Maastricht Gulpen Cycle Route
Exploring the river valleys of South Limburg
53 km

Maastricht Gulpen Cycle Route
This route takes you through the river valleys of South Limburg where you will discover that not all of Holland is flat. A bike with gears is recommended! Highlights of the route are the beer brewing village of Gulpen and the historic centre of Maastricht.

You cycle via Maastricht’s City Park to the Jeker Valley which follows the limestone plateau Mount St Peter (Pietersberg) into Belgium. Via the Albert Canal and Fort Eben-Emael the route takes you to Eijsden where you cross the River Meuse by ferry. From Eijsden Castle you cycle through the picturesque villages of ’s-Gravenvoeren and Sint-Maartensvoeren and Gulpen back into Maastricht.

View of the beer brewing village of Gulpen

Distance: 53 km (3h45)

Ferry: The ferry at Eijsden has a regular service from April to October. Sailing times, see: www.voerwen.nl

Route without ferry: Route at 413 if the ferry doesn’t run (adds 7 km to the route): 414 - 420 - 77. Here you can pick up the main route. For Eijsden Castle continue straight on.

Starting point: Maastricht train station
- Bicycle rental
- Car parking

Public transport to route: Train to Maastricht train station

The route follows the numbered cycle network:

Start - 1 - 3 - 12 - 401 - 402 - 405 - 412 - 413 - *** - 77 - 76 - 78 - 100 - 431 - 422 - 423 - 424 - 429 - 84 - *** - 85 - 69 - 67 - 65 - 6 - 79 - Finish

Start: Leave the station on the west side (direction town centre). Head straight on towards the town centre (Stationssstraat). After

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crossing the river you pick up the numbered cycle network at 1.

Finish: At 79 head towards 2. After the railway crossing turn right. This takes you back to the station.

***: follow the instructions given in the text below.

Maastricht City Centre

**Maastricht**

The name Maastricht is derived from the Latin *Mosae Trajectum*, meaning ‘crossing at the Meuse’. It refers to the bridge that was built by the Romans in the 1st century AD. The bridge was an important link in the Via Belgica, the main road that connected the French coast with the German Rhineland. The original bridge has long disappeared and been replaced by a newer bridge, the St Servatius Bridge, which is considered to be the oldest bridge in Holland.

**Vrijthof**

The historic centre of Maastricht is well worth exploring. As much of the centre is a pedestrian zone, it is easiest to do so on foot. One of the most popular tourist attractions is the Vrijthof. This large square in the centre of the town is home to various historic buildings - including St John’s Cathedral and Basilica of St Servatius - and cafes. The Vrijthof is also host to a number of cultural events such as the Carnival of Maastricht and the annual open air concerts by the internationally renowned violinist and conductor André Rieu.

The Vrijthof is used for concerts and other cultural activities
Mount St Peter
As you leave Maastricht, you’ll see a hill ahead you. It is an 8-km long limestone plateau created by erosion that runs across the border into Belgium. The Dutch part of the plateau is commonly known as the Pietersberg (Mount St Peter). The area has been mined since Neolithic times, first for flint and then for limestone. By the 19th century the network of mining tunnels - usually referred to as caves - is said to have extended for as many as 200 km. During World War II the caves were used as a hiding place for Rembrandt’s famous painting the Night Watch.

Fort Eben-Emael
Due to its strategic location, several castles and forts have been built on Mount St Peter since medieval times. This route takes you to Fort Eben-Emael just over the Belgian border. Fort Eben-Emael was built in 1931-1935 to protect Belgium from a German invasion. The underground fort, which at the time was the largest in the world, was thought to be unconquerable. However, on 10 May 1940 the fort was taken over by a small team of German paratroopers in just 15 minutes.

Fort Eben-Emael is open to the public several days a year. For dates, opening hours and admission fees, go to the Fort Eben-Emael website: www.fort-eben-emael.be/en. There is also a short signposted walk that allows you to explore the outside of the fort. You also get a lovely view of the River Meuse (Maas).

Gulpen
Does the name Gulpen sound familiar? Then probably you like beer. The picturesque village Gulpen is where Gulpener beer is produced. The Gulpener Brewery was founded in 1825 and sources its ingredients such as barley and hops from local farmers. If you want, you can sample their beers at the Gulpener Bierhuys. Be warned though, from Gulpen you face quite a steep climb before you descend back into the Meuse Valley!

*** At 143 head towards 76. After the ferry follow the cycle path to the right. After the bend, turn first right (Graaf de Geloeslaan). At 77 you pick up the numbered cycle network.