

## The city of Maastricht

Maastricht is a city and a municipality in the southern part of the Dutch province of Limburg, of which it is the capital. The city is situated on both sides of the Meuse river (Dutch: Maas) in the south-eastern part of the Netherlands. Maastricht is on the Belgian border (with both the Dutch-speaking Flemish and French-speaking Walloon region) and near the German border. Maastricht is widely known as a centre of tradition, history and culture and popular with tourists for shopping and recreation.



### History

After the Napoleonic era, Maastricht became a part of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1815 and the capital of the newly formed Province of Limburg. When the southern provinces sought independence from the North to form Belgium in 1830, the garrison in Maastricht remained loyal to the Dutch king, though the surrounding countryside came under Belgian control. Arbitration by the Great Powers in 1831 awarded the city and the eastern part of Limburg, despite being geographically and culturally closer to Belgium, to the Netherlands and the rest to Belgium. The North and the South did not initially agree to this and it would not be until the 1839 Treaty of London that this arrangement became permanent.

Because of the resulting eccentric location Maastricht often remained more focused on Belgium and Germany than on the rest of the Netherlands. Due to its proximity to the Walloon industrial basin, Maastricht industrialized earlier than most of the Netherlands. It thus retained a distinct non-Dutch character until the First World War forced the city to look northwards.

The city did not escape World War II: it was quickly taken by the Germans on 10 May 1940 during the Battle of Maastricht, but on 14 September 1944, Maastricht was the first Dutch city to be liberated by allied forces.

The latter half of the century saw a decline of the traditional industries and a shift to more services-oriented economy. Maastricht University was founded in 1976. In 1992, the Maastricht treaty was negotiated and signed here, leading to the creation of the European Union and the Euro.



## Art and Entertainment



Bonnefanten Museum – the foremost museum for old masters and contemporary fine art in the province of Limburg. Highlights are a series of paintings by Pieter Brueghel the Younger and other Southern Dutch artists, and a permanent collection of contemporary art featuring American Minimalism and Arte Povera.

Museum aan het Vrijthof – local history and art museum in the 16th century “Spanish Government” building, featuring period rooms with 17th and 18th-century furnishings, silverwork, porcelain, glassware, etc., and a collection of Flemish Baroque paintings and 20th century paintings from Maastricht.

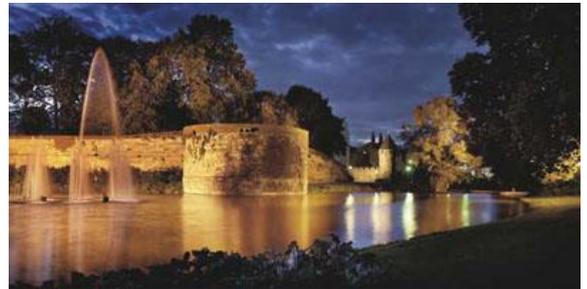
Treasury Basilica of Saint Servatius – with religious artifacts from the 4th till 20th century, notably those related to Saint Servatius: The gilded reliquary chest (12th century), the crosier (12th century) and the reliquary bust donated by Alexander Farnese, Duke of Parma (16th century).



Maastricht is known for its picturesque squares, romantic streets, and historical buildings. The main sights include:

### City Fortifications

- Helpoort – a 13th century town gate, the oldest in the Netherlands.
- Fragments of the first and second medieval city walls.
- Hoge Fronten (English: High Fronts) or Linie van Du Moulin – remnants of 17th-18th century fortifications with a number of well-preserved bastions and the early 19th century fortress Fort Willem.
- Casemates – underground network of tunnels, built as sheltered emplacements for guns and



cannons. These tunnels run for several miles underneath the city’s fortifications. Guided tours available.

### Market Square

The Market Square was completely refurbished in 2006-2007 and is now virtually traffic free.

Sights include:

- Town hall – built in the 17th century by Pieter Post.
- Mosae Forum – a brand-new shopping centre and civic building designed by Jo Coenen and Bruno Albert. Citroën Miniature Cars, the world's largest exposition of Citroën miniature cars, is inside Mosae Forum parking garage.



### **Nightlife**

The city is well-known for its exclusive wining & dining and its four Michelin star restaurants: Beluga (\*\*), Toine Hermsen (\*), Tout-à-Fait (\*) and Chateau Neercanne (\*) just outside Maastricht, offer a very nice experience.



For great bars and terraces you can visit "The Vrijthof". At and around this very nice and old square, you can find many little pubs and places to eat.

Bars are generally open until 3:00, but more active clubs can be open till 5:00.

### **Shopping**

You can find everything from antiques and department stores to specialty shops and interior design. In the area between central station and The Vrijthof square, you find many shops and department stores.

Located on the eastern banks of the river Maas is the neighborhood Wyck, this is one of the oldest parts of the city. Here you can find many antiques, delicatessen, fashion and design stores.

Shops are generally open from 1 until 6 p.m. on Monday. From Tuesday until Friday shops are open from 9.00 a.m. until 6 p.m. (with the exception of Thursdays late shopping until 9 p.m.) and on Saturday from 9.00 a.m. until 5 p.m. The majority of the shops are also open on Sunday from 12 until 5 p.m.

### **Currency**

The Netherlands use the euro (€). As for the denominations of the currency, there are €5, €10, €20, €50, €100, €200 and €500 notes, and €0.05, €0.10, €0.20, €0.50, €1 and €2 coins. Many businesses do not accept notes larger than €100.

### **Cash machines**

Make certain your bankcard is of the "four PIN number type"; this is the standard in The Netherlands. Cash machines in The Netherlands are compatible with the Maestro, Cirrus or Plus system. If you have any doubts about the usability of your bankcard, contact you

bank prior to leaving. You might also want to check with your bank to ask about their fee structure on international exchanges.

Tipping is not required at restaurants or hotels. However, a 10% tip is widely accepted as a standard for good restaurant service. For other services such as room service, housemaids, taxis and theatre ushers, tips are not expected but are greatly appreciated.

### **Credit Cards**

Credit and debit cards are widely accepted, although in some small shops or hotels, there may be an additional charge (2-6%) if you pay with your credit card.

### **Time Zone**

The time zone in The Netherlands is Central European Time. This is UTC/GMT +1 hour (Winter Period) and UTC/GMT +2 hours (Summer Period).

### **Voltage**

Electricity in The Netherlands is 230 Volts, alternating at 50 cycles per second. If you travel to The Netherlands with a device that does not accept 230 Volts at 50 Hertz, you will need a voltage converter. Outlets in The Netherlands generally accept 2 types of plugs. If your appliances plug has a different shape, you may need a plug adapter.

### **Visa**

Whether a prospective visitor requires a visa depends on his nationality and how long he intends to stay in the Netherlands. Nationals of many countries require a visa for an uninterrupted stay of up to three months.

### **Telephone code**

The country code for The Netherlands is 0031, please dial this number before a local Dutch number. Each city in The Netherlands has their own city code. The city code of Maastricht is 043. So when you make a call to a number in Maastricht, dial 0031 + 043 + the phone number.

### **Transportation**

By car: Maastricht is mainly served by the A2 and the A79 motorways. The city can be reached from Brussels and Cologne in approximately 1 hour and from Amsterdam in about 2.5 hours.

Parking: Due to the high number of visitors, parking in the city centre forms a major problem during weekends and bank holidays despite several large underground car parks. Parking fees are therefore deliberately kept high in order to incite visitors to use public transport or 'park & ride' facilities further away from the centre.

By train: The Dutch Railways serve both the main station of Maastricht and two smaller stations of which one is located near the business and university district (Maastricht Randwyck) and one located near another business and industrial district (Maastricht Noord). A railway branch passes through Maastricht that runs south to Liège, Belgium and north into the rest of the Netherlands, where it has a branch to Heerlen.

Intercity trains to the city of Alkmaar or Schagen in the province of North-Holland connect Maastricht directly with Eindhoven, Den Bosch, Utrecht, Amsterdam, and several other cities. Commuter trains furthermore cover the regional area, and an international intercity train connects Maastricht with Liège and Brussels in Belgium.

By airplane: Maastricht is served by nearby Maastricht Aachen Airport – often known as Beek locally – with scheduled flights to Alicante, Faro, Girona, Málaga, Pisa, Reus, Trapani. The airport is located about 10 kilometres north of Maastricht's centre. Maastricht can also be reached by flying to Eindhoven Airport and taking the train from there (a 1 hour train ride).

### **Emergency Services**

The national telephone number for all emergency services in The Netherlands including **AMBULANCE, FIRE** and **POLICE** is “**112**”.

### **Liability and insurance**

As in all major cities, people should be aware of safety risks. It is highly recommended that all participants carry proper travel and health insurance.