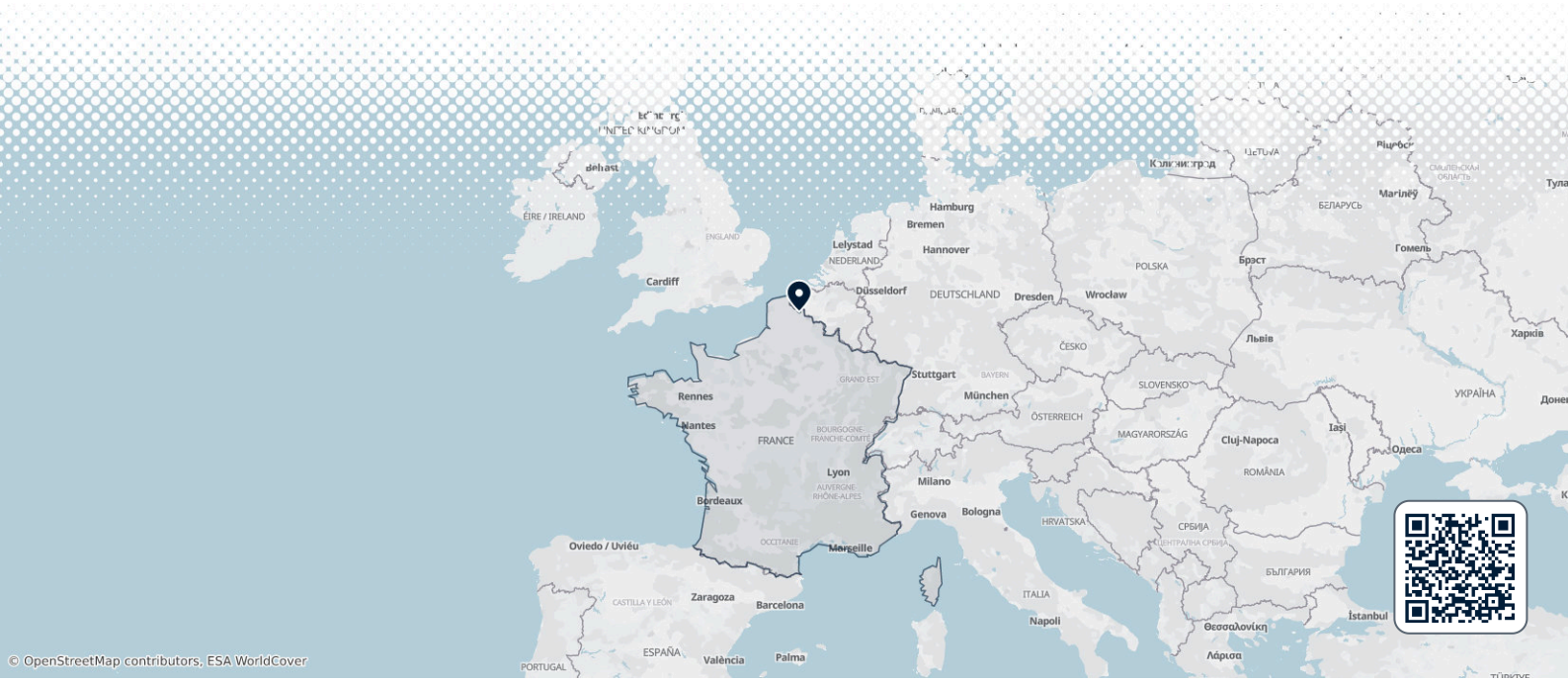


Lille

Hauts-de-France · France

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Lille is the main city of French Flanders, close to the Belgian border. It has a Flemish look, with red-brick gabled houses, and a lively feel from its large student population. More than a million people live in the wider metropolitan area.

It suits a city break of two or three nights. Museums, markets, cafés and good-value dining make it easy and affordable. Trains from Paris, London and Brussels take about an hour or a little more, so it also works as a base for northern France and Belgium.

When to visit

Late spring to early autumn is the best time, with mild to warm days. Rain can fall at any time of year, so bring a light jacket. Winters are cold and grey, but the Christmas market in December is a good reason to come.

The biggest event is the **Braderie de Lille**, on the first weekend of September. It is a huge street flea market, and it draws millions of visitors. Book your hotel well ahead, because rooms fill up fast.

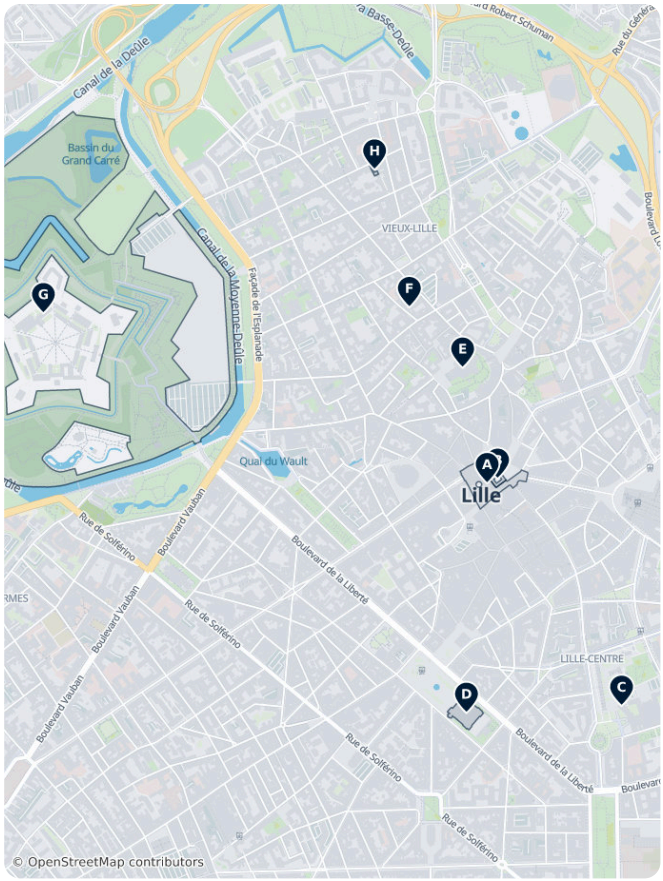
MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for sightseeing	6° / 12° Feels like 1°	0° / -7°	13 rainy days · Dry air
February	Poor Poor for sightseeing	8° / 13° Feels like 2°	1° / -5°	12 rainy days · Dry air
March	Poor Poor for sightseeing	11° / 18° Feels like 7°	2° / -4°	Dry air
April	Fair Fair for sightseeing	15° / 22° Feels like 11°	5° / -1°	Dry air
May	Good Good for sightseeing	18° / 25°	8° / 3°	12 rainy days · Dry air
June	Great Great for sightseeing	21° / 28°	11° / 7°	12 rainy days · Dry air
July	Great Great for sightseeing	23° / 29°	13° / 9°	13 rainy days
August	Great Great for sightseeing	23° / 29°	13° / 9°	12 rainy days
September	Great Great for sightseeing	20° / 26°	11° / 6°	Dry air
October	Fair Fair for sightseeing	16° / 21° Feels like 13°	8° / 2°	13 rainy days · Dry air
November	Poor Poor for sightseeing	10° / 16° Feels like 6°	4° / -2°	15 rainy days · Dry air
December	Poor Poor for sightseeing	7° / 12° Feels like 1°	2° / -5°	14 rainy days · Dry air

Best months: June, July, August, September

Climate data: NASA POWER (MERRA-2) · 1996–2025

Top sights

- A Place du Général de Gaulle is the main square and the heart of the city. Cafés line it, and the big column in the middle recalls the Austrian siege of 1792.
- B La Vieille Bourse is a 17th-century merchant exchange with a richly carved Flemish façade. You can walk into the inner courtyard for free.
- C Beffroi is the tower of the town hall, 104 m high and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It was finished in 1932, and you can go up for views over the city.
- D Palais des Beaux-Arts is one of the largest art museums in France. It holds old masters, 19th-century French painting and sculpture.
- E Cathédrale Notre-Dame de la Treille is a neo-Gothic cathedral with an unusual modern façade added in 1999.
- F Vieux Lille is the old town. It has cobbled streets, Flemish-style houses, independent shops and many places to eat.
- G Parc de la Citadelle is a large green park around the star-shaped fortress that *Vauban* built after 1667. It is good for a walk or a picnic.
- H Maison natale de Charles de Gaulle is the birthplace of *Charles de Gaulle*. It is a small museum about his family and childhood.



Lille – Plan Your Trip

Turn the places from this guide into a real itinerary, with smart routing, time estimates, and everything you need for a perfect trip.

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What to experience

- **Eat moules-frites at the Braderie**: On the first weekend of September, the whole centre becomes a flea market. The local tradition is a big plate of mussels and fries. Restaurants pile the empty shells outside to show how many they sold.
- **Christmas market and Ferris wheel**: In December, a market with wooden chalets fills the main square, and a big Ferris wheel turns above it.
- **Sunday morning at the Wazemmes market**: This is a big, lively street market with food, spices, fruit and clothes. Sunday is the busiest day.

Day trips

Lille sits in a very good spot for day trips. Trains are frequent and the Belgian border is close.

- **Roubaix**: about 25 min by metro or tram. A former textile town with the La Piscine art museum, set in an Art Deco swimming pool.
- **Tournai**: about 30 min by train. A calm Belgian city with a UNESCO-listed Romanesque cathedral. See A Tournai.
- **Arras**: about 45 min by train. A pretty town with two large Flemish-style squares and a UNESCO-listed belfry.
- **Lens**: about 40 min by train. Home of the Louvre-Lens museum, a branch of the Louvre. The Villeneuve-d'Ascq suburb, east of Lille, has the LaM modern art museum.
- **Brussels**: about 35 to 40 min by high-speed train from Lille Europe. See B Brussels.
- **Bruges and Ghent**: about 1.5 to 2 hours by train, usually with a change. Both are worth a long day, or a night. See C Bruges and D Ghent.



Where to explore

More places to visit in northern France:

- Calais is the main Channel port, with beaches and a ferry link to England.
- Boulogne-sur-Mer is a fishing port on the coast with a walled old town and a large aquarium.
- Amiens is known for its huge Gothic cathedral and its canal quarter.

For a trip further afield, Paris is about an hour away by fast train. See Paris.

Getting there

- **By train**: Lille is a major rail hub, and most visitors arrive this way. Two stations are close together in the centre: Lille-Flandres for regional trains and Paris, and Lille-Europe for Eurostar and high-speed trains. Paris takes about 1 hour, London about 1 hour 20 min, and Brussels about 35 to 40 min. Paris Charles de Gaulle airport also has a direct high-speed train, in about an hour. Book on SNCF Connect.
- **By air**: The local airport is Lille-Lesquin (LIL), about 11 km south-east of the centre. It has a limited choice of routes. A shuttle bus links it to the city. Many visitors fly to Paris Charles de Gaulle or Brussels and continue by high-speed train.
- **By bus**: Long-distance coaches link Lille with Paris, Brussels and other cities. They are often cheaper than the train but slower.

Getting around

- **Public transit**: The metro has two automatic lines. Two tram lines and many bus routes cover the wider area. Buy tickets at the machines at metro and tram stops, or on the transport operator's app. Validate your ticket before you board.
- **Cycling**: The city has a public bike-share system called V'Lille. The centre is flat.
- **On foot**: The centre is compact. The two stations, the main square and the old town are all within about 10 to 15 min on foot.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The compact centre, the stations and the old town are all within a short walk.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Moderate

The centre is flat and there is a bike-share system.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?**: No, not for a city stay. Public transport and walking cover the centre, and trains reach the main day-trip towns. A car helps only for villages and war memorials in the countryside.
- **Parking**: Street parking is paid in the centre. Underground car parks are easier but cost more. Cheaper park-and-ride car parks are at the ends of some metro and tram lines.
- **Restrictions**: The main square and parts of the old town are limited to pedestrians or have very restricted traffic.

Food & drink

Lille cooking is Flemish and hearty. Look for *carbonnade flamande* (beef stewed in beer), *moules-frites*, and *welsh* (toast with ham, cheese and beer sauce, served with fries). *Potjevleesch* is a cold meat terrine, and strong *maroilles* cheese is a local favourite. Vanilla waffles and *merveilleux* meringue cakes are the sweet specialties.

Traditional taverns called *estaminets* serve these dishes. The streets of Vieux Lille, such as rue de la Monnaie and rue de Gand, have many of them. For a cheaper lunch, look around the Wazemmes market. The sweet shop Maison Méert has been open since the 18th century, and it is known for its handmade vanilla waffles.

What to eat & drink

BREAKFAST

Croissant
Buttery, flaky laminated pastry and a classic French breakfast staple.

LUNCH

Ratatouille
A Provençal stewed vegetable dish of eggplant, zucchini, peppers, and tomatoes.

DINNER

Coq au Vin
Chicken braised slowly in red wine with mushrooms, onions, and lardons.

Beef Bourguignon · Bœuf Bourguignon
Beef stewed in red Burgundy wine with carrots, onions, and mushrooms.

Escargot · Escargots de Bourgogne
Snails cooked in garlic and parsley butter, a classic starter.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Baguette
Long, crusty white bread loaf bought fresh daily from the local boulangerie.

Cheese · Fromage
France produces hundreds of cheese varieties, often served as a course before dessert.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Crepes · Crêpes
Thin pancakes served sweet with sugar or jam, or savory as galettes.

Macarons
Delicate almond meringue sandwich cookies in a range of flavors and colors.

DRINKS

Wine · Vin
France's wine regions, including Bordeaux, Burgundy, and Champagne, are among the world's most renowned.

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Safety & health

Lille is generally safe for visitors. The main risk is petty theft.

- Pickpockets work around Lille-Flandres station, in crowded trams and metro cars, and at big events such as the Braderie. Keep bags closed and phones out of back pockets.
- Emergency number: 112.

History

Lille was part of the Counts of Flanders' lands, and later of the Dukes of Burgundy. The remains of their 15th-century palace stand beside Place Rihour. In the 17th century the city was under Spanish rule. *Louis XIV* took it in 1667, and it became French in 1668. He ordered *Vauban* to build the fortress in Parc de la Citadelle, and the Flemish Baroque style of La Vieille Bourse comes from this period.

In 1792, Austrian forces besieged the city for several days but failed to take it. The 19th century brought textile mills and fast growth. In World War I, German troops occupied Lille from October 1914 until October 1918. *Charles de Gaulle* was born in 1890 in the house now called Maison natale de Charles de Gaulle.

The modern city dates from the 1990s. The Channel Tunnel and the Eurostar arrived in 1994, and the new Euralille district grew around Gare Lille Europe. Lille was a European Capital of Culture in 2004. The town hall belfry, Beffroi, was finished in 1932.

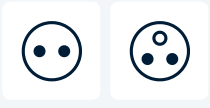
Country facts

Quick practical facts for France at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY



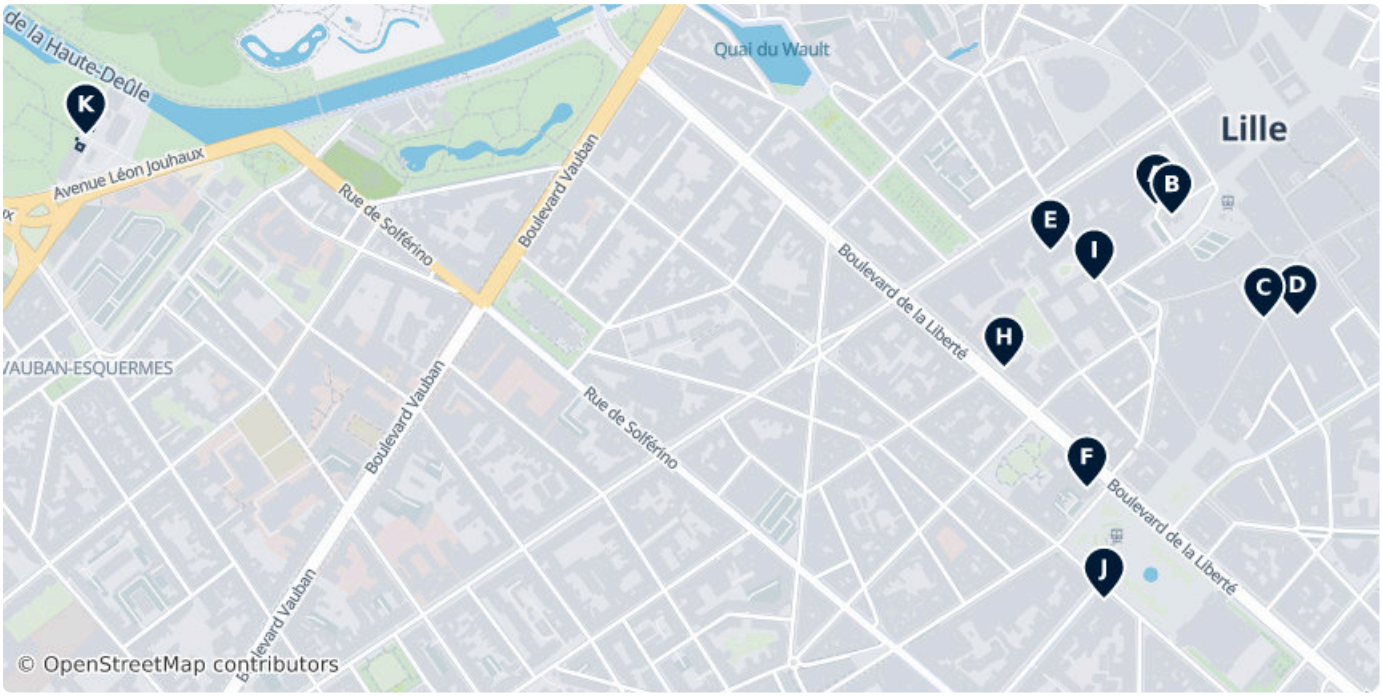
Type C / Type E
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
French

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Lille's Unmissable Treasures

Lille's historic center showcases a blend of Flemish and French architecture. This collection features the 15th-century Palais Rihour, a remnant of the Burgundian court, and the Baroque Saint-Étienne Church. The selection highlights the city's evolution through the 19th-century Beaux-Arts Préfecture and the historic fortifications at Porte de Dunkerque. Visitors can also explore the bustling Rue de Béthune shopping district and significant heritage sites like the former Jesuit college, now the Scrive military hospital, which reflects the city's rich institutional history.





A Rihour Square

One of the busiest place in Lille. This vibrant square lined with beautiful buildings and lively cafés is a truly fun place to be.

46 Place Rihour, Lille 59800, France (50.63565, 3.06164)



B Palais Rihour

Late Gothic residence built in 1453 for the Dukes of Burgundy. The remaining wing features a chapel and guardroom, now housing the local tourism office.

48 Place Rihour, Lille 59800, France (50.63553, 3.06196)

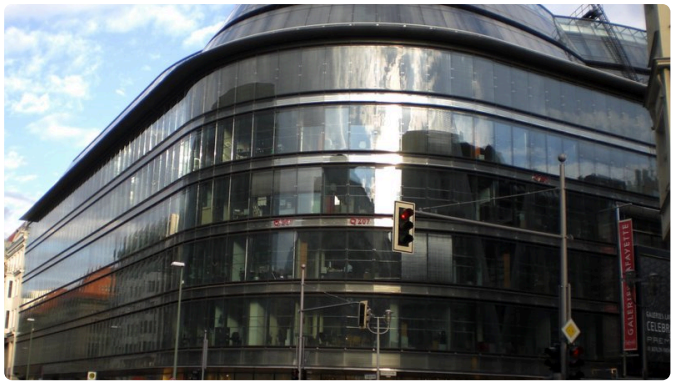
Mo–Su	09:30–18:00, 10:00–16:30



C Rue de Béthune

The main shopping street of Lille. It features fashion stores, souvenirs shops and lots of opportunities to window shop.

Rue de Béthune, 59800 Lille, France (50.63427, 3.06372)

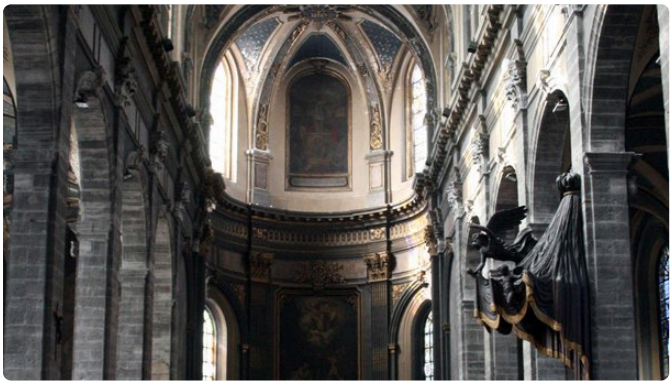


D Galeries Lafayette Lille

The Galeries Lafayette is an upmarket French department store chain, the biggest in Europe.

25-31 Rue de Béthune, 59000 Lille, France (50.63430, 3.06437)

galerieslafayette.com/magasin-lille/, +33 3 20 14 76 50

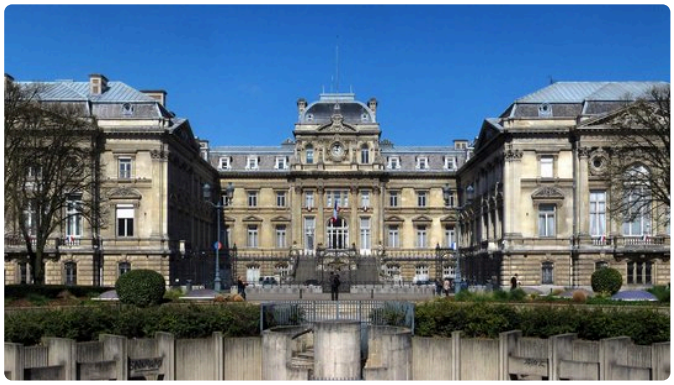


E Saint-Étienne Church

The Church of Saint-Étienne, Lille is a Roman Catholic church located on the rue de l'Hôpital Militaire in Lille, France.

47 Rue de l'Hôpital Militaire, 59800 Lille, France (50.63509, 3.05962)

+33 3 20 54 60 31



F Préfecture de Région

Monumental 19th-century administrative building designed in the Beaux-Arts style. It serves as the headquarters for the Hauts-de-France regional government.

90 Boulevard de la Liberté, Lille 59800, France (50.63220, 3.06033)

G Porte de Dunkerque

Historic city gate constructed in the 1860s. It formed part of the city's defensive fortifications during its 19th-century expansion.

(Unnamed Road), Lille 59800, France (50.63650, 3.04108)

H Hôtel Delbecque

19th-century private mansion and heritage site showcasing traditional local architecture.

105 Boulevard de la Liberté, Lille 59800, France (50.63367, 3.05873)

I Hôpital militaire Scrive, ancien collège des Jésuites

Former 17th-century Jesuit college converted into a military hospital in 1781. The complex features classic brick and stone construction typical of the period.

43 Rue de l'Hôpital Militaire, Lille 59800, France (50.63473, 3.06047)



J Hôtel des Postes

Grand late 19th-century building originally constructed as the city's central post office, featuring a prominent stone facade.

1 Rue d'Inkermann, Lille 59000, France (50.63085, 3.06065)

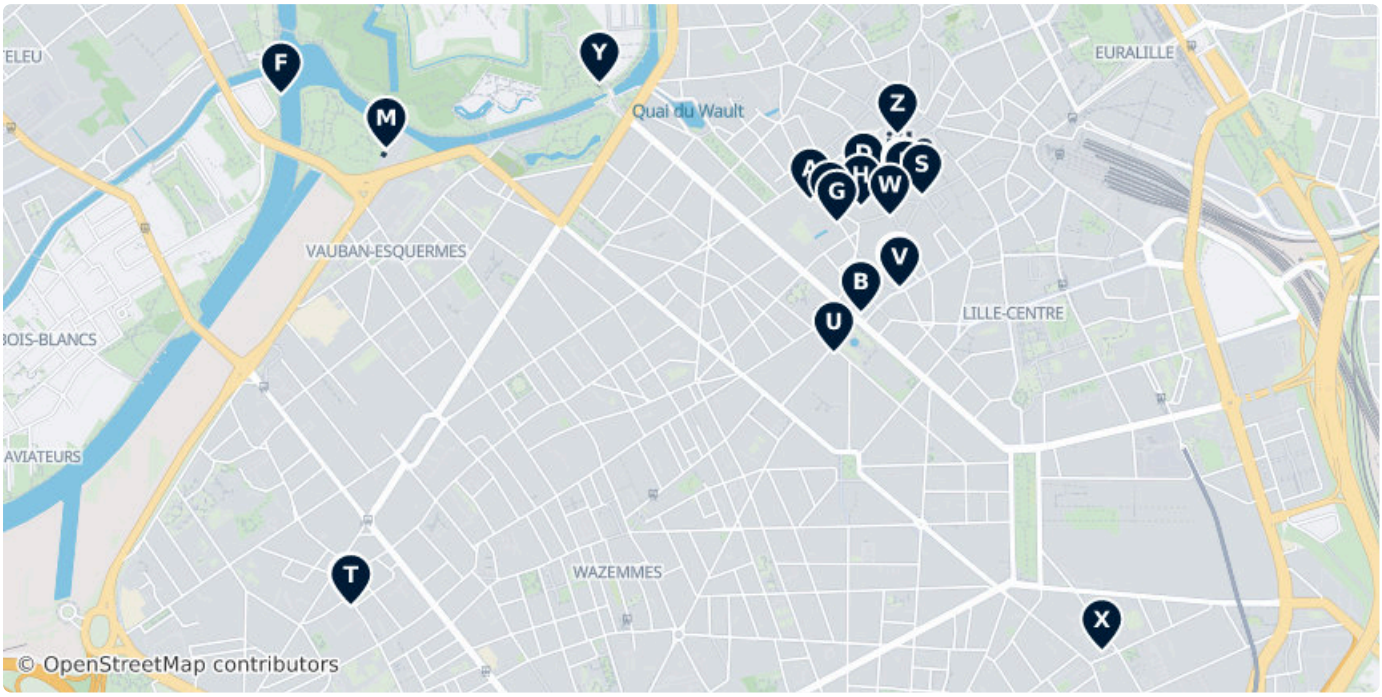
K Porte de Dunkerque

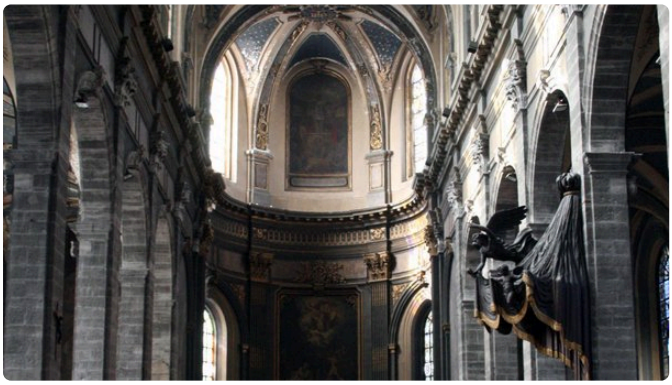
19th-century city gate that served as a key entry point through Lille's historic defensive walls.

(50.63650, 3.04108)

Lille's Heritage Trail

Lille's architectural and historical evolution is captured through this collection of landmarks. The trail features the 15th-century Palais Rihour, one of the city's few remaining examples of Flamboyant Gothic style, alongside the 17th-century Porte de Dunkerque. It highlights diverse heritage sites, including the military hospital Scrive—formerly a Jesuit college—and significant memorials such as the Colonne de la Déesse and the Mémorial aux victimes des 18 ponts, which commemorate the city's wartime resilience.





A Saint-Étienne Church

The Church of Saint-Étienne, Lille is a Roman Catholic church located on the rue de l'Hôpital Militaire in Lille, France.

47 Rue de l'Hôpital Militaire, 59800 Lille, France (50.63509, 3.05962)

+33 3 20 54 60 31



B Statue de Faidherbe

An 1896 equestrian bronze statue by Antonin Mercié honoring General Louis Faidherbe, a Lille native and commander during the Franco-Prussian War.

8 Place Richebé, Lille 59800, France (50.63196, 3.06184)



C Statue de Faidherbe

Memorial statue dedicated to the military career and regional legacy of General Louis Faidherbe.

8 Place Richebé, Lille 59800, France (50.63197, 3.06185)



D Palais Rihour

Built in the 15th century by the Dukes of Burgundy, this palace is a rare example of Flamboyant Gothic architecture and currently houses the city's tourism office.

48 Place Rihour, Lille 59800, France (50.63553, 3.06196)

Mo–Su 09:30–18:00, 10:00–16:30

E Porte de Dunkerque

A 19th-century city gate that served as part of Lille's defensive fortifications near the Deûle river.

(Unnamed Road), Lille 59800, France (50.63650, 3.04108)

F La Rolande

A historic vessel representing the regional maritime and industrial heritage of the Deûle waterway.

3 Rue Carolus, Lille 59000, France (50.63802, 3.03648)

G Immeuble

Registered historic building showcasing traditional Lille urban architecture.

41 Rue de l'Hôpital Militaire, Lille 59800, France (50.63446, 3.06079)

H Maison

A preserved historic house contributing to the city's architectural heritage.

9 Rue du Palais Rihour, Lille 59800, France (50.63491, 3.06184)

I Maisons

Group of historic houses representing regional architectural styles.

Place du Vieux Marché aux Chevaux, 59800 Lille, France (50.63271, 3.06346)

J Maison

Heritage-listed residence located in the southern part of the city.

5 Place Genevières, Lille 59000, France (50.62387, 3.03947)

K Maisons

Series of historic buildings on rue de l'Hôpital Militaire.

(50.63273, 3.06343)

L Immeubles

Historic apartment buildings noted for their preserved facades.

(50.63531, 3.06376)

M Porte de Dunkerque

Part of the city's former defensive walls and gate fortifications.

(50.63650, 3.04108)

N Maisons

Group of heritage-listed residential buildings.

(50.63270, 3.06348)

O Maisons

Historic residential structures reflecting 18th and 19th-century Lille architecture.

17 Place du Vieux Marché aux Chevaux, Lille 59800, France (50.63268, 3.06351)

P Hôpital militaire Scrive, ancien collège des Jésuites

Originally a 17th-century Jesuit college, this complex was converted into a military hospital in the 18th century.

43 Rue de l'Hôpital Militaire, Lille 59800, France (50.63473, 3.06047)

Q Immeubles

Heritage-listed buildings located in the historic city center.

(50.63534, 3.06372)

R Immeubles

Historic urban structures recognized for their regional architectural significance.

(50.63538, 3.06366)

S Immeuble

Traditional building noted for its historic facade.

38 Rue Neuve, Lille 59800, France (50.63522, 3.06450)

T Maison

Registered historic house in the Vauban-Esquermes district.

5 Place Geneviéres, Lille 59000, France (50.62384, 3.03954)



U Hôtel des Postes

A grand former post office building exhibiting early 20th-century civic architecture.

1 Rue d'Inkermann, Lille 59000, France (50.63085, 3.06065)

V Maisons

Historic residential heritage sites.

17 Place du Vieux Marché aux Chevaux, Lille 59800, France (50.63265, 3.06353)

W Maison

Heritage-listed house in the city center.

13 Rue des Fosses, Lille 59800, France
(50.63465, 3.06310)



X Mémorial aux victimes des 18 ponts

Memorial dedicated to the victims of the 1916 explosion of a German ammunition depot in the Moulins district.

59 Rue de Maubeuge, Lille 59000, France
(50.62259, 3.07237)

Y Au pigeon voyageur

War memorial honoring the messenger pigeons used during World War I and their handlers.

1 Avenue Mathias Delobel, Lille 59800, France
(50.63832, 3.05041)



Z Column of the Goddess

Monument in the Grand Place commemorating the 1792 siege of Lille by the Austrian army.

17 Place du Général de Gaulle, Lille 59800, France
(50.63690, 3.06344)

Lille's Cultural Hubs

Lille’s cultural landscape is defined by its "Maisons Folie"—former industrial sites like breweries and textile mills transformed into multidisciplinary art centers during its tenure as the 2004 European Capital of Culture. This selection includes specialized venues ranging from the Flow, dedicated to urban arts, to the Le P'tit Jacques puppet theater. Visitors can explore contemporary photography in the Fives district, independent cinema at L'Univers, and national circus arts at Le Prato, reflecting the city’s industrial heritage repurposed for modern creativity.



A Maison Folie Moulins

Housed in a former 19th-century brewery, this cultural center features exhibition spaces, artist studios, and a performance hall centered around a courtyard.

(50.62300, 3.06803)

maisonsfolie.lille.fr/maison-folie-mouli... , +33 3 20 95 08 82



B Zenith Arena

An indoor arena containing auditoriums, meetings rooms and a banquet hall. Visit to see sporting events, theatrical shows and concerts.

Boulevard des Cités Unies 1 (50.63260, 3.07843)

zenithdelille.com, +33 3 20 14 15 16



C Maison folie de Wazemmes

The Maison Folie Wazemmes is a cultural facility of the City of Lille, opened on the occasion of the Lille 2004 event, European Capital of...

Rue d'Austerlitz, 59900 Lille, France (50.62446, 3.04812)

Mo–Su 14:00–19:00

maisonsfolie.lille.fr, +33 3 20 78 20 23



D La Malterie

An artist-run space located in a former brewery malthouse, providing studios for visual artists and musicians alongside a program of exhibitions and concerts.

(50.61996, 3.05391)

lamalterie.com

E Le Cirque du Bout du Monde

A center dedicated to circus arts, offering workshops and professional training in various disciplines, including acrobatics and juggling.

(50.61906, 3.06488)

lecirqueduboutdumonde.fr

F Casino Barrière Lille

Try your luck at the casino, see your favourite movie at the cinema, or just chill at the bar. This place offers all sorts of fun!

777 Passerelle Lille Flandres, 59777 Lille, France (50.63651, 3.07722)

lucienbarriere.com/fr/Casino/Lille/accu..., +33 3 28 14 45 00

G Le P'tit Jacques

A traditional open-air marionette theater located in the Parc Vauban, specializing in puppet shows for children since 1978.

Jardin Vauban, Lille (50.63666, 3.04805)

lepetitjacques.fr, +33 3 20 42 09 95

H L'Univers

An independent, associative cinema that prioritizes documentary films, short films, and experimental works often followed by community discussions.

16 Rue Georges Danton, Lille 59000, France (50.62367, 3.07438)

lunivers.org, +33 3 20 52 73 48

I Goethe Institut

The German cultural center in Lille, facilitating language courses and hosting German-themed exhibitions, film screenings, and literary events.

(50.62662, 3.04276)

goethe.de/lille

J Le Grand Bleu

A national theater center specifically dedicated to performances for children, teenagers, and families, featuring contemporary plays and dance.

Avenue Marx Dormoy 36, 59000 Lille (50.63573, 3.03371)

Tu	14:00–18:00
We	10:00–19:00
Th–Fr	14:00–18:00

legrandbleu.com, +33 3 20 09 88 44

K WAAO - Centre d'Architecture et d'Urbanisme

Located at the Bazaar St-So, this center promotes architectural culture and urban planning through exhibitions, workshops, and educational walks.

Rue Camille Guérin 292, 59000 Lille (50.62676, 3.07564)

We–Fr	15:00–19:00
Sa–Su	14:00–18:00

mav-npdc.com, +33 3 20 14 61 15

L La Boite à rire

An intimate café-theater venue specializing in comedy shows, stand-up, and lighthearted theatrical productions.

252 Rue Léon Gambetta, Lille 59800, France (50.62837, 3.05173)

laboitearirelille.fr, +33 7 77 88 29 21

M L'Espace du dedans

A contemporary art gallery and bookshop that focuses on the intersection of visual arts and literature, featuring limited edition artist books.

(50.64185, 3.06590)

espacedudedans.com, +33 3 20 14 38 89

N Le Prato

A National Circus Arts Center (Pôle National Cirque) that hosts contemporary circus performances, cabaret, and multidisciplinary theater in a former industrial building.

6 Allée de la Filature, Lille 59000, France (50.61918, 3.07105)

Mo	14:00–18:00
Tu–Fr	10:00–12:30, 14:00–18:00

O L'hybride

A multidisciplinary venue featuring a screening room for short films, digital arts exhibitions, and a bar area for cultural gatherings.

(50.62583, 3.06600)

lhybride.org

P L'Antre 2

A performance space managed by the University of Lille, hosting student theater projects, professional residencies, and diverse cultural events.

(50.63104, 3.07552)

Q Maison de la Photographie

Situated in a former factory in the Fives neighborhood, this 600-square-meter space hosts temporary photography exhibitions and workshops.

(50.63188, 3.08507)

R Maison Folie De Lille Moulins

A multidisciplinary cultural site established in a former 19th-century brewery as part of the Lille 2004 European Capital of Culture project.

(50.62306, 3.06784)

We–Th	14:00–18:00
Fr–Sa	14:00–20:00
Su	14:00–18:00

maisonsfolie.lille.fr/presentation/mais... , +33 3 20 95 08 82

S Flow-Centre Eurorégional Des Cultures Urbaines

A dedicated center for urban cultures, featuring a recording studio, a rooftop for street art, and spaces for hip-hop dance and rap performances.

(50.62257, 3.06762)

Mo–Th	14:00–20:00
Sa–Su	14:00–18:00

flow.lille.fr, +33 3 62 14 59 52

T Maison Folie Le Colysée

Located in Lambersart along the Deûle canal, this contemporary building hosts art exhibitions and cultural events within its distinctive architectural frame.

Avenue du Colysée, 59130 Lambersart (50.63919, 3.03529)

We–Sa	13:00–18:00
Su	13:00–19:00

lambersart.fr/le-colysee, +33 3 20 00 60 06

DATA SOURCES

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