

LIEGE

Liège



Cultural Life



© OTLiège Marc Verpoorten

© Musée sciences

Préhistosite © FTPL

Archéoforum © Inst. Patrimoine Wallon



Titanic © ORW

The productions of the *Opéra Royal de Wallonie* (Royal Walloon Opera), which are internationally recognised, are also appreciated in particular by the Dutch and German neighbours.



OPL © Mahaux photography

The Liege Philharmonic Orchestra is famous throughout Europe for the quality of its performances and its daring programmes.

►►► Culture with a Beating Heart

Culture in the Province of Liege is not only rooted in the bedrock and preserved in museum displays. It is alive, dynamic, the heir to a rich history, the channel of overflowing and innovative activity.

The musical, theatre and folklore traditions for example have spawned a very large number of shows, concerts and festivals for all audiences.

The rich heritage both man-made and natural often serves as a backdrop to many an event. The Province's intellectual and artistic history has led to the creation of a large number of museums. And when Liege hospitality and cuisine are added to the mix, foreigners passing through often have only one desire: to come back to Liege or even to stay there.

►►► Museums and Exhibitions : Between Pleasure and Knowledge

Visit, discover, learn: the Province's museums are extremely varied and they are dedicated to a great variety of subjects that go from science to art via history both ancient and modern and archaeology.

This is particularly true of the city of Liege with the sciences (the Observatory of the World of Plants and the *Embarcadère du Savoir* (Jetty of Knowledge) consisting of the Aquarium, the Museum of Zoology and the House of Metallurgy, folklore (Museum of Walloon Life, Museum of *Tchantchès* (puppets), ...), history (Archéoforum, Cathedral Treasury, Museum of Ansembourg, ..), art (Museum of Walloon Art, Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Museum of Religious Art and Meuse Art, Sart Tilman Open Air Museum, Nicolas Shöffers' cybernetic tower and numerous religious buildings). And above all, the opening of the Museum Complex of Art and History

of the Liege Region which will bring together the collections from several museums and confirm Liege in its position as a cultural and tourism centre at a European level. In addition, a cybermuseum is being set up in the city of Liege. It will provide professionals and the general public with information on video art in the Walloon region.

Throughout the Province one can also discover and visit the most original museums: the Wool and Fashion Tourist Centre in Verviers that regularly puts on themed exhibitions, the Museum of Flavours at Herve, the Museum of the Spa-Francorchamps Circuit and the tourist programme *Sur la route du feu* (On the Trail of Fire) with in particular the Prehistoric Site of Ramioul, to mention just a few of the dozens of other museums that welcome many visitors each year.



© FTPL

The Stavelot *Laetare* is a major event in the Province's calendar of carnivals.



© OTLiège

The tradition of Christmas markets and villages is especially strong in the Province: the one in Liege is one of the biggest in Europe.



▶▶▶ Concerts and Festivals

Jazz in Liège opens the season of musical festivals. Held in June, this flamboyant international festival makes the banks of the Meuse vibrate. For forty years, top stars and raw outsiders, established and newly discovered musicians and American, European and Belgian soloists have expressed themselves through the most diverse jazz styles.

Since 1986 **the American style music festival** has hosted many country, jazz, blues, rock and roll and gospel concerts at the beginning of July. Western ambiance and other activities flavour the village of Cerexhe with US sauce.

Around the 21st July, the Belgian national day, the town of Spa resounds to the sounds of the **Francofolies**. This festival attracts an

audience of tens of thousands of fans of French songs. Here new talents are discovered and the biggest stars of French song are rediscovered even if, in the last few events, the Francofolies have been open to European artists, to songs in English and to DJs.

In August, electronic music fans get together at the **Nandrin Festival**, a meeting point for those mad about Kraftwerk and other composers for nightclubs.

And in October, the **Panoptica** festival celebrates the union of electronic music and visual arts. During the course of a long night, there is a succession of performances where sounds and images combine.



Francofolies © www.webreportage.be



© FTPL

▶▶▶ Liege, on Stage



©Trocadéro



Théâtre de la Place © Lou Héron

One loses count of the theatres, festivals and the conservatoires and academies and also the performances in Walloon language which make the region into one vast theatre. Every major town in the province of Liege has one or more theatres, some of them large halls such as the *Grand Théâtre* at Verviers, the Forum and the *Trocadéro* in Liege, the Cultural Centre of the Huy arrondissement, and many smaller ones such as the theatres housed in private homes. The many festivals confirm this dynamism: those in Huy, Spa and Stavelot, for instance, have become major events and the Festival of Liege is famous for putting on the most modern theatrical and dance productions in the world every two years.

▶▶▶ Le Forum

On 30th September 1922, Le Forum of Liege opened its doors to the public. This Art Deco architectural jewel was built in the heart of the *Cité Ardente* (vibrant city) and, whether it's comedy shows, theatre or variety, thanks to the magic of the whole venue, the Forum contributes to the creation of an atmosphere appreciated both by the artists and by the audience.

The history of Liege's artistic life in the 20th century is inextricably linked to the history of the Forum which in particular has established itself as the echo of the most beautiful voices from Jacques Brel and Léo Ferré to Louis Armstrong, Ray Charles and Miles Davis via Ella Fitzgerald, Barbara, Edith Piaf, Charles Aznavour, Yves Montand, Paolo Conte and also Barbara Hendricks, Laurent Voulzy, Roch Voisine and Hélène Segara.

The Forum is also the space where Parisian actors perform. One of the Forum's essential activities being the variety show, comedians have also made it resound to bursts of laughter: Fernandel, Fernand Raynaud, Guy Bedos, Coluche, les Inconnus, Laurent Gerra, Shirley & Dino, Gad Elmaleh, Michel Leeb...



Le Forum © Photo J.Barlet



Patricia Kaas © Photo Sony Music



Le Forum © Photo J.Barlet

▶▶▶ A Province that Knows its Classics in Music

Henry Du Mont, André-Modeste Grétry, César Franck, Henri Vieuxtemps, Guillaume Lekeu, Joseph Jongen, Henri Pousseur... a few of the names of Liege's most famous composers. This tradition is still very vigorous with many famous musical interpreters: Bernard Focroulle on the organ, Philippe Pierlot on the bass viol and the direction of the Ricercar Consort, Patrick Dheur on the piano or conductor Pierre Bartholomee. Two institutions have international influence: the Liege Philharmonic Orchestra and the Royal Walloon Opera, regularly hailed by international critics and winners of several awards, especially in France, with the *Victoires de la Musique*, *Diapasons d'Or*, *Molière*, etc.

The Royal Walloon Opera (ORW) employs almost three hundred permanent staff, has an orchestra, a list of choirs and scenery building and costume making ateliers. The ORW has reached a level of excellence in the interpretation of the works of Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti and Wagner and therefore attracts a large audience composed of Belgians and also Germans, Dutch and French people to Liege. Another area has recently pushed it into the media spotlight: musical comedy with "Titanic" and "Singin' in the Rain". In addition, with *Bel Canto*, the Royal Walloon Opera has found another direction that allows it to offer varied productions of great quality.



Götterdämmerung © ORW



ORW © OTLiège

www.orw.be



OPL © Mahaux photography

The Liege Philharmonic Orchestra was founded in 1960. It consists of 97 musicians and it gives almost 90 concerts a season, about fifty of which are held where it is based in the Liege Philharmonic Hall. The hall enjoys a quality of acoustics that puts it in the top rank of European concert halls. Several major record companies (Harmonia Mundi, Deutsche Grammophon, Universal, Virgin Classics...) have chosen it for its particularly pleasant acoustic qualities.

www.opl.be

Numerous festivals have also been held throughout the Province: this is true of the famous **Stavelot Festival** and also of the recent **Bach Festival in the Meuse Valley**. In Spa, chamber music has pride of place from mid-September to mid-November. **The Spa Musical Autumn** is centred on works ranging from Monteverdi to Schubert played by the musicians and ensembles who are among the best in the world. In September, the Liege Philharmonic Hall hosts a famous festival: the **Nuits de Septembre**. We should also mention the **International Song Competition** at Verviers which is entirely devoted to opera and which has been a global point of reference since 1975.

The Province is also home to the Walloon Centre of Musical Research, a place of experimentation, exchange and contemporary productions that hosts mixed projects of musicians from the Walloon Region/Brussels community and from all over the world.



Eupen Carnaval © FTPL

August 15 © OTLiège

▶▶▶ Everyday Folklore

Liege's folklore, with its great diversity, is part of everyday life. Everyone lives his life to the rhythm of traditions, especially at carnival time and this is particularly marked in the east of the Province, for instance in Eupen, Malmedy and Stavelot.

Rural traditions also play an important part : *fête de la pomme* (apple festival), *du fromage* (cheese festival), nut markets ...

All these festivities that fill the calendar (carnivals, gastronomic clubs, festivals on 15th August in Liege and Huy and Walloon festivals in September) provide many opportunities for coming to enjoy the hospitality of the locals.

▶▶▶ A Rare Building Heritage

Liege has demonstrated its building skills for centuries. A boat trip along the Meuse would be enough to convince the most sceptical. Numerous fine houses and chateaux fill out the exceptional tourist itinerary. It is true that in the Province of Liege, castles occupy an important place and they bear witness to the former power of the lords. Reinhardstein, Burg-Reuland, Franchimont and Logne: once formidable fortresses where festivities and historic reconstructions are still organised today. But with the passage of time, these castles and chateaux too have also become places of rest and tranquillity: Jehay, Harzé and Modave are superb examples of this, many Liege inhabitants still making regular use of them with exhibitions, concerts and public festivals.

Elsewhere, the towns of the Province of Liege are brimming with other architectural triumphs, especially religious ones : the Palace of the Prince Bishop and the very large number of churches in the centre of Liege, the Collegiate Church of Huy, astonishing examples of Roman architecture at Amay, Xhignesse, Theux and Saint-Séverin-en-Condroz and also a contemporary monument: Liege station designed by Santiago Calatrava.

All these marvels that make up the heritage are regularly maintained, not just by the renovation work that is done on the older buildings, but also by the events which, like for example the Heritage Days, the night visits to the "Secret Gardens and Corners" of Liege and the *son et lumière* shows, give new life to these treasures that ask only to be discovered.



Logne © FRPL



Modave © OTLiège Marc Verpoorten



© OTLiège Marc Verpoorten



Saint-Martin © OTLiège Marc Verpoorten

▶▶▶ The Tourist Offices of the Province of Liege

The Tourism Federation of the Province of Liege has created a website that gives a complete picture of the tourist facilities in the region. This organisation is assisted in its work by eleven tourist offices that fulfil their role of welcoming people to a special sub-region. They all have websites which are often very comprehensive, not just for publicising the opportunities for tourism but also to give information about the shows, exhibitions, concerts and other festivals. Some of them even give this information in four languages.

As for the Liege inhabitants' first-rate welcome, it's not just a legend!

- Tourism Federation of the Province of Liege
- Tourist Office for the Liege Region
- Tourist Office for the Spas and Hills
- Tourist Office for the Herve Region
- Tourist Office for the Vesdre Region
- Tourist Office for the Cantons of the East
- Tourist Office for the Ourthe-Amblève Region
- Tourist Office for the Region of Springs
- Tourist Office for the Huy-Meuse-Condroz Region
- Tourist Office for the Valleys of the Burdinale and the Mehaigne
- Tourist Office for Hesbaye and Meuse
- Tourist Office for the Lower Meuse Region

- www.prov-liege.be/tourisme
- www.liege.be/cadreslg/cadwelco.htm
- www.thermesetcoteaux.be
- www.paysdeherve.be
- www.paysdevesdre.be
- www.eastbelgium.com
- www.ourthe-ambleve.be
- www.pays-des-sources.be
- www.pays-de-huy.be
- www.burdinale-mehaigne.be
- www.tourisme-hesbaye-meuse.be
- www.basse-meuse.be

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