



Maastricht

is a town and a municipality in the southeast of the Netherlands. It is the capital city of the province of Limburg. Maastricht is located on both sides of the Meuse river (Dutch: *Maas*), at the point where the Jeker River joins it. Maastricht developed from a Belgic settlement that in the Gallic Wars was conquered by the Romans and thus became a Roman settlement, to a religious centre, a garrison city and an early industrial city. Nowadays, it is known as an especially cultured city (including local folklore) and education. Maastricht has 1677 national heritage sites, which is the second highest number in a Dutch town, after Amsterdam. It has become known, by way of the Maastricht Treaty, as the birthplace of the European Union, European citizenship, and the single European currency, the euro. The town is popular with tourists for shopping and recreation, and has a large growing international student population. Maastricht is a member of the Most Ancient European Towns Network .

1. Parking next to StayOkay hostel



When entering the street next to StayOkay, it is possible to reach 2 large parking places in the curls under the bridge. Don't enter the first, easily visible parking, but continue around the back.

2. The outer city gate



Here you see part of the city walls from a later time. Build around 1515 to include some new areas to the city. The tower on the east/right of the gate is called “de “Vief Köp”, or “the five heads”. It is called like that because in 1638 the heads of 5 traitors of Maastricht were put on display. Do not enter the gate, but instead go through the park to the left.

3. The bridge over the “Jeker”



The “Jeker” is the second river of Maastricht. Much smaller than the “Maas” but during war a very important river because it was the water supply of the city. It flows partly underneath the city. On the other side of the Jeker is the second city wall, which was built around 1375 to enclose the growing city.

Cross the bridge and head through the city wall.

4. Lange grachtje, the old city wall



Try to find the entrance to the street “Lange Grachtje”. This is a beautiful street going past the old city wall. The construction of this wall started in 13e century. It used to be a 2,5 km wall about 6-8 meter high with a total of 13 city gates.

5. Up on the city wall



Try to find the muddy path going up the city walls to enjoy the view over the park.

6. Down the stairs towards the “Pesthuys”



Walk down the stairs of the city wall, and cross the Jeker once again. If you look at the building on the corner you will see the “Pesthuys”. This building from 1775 was built as a water-powered paper factory. It probably carries the name “Pesthuys” which means “Plague house” because people infected with the plague were sent to nearby camps, outside of the city wall. This to decrease the risk of spreading the disease.

7. The Hell gate



On the other side you see the “Helpoort” literally translated “Hell gate”. It is part of the first city wall, built in the 13th century. There are several explanations for the name of the gate. One possible reason is that it is named after the street behind it, which used to have a lot of bakeries and iron smiths. The fire of these places could make the street feel like the hell.

8. The watermill behind the Minderbroeders church



Try to find this small entrance somewhere on the street “Achter de oude binderbroeders”. It is the back-entrance to a water mill which is still in use to make flower. If you are lucky, you can enter to see how it works on the inside. You can leave through the front door.

The water mill is originally from the 7th century! It is called “Bisschopsmolen” because in the 11th century it belonged to the Bishop of Luik/Liege. Over its life it has been used for various “milling” purposes, but at the moment it’s a flower-mill.

9. In the cow-street



Somewhere in the middle of the “Koestraat” or “Cow street” you will see this image on the house. You will see these images on many houses in Maastricht. These images are from the time before street names were commonly used. When you are a trader, visiting Maastricht, you would not be able to find a place using the address, because there were no street names. But using these images, you could for example meet in café “In the cow”. The images are necessary, because not everyone could read. While walking through the city, look up once in a while. You’ll discover more images.

10. Basilica of Our Lady



Little is known about the early history of the church. On this site a previous church was built, probably around the 4th century, making that the first church of the Netherlands. The church standing on the site now is built around the year 1000, making this church about 10 centuries old. You can see it’s a large and massive construction with a Romanesque style. If you enter the church through the side entrance you can imagine why they called this time the dark-ages.

11. Stokstraat



Welcome to the “Stokstraat”, one of the most expensive streets of the Netherlands. Have a look at some of the prices, but don’t be tempted to buy anything.

12. Sint Servaasbrug



The Sint Servaas bridge or “old bridge” as it is called by the local people, dates back to the 13th century. It was built as a replacement of the roman bridge which used to be located close-by. The roman bridge, already damaged by several wars, collapsed during a church procession in 1275.

13. Old roman bridge

If you look about 200 meter upstream of the Sint Servaast bridge you can see where the old roman bridge used to be. There is a little gate visible with stairs running towards the water.

14. Market square and city hall



Here you find the main market square, used for many centuries as the main market of Maastricht. On the middle of the square is the city hall, which dates back to the 17th century. This also used to be the location of the court, with executions on the square in front of the building. And during the biggest festival of Maastricht, Carnival, this is where the key to the city is handed over from the Mayor to the Prince of Carnival.

15. Entre-deux crossing through the shopping hall



Enter the entre-deux shopping promenade and find your way through. On the other side, if you look around, you will see the Dominican church.



The church was built in the 13th century and belonged to the monastery of the Dominican order. However, with the high number of churches that can be found in Maastricht, it recently had some other purposes. It was used as a big party location during the Carnival festival, and currently it is used as a large book-shop.

16. Basilica of Saint Servaas



This is the basilica of Saint Servatius is one of the oldest roman catholic churches of the Netherlands. It started as a chapel build in the 6th century on top of which a church was built in the 7th century. Since then many parts have been added resulting in a mix of Romanesque and Gothic building styles.

17. Vagevuur



You can walk between the Saint Servatius church and the Saint Jan church towards the square called vrijthof. The Saint Jan church is a protestant church dating back to the 14th century. Many legends exist about the red colour of the church, but in reality it is paint used to protect the soft marlstone against the weather.

The street in between the churches is named “Vagevuur” which means purgatory, the place between heaven and hell. This because crossing from the Catholic to the Protestant church, or the other way around, was an almost unforgivable sin.

18. Vrijthof



The square called “vrijthof” is the biggest and most famous square of Maastricht. It is the main location for most events and festivals. It is surrounded by monuments, and cafés where tourist gather to rest their feet. The statue with the lions, on the corner of the square, is a common meeting point for people to find each other.