

Overijssel & Gelderland



Although the ‘forgotten’ provinces of Overijssel and Gelderland can’t boast blockbuster cities like Amsterdam, Rotterdam or Maastricht, they make up for it with reserves of natural beauty – forest, rivers, lakes, national parks – and abundant history. That’s not to say that there aren’t major attractions: the Hoge Veluwe National Park, containing the Kröller-Müller Museum (with probably the world’s finest Van Gogh collection), should be near the top of any Dutch itinerary. Generally, though, the region’s pleasures are small and concentrated, adding up to a compelling whole. If you’re looking to escape the Randstad’s hectic urban sprawl, then you could do a lot worse than take time out here.

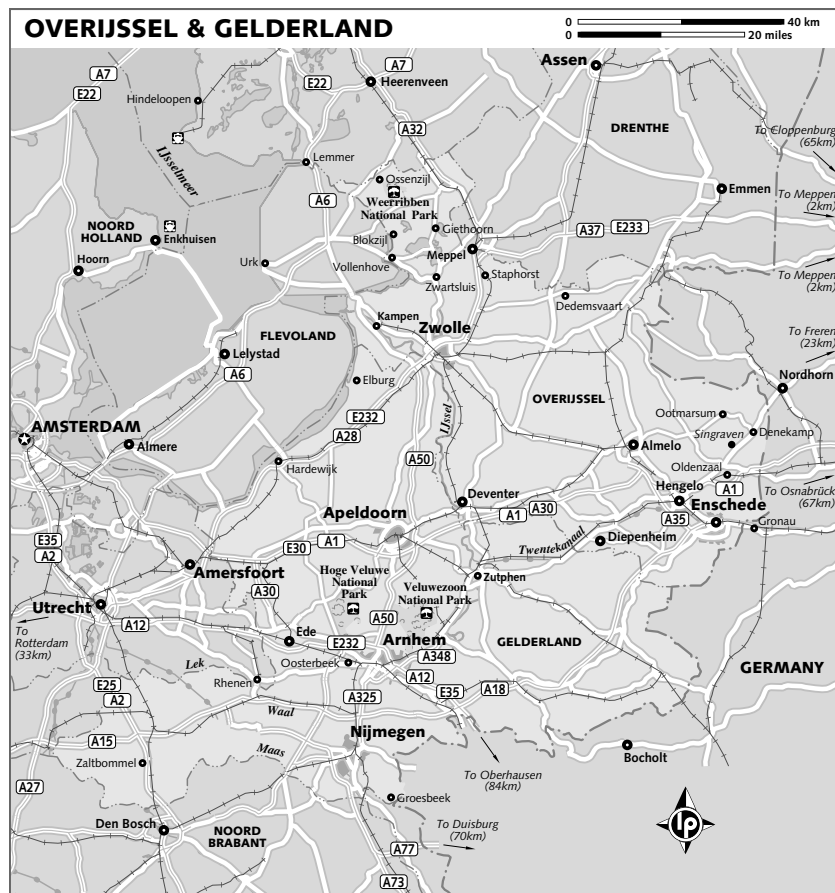
Zwolle, Deventer and Kampen, in Overijssel, are delightful, atmospheric towns, filled with many inspiring examples of historical architecture; all three were key member towns of the Hanseatic League. Then there’s the Weerribben National Park, a remarkable area of wetlands.

Nijmegen, in Gelderland, is an underrated destination. But with its waterfront culture, excellent cafés and an annual march that now takes the form of a week-long party, it’s full of bounce. On the other side of history, it was here and near Arnhem where attempts to liberate the occupied Netherlands went horribly awry for the Allies in 1944; there are many WWII memorials and locations to explore.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Lose yourself in the amazing **Hoge Veluwe National Park** (p269)
- Have an art attack at the **Kröller-Müller Museum** (p269)
- Spook yourself in the otherworldly ambience of the **Weerribben** (p256), Overijssel’s strange wetlands
- Have a fine old time in **Nijmegen** (p263), with its busy waterways
- Remember the past at Gelderland’s **war cemeteries and memorials** (p267)





OVERIJSEL

Overijssel means 'beyond the IJssel', after the river forming much of the province's western border. The province is hilly in the east near Germany and flat and soggy in the west along the former coastline, now landlocked by Flevoland's Noordoostpolder.

You might like to anchor yourself in Deventer to explore Overijssel, though Zwolle is the capital. Giethoorn in the north is pretty as well, but be aware of swollen summer crowds.

WEERRIBBEN NATIONAL PARK

A serene and occasionally eerie landscape of watery striations, **Weerribben National Park**

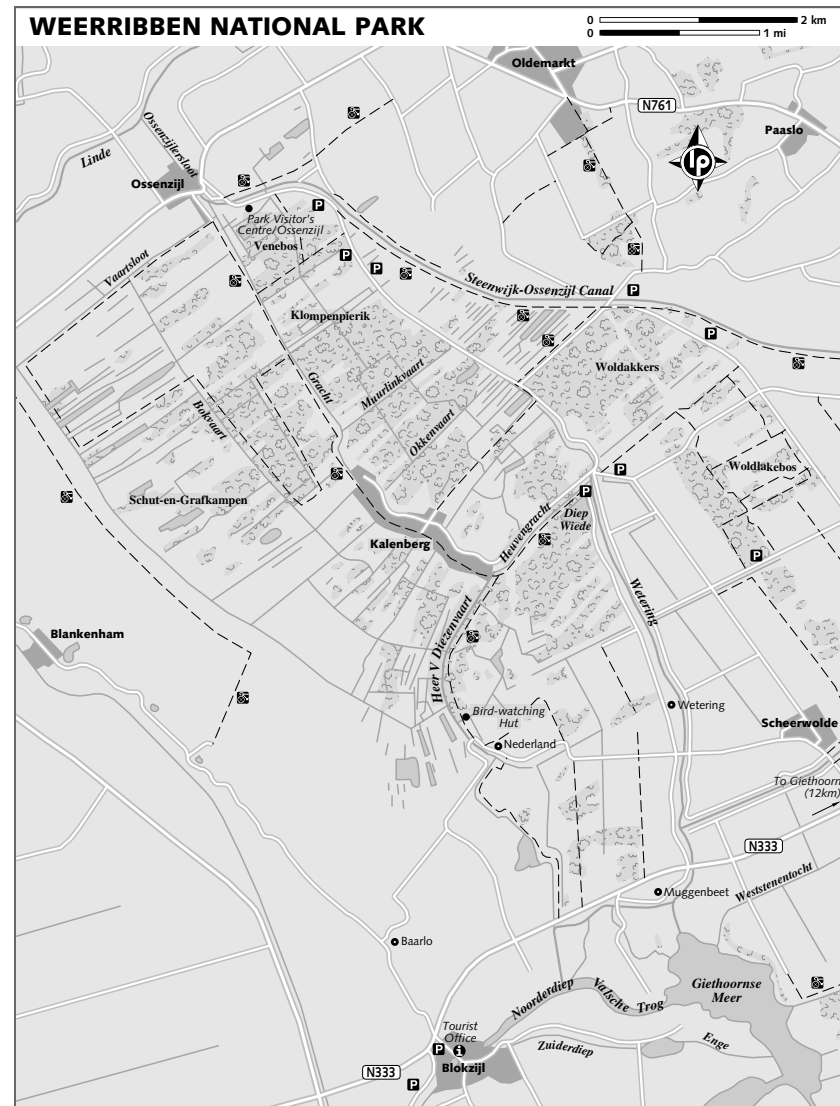
is 3500 hectares of marshy land. This entire area was worked by peat and reed harvesters, among the hardest imaginable jobs. The long, water-filled stripes across the landscape are the result of peat removal: as one line of peat was dug, it was laid on the adjoining land to dry.

Reed harvesting was no easier, and still goes on; you can see huge piles at many points in the park. Generations of harvesters lived out here with little contact with the outside world. Even now, their descendants live on some of the farms in the surrounding countryside in Ossenzijl and Blokzijl. Weerribben is also an amazing natural landscape and an important stop for migratory birds in Europe.

As you ride along one of the isolated bike paths or row the channels, you might get the sense you're on another planet. A chief factor in creating this illusion is the sound of the Weerribben: as you move through the sea of reeds, you'll hear the calls, clucks, coos and splashes of numerous birds, fish, frogs, otters and eels.

The park's **visitors centre** (☎ 0561-47 72 72; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, noon-4pm Sat & Sun) is in Ossenzijl, a tiny village on the northern edge of the park. Pick up dozens of maps of different cycling and walking routes, as well as advice on boat and canoe rental.

To reach Ossenzijl, take bus 81 from Steenwijk, a stop on the train line from Leeuwarden



to Zwolle. The bus takes 25 minutes and runs every two hours on weekdays and just a few times on weekends.

DEVENTER

☎ 0570 / pop 95,614

Deventer was already a bustling mercantile port as far back as AD 800, and it maintained its prosperous trading ties for centuries, evidence of which you'll see everywhere in its sumptuously detailed old buildings. In fact, so rich is the detail that the WWII film *A Bridge Too Far*, which was essentially about Arnhem's role in the war, was filmed here (Arnhem, of course, having been levelled by the war).

Information

Library (☎ 64 99 62; Brink 70; internet access per hr €3; ☹ 11am-10.30pm Tue & Thu, 11am-5.30pm Wed & Fri, 11am-4pm Sat)

Post office (☎ 67 63 58; Diepenveenseweg 1; ☹ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-12.30pm Sat)

Tourist office (☎ 69 14 10; www.vvdeventer.nl; Keizerstraat 22; ☹ 9.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-5pm Sat)

Sights

The **Brink** is the main square and Deventer's commercial heart. The town's famous **Waag**, the 1528 weigh-house in the middle of the square, was restored in 2003. Look for the cauldron on the north side – a gruesome and well-supported legend tells of a 16th-century clerk boiled alive in it, after he was discovered substituting cheap metals for precious ones in the local money supply.

There's a small **museum** (☎ 69 37 80; admission €3; ☹ 10am-5pm Tue-Sat) inside the Waag, with historical displays and a selection of traditional costumery.

The **Grote of Lebuïnuskerk** (☹ 1am-5pm Mon-Sat; admission €2.50) is the city's main church. It stands on a site where other churches were razed by flames and other catastrophes time and again, before the present Gothic structure was built between 1450 and 1530.

Deventer is so well preserved that most streets will have something to see. On **Assenstraat** and **Polstraat** there are wall carvings and window decorations created over several centuries. Assenstraat 67-79 is more contemporary, while **Walstraat 20** shows a woman

THE HANSEATIC LEAGUE

Although it was primarily composed of northern German cities such as Lübeck and Hamburg, the Hanseatic League also included seven Dutch cities along the IJssel: Hasselt, Zwolle, Kampen, Hattem, Deventer, Zutphen and Doesburg. The powerful trading community was initially organised in the mid-13th century, its member towns quickly growing rich off the proceeds of importing and exporting goods including grain, ore, honey, textiles, timbers and flax. The league was not a government as such, but it would defend its ships from attack and it entered into monopolistic trading agreements with other groups, such as the Swedes. The fact that the trading community achieved its powerful trading position through such means as bribery, boycotts and general fiscal ruthlessness shouldn't sound particularly unusual to business students today. League members did work hard to prevent war among their partners for the simple reason that conflict was bad for business.

It's ironic that the League's demise in the 15th century was mostly attributable to the Dutch. Amsterdam's traders recognised a good thing and essentially beat the League at its own game, out-muscling it in market after market.

climbing down the wall while hanging by a sheet.

Activities

The banks of the IJssel river are a scenic place for **biking**. Riding 36km north to Zwolle is a fine option, while a good 32km round trip follows the river north to Olst, where you can take a ferry across and return along the other side to Deventer. You can do the same thing going south to Zutphen, a 47km trip.

Sleeping

Hotel Gilde (☎ 64 18 46; Nieuwstraat 41; s/d from €90/120) This charming building, once a 17th-century convent, has been restored to its former architectural glory. With all that weight of history on the trimmings and frills, you just know that this is the swishest place in Deventer (despite the austerity of its former tenants).

Hotel de Leeuw (☎ 61 02 90; http://members.home.nl/deleuw; Nieuwstraat 25; s/d from €71/85) This lovely building with well-designed yet simple rooms, dates back to 1645. It's on a popular shopping street no more than 10 minutes from the heart of Deventer. The hotel has reduced rates for longer stays.

Other options:

Camping De Worp (☎ 61 36 01; Worp 12; sites from €11; ☹ May-Sep) Right across the IJssel from the centre of town, about two minutes north of the passenger ferry.

Hotel Royal (☎ 61 18 80; www.royal-deventer.nl; Brink 94; s/d €60/70) Basic but spotless rooms.

Eating

't Arsenaal (☎ 61 64 95; www.restaurantarsenaal.nl; Nieuwe Markt 33-34; dinner €13-29; ☹ lunch & dinner) This

stylish restaurant, next to the Lebuïnuskerk, really comes into its own in summer, when the courtyard and alleyway, in the shadow of the old church, makes for a grand and dramatic setting. The menu is classic French with modern twinges, and is typified by filets of fish served with octopus pasta.

Volkshuis (☎ 60 02 54; Kleine Overstraat 97a; dinner €12-16; ☹ lunch & dinner) Run by and supporting people with disabilities, Volkshuis uses its own produce to create simple food with quality organic ingredients, including appealing vegetarian options such as chilli 'non' carne.

Café de Heksenketel (☎ 61 34 12; Brink 62; mains €13; ☹ lunch & dinner) The menu here offers typical Dutch restaurant fare, like schnitzel with fries and salad. You'll need to eat something solid to go with one of the beers from their excellent selection.

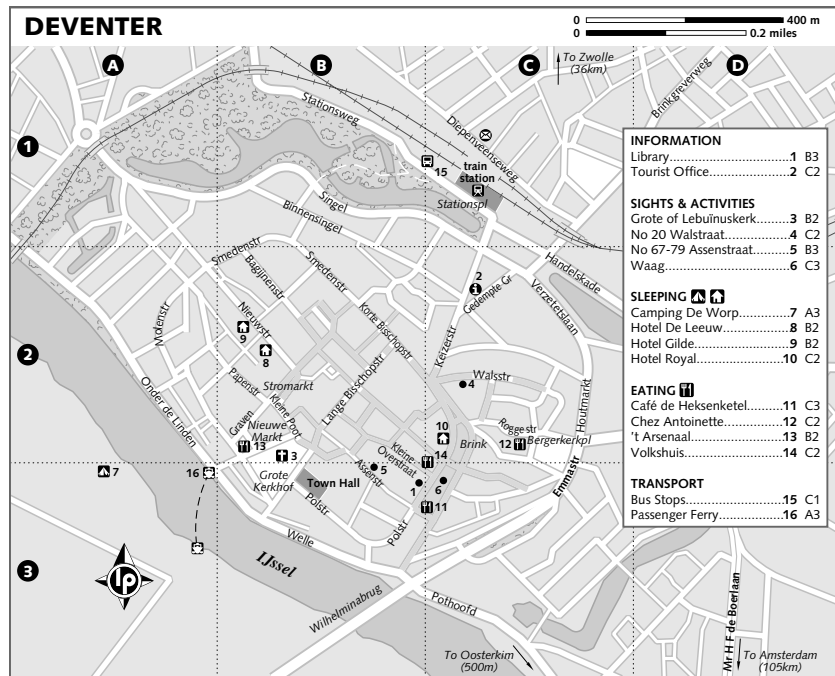
Chez Antoinette (☎ 61 66 30; Roggestraat 10-12; mains €16-22; ☹ dinner Tue-Sun) The popular Portuguese and Latin-influenced food here goes all out to impress, with local seafood, beef and poultry stocks, and Iberian seasonings like saffron, chilli, tomatoes, garlic and olive oil.

Shopping

The local speciality is Deventer *koek*, a mildly spiced gingerbread made with honey. It's widely available.

Getting There & Around

Deventer sits at the junction of two train lines; service is good in all directions. There are lockers in the main concourse.



Destination	Price (€)	Duration (min)	Frequency (per hr)
Amsterdam	14.70	75	1
Apeldoorn	3	12	2
Arnhem	7.10	36	2
Enschede	9.30	43	2
Nijmegen	9.70	51	2
Zwolle	5.20	24	2

The bus area is located to the right as you leave the train station.

The bicycle shop is in the train station. There is parking around the town's periphery, but the best place to park is the free lot on the west bank of the IJssel. To get there, take the free passenger ferry. The voyage takes less than five minutes and operates most of the day and night. The pier on the town side is near Vispoort.

ZWOLLE

☎ 038 / 110,027

Zwolle, the capital of Overijssel, is a compact town that can easily occupy a day of exploration – longer in summer, when a seemingly endless schedule of small festivals and the weekend market keep things bubbling. In the 14th and 15th centuries, Zwolle garnered wealth as the main trading port for the Hanseatic League and became a cultural centre of some repute. While those days are long gone, you can still step back in time, courtesy of the moat and ancient fortifications that surround the town.

Naturally, there's a **tourist office** (☎ 0900-1122375; www.vvzwolle.nl; Grote Kerkplein 14; ☎ 1-5pm Mon, 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat) and a **post office** (☎ 421 78 21; Nieuwe Markt 1A; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat).

Sights & Activities

People from Zwolle say they know they're home when they see the Onze Lieve Vrouwetoren (also known as the Peperbus, or Peppermill), the huge former church that dominates the skyline as you approach town.

The **Stedelijk Museum Zwolle** (☎ 421 46 50; www.museumzwolle.nl; Melkmarkt 41; adult/child €4/2; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sat, 1-5pm Sun) has a fine collection of items, including a wealth of Hanseatic material. It also hosts about 25 special exhibitions a year, ranging from high-art painting retrospectives to contemporary photography and multimedia.

The **Grote Kerk** is grand, but it was grander before the usual series of disasters knocked down the tower – accursedly, it's been struck (and destroyed) by lightning an astonishing three times. The 15th-century **Sassenpoort**, situated at the corner of Sassenstraat and Wilhelminasingel, is one of the remaining town gates.

Ecodrome (☎ 421 50 50; Willemsvaart 19; adult/child under 12 €9.95/8.50; ☎ 10am-5pm Apr-Oct, 10am-5pm Wed, Sat & Sun Nov-Apr) is a science-based, interactive multimedia education centre housed in futuristic-looking buildings. Well suited to travellers with kids in tow, it's a 1km walk turning right from the station.

The tourist office can help to organise canal tours.

Sleeping

Accommodation is tight here. Try the tourist office's booking service; there are some excellent B&Bs run by friendly locals, starting at around €20 to €25.

Bilderberg Grand Hotel Wientjes (☎ 425 42 54; www.grandhotelwientjes.nl; Stationsweg 7; s from €93) This stately establishment is a grand, sumptuous business hotel, with all the usual facilities and service to match. Creature comforts are a big deal here, with deluxe and executive rooms at the top of the range.

City Hotel (☎ 421 81 82; www.hotelzwolle.com; Rode Torenplein 10-11; s/d €55/70) An unaffected, down-to-earth place, well located with good, basic rooms. As one of the few central options, it's worth phoning ahead.

Eating

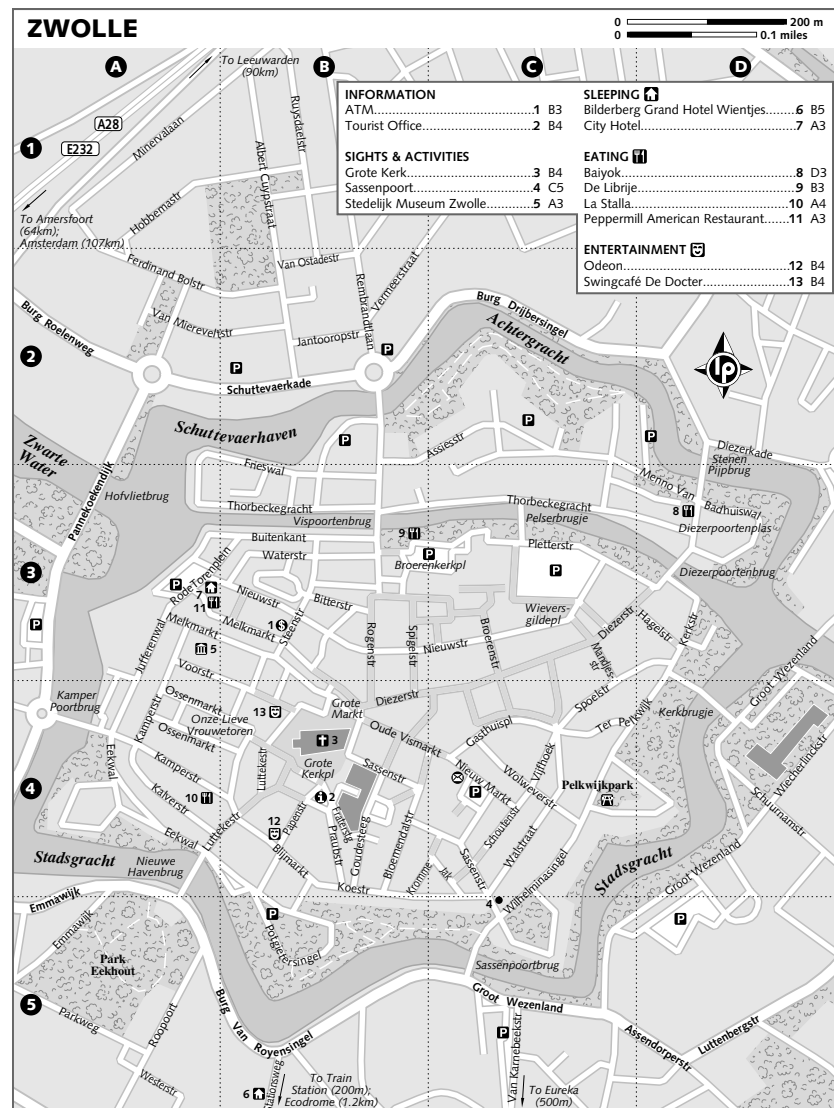
De Librije (☎ 21 20 83; www.librije.com; Broerenkerkplein 13; 3-course meals from €45; ☎ lunch & dinner) With three Michelin stars (just one of two restaurants in the country so decorated), you don't need us to tell you the grub scrubs up. As the name suggests, the experience takes place inside the wonderful ambience of a 500-year-old monastery library. The food is contemporary French with Dutch infusions.

Other options:

Baiyok (☎ 22 98 82; www.baiyok.nl; Diezerpoortenplas 3; mains from €12; ☎ dinner Wed-Sun) Good Thai food, Zwolle's only such restaurant.

La Stalla (☎ 421 25 83; Kamperstraat 7-9; mains from €15; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, dinner Sun) Dutch take on Italian cuisine.

Peppermill American Restaurant (☎ 423 08 06; www.thepeppermill.nl; Melkmarkt 56; mains €16-29;



☎ dinner Tue-Sun) Classy North American cuisine, including Mexican and Cajun.

Entertainment

Swingcafé De Docter (☎ 421 52 35; www.dedocter.nl; Voorstraat 3) A great place, dark and musty, the swingcafé hosts live rock bands a few nights per week, and has inviting open frontage

and ample supplies of Hertog Jan, a great Brabant pilsener.

Eureka (☎ 422 29 03; www.eureka-zwolle.nl; Assendorperplein 9) This magical space is a community arts centre-cum-venue-cum-café. People of every age, disposition or species roam its creaky floors, and the mood is warm and inclusive.

Odeon (☎ 428 82 80; www.schouwburg-odeon.nl; Blijmarkt 25) This grand building is a multi-purpose entertainment venue hosting everything from theatre and dance to live rock and electronica nights.

Shopping

The market occupies most of the former Melkmarkt, Oude Vismarkt and the star-shaped centre in general on Friday and Saturday. Fish, fresh fruit and vegetables, clothes – anything goes. There's also cheap cheese and bread, a great way to stock up for a picnic. Pelkwijk-park or the area just south of Kerkbrugje are good areas for this activity.

In summer, market day is often augmented by alfresco music – anything from blues to Germanic 'oompah' stylings.

Getting There & Around

Zwolle is a transfer point for trains and has good connections.

Destination	Price (€)	Duration (min)	Frequency (per hr)
Deventer	5.20	24	2
Groningen	15.10	60	2
Leeuwarden	13.70	60	2

Local buses leave from the right as you exit the station. Intercity services are 100m further over in the same direction.

The **bicycle shop** is to the left of the station.

KAMPEN

☎ 038 / pop 48,964

Picturesque Kampen, another lovely Hanseatic city, is a perfect day trip: 15km west of Zwolle, about 20 minutes by bicycle. Its surrounding

parklands are pretty and its historic centre is one of the country's best preserved, boasting no less than 500 medieval monuments: houses, gates and towers. It's difficult to get lost in Kampen, as it's small and laid out in a linear fashion, parallel to the IJssel.

Plan your day with the help of the **tourist office** (☎ 331 35 00; www.vvkkampen.nl; Oudestraat 151; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat), which can also organise private rooms (about €30).

Sights & Activities

The major sights lie along Oudestraat.

The **Nieuwe Toren** is immediately obvious: it's the 17th-century tower with the incredible lean. There's a little statue of a cow here, linked to a rather ludicrous old story (see the boxed text, below).

The **Oude Raadhuis** (Old Town Hall; ☎ 339 2999; Oudestraat 133) was – surprise, surprise – badly damaged by fire and rebuilt in 1543.

The **Bovenkerk** (☎ 331 6453; Koornmarkt 28) features an organ with over 3000 pipes, while the **Gotische Huis** (Gothic House; Ousestraat 158) is a 15th-century merchant's house that's worth a look, not least for its housing of the **Stedelijk Museum** (admission €3; ☎ 11am-12.30pm & 1.30-5pm Tue-Sat, plus 1-5pm Sun Jun-Sep) and a collection of local, historical relics.

Two 15th-century **city gates** survive along the gorgeous park on Kampen's west side.

Sleeping

The town has but two places to lay your hat, the **Hotel Van Dijk** (☎ 331 49 25; fax 331 65 08; IJsselkade 30-3; r from €60) and the **Hotel-Restaurant 't Haasje** (☎ 331 38 26; Flevoweg 90). Both, naturally, are often full.

Camping Seveningen (☎ 331 48 91; Frieseweg 7; camp sites €11; ☎ Apr-Oct), on a pretty waterside location,

is an alternative. From the train station, walk northwest along the river for 20 minutes.

Getting There & Around

Trains make the run between Zwolle and Kampen (€2.80, 10 minutes, two per hour). There's a small phalanx of bus stands behind the train station.

NORTHERN OVERIJSEL

Before the Noordoostpolder was created, the Northern Overijssel region was on the Zuiderzee. Today the former coastal villages are landlocked, but maintain their links to the water through the spider web of canals that crisscross this marshy area. It's a difficult area to get around without a car or a bike and a set of energetic legs, as buses are infrequent and involve inconvenient connections. Still, it's worth the effort to explore as you'll take in great scenery and feel a bit detached from the rest of the Netherlands.

The region is home to **Giethoorn** (☎ 0521), a town with no streets, only canals, walking paths and bike trails (inevitably it's tagged the 'Dutch Venice') – contrary to most Dutch geography, Giethoorn is built on water crossed by a few bits of land, and farmers even used to move their cows around in rowboats filled with hay. This is a sentimental place for the Dutch as it was the setting for *Fanfare*, a popular, funny 1958 film about the local folk, which was one of the first films to dissect the Dutch psyche.

The entire area is a joy to pedal through. At any time there are countless opportunities for boat rides, although joining a cow will be tougher these days: recently, Giethoorn has been discovered in a big way, appearing in summer to be populated entirely by camper vans along the ample canalside space.

Giethoorn's **tourist office** (☎ 0900-5674637; www.vvvgiethoorn.nl; Beulakerweg 114A; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat, 9am-5pm Sun May-Sep; 9am-5pm Mon-Fri Oct-Apr) is on the main road and will sort your accommodation – there are scores of camping grounds, rooms and cabins for rent. The town itself, five minutes away, has banks and other services.

Bus 70 serves Giethoorn on its route between Steenwijk (18 minutes) and Zwolle (one hour). Service is hourly on weekdays and shocking on weekends.

It's difficult to get around Giethoorn without a boat, a bike or a combination thereof. A few of the canalside service stations run bike-hire services.

GELDERLAND

The lush province of Gelderland features a genuine attraction in the form of Hoge Veluwe National Park, with its superb modern art museum and beautiful forestry. There are other, excellent cultural repositories in Apeldoorn and Arnhem, and the latter of course was the setting for Operation Market Garden, immortalised in the WWII actioner, *A Bridge Too Far*.

NIJMEGEN

☎ 024 / pop 159,556

Primarily a trading and manufacturing town, Nijmegen survived many invasions right up until WWII: the Roman Empire conquered it in AD 70, promptly burning it down, an ominous taste of things to come.

In February 1944, as a marshalling point for German forces, Nijmegen was bombed heavily by the Americans; later that year, the town was devastated by the 'Operation Market Garden' fiasco (see p267).

The postwar years have seen many rebuilding schemes of varying success, but Nijmegen has always bounced back, for it has

ANIMAL ATTRACTION

There is a surfeit of zoological parks in Gelderland and near the borders of neighbouring provinces.

Harderwijk's aquatic megapark, the **Dolfinarium** (☎ 0341-46 74 67; www.dolfinarium.nl; Strandboulevard Oost 1, Harderwijk; adult/child €23/19.50; ☎ 10am-5pm, 10am-6pm Jul & Aug), features its namesake alongside stingrays, seals and other aquatic life.

Apeldoorn's **Apenheul** (☎ 055-357 57 57; www.apenheul.nl; JC Wilsaan 21-31; adult/child €15/12; ☎ 9.30am-5pm, to 6pm Jul & Aug) is home to primates that will have the nerve to come and sit on your shoulder – if you have no food, they will attempt to snatch anything small and shiny. Make sure your Prince Albert is well hidden.

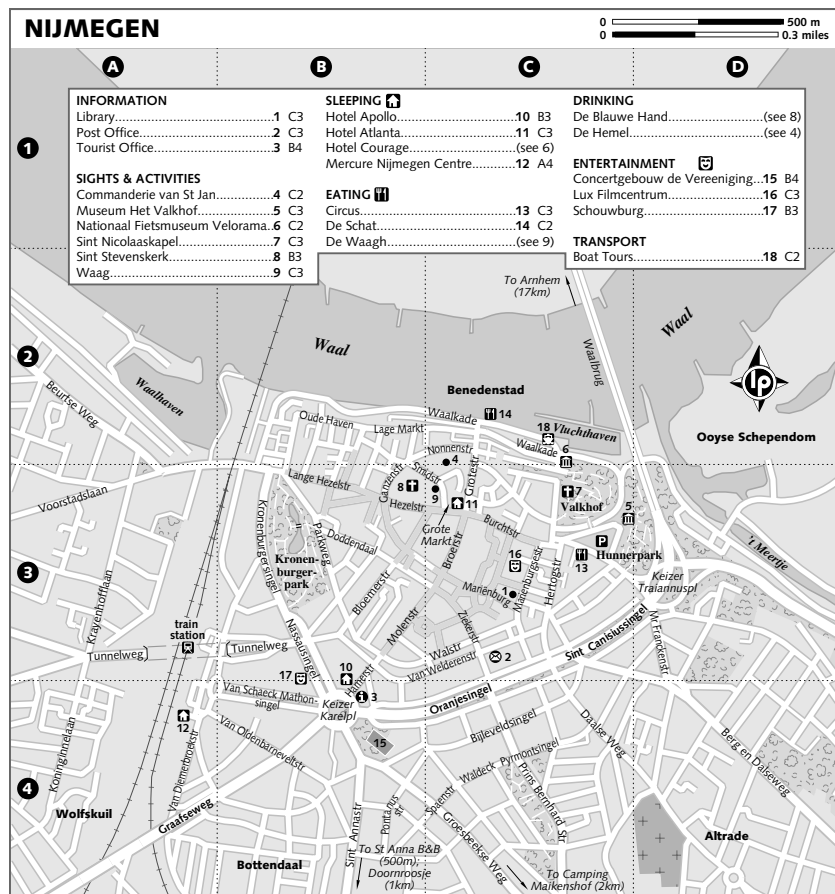
Arnhem's **Burgers' Zoo** (☎ 442 45 34; www.burgerszoo.nl; Antoon van Hooftplein 1; adult/child €16/14; ☎ 9am-7pm or sunset) tries to recreate the natural environments of its many animals. The creatures mostly don't buy this ruse, given the climate.

THE GRASS IS ALWAYS GREENER...UP THE TOWER

Once upon a time, a local farmer mistook moss growing atop Nieuwe Toren for grass and wondered aloud if he could get his cows up there to graze. So what he did was, he hoisted one of his cows up to the top via a dodgy system of pulleys and ropes. The cheering townspeople below saw the cow's tongue protruding from its mouth and assumed it was indeed having a good old feed. And there was much rejoicing. Unfortunately, the poor animal was actually choking to death, a ridiculous episode that made Kampen the butt of Dutch jokes for many, many years.

Credit, though, to the town: it has turned stupidity into a virtue, and these days, on a summer's morning in July, the incident is celebrated as Kampen Cow Day, with the ceremonial hoisting of a stuffed cow up the tower, accompanied by live music, where the bovine symbol remains for weeks.

The dates for Cow Day vary, so contact the tourist office for confirmation.



history on its side: there's a rivalry between it and Maastricht for the title of 'oldest city in the Netherlands', although these days it's archaeologically accepted that Nijmegen is older.

Nijmegen also has a bustling waterfront culture on the Waal, Western Europe's busiest expanse of river.

Information

Library (☎ 327 49 11; Mariënborg 29; internet per hr €4; ☎ 2-6pm Mon-Wed, 2-8pm Fri, 10am-2pm Sat)
Post office (☎ 323 90 92; Van Schevichavenstraat 1; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1pm Sat)
Tourist office (☎ 0900-1122344; www.vvwnijmegen.nl; Keizer Karelplein 2; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-5pm Sat)

Sights & Activities

The Museum het Valkhof (☎ 360 88 05; www.museumhetvalkhof.nl; Kelfkensbos 59; adult/child €6/3; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Fri; 2-5pm Sat & Sun) is housed in a striking building, the heaving, 16-sided St Nicolaaskapel – originally a replica of Charlemagne's palace at Aachen – that has been remodelled and reworked in a multitude of styles (depending on who held power in Nijmegen) during its 950-year life-span. The museum's collections cover regional history and art and there's a first-rate section of Roman artefacts.

The **Nationaal Fietsmuseum Velorama** (National Cycling Museum; ☎ 322 58 51; www.velorama.nl; Waalkade 107; adult/child €4.60/2.80; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 11am-5pm Sun & public holidays) is a small but interesting museum with over 250 bikes: everything from

19th-century wooden contraptions to hand-propelled bikes, to an entire room devoted to penny-farthings, plus more modern – and sane – machines. It's a must-see for anyone who's marvelled at the remarkable Dutch affinity with two-wheelers.

A few important bits of the old town either survived the war or have been reconstructed. The **Waag** (weigh-house) on Grote Markt was built in 1612 and has a lovely interior (see p266), while **Sint Stevenskerk** (☎ 360 47 10; De Waagh.....(see 9)) is the large 14th-century church.

Commanderie van St Jan, near Grote Markt on Franseplaats, was a 12th-century hospital for the knights of St John. It has a very different use today: it's a brewery (p266).

Even allowing for the usual air of frivolity commonly associated with such watery zones, strolling along the **Waalkade**, Nijmegen's waterfront, is delightful – especially if you're into boats and shipping. This stretch of river, Europe's busiest, sees a large barge or ferry pluming past Nijmegen every few minutes. Sometimes it's busier than the traffic on the road. Walk or ride a bike along the **Waalbrug** for breath-stealing sunset views of the old town, the water and the boats chugging below.

Cruises on the Waal depart from the waterfront along Waalkade. Some go all the way to Rotterdam. There are various companies; make inquiries at the tourist office for best results.

Festivals & Events

Nijmegen's big event is the **Internationale Wandelvierdaagse** (www.4daagse.nl), a four-day, 120km- to 200km-long march held in mid-July every year. It has a long history: the first one was held in 1909. Thousands walk it, even though the shortest or easiest route is a minimum of 30km a day. Many suffer debilitating blisters, while thousands more endure debilitating hangovers, as the Wandelvierdaagse is the city's excuse for a week-long party. Competitors set off in a different direction (north, south, east, west) each day, and there are varying route classifications according to gender and age.

Note: Two walkers died on the first day of the 2006 event, causing the Wandelvierdaagse to be cancelled. The future of the event is now very much in flux. Check the website for updates.

Sleeping

St Anna B&B (☎ 350 18 08; www.sintanna.nl; St Annastraat 208; s/d from €58/70) Perhaps Nijmegen's most charming accommodation; St Anna's owners also run a travel agency specialising in New Zealand, which explains the sheep motif. It also explains why one of the rooms has pictures of kiwi fruit on the walls and on the bedding. There are numerous comforts here as well as a wonderfully warm welcome.

Hotel Atlanta (☎ 360 30 00; www.atlanta-hotel.nl; Grote Markt 38-40; s/d €57.50/83.50) This place is a great-value option with comfy room. It's also home to a popular café on the Grote Markt. Beware, though – the central location gets quite noisy at night.

Our pick: Hotel Courage (☎ 360 49 70; www.hotelcourage.nl; Waalkade 108-112; s/d from €75/98) Restored old-style hotel with a superb location right on the waterfront – in the shadow of the Waalbrug – plus a nice restaurant and bar and very cosy rooms. Choose from tiered pricing packages: more cash for river views, less for park views.

Mercure Nijmegen Centre (☎ 323 88 88; www.acorhotels.com; Stationsplein 29; r from €85; ☎ ☒) Not bad, but you know, it's a large chain hotel aimed at business travellers, so design features are not a high priority. Having said that, rooms are super comfortable, well-appointed (aesthetically bland, of course) and spotlessly clean.

Other options:

Camping Maikenshof (☎ 684 16 51; Oude Kleefsbauw 134; campsites from €12) Take bus 6 from the train station east for 6km (direction: Beek) to the last stop in Berg en Dal.

Hotel Apollo (☎ 322 35 94; www.apollo-hotel-nijmegen.nl; Hamerstraat 14; s/d €75/98) Basic, friendly place; spartan but comfortable rooms.

Eating

Circus (☎ 360 66 56; www.restaurantthecircus.nl; Kelfkensbos 21; mains €14-26; ☎ dinner) This is a more stylish restaurant than its free-wheeling moniker implies – no tiger or elephant on the menu, although it is meaty Dutch fare, even if that most un-Dutch of animals, the kangaroo, sometimes makes a cameo appearance.

De Schat (☎ 322 40 60; www.deschat.nl; Waalkade 1; ☎ lunch & dinner) A nice place along the Waalkade, with white-linen tables heaving with fresh seafood in Dutch variations. There's a great *fruits-de-mer* (seafood) selection, too, eminently fitting for the location.

De Waagh (☎ 323 07 57; www.de-waagh.nl; Grote Markt 26; 🍴 lunch & dinner) This is an atmospheric place in which to eat, being as it is the town's 1612 former weigh-house. The interior has been restored to a rich, sumptuous Burgundian ideal. The food's perhaps not as thrilling, although it is hearty: trip out on the sea bream with acid cabbage.

Drinking

De Blauwe Hand (Blue Hand; ☎ 360 61 67; Achter de Hoofdwach 3) The best bar in Nijmegen is also its oldest, an ancient survivor that derives its name from its 17th-century customers: workers at a nearby dye shop. The Blue Hand is the perfect little Dutch bar, friendly and inviting, as evidenced by its motto: 'A frosty mug of rich beer gives you warmth, joy and sweet pleasure'.

De Hemel (Heaven; ☎ 360 61 67; www.brouwerijdehemel.nl; Franseplaats 1; 🍷 12-8pm Tue-Sun) The building housing this brewery and distillery, the ancient Commanderie van St Jan (p265), is worth a visit on its own. But the goods also pass muster. Of the beers, there's Luna, a 5% lager; Helse Engel (Hell's Angels), weighing in at a whopping 8%; and Nieuw Licht, which is anything but, being heavy in taste, body and colour – it'll knock you sideways with its 10% alcohol quotient. Of the liqueurs, try the beer brandy and the beer gin (both 40%), and the cinnamon liqueur (20%). There's also beer vinegar, beer mustard, beer bread and beer chocolate, and all of this and more is available in their shop.

Entertainment

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Nijmegen boasts two large, formal performance venues.

Concertgebouw de Vereniging (Oranjesingel 11A; ☎ schedule & ticket info, both venues 322 11 00)

Schouwburg (Keizer Karelplein 32)

LIVE MUSIC

Doornroosje (☎ 355 98 87; www.doornroosje.nl; Groenewoudseweg 322) Long-running, eclectic multipurpose venue, with live comedy and music ranging from electronica and house to indie-rock and world music. It's got its own gym, with a 10% discount on membership just for flashing their monthly guide.

CINEMA

Lux Filmcentrum (☎ 381 68 55; www.lux-nijmegen.nl; Mariënbrug 38-39; admission €6-7, 5-film card €25)

Getting There & Around

The train station is large and modern with many services. Lockers are near the ticket windows.

Destination	Price (€)	Duration (min)	Frequency (per hr)
Amsterdam	16.20	90	2
Arnhem	4.60	12	5
Den Bosch	8.00	30	4

Regional and local buses depart from the area in front of the station.

The bicycle shop is underground in front of the station.

ARNHEM

☎ 026 / pop 142,162

With its centre all but levelled during WWII, Arnhem today is a nondescript, though prosperous township with several museums and attractions around its northern outskirts. Plus it's a desirable launch pad for Hoge Veluwe National Park. Another fact from the war years: Audrey Hepburn attended Arnhem Conservatory from 1939 to 1945.

The **tourist office** (☎ 370 02 26; www.vvarnhem.nl; Willemsplein 8; 🕒 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat) is a 10-minute walk east of the train station.

Sights & Activities

Southeast of the Korenmarkt, is the **John Frost-brug**, a replica of the infamous 'bridge too far' (opposite). It's not much to look at, but its symbolic value is immense.

The **Museum voor Moderne Kunst** (☎ 351 24 31; www.mmkarnhem.nl; Utrechtseweg 87; €6; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun) has a commanding spot overlooking the Rijn (Rhine), and its modern art collection represents Arnhem's determination to look forward. Most of the collection is by Dutch artists and the progressive curatorial policy is that at least half of the works on display at any time must be by women.

Here's a change of pace: the **Nederlands Openluchtmuseum** (☎ 357 61 11; www.openluchtmuseum.nl; Schelmseweg 89; adult/child €12.90/9; 🕒 10am-5pm Apr-Oct) is an open-air museum of Dutch heritage with a collection of buildings and artefacts from all provinces, everything from farm-houses and old trams to working windmills. Volunteers in authentic costume demonstrate traditional skills including weaving, smithing and farming.

A BRIDGE TOO FAR: OPERATION MARKET GARDEN

The battle they called Operation Market Garden was devised by British General Bernard Montgomery to end WWII in Europe by Christmas. Despite advisers warning that the entire operation was likely to fail, Montgomery pushed on. He had often groused that the Americans under General George Patton were getting all the headlines in their charge across France. The plan was for British forces in Belgium to make a huge push along a narrow corridor to Arnhem in the Netherlands, where they would cut off large numbers of German troops from being able to return to Germany, thereby allowing the British to dash east to Berlin and end the war.

Everything went wrong. The British paratroops were only given two days' rations and the forces from the south had to cross 14 bridges, all of which had to remain traversable and lightly defended for the plan to work. The southern forces encountered some of the German army's most hardened troops and the bridges weren't all completely intact. This, in effect, stranded the Arnhem paratroops. They held out there and in neighbouring Oosterbeek for eight days without food or reinforcements. The survivors, a mere 2163, retreated under darkness. Over 17,000 other British troops were killed.

The results of the debacle were devastating for the Dutch: Arnhem and other towns were levelled and hundreds of civilians killed. The Dutch resistance, thinking that liberation was at hand, came out of hiding to fight the Germans. But without the anticipated Allied forces supporting them, hundreds were captured and killed.

Finally Montgomery abandoned the country. The winter of 1944-45 came to be known as the 'winter of hunger', with starvation rife as no food could be imported from Allied-held Belgium.

Most of the Netherlands was still occupied when the war ended in Europe in May 1945.

Sleeping

Hotel Parkzicht (☎ 442 06 98; Apeldoornsestraat 16; s/d from €37.50/70) This convenient place is 10 minutes – downhill – from the station and has basic, decent rooms including triples and quads. It's okay to bring your pets to this laidback place (dogs are welcome in the Hoge Veluwe, but not necessarily at every hotel).

Hotel Old Dutch (☎ 442 07 92; www.old-dutch.nl; Stationsplein 8; s/d from €73.50/97) Conveniently located for transport connections, it's across the road from the main train station with comfortable, pretty rooms and a homey, friendly feel. In fact, it's the best all-round option within walking distance of Arnhem's commercial centre.

Stayokay Arnhem (☎ 442 01 14; www.stayokay.com/arnhem; Diepenbrocklaan 27; d €22.50) Inconvenient to the town centre, at 2km north of town, but perfectly situated for seeing a lot of the sights on Arnhem's outskirts, especially by bike. Take bus 3 (direction: Alteveer) and get off at Rijnstate Ziekenhuis (hospital).

Getting There & Around

Buses and public transport leave from in front of the station, although the renovation sporadically affects this.

Destination	Price (€)	Duration (min)	Frequency (per hr)
Amsterdam	13.80	70	2
Deventer	7.10	36	2
Nijmegen	3.60	12	5

The bicycle shop is to the right as you exit the station.

AROUND ARNHM WWII Cemeteries

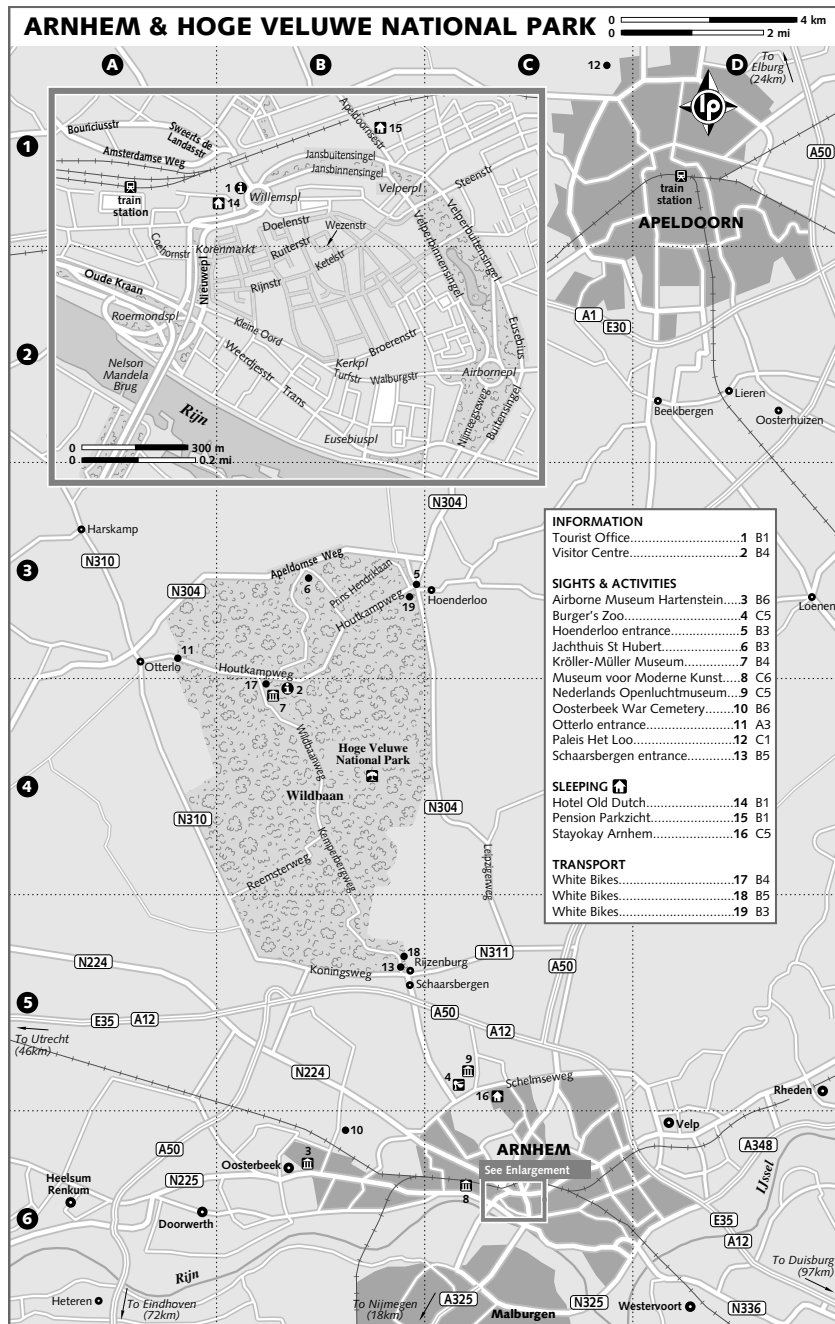
OOSTERBEEK

An old suburb 5km west of Arnhem, Oosterbeek was the scene of heavy combat during Operation Market Garden.

The **Airborne Museum Hartenstein** (☎ 333 77 10; www.airbornemuseum.org; Utrechtseweg 232; adult/child & veteran €4.80/3.80; 🕒 11am-5pm Mon-Sat, 12-5pm Sun) is inside a mansion used by the British as HQ during the battle. Take trolleybus 1 serving both Oosterbeek and Arnhem train stations.

The **Oosterbeek War Cemetery** is 200m north-east of Oosterbeek train station (follow the signs). Over 1700 Allied (mostly British and Free Polish) troops are buried here.

The tourist offices in Nijmegen and Arnhem can both provide more specific information on how to visit any or all of these monuments to the Allied war fallen.



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GROESBEEK

The small town of Groesbeek, just inside Gelderland's southern border, 10km south of Nijmegen, is home to the **National Liberation Museum 1944-45** (☎ 397 44 04; www.bevrijdingsmuseum.nl; Wylerbaan 4; adult/child €8/4; ☹ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, noon-5pm Sun). The museum aims to show the causes, events and outcomes of the Allied efforts leading to the liberation of the Netherlands. Using interactive displays and historical artefacts, visitors can 'relive' the strategic decisions and tactical actions of the various campaigns and battle locations. The ambitious museum also attempts to define for younger visitors what the ideals of democracy, freedom and human rights mean, and why people die fighting to protect them.

Nearby, the **Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery** is a mausoleum dedicated to the soldiers who fell here during Operation Market Garden. Of the 2610 Commonwealth soldiers commemorated, 2331 are Canadian. There is a memorial listing by name 1000 soldiers whose graves' whereabouts are unknown.

In the tiny township of Jonkerbos (a short distance from Nijmegen), **Jonkerbos War Cemetery** is the final resting place of mainly British servicemen.

HOGE VELUWE NATIONAL PARK

This **park** (☎ 0318-59 10 41; www.hogeveluwe.nl; adult/child €6/3, park & museum €12/6; ☹ 9am-6pm Nov-Mar, 8am-8pm Apr, 8am-9pm May & Aug, 8am-10pm Jun & Jul, 9am-8pm Sep, 9am-7pm Oct), the largest in the Netherlands, would be a fantastic place to visit for its marshlands, forests and sand dunes alone, but its brilliant museum makes it unmissable.

The park was purchased by Anton and Helene Kröller-Müller, a wealthy German-Dutch couple, in 1914. He wanted hunting grounds, she wanted a museum site. They got both. It was given to the state in 1930, and in 1938 a museum opened for Helene's remarkable art collection. A visit to the park can fill an entire day, and even if you don't have a bike, you can borrow one of the park's hundreds of famous, free white bicycles.

The ticket booths at each of the three entrances at Hoenderloo, Otterlo and Schaarsbergen have basic information and highly useful park maps (€3.50). In the heart of the park, the main visitors centre is an attraction itself. It has displays on the flora and fauna, including one showing the gruesome results

when a deer has a bad day and a crow has a good day.

Roads through the park are limited. There are many bike paths and 42km of hiking trails, with three routes signposted. The most interesting area is the **Wildbaan**, south of the Kröller-Müller Museum. At the north edge, **Jachthuis St Hubert** is the baronial hunting lodge that Anton had built. Named after the patron saint of hunting (but not the hunted), you can tour its woody interior.

Cars are not admitted after 8pm.

Kröller-Müller Museum

About 10km into the park (an hour by cycle) and among the best museums in the land, the **Kröller-Müller Museum** (☎ 0318-59 12 41; www.kmm.nl; Houtkampweg 6; adult/child €12/6; ☹ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) has works by Picasso, Gris, Renoir, Sisley and Manet. Good enough, but it's the Van Gogh collection that elevates it to world class, a stunning collection of 278 of the artist's work that rivals the collection in the eponymous Amsterdam museum.

There's also a sculpture garden featuring works by Rodin, Moore and more.

Getting There & Around

There is a bus service from the train stations in Arnhem and Apeldoorn. From Arnhem, take bus 2 (direction: Deelevey OC) to the Schaarsbergen entrance and on to the Kröller-Müller Museum. The first bus leaves at 10.10am (April to October) and there are three more through the day (one per hour in July and August). From Apeldoorn, bus 110 leaves the station every hour from 8.42am to 4.42pm.

There is car parking at the visitors centre, museum and lodge. By bike, the park is easily reached from any direction. You can also wait and use a free white bicycle, available at the entrance.

APELDOORN

The rather featureless town of Apeldoorn has one class attraction: the **Paleis het Loo** (☎ 055-577 24 00; www.paleisheetloo.nl; Koninklijk Park 1; adult/child €9/3; ☹ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun), built in 1685 for William III; Queen Wilhelmina lived here until 1962. Now it's a magnificent museum celebrating the history of the royal House of Oranje-Nassau. View the royal bedchambers, regal paintings, royal furniture, silverware, the lavish dining room

dating from 1686, the vintage car fleet, the immense gardens with their maze of hedges and pathways...

ELBURG

☎ 0525 / pop 22,022

Gorgeous Elburg has a sculpted, cobbled 16th-century splendour. Compact and grid-like, its centre can be easily explored on foot. One highlight is the old harbour. Continue all the way down Jufferenstraat, through the old gate at the end of Vischpoortstraat and into the harbour itself, where a small flotilla of pleasure and fishing boats can take you on a boat tour. There's also an enjoyable market

in good weather, where you can help yourself to cheap snacks or local crafts.

Visit the **tourist office** (☎ 68 15 20; www.vvvelburg.nl; Ledige Stede 31; 🕒 9am-5pm Mon-Fri year-round, 10am-4pm Sat May-Aug) for more information.

There's just one hotel, the **Elburg** (☎ 68 38 77; www.hotelelburg.nl; Smedestraat 5-7; s/d €58.50/89.50).

Getting There & Around

Take bus 100, 200, 184 or 144 from Zwolle train station on any weekday. Bus 100 is the only one that runs on weekends. The service runs every 30 minutes, and will deposit you about 100 metres from the beginning of Jufferenstraat, the main drag.