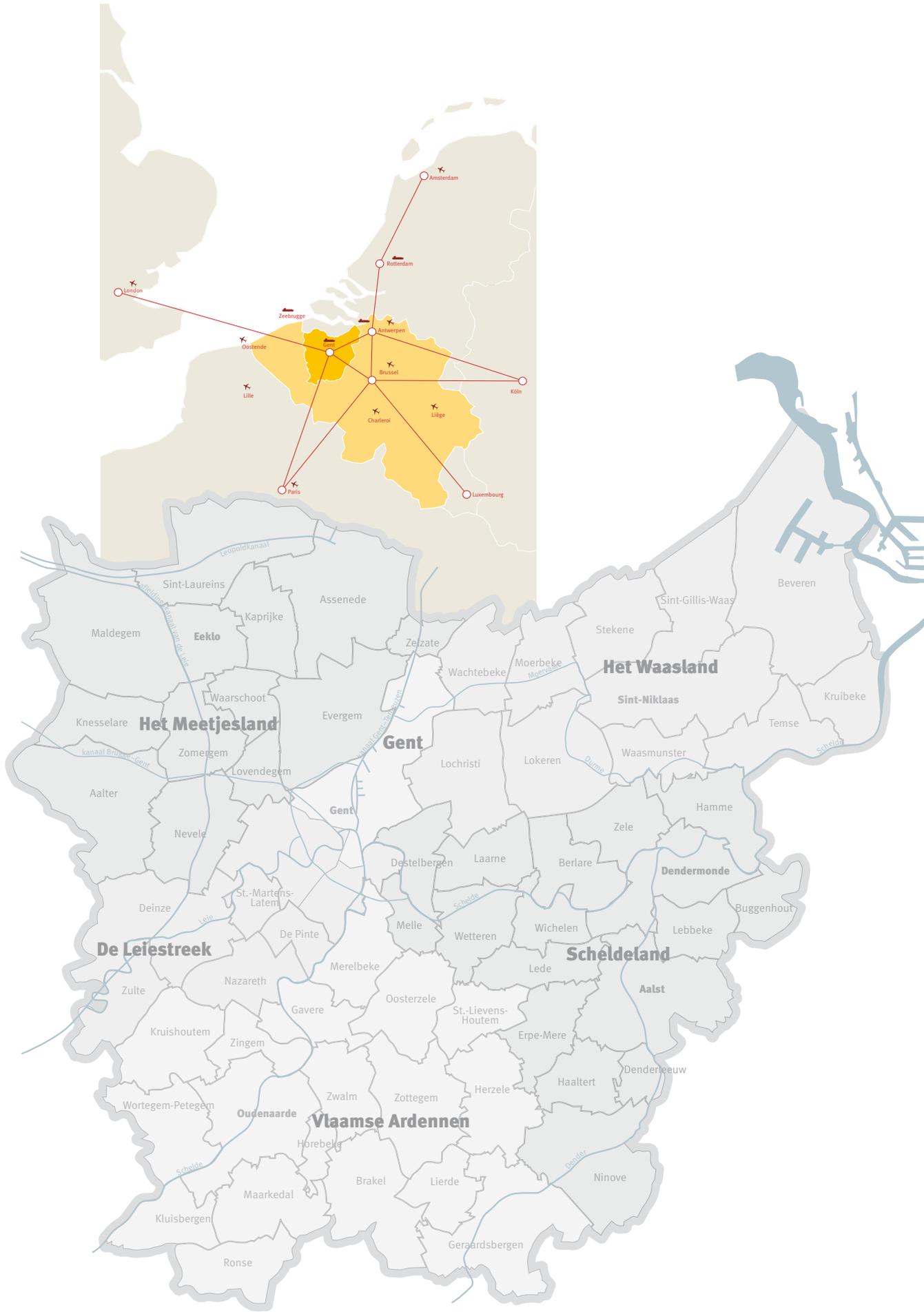




Experience East Flanders





Let East Flanders captivate you

“Europe’s best-kept secret.” That is what the Lonely Planet travel guide publisher calls Ghent (Belgium), promptly catapulting the city to the 7th place in the world-famous list of must-see cities in 2011.

And Ghent automatically brings to mind East Flanders, home of Artevelde’s historically rebellious city. And 64 other cities and towns in the midst of forested hilltops or alongside long polder brooks. Four major rivers and streams – Scheldt, Leie, Dender and Durme – run through the area and lend their name, fame and strength to the region. It is one of the five provinces of Flanders, the northernmost part of Belgium. Our 1.4 million inhabitants live in one of the most densely populated areas of Europe.

“Welcome to East Flanders.” With so much authentic simplicity, but with all the more pride, we invite you to discover our province in all its honour and glory. The rural and agrarian Meetjesland with its extensive brooklands in the north. The equally flat Waasland to the northeast of Ghent with its typical ‘bulging’ farmlands. The Scheldeland area with its dykes and marshlands and flowery meadowlands. And finally the Flemish Ardennes in the south of the province, where the landscape rises to 180 metres above sea level. Green valleys, splashing brooks, wild forests, concealed ancient villages and meandering roads... on which the Tour of Flanders is contested.

No nature without culture. Or is it the other way around? Ganda is what the Celts called the confluence of the rivers Leie and Scheldt. It is only a small step to Ghent’s art treasures. And to the rhythm of the Leie to the region where artists left their expressionist mark on Belgian art. The inhabitants of East Flanders can be proud of their province!

See you soon!

André Denys, *governor*

Alexander Vercamer, Marc De Buck, Peter Hertog, Jozef Dauwe, Eddy Couckuyt, Hilde Bruggeman, *deputies*

Albert De Smet, *provincial registrar*





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How do you define a national sport? Is it 'an active and lengthy pursuit of most inhabitants of East Flanders'? If so, 'doing a terrace' tops our sports list. The tables and chairs in front of every East Flemish café, brasserie or pub attract dozens of passers-by. While licking beer foam off their lips, the Tour of Flanders rushes by on its way to the hellish cobblestones of the Oude Kwaremont, Koppenberg and particularly the Muur van Geraardsbergen.

Purely for sports and cycling

Omloop het Nieuwsblad, the Tour of Flanders, Gent-Wevelgem, the Tour of Belgium, Three Days of De Panne, the Eneco Tour, ... all heroic bicycle races cross East Flemish territory. The hills of the **Flemish Ardennes** are the perfect challenge for professionals and any true **cycling amateurs**. Because cycling is in: our country has 6,000 cycling tourist clubs who all want to grease their calves in East Flanders, which attracts enthusiasts from far abroad. To network, even politicians and businesspeople are trading in their golf clubs for bicycle seats.

The Tour of Flanders is an authentic piece of East Flemish cycling culture.



Enjoy cycling

Speaking of networks: **recreational cyclists** can enjoy the flatter areas of East Flanders. Especially for them, the East Flanders Tourist Office has developed a dense network of cycling nodes across the entire provincial territory. With over **3,000 km of cycling routes**, East Flanders is a cyclist's paradise. On the Flanders Tourist Office web site (www.tov.be) you will find all the practical information about the large range of cycling opportunities. An on-line route planner is also available. By the way, did you know that our province has the most **mountainbiking routes**? Another thing we want to be the best in! The fixed routes (for gps as well) and networks (e.g. Waasland and Southeast Flanders) can be browsed on line and downloaded from the site. Each year, all once-only cross-country cycling tours are compiled in a handy calendar.

Want to relax during your cycling trip? We officially approve **bicycle-friendly hotels, cafes, restaurants and guest accommodations** and award a special logo. They will provide information and maps on cycling opportunities in the area. In case of a minor breakdown, you can use a bicycle repair set. And there are appropriate and free sanitary facilities. If you are using an electric bicycle, then visit the www.fietsoplaadpunten.be web site to see where you can recharge your batteries.



Touring Flanders

In Oudenaarde you can personally experience the leading Tour in the interactive **Tour of Flanders Centre**. Share the heroism, the drama, the joy and the excitement. Learn everything there is to know about the route, the heroes and the unlucky, the Flandriens, the cobblestones and slopes, ... Test your own limits, using modern multimedia to go head to head with Johan Museeuw on the Oude Kwaremont or wear yourself out on the Koppenberg. In short: experience the pride of Flanders from start to finish. Or get on a bicycle and complete the 72, 80 or 114-km-long Tour of Flanders cycling route. For all information, see www.crvv.be.

Pampering top sportspeople

“Cycling is ideal for people with busy lives who want some exercise nonetheless. And it is environment-friendly to boot.” This is a quote from cycling legend Eddy Merckx, the ‘cannibal’ of the road who won the Tour de France no less than five times and who won over 500 other races. More than enough to name our **Flemish Cycling Centre** in Ghent after him. The indoor track is right next to the state-of-the-art **Flanders Top Sports Hall** where top athletes from all over the world set many Belgian, European and world records, loudly encouraged by more than 5,000 supporters.

As the leading sports province, East Flanders has already produced many sports personalities. And still does. They win world titles or return home with precious metal around their necks. In the wake of Olympic tennis player **Sabine Appelmans**, junior **An-Sophie Mestach** is heading for the top, winning the Australian Open junior tournament as the first Belgian. For years, **Jean-Marie Pfaff** was a brilliant goalkeeper in numerous interlands of the Belgian team, while **Frank De Bleekere** became the world’s fourth best referee in 2010. As a result, we have a whole series of stars in a variety of disciplines: **Cédric Van Branteghem** (running), **Eline Berings** (hurdles), ... And recently, **Stefaan Engels**, the marathon man who ran 42.195 km no less than 365 times in one year. **Jacques Rogge**, a native of Ghent and IOC (International Olympic Committee) president, can be proud of his people and East Flanders.

The Flanders Sports Arena in Ghent hosts a lot of major, international indoor sports events. The emphasis lies not only on indoor athletics with one of the fastest mondo-arena’s in the world but also matches in tennis, basketball, volleyball, handball, gymnastics, aerobics, judo ... can be organized thanks to the multifunctional center field.





Every Tuesday morning, around aperitif time, a handful of men at the Kruishoutem city hall set the price of an egg for the entire western hemisphere. They have been doing this expertly for decades now, because several minutes later almost the entire western egg industry visits www.kruishoutem.be (egg prices) to align their selling prices with the reference price. Eggs as a metaphor for knowledge and innovation? Why not? After all, East Flanders is a growth pole for a highly diversified economy: with driven small and medium-sized companies alongside major steel producers and petrochemical companies, service providers and high-tech spin-offs.

Where **knowledge** works

The bustling and innovative East Flemish economy is fed and stimulated by the abundantly present know-how. In turn, this know-how is given every opportunity to develop itself, thanks to our dense network of high-quality schools and training. For instance, Ghent is a well-reputed knowledge city thanks to its renowned university, colleges and research centres. It is the only Belgian city with over 60,000 students. Without exaggerating, East Flanders offers specialised training for any profession.

Focusing on strong industries

Researchers from all over the world are attracted by the numerous research institutes and knowledge centres, forming innovative clusters and incubation centres with start-up companies and spin-offs. With the **biotech cluster** around the Flemish Biotechnology Institute (VIB) as a catalyst, East Flanders evolved into a world-leading life sciences region. Our fundamental knowledge leads to agriculture, industry, medicine, IT, energy, ... applications.

Among other things, biotechnology is a fertile breeding ground for traditional ornamental plant cultivation in East Flanders, i.e. our azaleas and begonias. Four research institutes enhance knowledge development and valorisation in the **Technopole for Ornamental Plant Cultivation**. It is no surprise then that the world-famous **Ghent azalea** was awarded the coveted European PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) approval as a regional product in 2010. If you want to watch them bloom, you must certainly visit the unique Ghent Floralties.



Cultivating pride

For over 200 years now, hundreds of ornamental plant cultivators have been showcasing their upgraded plants and flowers at the five-yearly **Ghent Floralties** (www.floralien.be). Visitors come from all over the world to soak up the atmosphere, odours and colours, the beauty... or to 'steal' creative ideas with their eyes from the large offering of contemporary ornamental creations. However, you will need to wait until 2015 for the next edition of the prestigious flower and plant exhibition. If you can't wait that long, you can opt for the Floralties route and snoop around in the greenhouses of an ornamental plant cultivator. For all information, see www.floralientocht.be.

For the **textile industry** as well, our province centralises both design and technology know-how, which translates into growth possibilities for a significant cluster of companies active in interior, clothing and technical textiles. “No less than 30% of Flemish textile and clothing companies are based in East Flanders, representing 8,500 employees,” emphasises the president of the Economic Council of East Flanders (EROV). And this does not even include the researchers of the **Centexbel** textile research centre and other research institutes.

Prosperity for you and me

Apart from these spearhead industries, our province also wins its spurs in multimedia, semiconductors, medical software and environmental technology. A typical example is the **Ghent Bio Energy Valley** and, by extension, **Bio Base Europe**. These leading European initiatives, aimed at developing a bio-based economy, support the development of sustainable bio-energy activities applied far beyond our country’s borders.

And let’s not forget **information and communication technology**! The industry continues reinventing itself, over and over again. And not only among major industrial players or service providers. Advanced applications for the young, the elderly, the hearing impaired, ... provide solutions tailored to people.

Summarised in one sentence: the East Flemish knowledge economy is a source of prosperity, employment and progress for all, within and far beyond our province.



From atlas to gps and back

In case you didn’t know yet: the distant origins of the ‘global positioning system’ (gps) lie in East Flanders. After all, this navigation system is based on the Universal Transversal Mercator projection (UTM), a variant of the so-called Mercator projection, which originated from the mind of the great cartographer Gerardus Mercator (1512-1594) who was born in the East Flemish village of Rupelmonde. After his death, a book containing 105 maps of Europe was published, which Mercator was the first to call an ‘atlas’. And coincidence or no coincidence: the cradle of Tele Atlas – a global leader in digital maps, absorbed by gps supplier Tomtom in 2008 – is also located in Ghent. In short: we have come full circle. A tip: 2012 is Mercator Year in the Waasland, celebrated with plenty of activities and exhibitions.

Water a source of life

“Of all the Brazilian orange juice consumed in Europe, half is imported through our port”, says the senior official of the Port of Ghent. Strange but true: thanks to East Flemish water, all of Europe can enjoy overseas fruit juice.

Ports are gateways to the world, with rivers as arteries. Perhaps that is why man has always been drawn to water. To fish, to wash, to play, to rest, to dream. Or simply sail, swim and dive. But above all, to drink it, to live and let live.

East Flanders is one big blue-veined web, with the confluence of the rivers Scheldt and Leie in Ghent at its heart. Many of our bustling and pleasant cities originated along waterways and their crossroads. The flat water allows flat-bottomed boats to glide from city to city, incessantly transporting cargo. The streams, rivers and canals shaped our landscape. When the natural dykes collapsed in the Dark Ages, large parts in the north of our province were flooded. The waters receded, but the brooks remained, sometimes stretching for miles and miles. Today, they are still the favourite place of water recreation enthusiasts and nature lovers. The Sint-Laureins brooklands in the northwest for instance look extremely idyllic, with provincial sports centre de Boerekreek as its best-known spot.





Economic growth beacons

Traditionally, the port of Ghent is a bulk goods port, e.g. for ores, grain and fertilisers. In 2010 the seaport transhipped 47 million tonnes, of which 27 million tonnes by sea and 20 million tonnes by inland shipping. This record proves that the port is a focal point for Flanders in the town planning-economic structure of Ghent and the region. For that matter, the 32-kilometre-long Terneuzen (The Netherlands) canal connects the city with the Westerschelde and the North Sea. Like the port itself, the canal zone became an artery of the East Flemish economy. Even the Antwerp world port extends to East Flemish soil, where the Waasland port with over 30 million tonnes of maritime traffic is a growth pole for the Antwerp container activities. For any information, see www.havengent.be.



The little guy whizzes on

Brussels and Geraardsbergen both have their Manneken Pis. But Geraardsbergen's is the oldest by far, with a 160-year lead. Put differently: when the Brussels Manneken hesitantly whizzed for the first time, Geraardsbergen's Manneken had already peed an entire Dender river. "A figment of the imagination? No, the truth. And a historically proven fact!" A lot of water will have to pass under the bridge before the East Flemish 'diehards' surrender to their Brabant challengers. This is folklore too. For all information, see <http://oudste-manneken-pis.be>.

In the Waasland in the east of our province you can **canoe and kayak** on a 35-kilometre-long closed circuit. And the Scheldeland boasts no less than 277 kilometres of navigable waterways and numerous ponds. By way of contrast, fast-flowing rivers cut valleys in the verdant and forested landscape in the south of the province, thus creating the **(East) Flemish Ardennes**. The ideal place for anyone who prefers hills. Finally, to the west, the **Leie** quietly meanders in the direction of the river Scheldt and the sea. Along its wide banks, artists installed themselves in villages and let themselves be inspired by its poetic course.

Rivers of fun

With over four hundred kilometres of navigable waterways and a multitude of canals, brooks, ditches and moats, it would be a shame not to enjoy all this water in East Flanders. Proud boat or yacht owners can roam around to their heart's content for an entire **boating holiday**. Each East Flemish region has its own select spots where you can comfortably moor, such as the **East Flemish marina** in Aalst, Lokeren, Deinze and Geraardsbergen. The crowning glory is Portus Ganda, at the confluence of the rivers Leie and Scheldt, in the heart of Ghent.

However, boating holidays are not just for yacht owners. Simply rent your own pleasure boat for a couple of hours or weeks. Or board one of the ships or boats making **tourist trips** on the Scheldt, Leie, Dender and Moervaart and explore our province from an entirely different perspective. Discover the numerous **watermills** and **castles** along the way, hidden along the picturesque banks. Such as the **Laarne castle**, one of the country's best-preserved water castles. Or the 16th century **Ooidonk castle**, at a bend in the Leie in Bachte-Maria-Leerne. This gem of Hispano-Flemish architecture could blend in with the Loire fairy tale castles.

The region of the Leie in the south-west of Ghent attracted around the beginning of the 20th century a lot of different artists. In one of the many meanders of this Leie, between Deinze and Ghent, a surprisingly atmospheric, richly furnished and well kept 16th century castle can be found: castle 'Ooidonk'. Through touristic boat tours or a trip with your private yacht, you can admire multiple water mills and (fairy tale) castles like this one in East Flanders. © Jan Crab





Finger-licking good

“The inhabitants of East Flanders like to invite friends and have a great time, which inevitably implies an exuberant table with plenty of food and drinks. Frugality towards one’s guests is a major sin in East Flanders.” This is how we live on in a foreign guest’s memory. And rightly so, because East Flemish cuisine has been praised for centuries for its **gastronomy and delicacies**.



Take for instance the Geraardsbergen **mattentaart**, a world-famous cheesecake straight from the heart of the Flemish Ardennes. The oldest known recipe is found in ‘Een Notabel Boecxken van Cokerijen’, published by Thomas Vander Noot, probably in 1510. The sweet, soft and hearty pastry put **Geraardsbergen** on the world’s culinary map and is protected as a regional product by Europe since 2007. **Chocolates, pralines, jams, pies** and **gingerbread** also give our province its own character and are a must and lust for anyone with a sweet tooth.

Not for sourpusses

Mattentaart has its origins in abbeys and castles which were able to preserve milk longer in their ice cellars, resulting in matten (lumps of accidentally curdled milk, which could not be used to make cheese with). The matten gruel is a mixture of matten, eggs, sugar and, if so desired, some almond extract. To know how the preparation continues, read www.mattentaart.be.



Some zest is also allowed, because East Flanders is the cradle of **gin**. In the late 19th century no less than a quarter of the industrial distilleries and two thirds of the agricultural distilleries made their eau de vie on East Flemish soil. With its 15 distilleries, our province still is the country’s leading gin region. It is only logical then that the East Flemish **O’de Flander** gin enjoys European protection and is allowed to bear the BGA label (protected geographical indication). You must taste it to believe it.

Fancy cooking

The Scheldeland region, to the southeast of Ghent, is home to many of the world's restaurants with one or more Michelin stars. However, top chefs are found elsewhere in the province as well, such as Peter Goossens in his **three-star restaurant** Hof van Cleve in Kruishoutem. Remember to get a reservation though. Renowned chefs boast a rich tradition of regional dishes and serve home-grown products with a modern twist. The menu still includes classic **regional dishes**: Ghent waterzooi, rabbit with prunes, beef stew with fries, hodge-podge, eel in green sauce, Lokeren horsemeat sausage, ... Possibly combined with an exquisite selection of **cheese, delicacies** and a dollop of **mustard**.

A delicious dish calls for a decent beer. That is why, after the first work of mercy (feeding the hungry), we also take the second work to heart: giving drinks to the thirsty. There is plenty of choice of dozens of **specialty beers**, brewed by East Flemish **family breweries**. And thanks to the wealth of water sources – especially in the Flemish Ardennes – we are just as rich in traditional breweries which have been scoring for centuries with their beers, both nationally and internationally.

Discover, taste and enjoy!

More than 45 East Flemish producers will make your mouth water with all the treats they show off in the Groot Vleeshuis at the Groentenmarkt in Ghent. We have renovated the 15th century indoor meat market, turning it into a promotional centre for our East Flemish regional products, where you can discover and taste an exclusive range of snacks and drinks. In addition to delicacies, we also showcase our textiles and ornamental plant cultivation there. For all information, see www.grootvleeshuis.be.

The medieval Groot Vleeshuis (15th century) used to be an indoor market where butchers leased a meat stand or 'stall' to market their goods. By centralising the sale of meat, the government could control the freshness.





Finding **traces** and enjoying them

“For years, I visited one foreign museum after another. Until a resident of Barcelona mentioned the S.M.A.K. to me, which is located in my own province, of all places! I hadn’t even been there yet! Since then, I am a tourist in my own region.” And our East Flemish globetrotter is not alone. Each year thousands of Japanese visit the Ghent towers, even more world citizens take a boat trip on the river Leie to the artists’ colony in Sint-Martens-Latem, coming from every corner of the world to taste and enjoy East Flemish culture, popular feasts and gastronomy. Our province’s cultural offering is quite varied. Its museums are some of Flanders’ most interesting assets. Mola (the provincial mill centre in Wachtebeke), to name but one, evolved into a unique ‘molinological’ information centre. Another showpiece is pam (the provincial archaeological museum in Ename and Velzeke), exhibiting prehistory, Roman and Merovingian times and the Dark Ages in a highly original and internationally acclaimed manner. With our provincial time machines you can travel to the past and future. After all, we serve aficionados of contemporary and modern art and culture hand and foot. In short: East Flanders is a treasure trove of large and small museums, housing the widest variety of surprising collections: prehistoric and Roman finds, the works of avant-gardist artists, team trains, matches, jukeboxes, cyclists’ jerseys, agricultural vehicles, beer bottles, ... far too many to list them all here. On www.museuminzicht.be you can virtually explore 40-odd East Flemish museums.

For all the world

Countless generations have left their traces in East Flanders. We not only leave our marks culturally, but also **architecturally, festively, scientifically, recreationally** and in **sports**. Witness the **monuments** in every possible shape: from listed chapels and Mary caves in the country to impressive abbeys, chateaus, castles and cathedrals. Many themed cycling routes of the East Flanders Tourist Office such as the 'Bakens van kunst aan de Leie' (Art Beacons on the Leie) allow you to discover the province culturally-historically. Sports temples, music and film festivals, popular feasts and folklore annually attract hundreds of thousands of visitors and artists from every corner of the world. And all of them find a place and a bed for a great and **agreeable stay**. The East Flanders Tourist Office has a sampling of 'to-do' and 'must-see' sites which will keep you busy for a couple years to discover our province... What more could you want?

Tourist avant la lettre

East Flanders and particularly the city of Ghent are printed in Charlemagne's memory. The future emperor of the Holy Roman Empire was born in Ghent (1500) and never forgot his city of birth, which he left as a six-year-old. When the cities lose power during his reign, the rebellious city of Ghent puts up a fight. The townspeople reject all reconciliation attempts. In 1540 the emperor decides to personally deal with the rebels, but can't find it in his heart to destroy his native city. But he does teach the proud residents of Ghent some humility. Want to know how the story continues? Then book a Charlemagne trip with one of the Ghent guide associations.

National Geographic's Traveler Magazine praised Ghent for the city's "wonderful mix of a magnificent past and a bustling present". And promptly proclaimed the rebellious city the world's third most authentic destination.



Culture with a big C



In 1934 Ghent was startled by a bold theft: two panels of **The Adoration of the Lamb**, the twelve-part altarpiece painted by the Van Eyck brothers (1432), had been stolen and used to blackmail the bishop of Ghent. The mysterious kidnapper returned one panel, to add weight to his ransom demand for the other panel, the much-discussed **Just Judges**. On his deathbed, the alleged thief confessed the theft, but was no longer able to reveal the hiding place. To the present day, the judges have still not been found. But never mind, you can now admire the showpiece of Flanders' heritage in all its glory in the **Saint Bavo cathedral** in Ghent. The disappeared panel was replaced with a copy (*).

(*) A juicy detail: when the Ghent painter Julien Van Der Veken was commissioned to make a copy of the disappeared panel, he was not allowed to sign the product of his hard work. Out of protest, he replaced the head of one of the judges with that of Leopold III, King of Belgium at the time.

Our province conceals even more original masterpieces – fortunately, we know where they are – in its numerous national and regional museums. For instance, you cannot pass up the legacy of the **Latem Schools** in the Leie area. Or our **tapestries** from the Flemish Renaissance. Decorative gems, woven by artistic craftsmen from the Oudenaarde and Geraardsbergen areas. Their renowned greenery or 'verdure tapestries' decorate the Oudenaarde city hall and are definitely worth a visit.



Textiles made East Flanders great. That is what you learn in the **Museum for Industrial Archaeology and Textile (MIAT)** and experience when touring the East Flemish cities. This greatness is evident from the well-preserved interbellum neighbourhoods, e.g. in Ronse and Sint-Niklaas. Farther back in time, the East Flemish **belfries** (Aalst, Dendermonde, Eeklo, Ghent and Oudenaarde) towered high above the skyline, often overshadowing the humble **beguinages**.

Due to their uniqueness, both heritage types were recognised as **world heritage sites** by **Unesco**. And while the guilds and bourgeoisie made the cities grow, the nobility retreated to their **chateaux** on their vast estates.

Ever since the middle ages partygoers dress up, dance on squares and drift from one café to the other. Despite the chilly weather in February – Marsh, Aalst carnival can genuinely be called a street event.

World-renowned parties

The ‘common’ people preferred to go crazy during the **annual fairs**, which originated from religious **parties and processions** in medieval times. And they still do. The bustling **Ghent Festivities** are an inextricable part of East Flemish summers. For 160 years now, the inhabitants of Ghent – together with over one and a half million visitors from all over the world by now – let it all hang out in a ten-day mix of popular entertainment and more refined culture.

In February, **Carnival** breaks loose. In Aalst, Flanders best-known carnival city, the ‘voil jeanetten’ take on the country and its events in a long parade, the peak of three days of partying. Traditions are meant to be honoured, so Unesco promptly added four other popular feasts to its list of Masterpieces of Oral and Immaterial Patrimony of Humanity, in addition to Aalst Carnival: **Houtem Annual Fair** in Sint-Lievens-Houtem, **Krakelingenworp** and **Tonnekensbrand** in Geraardsbergen and **Ros Beiaard Parade** in Dendermonde.

Plenty of talent

“It is a great place here for creative minds,” said the talented musician **Gabriel Rios**. Creative jacks-of-all-trades give it all they’ve got in the lively art, music theatre and film scene. Too many to list them all here. Standing up for modern art, art pope **Jan Hoet** established the **S.M.A.K.**, an exceptional museum among modern art museums. The ’03 chair of designer **Maarten Van Severen**, whose heritage is cherished in Ghent, is one of those icons. Or the soundtracks of composer **Dirk Brosse**. Today, artistic productions in East Flanders are soaring. An indisputably talented generation, with e.g. **Alain Platel**, **Arne Sierens**, **Michaël Borremans**, **Berlinde De Bruyckere** and **Honoré d’O** has conquered the world in the meantime, following in the footsteps of the previous generation of icons such as **Raoul de Keyser**, **Roger Raveel** and **Philippe Herreweghe**.

Film and festival

Each year, Ghent welcomes a series of award winners and stars in cinema during the International Film Festival of Flanders. It is not yet ‘Cannes’ but slowly the festival in Ghent developed into one of Europe’s most prominent film events. Every year in October, the festival presents some 100 features and 30 shorts from all across the world. Over about 130,000 viewers watch each year the concerts and film showcases or visit the film related exhibitions.

For any information, see www.filmfestival.be.

Music and festival

For two months, music-loving Flanders is all ears at the Festival of Flanders, a festival that starts with a high-quality classic repertoire but dares to take artistic risks at the same time. With its diversity and creativity, it is unlike any other festival. For the 54th time already, no less than 220 classic and world music concerts perform from early September to late October. The beating heart in Ghent pumps musical blood to lots of smaller cities, villages and towns, thus reaching our entire province.

For any information, see www.festivalgent.be.



This **region** is also governed



The province is organized broadly like other democratic institutions:

- the provincial council is the democratically elected 'parliament' that has the last word on policy outlines and actual policy in the province
- the deputation, led by the governor, is the 'government' which takes responsibility for the day-to-day running of the province
- the officials of the provincial administration prepare the policy and implement the decisions of the deputation

The provincial council

Elections for the provincial council are held every six years. Then the inhabitants of East Flanders chose their 84 representatives. The provincial council decides on matters of provincial interests, in the domains: culture, environment, welfare, education, tourism, economy, ... The council approves of the provincial budget and lays by doing so the foundation of the policy.

The deputation

The members of the provincial council elect from amongst themselves six delegates for the day-to-day administration of the province: the deputies. Together with the governor, who is chairman, and the provincial registrar, who is secretary, they form the deputation. The deputation does the groundwork for the provincial council's decisions and then implements them.

The governor

The governor is appointed by the Flemish government. As the chairman of the deputation the governor has in principle no voting rights. As a government representative of the Flemish and federal governments in East Flanders he sees to it that laws and decrees are adhered to. He sees to it that the local administrators (municipalities, social services departments, water management agencies,...) do not do anything in conflict with law or harm public interest. He is responsible for peace, order and safety in the province and coordinates relief in the case of major disasters.

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www.twitter.com/oost_vlaanderen

www.facebook.com/provincie.oostvlaanderen

Interesting website links

Sports and cycling

- Tourism East Flanders: www.tov.be > fietsen
- The province of East Flanders – province of cyclists: www.oost-vlaanderen.be/wielerprovincie
- The province of East Flanders – mountain bike: www.oost-vlaanderen.be > sport > mountainbike
- The province of East Flanders – Facebook page for cyclists: www.facebook.com/oostvlaanderen.wielerprovincie
- Flanders Sports Arena in Ghent: www.topsporthal.be
- Famous people born in Ghent: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lijst_van_Gentenaars
- Mobibikes – locations for charging electric bikes: www.fietsoplaadpunten.be
- Flanders Classics – the tour of Flanders: www.rvv.be
- Centre of the tour of Flanders in Oudenaarde: www.crvv.be
- Flanders, land for vacations – biker friendly lodging: www.vlaanderen-vakantieland.be/fietsvriendelijk
- Bloso – mountain bike: www.bloso.be > sportpromotie en inspectie > mountainbikeroutes
- Provincial centre for sports De Boerekreek: www.boerekreek.be
- Provincial centre for sports Puyenbroeck: www.oost-vlaanderen.be > cultuur & vrije tijd > sport

Knowledge and innovation

- Municipality Kruishoutem: www.kruishoutem.be (ga naar ‘eierprijzen’)
- The province of East Flanders – house of the economy: www.oost-vlaanderen.be > het Huis van de Economie
- Flemish Institute for Biotechnology (VIB): www.vib.be
- Ghent Bio-Energy Valley: www.gbev.org
- Royal Association for Agriculture and botany – Ghent Floralties (organized every five years): www.floralien.be
- Tourism East Flanders – Floralties bike ride: www.floralientocht.be
- The province of East Flanders – Economic Board for East Flanders: www.erov.be
- Centexbel, the technical and science centre for Belgium textile industry: www.centexbel.be
- Tourism Waasland: www.toerismewaasland.be > Activiteiten > Mercator

Water

- Manneke Pis in Geraardsbergen: <http://oudste-manneken-pis.be>
- Port of Ghent: www.havengent.be
- Municipality Sint-Laureins: www.sint-laureins.be
- Castle Ooidonk in Deinze: www.ooidonk.be
- Promotion Inland Sailing in Flanders – water recreation: www.waterrecreatie.be
- Tourism region of the Scheldt: www.scheldeland.be
- Tourism region of the Leie: www.toerisme-leiestreek.be
- Royal Association of historic city centers & gardens in Belgium: www.historische-woonsteden.be
- Tourism East Flanders: www.tov.be > activiteiten > op het water

Gastronomy

- City Geraardsbergen: www.geraardsbergen.be
- Family Nevens – the Mattentaarten of Geraardsbergen: www.mattentaart.be
- Restaurant Hof Van Cleve by chef Peter Goossens in Kruishoutem: www.hofvanclave.com
- Tourism East-Flanders – regional products: www.tov.be > activiteiten > uit > eten en drinken > streekproducten
- The province of East Flanders – Centre for regional products ‘Groot Vleeshuis’ in Ghent: www.grootvleeshuis.be

Touristic-cultural

- Tourism East-Flanders: www.tov.be
- Tourism Meetjesland: www.toerismemeetjesland.be
- Tourism Waasland: www.toerismewaasland.be
- Tourism region of the Scheldt: www.scheldeland.be
- Tourism region of the Flemish Ardennes: www.toerismevlaamseardennen.be
- Tourism region of the Leie: www.toerisme-leiestreek.be
- Museum East Flanders in Evolution (MovE) of the province of East Flanders: www.museuminzicht.be
- Union of the guides of Ghent and East Flanders: www.gidsenbond-gent.be
- Centre for religious art and culture – religious heritage in East Flanders: www.religieuserfgoed.be
- Vízit – city walks, bike tours and city trips: www.vizit.be
- Gandante vzw – walks, tours, boat trips, ...: www.gandante.be
- Ghent Authentic – guided tours through Ghent: www.ghent-authentic.com
- Provincial archeological museum (pam) Velzeke and Ename: www.pam-ov.be
- Provincial mill centre (Mola): www.oost-vlaanderen.be/mola

Culture

- Sint-Baafs cathedral in Ghent: www.sintbaafskathedraal-gent.be
- Ghent festivities in July: www.gentsefeesten.be
- Museum of Industrial Archeology & Textile (MIAT) in Ghent: www.miat.gent.be
- Aalst carnival in Marsh: www.aalst.be/carnaval
- Municipality Sint-Lievens-Houtem: www.sint-lievens-houtem.be
- City Geraardsbergen: www.geraardsbergen.be
- Ros Beiaard comité vzw – Ros Beiaard tour in Dendermonde in May: www.rosbeiaard.be
- City Ghent – Visite Ghent as a tourist: www.visitgent.be
- International Film Festival of Flanders in Ghent: www.filmfestival.be
- Urban museum for modern art in Ghent: www.smak.be
- Collegium Vocale ensemble from Ghent: www.collegiumvocale.com
- Designer Maarten Van Severen: www.maartenvanseveren.be
- Composer Dirk Brossé: www.dirkbrosse.be
- Museum Roger Raveel at Machelen-aan-de-Leie, devoted to the artist: www.rogerraveelmuseum.be
- Ghent Festival of Flanders, classical and world music concerts in September and October: www.festivalgent.be
- City Deinze – Museum of Deinze and the region of the Leie: www.museumdeinze.be

Colofon

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