

Maastricht



USA Girl Scouts Overseas

Tri-Border

The walking tour guide, description, and map can be obtained by writing to:

tribordergirlscouts@usagso.org

The patch can be purchased for \$3. The responsibility for determining if the patch has been properly earned will rest with troop leaders of individual troops. We would appreciate your comments for any improvements that can be made to the tour, as well as a statement about the things that you enjoyed the most.

This guide was originally written by Muriel Parrish, Anne Parrish, and Hilda Leeuwen. At the back of the guide is a map, and pictures of landmarks are included throughout. This should prove to be of some assistance if any of the directions are confusing.

Mmm...MARVELOUS MAASTRICHT

A Walking Tour of the Netherlands Oldest City

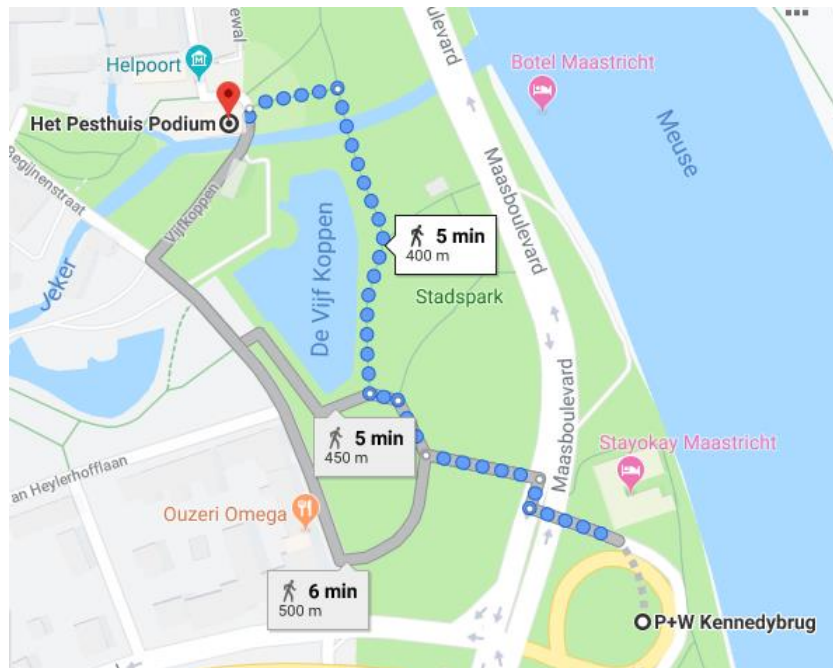
Maastricht is the capital of Limburg, the southernmost of the eleven provinces which constitute the Netherlands. It's central location between Aachen, Germany and Liege, Belgium (each only 20 miles away) has created a cultural mixture unique in its charm and appeal. Any time of the year, even the grey days of winter the streets and restaurants are lively, and a cheerful, buoyant atmosphere prevails.

The city can trace its beginnings to 50 BC when the Romans built a settlement by a fjord on the River Maas (Meuse). The name Maastricht is derived from the Roman name, Moesae Trajectum, meaning site where the Meuse could be crossed.

This 2000-year-old city used to be one of Europe's most feared and strongest military strongholds. It has been surrounded by three different ramparts (medieval town walls) and was besieged more than 21 times.

Its century upon century of ever-changing architecture: its narrow cobblestone streets; its many squares (small and large); its numerous church steeples and the four bridges over the River Maas make a visit memorable and worthwhile and a favorite with photographers.

The walking tour can generally be completed in 3 ½ hours. As most of the streets are cobblestone, comfortable walking shoes are recommended. There are several areas where a picnic lunch can be eaten, as well as many delicatessens and bakeries where meats and breads can be purchased. There are also numerous coffee houses and cafes with reasonable prices. Should a troop have time for additional sites more extended tours can be made of the St. Petersburg caves, Bonnefanten Museum, various churches and treasuries and the Town Hall.



Parking Location to Starting Point



1. The white house in front of you is Het Pesthuis (Plague House). It is now officially called the Pest House, but in fact this building was originally built as a papermill. It is now the rehearsal house of the Maastricht theatrical company. The original pesthouse used to stand next to this building, and in it the dying plague patients were looked after and nursed by the monks from the Monastery of Capuchins. During the plague epidemic in 1623 most of the monk nurses died too. Later when the pesthouse was no longer needed it was demolished.

2. Find the stone stairs near the pesthouse and go up them. You are on the Bastion “De Vijf Koppen” (the five heads). This bastion belonged to the second rampart (wall) around Maastricht. There were three ramparts around the city, generally dating from the 13th century. This wall was expanded in 1516 with two bastions. You are standing on one of them because a new type of cannon had been invented and the soldiers needed more space than there was on the former platforms on the walls to handle the cannons. This bastion was originally called the Bastion De Drie Duiven (the three pigeons). The name was changed in 1638, after Father Vink, a Franciscan Friar, and four other persons were accused of treason in favor of the Spaniards. The friar later proved to be innocent, but it was discovered too late to do him any good. The heads of the five executed were put on the tops of long poles and displayed here as a deterrent to others who might consider treason. Take a look around from up here, the view of the lake, pool, and fountain are very nice.



3. Walk further, take the footpath along the old wall and go over the small bridge with the road underneath. Go up the seven wide and eleven small stairs. You are now on the second bastion, Haet ende Nijt (Hate and Envy). Leave this bastion by taking the stairs, go to the left, go down the stone stairs and take the footpath to the right (U-turn). You'll hear the rushing water of the Jeker river here.

4. Begijnstraat should be on your right. The gate in front of you is Poort Waarachtig (True Gate). In the 17th century this gate was not here. It was built in 1888 as a passage for traffic. Now go into Begijnstraat to your left.

5. Go into the small park on your right. This is Faliezuster Park. Next to the Klooster is Pater Vinktoeren. Father Vink was imprisoned here.

6. Walk past the tower and along the path over the small bridge. The small river Jeker disappears underneath many streets and houses of Maastricht. The large green gate door is the entrance to a café called D'n Hiemel (Heaven). The owners chose this name because it is situated next to Helpoort (Hell's

Gate). Helpoort, just beyond the Hiemel, is the original and oldest city gate in the Netherlands and is part of the second rampart.

7. Do you see that you've made a circle and are back to the pesthuis? Go through the Helpoort. There is a small museum in the wall there and a little park. You may wish to walk up on the wall to see the river from here. Then walk along Sint Bernardusstraat, a street full of places for evening entertainment, cafes, and dancing. The other end of this street opens on the Onze Lieve Vrouweplein, but halfway down the street we will take a street to the left.

8. Achter de oude Minderbroeders (Behind the Old Franciscan Monastery). On your left is the former monastery. The Franciscans settled here in 1234. In 1300 they began to build their church. About 1400 it was finished. This church was built in northern French style (see the points of support and arches). It is one of the most beautiful churches in high gothic style in this area (Reportedly the most beautiful is Bartholomeus in Meerssen). During the Spanish occupation in 1578-1632, the Franciscans left Maastricht and parts of their buildings were destroyed. The Jesuits got their monastery back, but the Franciscans never did and they built a new monastery elsewhere. Behind the former monastery there is a very large convent garden.

9. Three-fourths of the way down Achter de Oude Minderbroeders and on the right side of the street, a concrete post (1979) marks the entry to a small passage: Bisschopsmolengan (Bishops Mill Passage). It is a very old and beautiful water mill, in the style of Louis XV. Godfried van Bouillon, the leader of the First Crusade, sold this mill to the Bishop of Liege in 1095. Be sure to observe the houses in the area.

10. Go back out of this passage to the right and at the next street turn to your left until you reach the old wall and the street Lang Grachtje. The wall here is part of the first rampart with an extended wall tower. This is really a very old area in Maastricht. Then you must continue to the right along St. Pietersstraat. On your left there is a very small passage among some apartment buildings.

11. Take a look here at the 17th century Leeuwenmolen. It is a white building dated 1694.

12. At the next intersection, before you come to one of the ramparts is a lovely old house with interesting gables and a clock near the roof (in back).

13. Cross the intersection (by a statue of a woman) and walk along the walled street. This wall is the remainder of the second town wall and dates from around 1350. It surrounded a town area three times larger than the first wall. It also looks different from the first wall. It has towers placed at regular intervals. At the end of this street (Nieuwhofstraat) you will come to Zwingelput Street. On the left in the wall you will find a small entrance next to the big stone stairs. There is a small wooden bridge through the entrance above the Jeker River which acts as a natural moat. This entryway was created to provide access between Nieuwehof, a convent, and Aldenhof, the mother convent. Aldenhof has since been demolished and an animal park is now located there. If you walk into the park and look back you have a nice view of the wall.

14. Go back through the entryway and climb the stairs leading to the top of the wall. Follow this wall path until you reach “de Waterpoort de Reek” (Water Gate). Go down through the arched doorway and along the narrow passage. On your left in the wall you will see a witch figure riding a broom. You are at the Hekenhoek (Witches’ Corner) and Hekenstraat.

15. The modern building ahead of you is the Conservatory for Music. It was built over the Jeker River and was designed by P. H. Dingenmann. Previously on this site was a mill. There are schools, academies for art and music and a medical university in this area. It is called the “Student Quarter.”

16. Continue along the left and on your right is the Huis op de Jeker (House of the Jeker). This unique 17th century house has two stepped gables.

17. Continue along this street and at the corner follow it around to the right. Here at the Ezelmarkt (Donkey Market) is a nice view of the Huis op de Jeker. The donkey statue in this market is a favorite with children.

18. Further along this street at the next intersection you will come to de Bosquetplein. On your right is the Convent of the Grauw Nuns. It served in this capacity until 1920 when it became a nature museum.

19. On the opposite side of the street is the Convent Nieuwenhof.

20. Across from the Convent is No. 27 St. Maartenshof. Steal softly through the door and look at the quiet courtyard and tiny houses. They have recently been renovated and once belonged to the Begijnen Convent. They date from 1715 and formerly served to house the poor. The group statue see here is of the Maastricht folk poet, Fons Olterdissen, Telling stories to the children. Walk along Grote Looierstraat. Formerly this area was a moat, but now this street has been built over the river. This street has a typical French look and many of the houses have been renovated.

21. Continue along Grote Looierstraat until you reach Tafelstraat. It is a very small street with old houses. At the end of Tafelstraat, the Waalse Kerk (Walloon Church) is opposite the Franciscan Church (You’ve made a circle again).

22. Turn to your left and then turn right onto Stenenbrug. Continue along this street and at the intersection on the right-hand side is Koestraat. The monumental house De Ridder (The Knight) is at the corner. It dates to the mid-17th century and has a unique, rare façade. The street is named after the house. Turn left onto Koestraat and notice the beautiful antique facades of numbers 20, 16, and 14. Continue down this street and you will come to the Onze Lieve Vrouwplein.

23. The Cathedral of Our Lady (Onze Lieve Vrouwe Basiliek) is historically the most anointed monument in Maastricht. Situated in a corner of the old castellum, its history probably goes back to a heathen temple and its predecessor was the Episcopal Church of 390 AD. The left side porch is the town’s most treasured place of worship and dates to the 12th century. Behind this porch is the former Chapel of Merode, where the miraculous statue of the Star of the Sea has been kept since 1837. The features of the face are very charming, and the child is full of life. The crown worn by the statue is a faithful replica

of the original and a very valuable one made of solid old and adorned with a number of precious stones. It is valued at \$75,000. the original is in the church's treasure chamber.

24. Walk across the square and turn to your left along Plankstraat. Turn left along Stokstraat. Between 1957 and 1973 Stokstraat was completely restored. The houses and buildings date chiefly from the 17th and 18th centuries and the beautiful gables and gable stones create a unique shopping area.

25. At the end of Stokstraat you will come to the small Square of the Kleine Stokstraat. Here is the statue of the Meestreechter Cein (Maastricht Spirit). This statue personifies the light hearted, gay, Burgundian spirit of Maastricht. If you match your humor to the spirit of the geis, the tour of the city is certain to be a pleasant one. Go to your left along Maastichter Smedenstraat until you reach the Kersenmarkt at the next intersection. Go to your right past the Bijenkorf department store.

26. At the intersection of Klenestraat, Muntsraat, Jodenstraat, and Grote Straat is the Dinghuis. The 16th century front gable is made entirely from Namur stone. It has a high saddle roof and a timbered side gable. Until the town hall was built, it represented the seat of the Liege and Brabant High Court of Justice. The building is now home to Maastricht's main tourist information center.

27. Turn to your left and go down Grote Straat. After emerging from Grote Straat, turn to your left and walk along the row of sidewalk cafes. You'll come to the Vogelstruys at the end of the row. This is the oldest café in Maastricht. This pub and the square it looks out on are called Maastricht's living room. If you have time stop here for a cup of coffee and Dutch vla. The view across the square is a fascinating one.

28. The square in front of you is called the Vrijthof. The two churches standing side by side are St. Jan's (notable for its red tower) and St. Servaas. These two churches are separated only by a narrow street referred to as purgatory. St. Servaas Church was built over the grave of the Saint who was the first Bishop of Maastricht and the crypt can be visited. His bones rest in a jewel studded cask in the church treasury. Also housed here are a large collection of ivory and silver reliquaries.

29. Returning to the point where you emerged from Grote Straat, turn left into Helmstraat. On your right you will see the old Dominican Church (now a large book store and coffee café) and a shopping mall called Entre Deux. Pass through the mall. When you emerge from the mall, turn to your left.

30. You have now arrived at the Market Square and Town Hall. There are two statues in the square. One is a humorous fountain sculpture, the vegetable woman (a gift given to the town by the market vendors). The other is a statue of a priest, Professor Minckelers, who invented a method of bringing lighting gas into the people's homes through a system of pipes.

31. The town hall was built between 1659-1665 under the direction of architect Pieter Post. It is a double building with the right and left sides being alike with twin staircases. For a long time the city was ruled jointly by a prince bishop and a duke. The double stairs made it unnecessary for either to give precedence to the other. The meeting rooms and offices are decorated with 18th century tapestries and the mayor's office has walls of gold leather, painted with oriental scenes, antique furniture, fine stucco

work, and a beautifully painted vaulted ceiling. The doors are always locked, but if you ring the bell the secretary will answer and may let you view the hall if no meetings are being held at that time.

If you have been longing for a bit of Americana, on your right as you face the town hall is a Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise!

32. Now follow the street along the right side of the market to Maas Boulevard. Cross the street, turn right and walk along the Maas promenade. On your right will be the Augustine Church, a Baroque church dating from 1659 and built by the Cloister of Augustin. You can also watch the traffic river and admire this lovely town from yet another vantage point.

33. The bridge ahead of you and to your left is the St. Servaas Bridge. This bridge is the oldest in the Netherlands.

34. Continue straight and you will arrive in the park where your tour began. If you live nearby, we think this trip to Maastricht will be just the first of many. If you live further away, we're sure you'll have many pleasant memories of your visit to Maastricht!