RAVeL 6** towards Thuin).
- 2 **Km 3,5:** At 'Marchienne-au-Pont', the RAVeL trail changes bank via the road bridge to pass under it.
- 3 Follow the RAVeL 6 to Thuin







Km 21.2



2H00

SIGNPOSTING RAVeL

## Thuin - Thuillies - Ragnies - Thuin

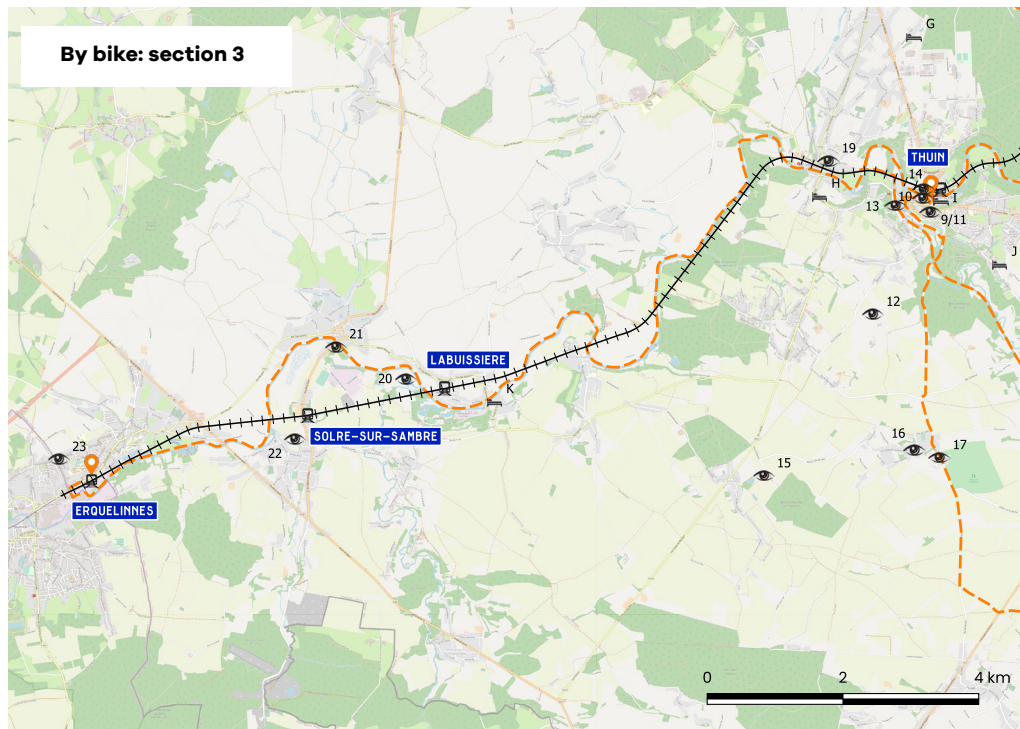
### Signposting

RAVeL 3

- 1 **Km 23.6:** pass 'Thuin' in a long bend of the River Sambre. Before the railway bridge, turn right on a slip road, go up on the bridge and follow the RAVeL 3 trail towards 'Beaumont' along the adjacent tram lines.
- 2 In 'Thuillies', at the RAVeL trail junction, continue to the right on the RAVeL 3 path towards 'Beaumont' for about 2.5 km. At the junction with 'Rue de la Sucrerie' (Sucrerie Street), turn right following the **unmarked RandoVelo 1 (RV1) route**.
- 3 Go around 'Donstiennes castle' to the right and take the 'Ancien Chemin de Charleroi' (The Old Charleroi Road). Then, take the first right to join Chaussée de Charleroi but **be vigilant** when you cross. Turn right onto 'Rue de la Roquette' (Roquette Street) towards the village of Ragnies. Cross the village and continue to 'Thuin'. **N.B. Take care on the way down due to the uneven surface.** Pass under the RAVeL trail and join the River Sambre Quays; cross the River Sambre via the footbridge (dismount) or via the bridge; continue along the RAVeL 6 trail towards 'Erquelinnes' (Charleville). Pass the junction with the RAVeL of the Line 108 (on the right).



**By bike: section 3**



**Km 20.3**



**1H45**

**SIGNPOSTING**

**RAVeL**



## Thuin - Erquelinnes Station

### Balisage

RAVeL 6

- 1 In Thuin, take the RAVeL 6 again
- 2 At the French border in 'Erquelinnes', turn right towards 'Rue des Usines' (Usines Street) and cross the railway at the level crossing. Continue to the right towards Erquelinnes station, 'Rue Albert 1<sup>er</sup>' (Albert 1st Street).

Find **accommodation** on **page 31**  
and **activities** on pages **24-29**





# Discover

## 1 Charleroi Adventure City Safari

An offbeat and atypical look at the city

[www.charleroiadventure.com](http://www.charleroiadventure.com)

## 2 Charleroi Belfry

Designed by architect Joseph André in 1936, this monument is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Place Charles II – 6000 Charleroi

[www.cm-tourisme.be](http://www.cm-tourisme.be)

## 3 BPS22 – The Art Museum of the Hainaut Province

The BPS22 is one of the largest art museums in Wallonia. It is distinguished by its unusual exhibition programming and welcomes you into a beautiful glass and iron building dating from 1911.

Boulevard Solvay 22 – 6000 Charleroi

[www.bps22.be](http://www.bps22.be)

## 4 Parcours Street Art

This vibrant 3km walk takes you among the ruins of the industrial era of the Pays de Charleroi. This "underground" urban route offers the opportunity to admire the vibrant work of hundreds of graffiti artists and painters that makes the urban landscape come alive.

*Starting from Charleroi - Sud station*

[www.cm-tourisme.be](http://www.cm-tourisme.be)

## 5 The Slag Heap Trail

The Black Loop (20 km) allows you to discover Charleroi and its slag heaps during a hike between the steel industry, greenery and the edge of the Sambre. There is also a shorter version of the loop (5 km).

[www.cm-tourisme.be](http://www.cm-tourisme.be)

## 6 Museum of Photography

Installed in a former religious building, the museum brings together a collection of more than 80,000 photographs, including more than 800 photos on permanent display and 3 million negatives.

Avenue Paul Pastur 11

6032 Mont-sur-Marchienne

[www.musephoto.be](http://www.musephoto.be)

## 7 The 'Bois du Cazier' mining site and its slag heap mounds

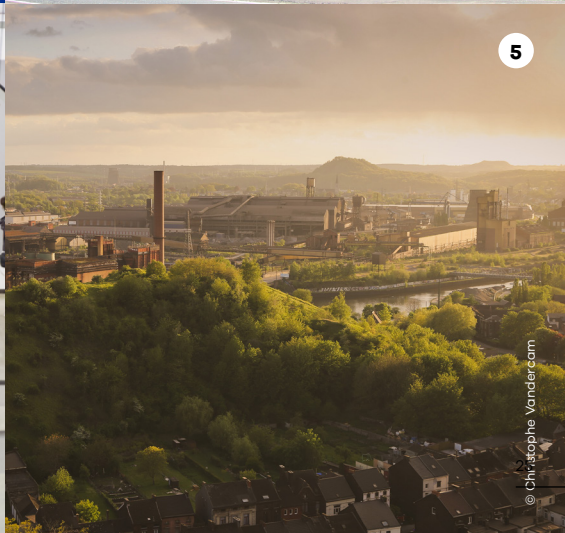
An important witness to Wallonia's industrial past, the 'Bois du Cazier' is today a memorial museum that illustrates the living and working conditions of the miner's lives at the time and the details of labour immigration which saw miners from 35 countries come to work in Belgium.

Rue du Cazier 80 – 6001 Marcinelle

[www.leboisducazier.be](http://www.leboisducazier.be)











## 8 Cistercian Abbey of Aulne in Gozée

The Cistercian ruins of the Abbey of Aulne are located in 'Gozée', a stone's throw from Thuin. Come and discover its history and its tasty craft beers.

Rue Vandervelde 290 - 6534 Gozée  
[www.abbayedaulne.be](http://www.abbayedaulne.be)

## 9 Thuin: the medieval town and its hanging gardens

Recognized as an exceptional heritage of Wallonia, the suspended gardens of Thuin offer a rare landscape enriched by an amazing course of contemporary works of art.

**Office du Tourisme de Thuin**  
Place Albert 1<sup>er</sup> - 6530 Thuin  
[www.tourismethuin.be](http://www.tourismethuin.be)

## 10 The Thudo Eco-museum and the Boatmen's District at Thuin

An old merchant barge takes you through the world of boating. The different themes are addressed using documents and witnesses of the time: postcards, construction plans, models... Continue your visit with a walk in the boatmen's quarter, in the lower part of the town, which is still largely inhabited by a population of retired boatmen.

Rue 't Serstevens - 6530 Thuin  
[www.tourismethuin.be](http://www.tourismethuin.be)

## 11 Belfry of Thuin

At the top of its 60 metres, the Belfry of Thuin, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, offers an exceptional panorama of the Sambre and Biesmelle valleys.

Place du Chapitre 3 - 6530 Thuin  
[www.beffroidethuin.be](http://www.beffroidethuin.be)

## 12 "Ferme du Pont de Bois" in Thuin (Art Gallery)

Hosts an artists' studio and is also an exhibition space where national and international artistic events, permanent and / or occasional exhibitions are organized.

Diale Colas - 6530 Thuin  
[www.cm-tourisme.be](http://www.cm-tourisme.be)

## 13 The Vicinal Historic Tramway Discovery Centre

Museum dedicated to the tram in all its various incarnations: steam (see website), electric and diesel. Historical monuments line this tram line, allowing visitors to combine railway and cultural discoveries such as the hanging gardens at Thuin or the Saint Ursmer College. Climb aboard and enjoy unique panoramas and rural settings as you ride.

Rue du Fosteau 2 - 6530 Thuin  
[www.cm-tourisme.be](http://www.cm-tourisme.be)

## 14 'Maison Imprimerie' (House of Printing and Letters of Wallonia)

This museum, dedicated to the paper trades, houses an important collection of material. Come and discover a profession that has evolved since Gutenberg – the inventor of the printing press.

Rue Verte 1b - 6530 Thuin  
[www.maison-imprimerie.net](http://www.maison-imprimerie.net)

## 15 The Château du Fosteau & Park

At the top of an undulation overlooking the surrounding meadows, looms the silhouette of the Château du Fosteau. This remarkable architectural ensemble punctuated by 7 towers includes a fortified manor from the end of the 14th century and a fortified farmyard.

Rue du Marquis 1 - 6530 Thuin  
[www.chateauaufosteau.com](http://www.chateauaufosteau.com)



## 16 Ragnies, one of the Most Beautiful Villages in Wallonia

Set in a rural setting on the edge of a stream, this picturesque village is characterized by the presence of large farm houses on its outskirts.

Place de Ragnies - 6532 Ragnies  
[www.beauxvillages.be](http://www.beauxvillages.be)

## 17 Biercée Distillery

This unique Belgian distillery producing top-of-the-range eaux-de-vie, liqueurs and gins from untreated fruit, the Biercée Distillery is located in a grandiose place steeped in history.

Rue de la Roquette 36 - 6532 Ragnies  
[www.bierceedistillery.com](http://www.bierceedistillery.com)

## 18 Café Leblon – License Free Boat Trip on the River Sambre

Café Leblon invites you to embark on its license-free boats and relax by the water, on the Sambre River, a stone's throw from the site of the 'Aulne Abbey'. On the way back, enjoy a nice refreshment with a regional beer or an ice cream on the café terrace.

Rue de Leernes 9 - 6534 Thuin  
[www.cafe-leblon.be](http://www.cafe-leblon.be)

## 19 St-Ursmer Collegiate Church & Folcuin Garden in Lobbes

This 10-acre garden, classified as 'Parks and Garden of Wallonia', is located next to the collegiate church of Lobbes. It is a public space of medieval inspiration, monastic and managed by volunteers, located at the foot of the oldest church in Belgium.

Rue de l'Eglise 1 - 6540 Lobbes  
[www.collegialelobbes.be](http://www.collegialelobbes.be)

## 20 Labuissière Nature Reserve

This reserve covers about fifty hectares in a mosaic of wetlands. This marshy area attracts many nesting and migrating birds.

[www.hautesambre.natagora.be](http://www.hautesambre.natagora.be)

## 21 Explore the Haute-Sambre region on a stand-up paddle or kayak with 'Nature Evasion'

'Nature Evasion' invites you to explore Haute-Sambre region through various recreational, educational, sports and tourist activities accessible to all, including stand-up paddle boarding and kayaking. On the esplanade of the Sambre bridge in 'Merbes-le-Château'

 [Nature-Evasion](#)

## 22 Castle of Solre-Sur-Sambre

It is one of the oldest fortified castles in the Hainaut province, which, through its exceptional state of conservation, is a remarkable witness to the architecture of fortified castles in the Middle Ages.

Rue du Château-Fort - 6560 Erquennes  
[www.erquennes.be](http://www.erquennes.be)

## 23 Brootcoorens Brewery in Erquennes and La Houblonnière

A stone's throw from the French border, the 'Brootcoorens' brewery in 'Erquennes' immerses you in a pool of malty flavors and traditional folklore. Take the opportunity to visit 'La Houblonnière': located right in front of the family brewery, it's a real hop plantation amongst other things. Brewery equipment is also exhibited there. Tastings are a must.

Rue de Maubeuge 197 - 6560 Erquennes  
[www.brasserie-brootcoorens-erquennes.be](http://www.brasserie-brootcoorens-erquennes.be)



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# Taste of Wallonia

📍 **Chèvrerie des Saules  
(Speciality goat dairy)**

Allée Centrale, 90  
6040 Jumet

[www.chevrerielessaules.be](http://www.chevrerielessaules.be)

📍 **La Manufacture Urbaine  
(Speciality grocery store)**

Rue de Brabant 2  
6000 Charleroi

[www.manufacture-urbaine.com](http://www.manufacture-urbaine.com)

📍 **Brasserie de l'Abbaye d'Aulne  
(Aulne Brewery)**

Rue Vandervelde, 273  
6534 Gozée

[www.abbayedaulne.com](http://www.abbayedaulne.com)

📍 **Musée du miel et de l'abeille  
(Museum of Honey and Bees)**

Relais de la Haute Sambre  
Rue Fontaine Pépin 12 - 6540 Lobbes

[www.museedumiel.be](http://www.museedumiel.be)

📍 **Le Spamboux  
(Speciality grocery store)**

Rue du Spamboux 2  
6540 Mont-Sainte-Geneviève

[f Le-Spamboux](#)




# Where to Stay?



**A Auberge de jeunesse de Charleroi**   
Rue du Bastion d'Egmont 3  
6000 Charleroi  
[www.lesaubergesdejeunesse.be](http://www.lesaubergesdejeunesse.be)

**B Ibis Charleroi Centre-Gare**  
Quai de Flandre 12  
6000 Charleroi  
[ibis.accor.com](http://ibis.accor.com)

**C Novotel Charleroi Centre**  
Place Verte 17  
6000 Charleroi  
[www.accorhotels.com](http://www.accorhotels.com)

**D Chambre d'hôtes 76tour**   
Boulevard Pierre Mayence 76  
6000 Charleroi  
[www.76tour.be](http://www.76tour.be)

**E Hôtel Auberge de l'Abbaye d'Aulne**  
Rue Émile Vandervelde 275  
6534 Gozée  
[www.aubergedelabbaye.be](http://www.aubergedelabbaye.be)

**F Camping insolite Thudi-Nids en bulle**  
Rue Émile Vandervelde 290  
6534 Gozée  
[www.thudi-nids.be](http://www.thudi-nids.be)



**G Relais de la Haute-Sambre**  
Rue Fontaine Pépin 12  
6540 Lobbès  
[www.rhs.be](http://www.rhs.be)

**H Gîte La Grattière**  
Rue de la Grattière 31  
6540 Lobbès  
[www.lagrattiere.be](http://www.lagrattiere.be)

**I Gîte L'Escale de Flore**   
Chemin de Halage 43  
6530 Thuin  
[www.hainauttourisme.be](http://www.hainauttourisme.be)

**J La Ferme de l'Apéro**  
Chemin de Forestaille 8  
6530 Thuin  
[www.lafermedelapero.com](http://www.lafermedelapero.com)

**K Chambre d'hôtes Au Crapaud Charmant**  
Rue du vieux Château 17  
6567 Labuissière  
[www.aucrapaudcharmant.com](http://www.aucrapaudcharmant.com)

## Notes

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## **VISITWallonia.be**

### **The Ultimate Belgian Getaway**

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**Alcohol abuse is harmful to health. Consume and enjoy in moderation.**