

Lille, Flanders & the Somme

POP 5.97 MILLION

Includes ➔

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Meert (p183)
- ➔ La Sirène (p191)
- ➔ La Marie Galante (p191)
- ➔ Het Kasteelhof (p188)

Best Places to Sleep

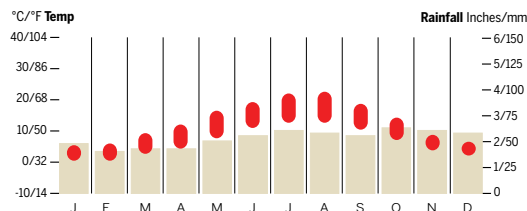
- ➔ Hôtel Marotte (p206)
- ➔ L'Hermitage Gantois (p183)
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- ➔ Les Tourelles (p198)

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 home territories of the Ch'tis (residents of France's northern tip) and the Picards compete with the best France has to offer. In Lille and French Flanders, a down-to-earth Flemish vibe mixes easily with French sophistication and savoir faire. In Picardy and the Somme, WWI memorials and cemeteries marking the front lines of 1914 to 1918 often render visitors speechless with their heartbreaking beauty. Nearby, the underrated cities of Arras, Amiens and Laon captivate with their Gothic and Flemish architectural treasures, while the hearts of nature lovers will soar along the sublime Côte d'Opale and the estuaries of the Baie de Somme. Just outside greater Paris, Compiègne preserves the dazzle of Napoléon III's Second Empire.

When to Go

Lille



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

Jun–Aug Splendid weather makes summer a perfect time to explore the 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 Lille's old town** (p181)
Exploring centuries-old alleyways and chic boutiques
- 2 Amiens** (p205) Marvel-ling at the Gothic cathedral.
- 3 Côte d'Opale** (p190)
Rambling the spectacular, windswept coast.
- 4 Historial de la Grande Guerre** (p200) Pondering the horror of WWI in Péronne.
- 5 Louvre-Lens museum** (p190) Immersing yourself in 5000 years of civilisation at this innovative museum.
- 6 Cassel** (p187)
Enjoying Flemish landscapes, architecture and cuisine in this pretty hilltop town.
- 7 Baie de Somme** (p197)
Touring this magical area and spotting seals on sandbanks.
- 8 Arras** (p188) Joining the bustle of the Saturday market at gorgeous Place des Héros.
- 9 Ring of Remembrance memorial** (p202) Reflecting on the human price of WWI's hellish Western Front.
- 10 Compiègne** (p208)
Revelling in elegant architecture and fine food.