



News from VISITFLANDERS - JANUARY 2025

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Happy New Year from the team at VISITFLANDERS! In this edition, we're excited to share highlights of the events we're looking forward to in 2025. Notable among them is a year-long festival in Leuven celebrating 600 years of KU Leuven. Also, don't miss the new "Abby" museum opening in Kortrijk and the revamped Passchendaele Museum reopening in April. For a full list of cultural events, check out our [listing for 2025](#). For food lovers, Ghent's Gent Smakt festival and the Shrimp Croquette Festival in October promise delicious experiences. There's much to look forward to as we plan for an exciting year ahead!

Arts and Heritage:

600 years of KU Leuven
February 2025- February
2026
Leuven

Abby Kortrijk - opening
March 29, 2025
Kortrijk

In 2025, KU Leuven, (University) will celebrate its 600th anniversary, marking six centuries of discovery, research, and education. The celebration will span until February 2, 2026, featuring a diverse and high-quality program to honor its rich history. Starting from May 16, 2025, KU Leuven will unveil seven new contemporary art installations in public spaces. The anniversary celebrations will also include permanent, free-access walking routes, offering additional cultural experiences. These will be accompanied by a variety of activities, including lectures, exhibitions, and a rich program of visual arts and poetry. Guided walks and tours will be organized, The University owns many beautiful historic buildings and rich collections of art and science, so the 600th anniversary is a unique opportunity to discover some of the city's heritage gems



Image credit: (c) Layla Aerts

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Abby Kortrijk is a new dynamic and accessible museum of visual art, designed by Barozzi Veiga and Tab Architects. Set in a historic abbey, the museum blends a pavilion in the park, a sixteenth-century chapel, and two modern underground exhibition halls to create a space for art and interaction. Its program is participatory, with rotating exhibitions and innovative presentations that encourage visitor engagement and collaboration. The new museum aims to offer a fresh, evolving experience where art and audience connect in unexpected ways.



Image credit: (c) Barozzi Veiga

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Cycling News

Tour of Flanders

April 5-6.2024

On April 5, 2025, the "We Ride Flanders" cycling festival offers a thrilling opportunity to ride the same route as the pros, one day before them. Participants will tackle the legendary hills, navigate famous cobblestone lanes, and experience the unique atmosphere along the way and at the finish line. The 242 km race begins in Bruges and finishes in Oudenaarde, while other shorter distances (80 km, 144 km, 177 km) will start and finish in Oudenaarde. The next day, The Ronde van Vlaanderen takes place and is the pinnacle of the Flemish cycling season, and for cycling enthusiasts, no date is awaited with more anticipation by cyclists in Flanders!



Image credit: (c) Patrick Verhoest

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Cycling Routes in Flanders

9 Iconic Cycling routes

Flanders offers nine iconic cycle routes, perfect for a cycling holiday. Each route weaves together the region's stunning scenery, taking cyclists along well-maintained paths and centered around unique themes. These routes are fully signposted in both directions, allowing cyclists the flexibility to choose their starting point, finish line, and preferred direction, making for a customizable and enjoyable cycling experience.

Most of the routes are accessible via rail and from the airport and local companies can provide cycle hire and bike bags to help facilitate a rewarding cycle trip based on many of the set routes.



Image credit: (c) Piet De Keisgeiter

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Flanders Fields News

Passchendaele Museum re-opens

April 5, 2024

Passchendaele Museum, Zonnebeke

Since November last year, the Passchendaele Museum's chateau has been undergoing extensive refurbishment, focusing on a revised storyline, improved collection displays, and enhanced heritage features. The updates aim to enrich the visitor experience, with a smoother route and newly restored, richly decorated interiors. The first-floor heritage, currently obscured, will be revitalized, uncovering windows and fireplaces hidden since the 1980s. The new museum route will also feature life-size scenes and a more chronological presentation of the Battle of Passchendaele, guided by an updated audio guide.



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Update on the renovation of the Menin Gate

Ypres

Menin Gate has been under restoration since 2023, with extensive scaffolding surrounding it. However, now, the temporary roof has now been removed, and sections of scaffolding are being dismantled. By spring 2025, all name panels in the main hall and galleries will be visible again. Restoration work has included repairing the brick and stone facades, restoring intricate details like the lion atop the monument, and fixing or replacing the name panels. The old metal staircases have been restored and reinstalled, and the monument now features a modern audio system. New architectural lighting is also being prepared. Starting in mid-January, a Living Roof will be installed to enhance the monument's longevity, support biodiversity, and improve sustainability.



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Gastronomy and Beer

Gent Smakt

May 28 - June 1, 2025

Ghent

Later this year, Ghent's city center will host the free five-day culinary festival Gent Smakt, featuring over 60 local stallholders showcasing signature dishes and products. Visitors can enjoy culinary walks, street food at Korenmarkt, and local specialties at Klein Turkije and Goudenleeuwplein. A visit to a picturesque terrace in Goudenleeuwplein will offer views of the historic city center, while Poeljemarkt will highlight young chefs and experienced entrepreneurs. The Stadshal will host the "Chef's Island" for exclusive culinary experiences. Overall, the whole experience is designed to show Ghent off in its full gastronomic glory against the backdrop its beautiful landmarks.



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Shrimp Croquette Festival

October 11-13, 2025

Ostend

Stuffed in a tomato, rolled in a spread, or simply enjoyed on their own, shrimp are always a great choice. But when coated with a layer of breadcrumbs, nothing compares to a creamy shrimp croquette. What started as a modest event has grown into an annual celebration of one of Belgium's most beloved snacks. The festival has become larger and more significant each year, with both diners and professional judges voting for their favorite croquette. While many are made in the traditional style, others experiment with unique flavors and ingredients. Last year, 11 participating restaurants set to serve up approximately 49,500 croquettes during the festival. To further enhance its appeal, visitors are encouraged to travel to Ostend by bus, bicycle, scooter, or carpool to help reduce the city's pollution.



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