Welcome to South Limburg

- The region
- Activities
- Family and children
- Wellness and health
- Slow Down and Spirituality
- Culture and events
- Accommodation and catering
- Highlights and Service
The southernmost region of The Netherlands! Rolling hills, lush meadows and picturesque villages. This is how Zuid-Limburg will welcome you, true to the motto of: Relax and enjoy life!

Great variety in a small space
The region of South Limburg, in the east, it borders on Germany in the south and west on Belgium. As the center of this border triangle 'Netherlands - Germany - Belgium', South Limburg boasts a 'limitless' variety in a small space.

Welcome to the region of South Limburg, Zuid-Limburg
South Limburg is the southernmost part of the province of Limburg, which also includes the regions of North Limburg (Noord-Limburg) and Central Limburg (Midden-Limburg).

From the easternmost point, the city of Heerlen, to the westernmost point, the city of Maastricht, the distance is just about 24 kilometers! The north and south are about 40 km apart. South Limburg is a tourist area, truly deserving of the ‘small is beautiful’ motto.
A small area is enough to allow visitors like you to become convinced by the delights of the South Limburg region with its large selection of attractive offers for you and your companions. And there is something for every traveler: Whether you are young or old, whether you are interested in sports or recreational activities. We would like to invite you to relax and unwind, to get active and to explore! Just as you like it best.

Be active, relax, set out to discover new realms

South Limburg is famous for its numerous bicycle tracks and hiking trails and its traditional culinary delights, such as wine and cheese. And how about, for example, a hot air balloon ride, a contemporary art event or camping out in the middle of a meadow in full bloom? The possibilities are endless. Take your time, discover something new and enjoy the simple and pleasant Dutch way of life. Plan for your next getaway in South Limburg now.

South Limburg – A delight for all seasons

In addition to discovering the many ways that South Limburg will delight you outdoors, there is also a variety of bad-weather offerings - you will not be bored here! Instead of a mountain bike tour through the Heuvelland, you can, for example, take a subterranean mountain bike tour through the marlstone caves of Valkenburg*.

And just in case that the weather god decides to be not quite as well inclined towards you, then you need not fear that the entire trip will end up a disappointment. Go and explore the Discovery Center Continium* in Kerkrade or pay a visit to the subtropical water landscape of Mosaqua in Gulpen*. Take a trip through history and hop on the steam railway line Miljoenenlijn* that will take you from Simpelveld to Valkenburg. Or give your body a treat and relax in 32 degree Celsius thermal water in the generous spa facilities of Born or Valkenburg. Whoever prefers to be athletically active will meet their match in the largest indoor ski slope in all of Europe, the SnowWorld* in Landgraaf. And this is only a short overview of the many options that the region offers on any rainy day!

Take a discovery trip

On the following pages, we are going to present the various parts of South Limburg with their typical regional characteristics and individual offers. You will also discover useful information and helpful tips on the highlights, accommodation and events of and in the region. In the event that you need some information on location to help you out with your questions, then why don’t you drop by and visit us at one of our five Limburg shops or stop over at one of our many information points in the region. The regional tourism association (VVV Zuid-Limburg) was founded in 1885 and is the oldest tourist office in the Netherlands. Tourism has a long tradition here, as you can see. Have fun exploring South Limburg!
South Limburg Geography

To the north, in the Grensmaasvallei, the region borders on the Maasplassen recreational area. It is well known as a popular recreational area, especially for water sports. It covers about 3000 hectares and is considered to be the largest inland water-sports area of the Netherlands.

To the south, South Limburg borders on the foothills of the Ardennes / High Fens and Eifel. This lends the region its character, which is completely untypical for the Netherlands: wide and gently rolling hills, which is in stark contrast to the otherwise thoroughly flat Dutch landscape!

In the far south, we can find the highest point in the Netherlands: the Vaalserberg (322.5 m). Therefore, this region is also affectionately called ‘little Dutch-Switzerland’.

Something that is also characteristic of the region is an area known as marl country. The yellow marl, a soft, 70 to 80 million year old type of sandstone that is also an important ingredient for cement, rises directly to the surface here in South Limburg. The marlstone caves resulting from the degradation are particularly well known in and around Valkenburg. For example, it is possible to explore the caves by bicycle, mountain bike or by going on a guided tour. A very special tip for you: At Christmas time, the marlstone caves serve as the setting for Christmas markets - a truly underground delight!

In addition, the hilly region is valued for its numerous cycling and hiking routes, such as the marlstone country track that is very popular with cycling enthusiasts.

South Limburg, to the east, was heavily influenced by the mining of black coal. In and around Heerlen and Kerkrade, however, only a few remains still hint at the now bygone mining days.

Did you know ...

… that South Limburg is the most popular domestic destination with the Dutchmen?
of the past. Today, the Dutch Mining Museum* in Heerlen, which has been set up in one of the old winding towers, brings back memories of this part of history. In the west of South Limburg, there is the dynamic city of Maastricht, the capital of the province of Limburg, and the most important center of the region. From north to south, the Meuse River flows through the city and offers a variety of activities and cultural opportunities to visitors, such as kayak and canoe tours or numerous boat trips, where you can explore the city from a completely different perspective. In addition to the Rhine and Scheldt rivers, the river Meuse, incidentally, is one of the major rivers of the Netherlands.

Changing influences have shaped the history of South Limburg

South Limburg has been inhabited for many centuries; in Savelsbos near Eijsden, even prehistoric flint mines can still be found today; and the Romans also left their traces here and built a bathhouse, for example, in Heerlen, which is part of the Thermenmuseum* (spa museum) today. Evidence of the subsequent settlements is provided by the historic towns, with churches, timbered houses and water mills and a variety of palaces, castles and country houses throughout the countryside. The ancient monastery town of Sittard (1243) for example, is famous for its magnificent churches.

The ‘clay town’ of Valkenburg aan de Geul, the history of which dates back to the 11th century, is dominated by a defiant castle - one of the many castles in this region. In contrast, Kasteel Hoensbroek* gives the impression as though the lord of the castle had just left in a hurry.

At the beginning of the 19th Century, Limburg was divided among the various nations. It was only in 1839 that the region was divided up into a Dutch and a Belgian province. The history of Limburg has been significantly affected by changing Dutch, German and French influences and is therefore a completely original-European region, not only since the Maastricht Treaty. The various influences are still reflected by the regional characteristics, such as the Limburg cuisine.

The provincial capital of Maastricht even impresses, beyond that, with museums and cultural treasures of the first order but also, of course, with its cozy street cafes and shops.

The economy of the region - then and now

Already in the middle of the sixties, coal mining ceased in the east of South Limburg. The following industries changed over to new energy resources, for example the company DSM, Dutch State Mines, which changed over from the coal chemical to petro-chemical field. Moreover, new jobs were created in the service industry and educational sector, for example, as a result of moving the national statistical offices to Heerlen or the establishment of the university in Maastricht. In addition to the university, which attracts many international students these days, Maastricht offers a suitable location to a big number of international and in particular also European research facilities.

Today, another important branch of industry of South Limburg is the tourism sector and service industry. This shows, above all, in the big number of tourist operations like hotels, restaurants, camping sites, amusement parks and many other attractions.

Above all, an essential contribution to the structural change of South Limburg is being made by the EUREGIO MEUSE-RHINE, a cooperation association in the border region of the countries of Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands that operates across the borders.

Did you know ...

... that Holland is the name of a former province which was divided into North and South Holland and does not stand for the entire Netherlands, as it is often used in the Anglophone world?

* See address list / map on the last pages
South Limburg in Detail

The region can be roughly divided up into five different areas:

- Valkenburg aan de Geul (1)
- Parkstad Limburg (2)
- Hill country (3)
- Grensmaalvallei (4)
- Maastricht (5)

Valkenburg aan de Geul

Valkenburg aan de Geul has always been a tourist center of attraction due to its fascinating underground cave world, the *Mergelgrotten*. In the year 1853, the station of this small town, which by the way is the oldest still active station of the Netherlands, was opened and, therefore, a fast connection with Maastricht and Aix-la-Chapelle was created. The high society then discovered the lovely Valkenburg countryside, using the so-called *Miljoenenlijn* (steam railway). In 1885, the first tourism office of the Netherlands opened in Valkenburg. Therefore, the tourism association VVV Zuid-Limburg is the oldest tourism association of the Netherlands, with its 126 years of age, and probably also the oldest in Europe. You get an impressive view over this little picturesque small town which invites you to go on discovery tour, when looking at it from above, standing before the romantic ruins of a castle. Valkenburg has an old town full of corners in which many street cafés and bars line up side by side. There are considerably more cafés than shops; this promises you many sociable hours. The small town offers lots of overnight accommodation, starting with the simple Bed & Breakfast, on to private rooms and up to the luxury hotel! And this at every corner, within the Valkenburg city limits! In addition, Valkenburg is a true event region. Throughout the year, events are taking place here almost every weekend. There is something for everybody! The supply in and around Valkenburg is great - you can enjoy your stay without having to travel around too much.

Did you know ...

... that the *Miljoenenlijn* (steam railway) got its name on account of the costs, exorbitant at that time, of up to one million guilders per length of track kilometer?

For instance, you have a choice of:

- The theme park De Valkenier*
- Fairy tale park Sprookjesbos*
- Ropeways and sled track*
- Underground tunnels and museums, as well as the 100 year old reconstruction of the Roman - Catacombs in the marl caves*
- Valkenburg castle ruins*
- 32°C thermal water in the generous Wellness centers in the Thermae 2000*
- The modern Holland Casino*
- Two under and above-ground cycling - adventure-tours in the marl caves*
- Coal mine*
- Open-Air-Theater*
- Castle grounds Oud-Valkenburg*

as well as a great selection of gourmet restaurants, a versatile cultural supply, old castles, green parks and impressive nature landscapes!

Parkstad Limburg

The tourist destination with the strongest growth rates in the Netherlands and an area rich in contrasts and extremes is what you will find in the dynamic region of Parkstad Limburg, also called Orlando on the Maas. Parkstad Limburg has many unique museums and special monuments, is another piece of the Dutch mining history and is host to numerous cultural and sporting events every year. Would you like to engage in physical activities and explore the region on foot or by bicycle? The recreational area of Brunssummerheide, in that case, offers you numerous possibilities for this!
In 2009, the Park Gravenrode (in Landgraaf and Kerkrade) in Parkstad Limburg got the European EDEN Award (European Destination of Excellence). The park got this Award for a structural change performed successfully. For, within twelve years, this region characterized by mining turned into a blossoming landscape, the attractions of which are in harmony with nature. Parkstad Limburg therefore became a model project for the European structural change - having undergone a transformation from ‘black’ to ‘green’.

There are many attractions to be found in Parkstad Limburg, among them:
- Zoo GaiaPark* in Kerkrade
- Family Theme Park Mondo Verde*, which is also the largest new garden landscape in the Netherlands
- The largest indoor ski track of Europe, SnowWorld* in Landgraaf
- Experience and activity museum Discovery Center Continium* in Kerkrade
- Miljoenenlijn* steam railway in Simpelveld
- Themermuseum*, spa museum with completely restored remnants of a Roman spa
- Observatory eXplorion*
- Mini Haven Schutterspark*
- Neoliet Climbing Center*

as well as many great shopping opportunities as for example downtown Heerlen or the Woon-boulevard*, that you can find there too and that constitutes the biggest residential shoppingmall of the Netherlands or also the numerous comfortable bars for going out.

Did you know ...

… that Parkstad Limburg stands for the association of 8 municipalities, namely: Heerlen, Kerkrade, Landgraaf, Brunssum, Nuth, Simpelveld, Voerendaal and Onderbanken.

Event-castle Kasteel Hoensbrook*
Family Theme Park Kinderstad Heerlen*
Festival grounds Megaland* in Landgraaf

Hill country

The hill country (Heuvelland) comprises a northern and a southern part. In the northern hill country (Heuvelland Noord), you will find the foothills of the Ardennes, which lend the region its slightly hilly character. The landscape of the southern hill country (Heuvelland Zuid) is marked by nostalgic small villages and towns amongst lush green grazing pastures and gloriously colorful high stem orchards. The creeks of Geul and Gulp which have formed the landscape centuries ago, quietly make their way through the region these days. In addition, you also have the border triangle here, and the highest point of the Netherlands, the Vaalserberg (322.5 m). In 2005, the hill country got its title ‘5 star landscape’ and therefore is part of the most beautiful areas of the Netherlands. In addition, you will find some Natura 2000 nature reserves in the hill country, for example the Geultal (Geuldal). Here, you’ll have ideal surroundings for hiking and riding a bike.

Here, you will also find:
- Vinyards like in Epen or in ‘wine village’ Wahlwiller
- Breweries for Gulpener and Brand beer
- Climbing and adventure center Fun Valley* in Oost-Maarland

* See address list / map on the last pages

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Maastricht

Maastricht is the capital of the province of Limburg and one of the three oldest towns of the Netherlands. This beautiful town owes its name to the River Meuse which flows through the town and provides it with a special atmosphere. Maastricht offers its visitors a versatile program: the historical old town with its many shopping possibilities, museums, monuments, beer rooms that are very comfortable, restaurants, little ports, water sport facilities and much, much more! Most of it even in walking distance. Churches, treasure vaults and patrician houses are a testimony of the prosperity which the town has enjoyed over the centuries. The remains of the city walls and the underground fortress tell of a busy, war-scarred past at the intersection point of political influences. But Maastricht has to offer more than cultures of times bygone. On the contrary, art and culture are ubiquitous here. Parades and festivities adorn the town throughout the year. Numerous small street cafes, bars and restaurants characterize the town, as do the many famous sights such as Bonnelantten Museum, Helpoort, Chateau Neercanne, Bonbonnière, Sint Pietersberg Grotto, Rederij Stiphout, Bisschopsmolen and much more. Go and explore!

Grensmaasvallei

Grensmaasvallei, the most northern part of the region of South Limburg, lies where the Netherlands is narrowest and where the wide river meadow landscape of the River Maas has created a unique landscape. The area is suited very well for vast bicycle tours and for all possible water sports. Distributed across the region, little historical villages adorn the landscape and invite you to discover their history. Stroll through the regional-typical shops, visit one of the many galleries and take time out for a cup of coffee in one of many market squares, as for example the one located in the historical cloister town of Sittard.

Here you will also find:

- Breweries like the Alfa Brewery in Schinnen
- The Thermal Spa Born in Born-Sittard
- Recreational park Steinerbos in Stein
- Kasteel Limbricht, castle
- Kasteelpark Zoo Born
- Leisure and event center ‘All in Echt’

as well as a variety of very old churches and basilicas, museums and galleries, hot air balloon trips, terrific shopping opportunities and various comfortable restaurants in the many little villages of the region.

Subtropical spa and swimming pool facilities called Mosaqua in Gulpen
- Climbing hall ROCCA
- Glass blowers G. Cardinale in Vaals
- Labyrinth Border triangle, a maze high on the Vaalsberg
- Steam Railway Miljoenenlijn
- Golf course Het Rijk van Margraten

as well as several golf courses and outdoor carting tracks, various museums and galleries, a variety of shops selling regional products and numerous cozy restaurants.

* See address list / map on the last pages
Activities

Get active, experience nature, discover new things - Enjoy your life

Bicycle ride through the hill country (Heuvelland)? Or pampering yourself in a wellness oasis, just chilling?

Becoming acquainted with new people on one of the numerous events or preferring to meditate in peace, far away from everyday stress?

In South Limburg, you will find a wealth of offers on a small space - something to suit everyone! Whoever wishes to actively explore South Limburg, whether by bicycle or on foot, has a multitude of possibilities here.

Or how about trying out completely different variants, for example mini golf or regular golfing, checking out South Limburg from above in a glider or hot air balloon, riding a mountain-bike or even a horse, playing ninepins... or why don't you go ahead and drive a go-kart or quad, try your hand at inline skating, skiing, mountain climbing or abseilen. The choice is yours!

Would you prefer to chill out, so that body and mind can recover from stressful everyday life? The region offers many terrific possibilities here, too! The region of South Limburg has a variety of churches, castles, museums and art galleries and much more, just waiting for those who prefer to go on a cultural expedition.

Please also see:
- Family and children (page 22)
- Wellness and health (page 26)
- Slowing Down and Spirituality (page 30)
- Culture and events (page 32)
- Accommodation and catering (page 38)
Hiking and Cycling - Enjoying movement and nature

The region is known beyond its borders with travelers and cyclists, owing to South Limburg’s topography that is unique for the Netherlands. For our guests, we have created a comprehensive network in South Limburg of well signed and described hikes and cycle tours.

Hiking in South Limburg

The individual walks are between 2 and 20 kilometers long and lead through the most beautiful parts of the region. The labeling consists of small colored posts. There are special trail maps, available from the tourism association VVV Zuid-Limburg, containing useful information and interesting knowledge about South Limburg, which you can discover while hiking along. Trail maps are available at the branch offices of VVV Zuid-Limburg as well as in the Limburg stores*.

Subject hikes

There is much to tell about the unique plant and animal kingdom, the numerous monuments, the Limburg culture and many interesting inhabitants of Limburg. Therefore, we have developed a whole number of walks for you with stories about our region. We enjoy being at your service! The guides know the area very well and will include many beautiful places in the tours. Hiking events known beyond the borders, which are organized by different hiking clubs, are: ‘Wandelronde van South Limburg’ (May), ‘Night of Gulpen’ (June) and ‘Heuvelland 4 daagse’ (August). The guides and organizers speak excellent English. Also, various hiking tours are organized almost every Sunday by the regional hiking clubs, as for example by the LWB (Limburgse Wandelsport Bond).

In the Euregio

South Limburg borders only some kilometers on the rest of the Netherlands and is otherwise surrounded completely by Germany and Belgium. The newly created ‘green metropolis’ is a true cyclist paradise in the ‘Euregio Meuse-Rhine’, leading past marvelous, partly cross border, nature reserves and numerous cultural monuments. If you want to discover this gripping border region comfortably and fast, then you find all the necessary information by contacting us.

Cycling tours in South Limburg

South Limburg was the first region of the Netherlands where the so-called cycle route junction network was developed for hobby cyclists. Every cyclist can plan his individual route with the help of the corresponding numbers that are assigned to the route and then set off, relaxed, thanks to this ingenious system. You only need to follow the numbers selected. You can get the respective maps in all branch offices of the tourism association VVV Zuid-Limburg and online at www.southlimburg.com or simply order these by e-mail info@vvzuidlimburg.nl.

Cycling classics

South Limburg is nationally and internationally famous as a venue of numerous, unique cycling events, as for example the cycling world championships and the ‘Tour de France’. Moreover, the ‘Amstel Gold Race’ and ‘Limburg Mooiste’ take place here annually.

* See list / map on the last pages

Voerstreek

Hiking, exploring & enjoying
In 2012, the region of South Limburg will also be the venue of the Cycling World Cup once more. These ‘classics’ of cycling have been summarized in a map, so that you can cycle down these tracks yourself - at your own pace, of course. Maps are available at the branch offices of VVV Zuid-Limburg as well as in the Limburg stores*. 

Mountainbike-Routes through South Limburg

There is, of course, also a route network for mountainbiking available in South Limburg, which is comprehensive and well marked. The local mountain-bike organizations have marked out the best outdoor routes for you. Highlight for mountain-bike fans is a tour through the Mergelgrotten* in Valkenburg. Comprehensive information as well as maps are available at the branch offices of VVV Zuid-Limburg as well as in the Limburg stores*.

Alternatively active - Enjoying the change!

In search of adventure? South Limburg offers you a variety of possibilities for getting active, whether with or without thrills. What would it be like, for example, to see fascinating Heuvelland from inside a balloon high up in the air? Or would you rather scale the greatest heights yourself, anyway? Then the climbing park is the right place for you to be. For golf fans or those who still want to become fans, South Limburg has great offers, too: the Golf & Country club of Hoenshuis in Voerendaal and the golf course Het Rijk van Margraten*. For non-golfers, the so-called Boerengolf (pawn golf) is an alternative which guarantees you to have fun.

Also good to know: It is not a condition in the Netherlands to have to be a member of an association. This pleases, above all, the amateur golfers!

You love the challenge of great sporting events? You are then exactly at the right place at the triathlon in Stein which takes place every year for three days, and you are bound to enjoy this even if only watching from the roadside! The athletes can take their pick between licenses from one through three days. Meals, drinking and conversation are provided by the organizer! But that’s not all: Other great activities which the region can offer you are, for example, skiing in the ski hall Snow-World* in Landgraaf, Mountainbiking into the Mergelgrotten* of Valkenburg, swimming in the subtropical fun spa of Mosaqua* in Gulpen or you can venture into the Middle Ages in Kasteel Hoenbroek*, a true adventure castle. These are only some of many options. Come to South Limburg and experience an unforgettable adventure. Here, everything is possible! You can find further information on our Internet site www.southlimburg.com or directly on-site with us.

Did you know ... 

... that our website www.southlimburg.com allows you to download the cycle routes in the form of GPS data, for example for your GPS device?

* See address list / map on the last pages
A delight for the whole family
A quick arrival, a lot of exciting attractions on a small space and hosts fond of children will turn your family vacation in South Limburg into an unforgettable experience - and even so in the case of bad weather!

How about, for example, an exploratory tour of the Valkenburger marl grottos with a subsequent visit to an amusement park? Or you could investigate nature under a completely different aspect, to be more precise by visiting a barefooted park. You could explore the lovely hill country on a walk in the south of the region or hop on a bicycle and cycle along the Meuse to the south in the direction of Maastricht or in northern direction towards Roermond and Venlo. And if the weather is bad, numerous indoor attractions await you. Here, everybody will get their fill - boredom excluded!

Feel right at home - even better!
Whether it’s an apartment hotel, family boarding house, bungalow park, holiday apartment or camping site … South Limburg offers you a gigantic selection in overnight options: whether modern or traditional, there is something for every taste and purse.

In our Dutch accommodation list, you are bound to find something. The pamphlet is available in all Limburg stores*, on our website for download or order it at: info@vvzuidlimburg.nl

A day of fun and variety
Need a destination for an unforgettable day trip? The big selection of attractions in South Limburg guarantees for an unusual excursion with the whole family. How about, for example, a visit to the biggest ski hall of Europe, the SnowWorld® in Landgraaf? Or discover the gardens of the world in the amusement park.
In our Dutch accommodation list, you are bound to find something. The pamphlet is available in all Limburg stores*, on our website for download or order it at info@vvzuidlimburg.nl.

Our department of information and reservation will advise you with pleasure for the planning and execution of your school trip and compile an individual offer for you.

Further information as well as arrangements and prices can be found on our website www.southlimburg.com or inform yourself at the department of information and reservation at info@vvzuidlimburg.nl or phone 0031-43-6098500.

Also see:
► Highlights (page 44) and Service (page 50)

Mondo Verde*. Experience modern and animal-friendly husbandry in the zoo GaiaPark* in Kerkrade which was already chosen for the third time in a row as the best zoo of Benelux. The River Meuse caters to the water enthusiasts. Boat or canoe tour or a visit in to a beach swimming area, like the Fun Valley* - the options are varied.

In addition, the region offers numerous events which are suited very well for a day trip, as for example the knights show in Kasteel Hoensbroek* or the triathlon in Stein. If the weather isn’t on your side, there are numerous alternatives: the science museum Discovery Center Continium* in Kerkrade, the indoor fun fair Kinderstad Heerlen*, the climbing hall ROCCA* in Gulpen or the semitropical bath paradise Mosaqua* - to name but some.

Carefree school trips made to measure - We help with pleasure

Thanks to the large variety of offers and the short journey times, the region of South Limburg is ideally suited for a school trip. Discover the bone of contention of Europe with your students and experience history up very close and personal! Go on a trip into the past and explore the stories of dukes, counts and knights in one of the numerous castle and fortress grounds. In the open-air museum of Nonke Buusjke*, time seems to have stopped at the beginning of the last century. Marvel at the ancient machines and tools and turn history into an experience!

Accommodation abound! Whether it’s group accommodation, a bungalow park or camping site – South Limburg offers you a gigantic selection in overnight options.

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Also see:
► Highlights (page 44) and Service (page 50)
Wellness and Health - Enjoy the relaxation

You want a break from the stresses of everyday life? Just let your mind wander and be pampered?

Then you’ve come to the right place: South Limburg is becoming ever more popular as a spa getaway. After all, South Limburg is easily accessible and this is where you can enjoy the (extended) weekend in a wonderful manner, and marvel at the diversity of offers. See for yourself!

Let your mind wander and your body be pampered in one of the numerous wellness centers of South Limburg – from taking a dip in ‘40,000 year-old’ thermal water, or having a relaxing massage or dropping in at the sauna, up to a medicinal herbal treatment. The small town of Valkenburg aan de Geul is a special place when it comes to spa offers - it’s been an official resort of the Netherlands since 1987. Ever since 1987, when high above on the Cauberg, the source of the ‘40,000-year-young’ medical mineral water has been discovered, Valkenburg has been allowed to use the add-on ‘healing spa’ before its name.

In 1998, on the summit of the mountain Cauberg, immediately beside the ultramodern Holland Casino*, as a supplement to the spa complex Thermae 2000*, a health resort park was established that boasts vast gardens. There, you can let yourself float about calmly in the big heated pool and also try out quite different treatments - for example the Tuli sauna with its open wooden fire or the Rassul baths and, in doing so, keep enjoying the splendid panorama.

* See address list / map on the last pages
Generous relaxation zones and meditation rooms as well as a comprehensive offer of massages will round up your wellness experience. An absolute highlight for our guests is absolutely also the completely relaxed atmosphere, the inviting seat arrangements by open fireplaces and a four star hotel directly to the spa - you don’t even need to change clothes after the sauna anymore! And if you’re looking for a thrill at the end of a relaxing day, all you need to do is pay a visit next door - to the modern Holland Casino*.

But not only Valkenburg has a lot to offer in terms of wellness: Located in the heart of the border triangle in Vaals, with the 322.5 m the highest point in the Netherlands, you will find another castle hotel - the Bilderberg Kasteel Vaalsbroek. The 15th Century castle offers travelers a stylish setting for a perfect weekend. The adjoining spa & wellness center features an indoor pool, two saunas, a Jacuzzi and a large selection of massages and beauty treatments in two in-house beauty salons. The extensive offer is perfectly complemented by the restaurant ‘In de Oude Watermolen’.

Apart from these exceptional wellness centers, there are still a number of day spas and hotels in South Limburg, which will help you to relax and recover, with their beautifully designed saunas and a variety of massages.
Aad de Haas. More traditional churches are located, among others, in Heerlen (Sint Pancratiuskerk), Susteren (Amelberga-basiliek)* and Limbricht. In the Salviuskerk in Limbricht, you will find the oldest Roman wall paintings of the Netherlands. Sittard is a true Church City: Next to the Basilica ‘Our Lady of the Sacred Heart’ (Onze Lieve Vrouw van H. Hart), there are still some other remarkable churches, both Roman Catholic and Protestant.

Monasteries and Abbeys
Wittem, with its famous monastery and the monastery library, is the starting point for many a pilgrimage where to find inner reflection (guided tours also possible). This is also where we have another highlight: the annual Art Days of Wittem. There is room for reflection also in the Rolduc Abbey in Kerkrade, the largest and oldest abbey complex in the Netherlands. And let’s not forget the chapel of Father Karel in Munstergeleen. Father Karel was canonized on 3 June 2007 because of his healing hands. The chapel and his birthplace are open daily. You can light up a candle here for yourself or your loved ones. Who knows, maybe it will bring you luck.

Churches and Basilicas
Well-known churches in South Limburg include the Sint-Servaaskerk and the ‘Basilica of Our Lady’ (Onze Lieve Vrouwebasiliek) in Maastricht, which dates back to the 11th century and has a unique architecture. This also applies to the H. Gerlachuskerk in Houthem-St. Gerlach from 1725, with frescoes by the Baroque artist Johann Adam Schöpf, and the Holy Sacrament Basilica of Meerssen. Here you will find magnificent stained glass windows of the famous artist Charles Eyck from the 20th century. Contemporary art is available in other religious buildings, too. For example, in the Church of Wahlwillel, with the murals and Stations of the Cross by the artist Adam Schöpf, and the Holy Sacrament Basilica of Meerssen. Here you will find magnificent stained glass windows of the famous artist Charles Eyck from the 20th century.

Slow down and spirituality – Enjoy the silence
Life in the information age with its endless possibilities, with everyone being able to communicate at any time and any place, gives rise to the desire in many people’s minds to simply slow down, put on the brakes and get a grasp of the essentials again. What could be better suited for this than a region such as South Limburg with its rich religious heritage, its stunning nature and its inhabitants, whose casual, comfortable lifestyle is really contagious. Looking for peace and spirituality? Then you’ve come to the right place here in South Limburg! South Limburg offers a variety of churches, chapels, monasteries and basilicas. Almost all of them are of Roman Catholic origin, as well as the hundreds of crosses by the roadside, which are still plenty abound anywhere in the region. The Musica Sacra festival, held annually in Maastricht, is also to be especially recommended.

Did you know ...
... that the Netherlands has a southwest to northeast so-called ‘bible belt’ (Bijbelbelt), geographically separating the Protestant North from the Catholic South?
Culture and Events – Enjoy the extraordinary

South Limburg's versatility is also reflected by the large number of cultural offerings. South Limburg is bursting with culture and events! In the annually recurring events, South Limburg is transformed into a world full of music, theater, song and dance. There are famous events like Pinkpop or Kerststad Valkenburg.

There is something for everyone - from opera to pop festival and from art to dance festival. They all have one thing in common: a special program! And this is why they are worth a visit especially. Have we piqued your interest? Down below, we have listed some of these events for you:

Amstel Gold Race (April) and Limburgs Mooiste (June)

The Amstel Gold Race is a road cycling race that first took place in 1966, a classic one day race, which was named after the Dutch beer brand Amstel. It is part of the newly established UCI ProTour, a series of major cycling races throughout the year. Since 2005, the Amstel Gold Race has been finishing at the Cauberg in Valkenburg, a relatively short but very steep rise, which has also been the scene of the road cycling World Cup four times. On the day before the race, amateur racing cyclists are being given the opportunity to cycle the route.

For amateur race cyclists, we can also recommend Limburgs Mooiste - an amateur road race. This sporting event attracts thousands of cycling enthusiasts every year, after Pentecost, from all over Europe and is one of the largest events of its kind.
Pinkpop (May/June)
Pinkpop is the oldest and most popular open-air festival in Europe and takes place every year on the Pentecost weekend in Megaland*, the festival grounds of the Parkstad Limburg in the community of Landgraaf. The Pinkpop festival was first held in 1970. Many internationally-famous bands have already played there, such as the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Dire Straits, Metallica, Foo Fighters and Rage Against The Machine.

Cultura Nova Heerlen (August and September)
This annual festival in Parkstad Limburg is a fascinating summer event which is surprising and captivates those who attend it. Over the course of ten days, Cultura Nova boasts an extremely diverse program for adults and children alike, with theater, music, dance, art and film. Regional, national and international artists and ensembles come to perform there. During all the special artistic performances, you will frequently find yourself surprised by their often unexpected and highly unusual settings that have been picked from among the various Parkstad municipalities. The heart of the Cultura Nova festival is in downtown Heerlen, in and around the Schunck glass palace.

Gulpen Beer Festival (August)
South Limburg is proud of its beer culture! Each year in August, it’s all about beer in the small town of Gulpen. Whether young or old, the comprehensive program offers something for every taste, such as a children’s fun fair or the senior citizen luncheon.

Sint Rosa Festival Sittard (August)
A religious town festival, consisting of special Sunday church services and processions. As was customary in ancient times, the Sint Rosa Festival also boasts a nostalgic carnival, matching the former ‘rich Roman life’. This program is supplemented by cultural events for young and old alike.

Orlando Festival (July)
For more than 25 years, the Orlando Festival has been bringing together musicians of different levels. Young and adult amateurs get lessons of famous musicians and in the evening they listen in to the concerts given by their teachers. They make music together in the former abbey of Rolduc in Kerkrade until midnight.

Wittem Art Days (September)
Both for the inhabitants of the region and, increasingly, also for the tourists, the Art Days Wittem have become a major fixture in their calendar of events. Here, each year in September, a diverse program of chamber music, literature, visual art and readings is on offer. The Art Festival will be held in the

Did you know ...
... that the Pinkpop festival in Landgraaf attracts more than 60,000 visitors each year?

*See address list / map on the last pages
World Horticulture Expo Floriade 2012, Venlo (5 April to 7 October 2012)

The Floriade is a global spectacle, to take place again in 2012, where dozens of different countries will take part. You’re immersed in a crucible of other cultures and get to know different customs and rituals. But of course, attention will also be focused on our Limburg culture. Enjoy the good life in our cozy restaurants! We serve traditional dishes and beverages from the region and meals are prepared from seasonal products.

Musica Sacra Maastricht (September)
The Sacred Music Festival is dedicated to religious music. It is co-organized by the Catholic Broadcast Association KRO. For three days, there are concerts, film screenings and theater performances that deal with religious themes. The stages will be erected at different, unusual venues in the city center of Maastricht.

Kerststad (Christmas Town) Valkenburg (November/December)
Each year, from late November, the town of Valkenburg dives head-on into the Christmas spirit. The festive lighting of downtown and the beautifully decorated shops create a peaceful atmosphere. A special highlight, primarily, are the marl caves Valkenburg*. The Community Grotto* and Velvet Cave Grotto* serve as an extraordinary underground scenery for the Christmas markets. Another highlight is the Christmas parade with beautiful floats, dancers and entertainers. Detailed information about all events can be found on our website www.southlimburg.com.

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Staying in South Limburg – Enjoy the rest

South Limburg offers a wide variety of options on a small space and not just in terms of leisure activities. Even with the overnight accommodations, the region has plenty to offer - there is something suitable for everyone here!

Whether its hotels, from one to five stars, or spa resorts, castle hotels, design hotels, Bed & Breakfasts, cozy family-run guest houses, Apartments, or Apartment Hotels, you can take your pick!

Do you prefer self-catering and are looking for closeness to nature? How about using one of our many bungalow parks or campsites? A very special experience, too, is what we call farm camping.

Wellness-Hotels

Do you want to really chill and relax? South Limburg offers you a wide selection of spa hotels that have chilling as their middle name. For example, the Hotel Riche in Valkenburg or the Bilderberg Kasteel Vaalsbroek in Vaals. Spa resorts, in the truest sense of the word, is what you’ll find in the Thermae 2000* in Valkenburg and Spa Born* in Born-Sittard, with their complementary hotels.

Palace and Castle Hotels

A special highlight of the region is the large number of palace and castle hotels. The Château St. Gerlach in Valkenburg, for example, is a good place where to spend a few relaxing days when in South Limburg. The four-star hotel, in addition to the authentic and individually furnished hotel rooms, boasts a cozy bar, seminar rooms, a wellness area with swimming pool and two restaurants.

*See address list / map on the last pages
Camping

The Dutch are known beyond their borders for their passion for camping. Hence, South Limburg, too, offers a variety of campsites to discover. A special highlight is what we call farm camping, where you share a field with cows or horses. You can use each campsite as a point from where to set off with your family, directly to the extensive bicycle and hiking tours.

In the Netherlands it is not allowed to camp outside campsites. Of course, you are more than welcome at one of the campsites in our region.

All accommodation options, with contact details and useful information, can be found on our website www.southlimburg.com or in our Dutch Accommodation Directory ‘Overnachten’. Have fun exploring!

Further palace and castle hotels: the Brughof in Kerkrade, the Kasteel Terworm in Heerlen, the WInseler Hof, Landgraaf, the Bilderberg Kasteel Vaalsbroek or the Château Neercanne in Maastricht.

The Kruisheerenhotel in Maastricht is unique in Europe. The current hotel was built in the 15th Century as monastery and church of the Crusaders Order. The building stood empty for almost 20 years before, in 2000, the former monastery became a modern hotel. The result is an exquisite blend of historic exterior and modern interior life.

Something to be recommended is the restaurant of the Kruisheerenhotel, with its wine bar and an above ground, well-tempered wine cellar.

Bungalow parks

Do you and your family prefer to self-cater and are seeking closeness to humans and nature? Then, a bungalow park is just right for you! The holiday parks of Landal Kasteeldomein De Cauerg and Landal Hoog Vaals, among many others, will impress you with distinctive and stylish accommodation and offer plenty of space where to relax.

A relaxing hike, a mountain bike tour through the eventful Heuvelland, or a visit to a nearby health spa... all the options are yours to savor. And how about a delicious dinner and a subsequent visit to Holland Casino* - come on in, relax and completely forget about everyday life.
Savor South Limburg’s culinary side

South Limburg’s inhabitants are known for the fact that they like to enjoy all the good things of life. Therefore, they are often called ‘Burgundy folk’. Delicious meals, while relaxing, for example, in one of the many comfortable (and heated) outdoor cafes, are important to them! As a visitor to South Limburg, you are bound to notice this soon.

Feudal South Limburg

Anyone who thinks that Dutch cuisine consists only of ‘Friet met mayonaise’ has another thing coming, namely the fact that Limburg cuisine is influenced by Burgundy. The best known dishes are the Limburg asparagus and ‘Limburgerse Vlaai’, a fruit flap with custard filling. The beer of Limburg is under the influence of Belgian beer culture.

In addition, South Limburg has a surprising number of gourmet restaurants, whether it’s the underground grotto restaurant ‘La Caverne de Geulhem’, on one of the wineries, or in one of the chateaus.

Did you know …

… that in South Limburg wine is produced? South Limburg has a long winemaking tradition!

Some of the restaurants were even awarded the ‘Gault-Millau’, such as the restaurant ‘Hubert Haenen’ in Valkenburg or the ‘Kasteel Terworm’ in Heerlen. In addition, there are also restaurants with distinctions from the ‘Michelin Guide’, like the ‘Beluga’ and ‘Château Neercanne’ in Maas- tricht. Culinary pampering possibilities in South Limburg are infinite. For more information, drop by to visit us - online, by phone or e-mail and, of course, on site. Try us!

Pleasure, to experience first hand, up close and very personal

A visit to one of South Limburg’s craft production sites is a wonderful experience. Visit, taste, experience, and … do what you enjoy - anyone who’s not up for that? Whether it’s wine, beer, liquor, chocolate, apple juice or syrup - many companies in the region offer their guests the possibility of a guided tour where they will be initiated into the mysteries of the products and the company.

Discover the culinary traditions in this way and taste both the good and healthy life - for example, during a visit to a vineyard or a brewery!

Due to the hilly topography in South Limburg, even wine is grown here and we already have a long winemaking tradition. The climate and soil conditions allow resistant varieties such as Riesling, Müller-Thurgau and Pinot Gris to thrive. For wine enthusiasts, the region of South Limburg holds numerous opportunities in store where to explore the wine-growing tradition in more detail. Take a stroll through the vineyards or enjoy Limburgian delights at a wine tasting at local wineries!
South-Limburg: More than just a short break

A short break in South Limburg - you have to be an early riser for this because there is so much to do and experience. Decision-making may be difficult at times. Exciting marl caves* in Valkenburg and the labyrinth* on the Vaalserberg, magical theme parks, zoos like the Gaia-Park* in Kerkrade, where the animals can even partly run free, flowering gardens and spacious parks, stunning culture and monuments, water sports on the River Meuse and skiing in Europe’s largest indoor ski arena and, and, and ... Whether sunshine, rain or snow - there are countless ways to spend an unforgettable day full of variety. For in South Limburg, you will get bored ... never! Really, not a single minute!

Land of castles and fortresses

Of the hundreds of castles and palaces that have shaped its landscape in earlier times, South Limburg still boasts a lot of them that have been very carefully restored. Thus, it is possible for the ‘common people’ to visit those ‘noble fortresses’. It is worth a trip by car, by bicycle or on foot ... just come and explore the beautiful castles and palaces that adorn the landscape. Of course, the highlight of the day when visiting such a wonderful castle is a tasty lunch or dinner in one of the castle restaurants and as a conclusion of this experience, a night spent in a comfortable room in one of the numerous castle hotels.

*See address list / map on the last pages

Oud Valkenburg
Kasteel Schaloen
Museums, galleries and studios

History and culture are there in South Limburg in abundance. For centuries, the area had been a bone of contention of emperors, kings and bishops, evidence of which can be found today in the numerous museums and galleries. Visit South Limburg and discover art, history and culture, to experience up close and personal and to participate in. For details, please also see our website www.southlimburg.com

Marl caves and grottos

South Limburg is largely dominated by clay mining. Especially around the Valkenburg area, you can find the 250-kilometer-long underground passages that have made it famous. A guided tour through the caves is something that you should plan for on your next visit to South Limburg - for sure. The caves are also used to reconstruct a bygone age - a copy of a coal mine and a reconstruction of the Roman catacombs, for instance, can be found in the caves. But there are also many other activities to be enjoyed, such as underground Christmas markets, survival and cycling tours and mountain bike rides are all being held here, offering visitors the unique South Limburg experience.

Enjoy the special Christmas cheer in Valkenburg! In addition to the atmospheric lighting and decoration of the city, the marl caves* offer an absolute highlight: Underground Christmas markets! Many hundreds of thousands of visitors have enjoyed the very special atmosphere at this underground Christmas market in recent years. You will be impressed by the unusual surroundings and the beautiful decorations. The large range of Christmas gifts will especially impress lovers of the crafts trade.

Shopping

Pleasant leisurely stroll through the malls, window shopping … you name it, you can do it, and why don’t you pamper yourself with a cup of coffee and a wonderful piece of Limburger cake or a hearty lunch? You’ll be surprised at how different a shopping experience can be, far away from everyday stress. And all of that without long travel times! You might even discover one or the other unknown fashion label? South Limburg makes it possible.

Shopping paradises such as Maastricht, Sittard, Geleen, Heerlen, Kerkrade and Landgraaf provide excellent opportunities for shopping. But the cozy hearts of small towns like Beek, Brunssum, Valkenburg, Vaals, Meerssen and Valkenburg also offer everything that can inspire the shopping enthusiast. At Maastricht, you will also find many small galleries and designer shops, cute interior shops and nice cafes where to recover from ‘Funshoppen’.

Did you know …

… that the Christmas markets in the Valkenburg marl caves attract several thousand of visitors each year? We advise you to book early!
Euregio – Pleasure, European diversity style

When visiting South Limburg, you will discover a beautiful landscape, cultural history and a relaxed atmosphere. This southernmost part of Limburg is surrounded on all sides by foreign countries - Belgium and Germany, for instance, and then there are Luxembourg and France, only 100 kilometers away.

Besides the numerous attractions, sights and beautiful cultural and historical aspects of South Limburg, you can experience first hand the direct vicinity of the border. The cities of Aachen, Liege and Hasselt are just a stone’s throw away from each other and we would like to invite you to take a trip there.

Further information on this is available on our website www.southlimburg.com or also at www.gruenmetropole.eu.

Enjoy time out with your family

South Limburg will please everyone, even the children. Young and old alike can enjoy a stroll through one of the zoos, a visit to a splendid amusement park or a topical fairy tale forest. The selection is huge and turns a family trip into an extraordinary experience. How about bad weather? Not to worry, the kids can roam around for hours in the indoor playground. Zoos or global gardens? Hands-on museum or amusement park? Enchanted forest or maze? Your children will love the many options and want to come back straight away next weekend!

Or why not visit the malls, ‘Corio Center’ in Heerlen, or the ‘Op de Kamp’ in Landgraaf or ‘Makado’ in Beek. Here, you can stroll about in any weather, and then indulge yourself and your feet in one of the many sidewalk cafes.

Did you know that South Limburg boasts the largest residential shopping mall in Europe, the ‘Woonboulevard’? You’ll find everything for home and garden and in between, and then, to recover from your shopping experience, you can chill out taking a tasty lunch break. The surroundings of South Limburg, too, offer excellent shopping opportunities that will make the hearts of shopping fans beat faster, such as the ‘Maasmechelen Village Outlet Shopping’ right behind the Belgian border, or the ‘Designer Outlet’ in Roermond. Detailed information is available at www.southlimburg.com.
Pleasure to touch – the Limburg stores

In addition to our website and our brochures, the region also boasts six Limburg stores* – these are the information and gift shops of the tourism association VVV Zuid-Limburg*. In addition to information about the region, such as brochures and maps, the Limburg stores offer many products from different subject areas, such as relaxation and wellness, enjoyment, adventure and nature.

Natural experience!

Since time immemorial, the VVV Zuid-Limburg* has been a resource for tourism and recreation in general. This is where supply and demand meet. Everything you have ever wanted to know about South Limburg and surroundings, you will learn about in a Limburg store*. Information about romantic hotel packages, exciting attractions and well-signed hiking and cycling routes... all this is our daily business.

Products from the Region

Are you looking for an original gift from Limburg? Then choose one of our numerous products from the region! You can find out about our high-quality, regional products in our Limburg stores*. They offer Limburg delicacies, such as delicious jam, fruit juices, Limburg mustard, mushrooms, tea and coffee, wines, beers and liqueurs - a particularly extensive supply of delightful, genuine products.

Books, film and music

To get you properly in the mood, we have compiled a selection for you of the music, books and films of Limburg: our Limburger top Ten.

For active vacationers and explorers, we have outdoor kits, compasses and pedometers on offer.
Boundless Region

South Limburg is the heart of the Euregio. Belgium and Germany are only stone’s throw away. If you wish to discover the Euregio, you should ask for our cross-border tourist maps, books or gifts and the regional-specific products from the border region. A cross-border visit is possible also with one of our guides. South Limburg is a ‘boundless’ region.

Here you will find the Limburg stores:
- Valkenburg, Th. Dorrenplein 5
- Epen, Julianastraat 15
- Gulpen, Dorpsstraat 27
- Heerlen, Bongerd 19
- Sittard, Rosmolenstraat 2
- Vaals, Maastrichterlaan 73 a

South Limburg for Groups

South Limburg is the ideal starting point for an unforgettable group excursion or a worry-free adventure. Regardless of whether you are traveling with relatives, friends or the whole firm when paying a visit to South Limburg, everything is possible here:

Recharge your batteries, culinary delights, business conferences, activity vacation or company - tours.

The department of information and reservations of tourism association VVV Zuid-Limburg* offers a complete, tailor-made program and everything will be regulated for you up to the last detail, from accommodation and catering through activities, up to the meeting room. From A to Z for people big and small.

Our service and the perfect coordination are the guarantee for enjoyment without worrying...

We look forward to being at your service!

For more information or a non-binding offer, you can get in contact by telephone as well as via fax or e-mail with the VVV Zuid-Limburg*. Tell us what you want and our employees of the department of information and reservations will put together an individual program for you!

Small price and much to offer

If you book via VVV Zuid-Limburg*, you’ll not only get an individually put together program but also the best price. Our offer for groups is guaranteed and extended every season. You will find other interesting information, like attractive arrangements, at www.southlimburg.com.

South Limburg online

Of course, you can also find South Limburg on the World Wide Web. At www.southlimburg.com we will supply you with numerous information, event notes, tips and videos, yes, we even provide you with an interactive map of South Limburg with all its attractions. A lot of fun with discovering South Limburg!
Many roads lead to South Limburg
- Easily accessible by plane (Maastricht Aachen Airport), ferry, train and car
- Easy parking for coaches

Contact
Tourist Information:
Would you like to visit South Limburg?
Find the right person (English speaking) to answer your questions and to provide information about tours and accommodation:
Tel: 0031-(0)43-6098500

Stichting VVV Zuid-Limburg
Hoofdkantoor Walramplein 6
6300 AV Valkenburg a/d Geul
Tel: 0031-43 6098500
E-Mail: info@vvvzuidlimburg.nl
www.vvvzuidlimburg.nl
www.southlimburg.com