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Flanders
State of the Art

Micro-adventures in the Zwin Region

EXPERIENCE NATURE IN FLANDERS

VISITFLANDERS

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Dear friends of Flanders,

Small adventures await you in the enchanting **Zwin Region**. This beautiful region by the sea stretches across the border of Flanders and the Netherlands to the outskirts of **Bruges**. Furthermore, with its location on the coast, the Zwin Region is unique compared to other nature areas in Flanders. No other Flemish Park is so close to the beach and to the sea.

Feel as free as a bird in the **Zwin Nature Park** or wake up in the midst of nature in a **corn tent**, **tiny house** or **tree house**. Water lovers can go **packrafting**, **boating** or standup paddleboarding on the canal. And for the gourmets among us, sample all the salty and sweet delights this region has to offer and do so in unique locations.

In short, there is so much to discover in the Zwin Region. Read on, be inspired and experience **the most wonderful micro-adventures** there yourself.

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Contents

THE ZWIN REGION IN A NUTSHELL 4

AWAKEN IN NATURE 5

DAY TRIPS IN AND AROUND THE ZWIN REGION 6

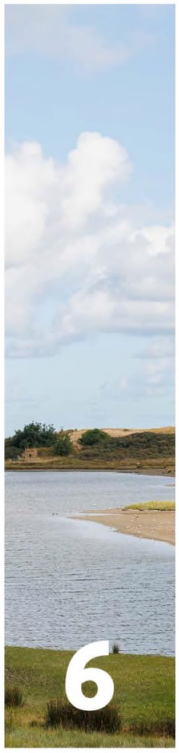
WATER FUN GALORE 8

FOREST BATHING IN BULSKAMPVELD 10

THREE BUCKET LIST EXPERIENCES IN THE ZWIN REGION FOR YOU TO TICK OFF 11
- Packrafting
- Birdwatching
- Dew walks

TASTE THE NATURE 12

ON THE MOVE 14
- Cycle routes
- Walking trails



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THE ZWIN REGION IN A NUTSHELL

The Zwin Region lies on the border of Flanders and the Netherlands. The tidal area extends from the north of West Flanders to the west of Zeelandic Flanders (the Netherlands). There are many beautiful towns and picturesque villages to admire in the Zwin Region.

EXPLORE THE ZWIN REGION FROM:

Bruges

Discover the rich history of this UNESCO World Heritage city or explore the beautiful nature spots of the Zwin Region.

© Toerisme Brugge - Ian Dhondt

Damme

Wander through this historic town, cycle along picturesque canals or discover the peaceful footpaths along the Damse Vaart.

Knokke-Heist

There is much to experience in this bustling seaside town. Explore the extensive polder landscapes, take beautiful strolls along the beach or stretch your legs during a walk to the Zwin Nature Park.

© Toerisme Knokke-Heist - Westtoer

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Awaken in nature

From the first rays of the sun slipping through the leaves to the song of birds greeting the day, nothing is more relaxing than waking up in the midst of nature. In the Zwin Region and its vicinity, there are many original places to spend the night where you can dream away blissfully.

Boomkamp, Oostkamp

Boomkamp is located in Oostkamp, near Bruges. Here you can spend an original night in a tree house or tent. From June to October, it is the ideal place to escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Boomkamp lies just outside the Zwin Region, but its location near Bruges makes it an ideal base from which to explore the region.

© Boomkamp

Maïsterplan, Damme

During the summer months, you can spend the night in the middle of a cornfield in a tiny house or a corn tent. During the day, the vast corn maze invites adventure and exploration.

© Maïsterplan

Nomad, Knokke

Nomad is a unique camping and glamping concept right on the Belgian coast. Here, the luxury of a hotel is combined with the freedom of camping.

© Jeroen Vandeweghe

Vlotkamp, Zuienkerke

Spend the night in a tent on the water in Vlotklamp. With a canoe, you paddle to one of the eight rafts scattered on the lake at Domain Polderwind in Zuienkerke.

© Westtoer

La vache au lit, Oostkerke

This tiny house, near Damme, is situated in a beautiful location in the midst of nature. An ideal place for people who love tranquillity and nature.

© La vache au lit

© Maïsterplan

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Day trips in and around the Zwin Region

Go on a whole day of adventure in the Zwin Region and the nearby surroundings. Enjoy an invigorating **forest bath**, explore the **Zwin Nature Park** or experience endless **water fun**. And when night falls, slip both feet under the table at one of the **delicious and original dining venues** that you find here. What are you waiting for?

Zwin Nature Park

The Zwin Nature Park is an interactive experience park for the whole family and is considered as an international airport for a great many migratory birds, of which the stork is undoubtedly the most famous visitor. Although, of course, you can spot many other feathered travellers as well. Keep your boarding pass to hand and brace yourself for an interesting flight across the Zwin Plain.

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5 must dos

1. EXHIBITION

In the Zwin Nature Park, you can explore the interactive exhibition centred around the Zwin migratory birds all year long. At the reception, you receive a boarding pass, which you need in order to visit the "international airport for birds".

2. CABIN TRAIL

The cabin trail is a leisurely walk of just under 2 km past various experience points and themed cabins, each telling its own story. The walk is suitable for prams and wheelchairs.

3. PANORAMA TOWER

A panorama tower can be found on the roof terrace of the visitors' centre. Here you can enjoy a 360° view of the Zwin Nature Park, the sea, the Zwin dunes and polders and the Kleyne plain.

4. THE ZWIN PLAIN

You can explore the Zwin Plain via a number of walking trails. Each season, you will discover different accents and inhabitants there. Put on your wellies or waterproof shoes, bring your binoculars and explore a fascinating landscape that is dotted with mudflats and salt marshes.

5. STORK TOWER

Between February and the end of July, spot the Zwin Nature Park's most famous visitor: the stork. Via the stork tower, located along the cabin trail, you can climb up to the level of their nests.

Accessibility

The Zwin Nature Park visitors' and viewing centre is located in Knokke-Heist and is accessible on foot, by bicycle, by public transport or by car.

- Via the international dyke that connects Cadzand with the Zwin
- Use this handy **route planner**
- Want to hire a bicycle? Take a look at the **large offer in Knokke-Heist**
- There is a spacious covered bicycle shed with 200 places.

- Via **line bus 41**: this runs every hour from Bruges/Knokke-Heist station to Oosthoekplein
- After that, it is about a 3 km walk. Check out this **route planner**

- Set your GPS device's destination to "Zwin Natuur Park"
- You can park in the park's car park: check the charges **here**.

Tiny Tip

The **barefoot trail** is an ideal family activity. Explore the different substrates of sand, mud and salt marsh during a 2 km barefoot walk.

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Water fun galore

A splendid water adventure awaits you in the Zwin Region and in the region around Bruges. From a day by the sea to standup paddleboarding, sailing, surfing, mastering water slides... the possibilities are endless. And for the truly daring, a day of packrafting is an absolute must. Dive in to the offerings below.

Lakeside Paradise, Knokke-Heist

- Wakeboarding
- Water skiing/wakeskating
- Kneeboarding

View all the sports **here**

© Lakeside Paradise

De Kijkuit, Beernem

- Kayak
- Pedalo
- Standup paddleboarding
- Indian canoe

View all the activities **here**

© Westtoer

Aan de Plas, Bruges

- Kayak
- Rafting
- Standup paddleboarding
- Windsurfing
- Sailing

View all the sports **here**

© Aan de Plas

Recreatiepark Klein Strand, Jabbeke

- Swimming lake
- Water slides
- Flyboarding
- Standup paddleboarding

View all the info **here**

© Westtoer

Discover even more water and sea sports in **Knokke-Heist**.

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PACKRAFTING

With a **packraft**, inflatable bag, paddle, life jacket and waterproof backpack, explore the **beautiful Damse waters**. Experience is not required. It is the ideal way to traverse the region in a completely different way.

CRUISE FROM BRUGES TO DAMME ON THE LAMME GOEDZAK

Journey along the Damse Vaart on the nostalgic riverboat the Lamme Goedzak. It travels four times per day between Bruges and the centre of Damme.

Tiny Tip

Bring your bike and cycle back along the Damse Vaart.

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Forest bathing in Bulskampveld

Forest bathing, known as **shinrin-yoku** in Japanese, is a special way of immersing yourself in nature. It is much more than an ordinary walk: it is an intense experience where you use all your senses to their full potential. In a forest or other natural area, far from the hustle and bustle of modern life, you can listen to the sounds of nature, breathe in the aroma of the trees and view the landscape with fresh appreciation. And in Bulskampveld Landscape Park, there are several places where you can do just that.

Put on your hiking boots, let yourself to be swept away by the forest and immerse yourself in the tranquillity and beauty of nature.

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THREE BUCKET LIST EXPERIENCES IN THE ZWIN REGION FOR YOU TO TICK OFF

Imagine: **dewdrops on the grass**, a **packraft in which you glide gently** across the water, and the **calls of thousands of birds** sparking your curiosity. This is the **Zwin Region**, where **adventure and wonder** go hand in hand. Discover our **bucket list experiences** and tick them off one by one.

© Meisterplan

© Medialife

© Medialife

1. PACKRAFTING

Traverse the **Zwin Region** while walking and paddling with a packraft! With an inflatable boat, you venture out onto the Damse waters while you enjoy the freedom and the unique views.

2. BIRDWATCHING

The Zwin Nature Park is a year-round hotspot for a great many migratory birds. From storks and colonial breeders to a host of other species - it's high time to venture out and start using your binoculars.
Check **here** to find out where and when you can spot which birds.

3. DEW WALKS

Wander through dew-covered fields, enjoy the silence of the morning and then witness the world come alive. A dew walk is an invigorating experience that will energise you for the rest of the day.

Discover **here** the most beautiful routes for morning walks in the Zwin Region and its vicinity.

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Taste the nature

Experience the different tastes that the salty nature of the Zwin Region has to offer. Here are a few suggestions:

Farms & fruit — vending machines

- **De Zoete Polder**: farm with cherries, plums and apples. Try their homemade jams, juices, beers, and more.
- **Kers & Bes**: cherry vending machine.
- **Aardbeien Depestel**: strawberry vending machine
- **Steffi Fruit**: vending machine with apples, pears and juices.

Ice cream and — dairy products

- **Hoeve Hazegras**: you can stay here overnight and also eat delicious ice cream. As a partner of the Lost Ports of the Zwin, they have made ice cream with medieval spices.
- **Hoorns Geitenkaasje**: goat's cheese (farm with more than 50 breeds of goat).
- **Beukenhoeve**: picnics, ice cream and dairy products from the farm
- **Sandy Roomijs**: artisanal ice cream, with no added preservatives or colourings.
- **The Ijshoeve**: For more than 20 years, Carine and Patrick have been selling their artisanal farmhouse ice cream made using milk from their own cows in the Oude Damse Weg in Vivenkapelle. After all this time, the IJshoeve has become an unmissable stopping spot for visitors to Damme exploring the region by bicycle.

— Breweries

- **Bryggia brewery**: microbrewery in Moerkerke.
- **Siphon brewery**: a small Belgian brewery that began in a family restaurant in the West Flemish town of Damme and which has been around for four generations.
- **Brewery Viven**: Krystle, one of the few female brewers in Belgium, is responsible for the flavour of the various beers in the product range. She comes up with the recipes and brews the first test batch in boilers in Damme. When Krystle has tasted and approved a new beer, production moves to the Proefbrouwerij in Lochristi so that larger volumes can be brewed.

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TASTE THE LOST PORTS OF THE ZWIN

Along The Lost Ports of the Zwin cycle route, you can now enjoy a taste of the past. Thirty entrepreneurs present contemporary creations inspired by ingredients and products from medieval times.

View the route **here**

© Ian D'Hondt

© Ian D'Hondt

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On the move

The best way to explore the Zwin Region? Cycling or walking. Along the way, you will come across the most beautiful spots in the region that provide the perfect opportunity to take a break. To get you started, we have some great cycle routes and walking trails ready for you.

© Westtoer

Tiny tip

A visit to the artworks at sunrise or sunset adds a magical touch.

Beaufort Sculpture Park

Beaufort is a triennial art event that has been held along the entire Belgian coast since 2003. Over 40 works of art from previous editions have been given a permanent home, including in the Zwin Nature Park.

View all the locations of the sculpture park here.

© Toerisme Knokke-Heist, Westtoer

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Cycle routes

Coastal Route

Looking for that perfect combination of nature, history and culture? On the Coastal Route, you cycle alongside the beach, overlooking the sea. Along the way, you pass through many bustling coastal resorts.

- **Distance**: 85 km
- **Departure point**: Knokke-Heist
- **View the route here**

Lost Ports of the Zwin

Using VR viewers, this signposted cycle route reveals never-before-seen images of the lost medieval ports of the Zwin.

- **Distance**: 60 km, or choose a loop of 44 km or 31 km
- **Departure points**: Zwin Nature Park, Sluis, Damme or Bruges
- **View the route here**

Through the polders

Cycle through the polders and discover lots of agricultural and farm shops along the way.

- **Distance**: 19 or 22 km
- **Departure points**: Zwin Nature Park, Sluis, Damme or Bruges
- **View the route here**

Strava-route

This one is perfect for anyone who loves a sporting challenge. Along this route, you explore, among other things, the dunes and the polder landscape. At the end, you will be rewarded with a Strava artwork on your screen.

- **Distance**: 70 km
- **Departure point**: Knokke-Heist
- **View the route here**

Walking trails

Zwin walking trail

Wander through the magnificent natural beauty of the Zwin dunes and polders and enjoy the spectacular views. The trail is not located in the Zwin Nature Park. So there is no need to purchase an admission ticket for the park.

- **Distance**: 13.3 km (can also be shortened to 9.2 km)
- **Departure point**: Knokke-Heist
- **View the route here**

Damse Vaart walking trail

The Damse Vaart walking trail leads you through the vast polder landscape between Damme and Oostkerke. Past rows of trees, old dykes and along arrow-straight canals, such as the Damse Vaart, you walk from the historic centre of Damme to picturesque Oostkerke and back again.

- **Distance**: 12 km
- **Departure point**: Damme
- **View the route here**

On the dykes of the Oude Zwin

This walk takes you past historical ruins, over the former sea dyke in Lapscheure and the Oude Zwin to the Damse Vaart.

- **Distance**: 13.4 km
- **Departure point**: Lapscheure
- **View the route here**

Streek-GR Kust

The Streek-GR Kust is a coastal path and it is the ideal route for exploring the coast. Walk through dunes, nature reserves, seaside resorts and along the beach and by the sea.

- **Distance**: 103 km
- **Departure point**: De Panne or the Zwin
- **View the route here**

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LEGAL DEPOSIT

D/2024/5635/9

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