



Lille, Flanders & the Somme

POP 5.97 MILLION

Includes ➔

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Meert (p184)
- ➔ La Sirène (p193)
- ➔ Het Kasteelhof (p188)
- ➔ Les Deux Frères – Chez Zénon (p190)
- ➔ Le Bistrot des Arts (p210)

Best Places to Stay

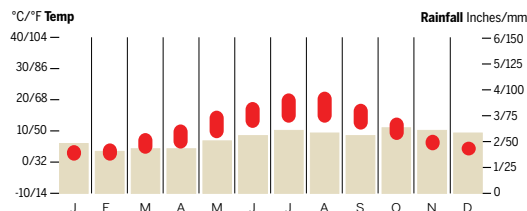
- ➔ L'Hermitage Gantois (p184)
- ➔ Le Cercle de Malines (p194)
- ➔ La Corne d'Or (p190)
- ➔ Hôtel Les Pilotes (p199)
- ➔ Au Vintage (p205)

Why Go?

True, a tan is easier to come by along the Mediterranean, but when it comes to culture, cuisine, beer, shopping and dramatic views of land and sea – not to mention good old-fashioned friendliness – the regions of the Ch'tis (residents of France's northern tip) and Picards compete with the best France has to offer. In Lille and French Flanders, the down-to-earth Flemish vibe mixes easily with French sophistication and *savoir faire*. And in Picardy and Artois, WWI memorials and cemeteries marking the front lines of 1916 render overseas visitors speechless time and again with their heart-breaking beauty. On a more cheerful note, the blessedly underrated cities of Amiens, Laon and Arras will captivate culture vultures with their glorious architectural treasures, while nature lovers will get a buzz along the sublime Côte d'Opale and fascinating Baie de Somme. Whatever your inclination, you're guaranteed leave this part of France with new experiences and wonderful memories.

When to Go

Lille



Feb & Mar Pre-Lenten carnivals bring out marching bands and costumed revellers.

Jul & Aug Splendid weather makes summer a perfect time to explore Côte d'Opale.

Sep The world's largest flea market, the Braderie, takes over Lille on the first weekend in September.



Lille, Flanders & the Somme Highlights

- 1 Strolling around **Lille's** (p180) chic and photogenic centre
- 2 Marvelling at Amiens' breathtaking Gothic **cathedral** (p206)
- 3 Rambling along the spectacular, windswept **Côte d'Opale** (p192), facing the white cliffs of Dover
- 4 Contemplating modern art at the innovative **Louvre-Lens museum** (p191) in Lens
- 5 Enjoying a hefty dose of Flemish culture in the pretty hilltop town of **Cassel** (p188)
- 6 Getting the best views of magical **Baie de Somme** (p198) from a kayak
- 7 Joining the bustle of the Saturday market in Arras' gorgeous Flemish-style **Place des Héros** (p189)
- 8 Pondering the sacrifices at **Vimy Ridge Canadian National Historical Site** (p204)
- 9 Revelling in elegant architecture and fine arts in **Compiègne** (p209)