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Spring 2022

Activity Holidays in the French Ardennes



Photo credit: Laetis

Planning a holiday abroad this year where you and your friends and family can enjoy some stunning scenery and a plethora of different activities? Then look no further than the French Ardennes, one of the best destinations for this type of vacation, not just in France but in Europe. Whether you enjoy walking or hiking, cycling or mountain biking, boating, kayaking, canoeing, paddle-boarding, horse-riding, swimming, bungee-jumping, paragliding, zipwire 'flying'.... There is something for all tastes and sizes – kiddies to older adults,

So what activity to choose?

STEP BY STEP

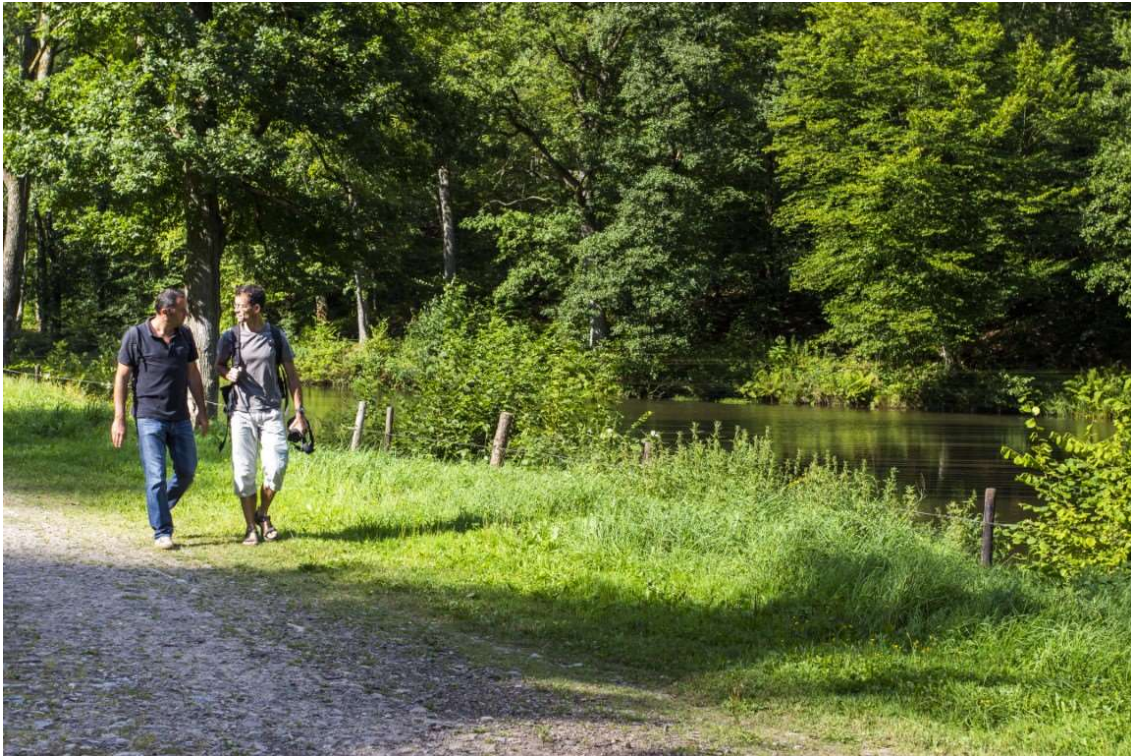


Photo credit: Laetis

There are the [walking routes](#), for example - over 1000 kilometres, including 47 marked trails and four GR long-distance hiking paths. The latter are very popular – particularly the GR 654 to Santiago de Compostela, and the GR 12 from Amsterdam to Paris. The others are the GR 14 from the Ile de France to Belgium via Sedan, and the GR 16 from Liège to the Semoy Valley

There is a NEW [online topographical guide](#) now available providing ideas for walks and hikes, with map and photos -

A couple of interesting walking trails offer something a little different. Try the 3.5 kilometre ‘In the Footsteps of Sergeant York’ – no, not Gary Cooper, but the American who led his battalion to victory in the First World War. Not only is there a chance to see where the various victories took place, but the also to enjoy the different flora and fauna of the [Argonne Forest](#).

Otherwise the ‘Ruisseau de la Murée’ is stunning – with beautiful views over the natural bowl of the Misère River and its tributaries. There is an amazing

EASY-RIDER



Photo credit: Laetis

Equally for **cyclists** and **mountain bikers**, the opportunities are numerous. The Ardennes form part of the Eurovelo19 trail which runs from the Haute Marne to Rotterdam (1,150km). This is great as one may explore the various facets of the Trans-Ardennes Greenway route on the Meuse, from its source at Langres to Givet – 443 kilometres. The route allows one to explore the various villages and places of interest, enjoy tasty local gastro specialities and beers, recognising the various attributes of the region such as the *Petites Cités de caractères*® and *Villes d'art et d'histoire*. It is handy to be able to pop on and off the TER trains with the bikes, so not having to necessarily cycle all the way!



Photo credit: Ardennes

The Ardennes are working on a **NEW** Greenway too, scheduled to open next year 2023, the South Ardennes Greenway. Watch this space!

The [first stages of the works](#) are finished and 55 kilometres will open this summer between Le Chesne and Vieux-lès-Asfeld.

The **mountain bikers** and **cross-country cyclists** are well catered for with the variety of possibilities in the Meuse and Semoy Valleys with 400 km of marked paths at different levels of difficulty, 30 circuits, 216 km of trails, and six stops for repairs, rest etc. The Bannet Leisure Centre near Sedan has 116km of routes, 16 circuits with two levels of difficulty – another top-class site.

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The '**Accueil-vélo**' label is useful as a guide to places that are bike friendly, everything from places to stay to repairers and other professionals, plus there is a [super interactive guide online](#) to prepare any cycling trip.

MESSING ABOUT ON THE WATER!



Photo credit: Laetis

The Trans-Ardenne Greenway is somewhere to also enjoy on the **water** – there are 130 kilometres of waterways. It is not just the Meuse that provides a suitable environment for **boating, swimming** etc, but also lakes like the Vieilles – Forges where sailing, paddle boarding, canoeing etc are all popular plus there is an enormous aqua centre, and it is the premier European spot for **carp fishing**. Forest rivers, streams, canals and lakes also provide rich rivers brimming with perch, pike, sculpin, trout, char, barbel, grayling, catfish and lamprey. Pedallos and electric boats are available for hire at various points in the region too.



Photo credit: Laetis

Covering 120 hectares, Bairon lake comprises two lakes, an old lake and its reed bed, separated by a dam and transformed into a nature reserve (Natura 2000) and a reservoir for water sports welcoming more than 200,000 people a year:

- Supervised swimming (from June to August), paddle boarding, canoeing, pedalos; catamarans, wind surfing, sailing activities for disabled people;
- mini golf, pedal go-karts
- themed outings, educational flora and fauna workshops, fishing
- paths for walking, playgrounds and a sandy beach
- restaurants and campsite
- picnic areas and playgrounds

GO FLYING!



Photo credit: Ardennes ADT

Even **'flying'** is possible in the Ardennes! At Furnay, there is the longest Tyrolean zip wire in Europe – Fantasticable® - 1200 metres long, 110 metres high and reaching speeds of up to 100 kilometres per hour over the Meuse. In fact, here at TerrAltitude there are 108 acrobatic circuits over five hectares, bungee jumps and catapult jumps.

The Ardennes Terre d'Aventures park offers zip wires, an elasto-trampoline, five circuits, a climbing wall and the 'Corsaire volant' – a life-size galleon where you can swing from mast to mast, up to ten metres in the air!!!

Try parachute jumping at the Belval Paraclub – 3500 metres up and freefalling at 200km/hr! Or if that's too much, calmer paragliding in the north of the region, at UUM or rock-climbing at two different sites – Tournavaux and Monthermé.

Lastly at Chêne Perché in the heart of the Natura 2000 Signy-l'Abbaye Forest, find more than 80 different games, zip wires, a pendular 'angle jump' and a Tarzan jump.

These are just a few of the possibilities - the Ardennes is a haven for activity holidays.



Photo credit: Laetis

The other bonus for the visitor in 2022 is the strong accent in the area on eco-tourism and 'green' holidays, and not just 'greenwashing' but serious eco-friendly initiatives that respect the countryside. It's not just lip service to a fashionable cause!!! So, to give a couple of ideas - there is the new Ardennes Ecotourism Club, for example, bringing together more than a hundred tourism professionals in the Ardennes region who practice sustainable tourism in order to preserve their environment and contribute to the local economy. Then there is the Ardennes Regional Nature Park is an area of over 117,000 hectares in the north of the Ardennes, including seven types of different habitats, home to several special types of flora and fauna.

Where to stay



Photo credit: Laetis

There is a wide choice of places to stay in the French Ardennes from campsites to chateaux, chambres d'hôtes to gîtes, hotels to apartments. Many accommodation options have excellent green credentials too. For all accommodation options, click [here](#).

A big bonus for visitors - Evadez vous!

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A big bonus for visitors - Evadez vous!

For all visitors, a sum of up to 100 Euros can be reimbursed if staying a minimum of two consecutive nights either in a restaurant or when buying a local activity either sporting or cultural to a minimum amount of 200 Euros. This offer is valid until the end of December 2022.

Travelling to the Ardennes

Travelling to the Ardennes: The nearest airport is Belgium South Charleroi, 100km to the north of Charleville-Mézières and there is a direct train connection to Paris Gare de l'Est taking 1 hour 45 minutes. To drive from the ferry and Eurotunnel terminals in and around Calais, take the A26 south to exit 14 (Juvincourt-et-Damary), the D925 east via Roizy, then pick up the A34 to Charleville-Mézières (3.5 hrs).



Photo credit: Laetis

Note to editors: Lovers of nature, hiking, biking, heritage or local food, the Ardennes region is close at hand and is an invitation to recharge the batteries and enjoy genuine experiences. For further information visit www.ardennes.com or <http://gb.ardennes.com>

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