



LILLE

LIVING FOR THE
WEEKEND

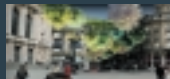


LILLE. L'ÎLE. THE ISLAND.

DON'T BE FOOLED BY THE SMOKESTACKS OF FRANCE'S WORKING CLASS NORTH. THIS CITY IS AN ISLAND UNTO ITS OWN. INDUSTRIOUS OVER INDUSTRIAL. A COBBLED *QUARTIER*, URBAN YET NAVIGABLE. METROPOLITAN BUT MANAGEABLE.

CALLED THE *CARREFOUR* BY THE FRENCH, AT THE CROSSROADS OF THE COUNTRY, LILLE IS NOT JUST LOCATIONLOCATIONLOCATION. (SLAP BANG BETWEEN LONDON, BRUSSELS AND PARIS). WELL CONNECTED IN OTHER WAYS TOO, FROM RENAISSANCE TO REM. A FEISTY YOUNG CITY, AMBITIOUS, EXPERIMENTAL, OUT TO PROVE. GIVING RISE TO THE FIGHTING SPIRIT OF GENERAL DE GAULLE.

A LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL.





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LILLE BRADERIE

LILLE 2004 → LILLE IS CROWNED EUROPEAN CITY OF CULTURE THIS YEAR, AND IS HOSTING THOUSANDS OF EVENTS TO CELEBRATE. THESE RANGE FROM STREET PARTIES, FREE CONCERTS, WHACKED OUT INSTALLATION ART (LIKE UPSIDE-DOWN FORESTS) AND EXHIBITIONS (RUBENS COMES TO TOWN, FULL FORCE).



TULIPES DESHANGRI-LA

Find out more at Lille 2004 HQ, 105 Centre Eurailille, +33 3 28 52 20 04, www.lille2004.com. Here are the highlights:
METAMORPHOSES → Artists use buildings and streets as their canvases, creating bamboo jungles and a milky way of stars.
MONDES PARALLÈLES → Alternate weekends, different international cities are transported to Lille's squares, concert halls and dancefloors, from Buenos Aires to Marrakech.
MAISONS FOLIE → Twelve locations across the city, including old factories and historical buildings, are turned into community workshops and multimedia spaces.



M. MEERT
1858

M. MEERT
1858

M. MEERT



SLEEPING → A SENSITIVELY RENOVATED 15TH-CENTURY FLEMISH-GOTHIC HOSPICE.



L'HERMITAGE GANTOIS → Lille's first boutiquey hotel is refreshingly unpretentious. Slate greys, clean lines and courtyard gardens, with rather snug (read small) rooms. Bonus is its own contemplative chapel (just off the glassy bar atrium). Rather grimy stroll to town, it must be added. 224 rue de Paris +33 3 20 85 30 30, www.hotelhermitagegantois.com
From €190/£128.

CROWNE PLAZA → The most perfect location for euroStars: by the tracks, towering over the platforms you pull into. The horrendous brassy exterior hides bright, breezy rooms... expansive and designed. Deserves credit in spite of its chain-iness. 335 Blvd de Leeds, +33 3 20 42 46 46, www.lille-crowneplaza.com.
From €170/£115.

SALONS BEAUMARCHAIS → The 18th-century home of Madame Meaux is too large and grand to rattle around in all alone. So she's turned over three rooms to B&B, with croissants and *confitures* served in the warm, farmhouse-style kitchen. Just three rooms: one single, one double, one triple. (Note: the single and double share a bathroom,



the triple is en suite). It's a gem, with your own house key to boot. But polish up your French so you can reserve a room, and be understood. 104 rue Royale, +33 3 20 74 49 92. Fax +33 3 20 55 64 73.
From €78/£52 with breakfast.

HOTEL BRUEGHEL → Try to get a room overlooking the stonework of St Maurice church. Cosy rooms, splashed in fresh white, super value, easy location – and no-nonsense Florence at the frontdesk keeping the place shipshape. 5 parvis Saint Meurice, +33 3 20 06 06 69 www.hotel-brueghel.com.
From €71/£48.

Price is for a double room.



SHOPPING → SNIFF OUT THE CHEESE SHOP THAT SUPPLIES NUMBER 10, THE WHITE HOUSE AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, FRANCE'S ELYSÉE PALACE.



MARKETS → Lille has three markets: the first, Provençale-style **Marché Place du Concert** offers the stuff food dreams are made of. Like fresh foie gras costing about €17/kg. Have a coffee at Café aux Arts. Market days Wed/Fri/Sun 8am–2pm.

The second market is the cutest, in the courtyard of the 17th-century **Bourse** (stock exchange) selling books, stamps and cigarette cards. Market days Tues–Sun 11am–7pm approx. Take Metro Line 1 to Gambetta, and get lost in the vast flea market **Marché de Wazemmes**. Vendors peddle food, clothes, antiques and animals, flanked on all sides by little bistros and cafés. Stop by three favourites on Place de la Nouvelle Aventure: La Brûlerie for strong coffee... next door Tiparo Thai offers spring rolls and dumplings to passing trade... beside Pain et Vin serving delicious tartines. Market days Tue/Thu/Sun 7am–2pm.



EURALILLE → Urban architect Rem Koolhaas created the shopping/entertainment complex between the old railway station and the new Lille-Europe station. It's a thoroughly modern mall, choc-a with the familiar brand names.

VIEUX LILLE → One-off shopping is in cobbled **Old Lille**, around rue de la Monnaie (the town's oldest street). Stores like Anne Fontaine (white shirts), Aigle (outdoor wear), as well as Kenzo, Deschamps, Hermès and Louis Vuitton. Favourites include: **Philippe Olivier** Take home local

Maroilles or dried out Vieilles Mimolette from this world-famous fromagerie (3 rue du Curé St Etienne). **Sade** All things nice, like lovely silky dresses and sexy one-off tops (3 rue de la Monnaie). **Atelier Un Vrai Semblance** Guillaume Moisson has his own repertoire of canvases but also works on commission, creating copies of the masters, trompe l'oeil for your walls and portraits of your fair self (3 rue au Pétérinck). **Tambours et Trompettes** The French know best how to dress kiddiewinks. Here, Valérie Fermon can make the grubbier of toddlers achingly pretty (14 rue au Pétérinck).



DRINKING → LILLE IS BEER COUNTRY, RATHER THAN WINE, BUT ANYTHING GOES IN THIS UNIVERSITY TOWN WHERE 40% OF RESIDENTS ARE UNDER 25.

GRAND' PLACE → Slip down the alley to **Les Compagnons de la Grappe** with its big summer terrace (26 rue Lepelletier). On less fair days, hang out with the mannequins in **Chez Morel**, a converted lingerie shop, now more Pernod than Perla (33 place du Théâtre). Also, try lovely **Le Porthos** with its wild art and wooden staircase winding up and up (53 rue de la Monnaie).

RUE ROYALE → My favourite strip is lined with cheap eats (couscous, Asian, crêperies), ateliers and smoky cafés. Like eclectic **L'illustration** where the city's writers hang out, books on tables, art on the walls (18 rue Royale). Opposite, **Le Lounge** serves cocktails, retro-style (21 rue Royale) and **BD Fugue Café** is a funky comic store with bar outback (5 rue Royale).



RUE DE GAND → Start at psychedelic lounge **Sapo** with plastic lamplight (11 rue de Gand) or **1492's** leopard skin surrounds (45 rue de Gand). Salsa over to Latin dance club **Sofa** (36 rue de Gand) or slip under the pavements into **La Scala**, cheesy fun with a crammed dancefloor (32 place Louise de Bettignies).

TRI POSTALE → For live music, check out this old postal sorting office now used for gigs and club nights. Wangle VIP access upstairs where the grungey bar has a pool table, silver trophies and fish tanks. There's a studenty feel, but everyone's here and their dog.



EATING → BASKETS OF OYSTERS,
BUCKETS OF CLAMS, TANKS OF
LOBSTERS AND FLIPPING FISH.



■ A L'HUITRIÈRE

A L'HUITRIÈRE → Pass through an evocative Art Deco fishmonger to reach the fussy, French restaurant out back. It's chintzy, but wow the black tie waiters know their stuff. The finest of foods: scallops with cabbage and truffles, John Dory with endives compote and shrimp broth, veal sweetbreads or stuffed pigeon legs, and the most sublime turbot jailed in potato strands with mushrooms and truffle butter. Squeeze in an ablaze Crêpes Suzette – and note, the sommelier on hand is a wine-angel. 3 rue des Chats Bossus, +33 3 20 55 23 10. **€83** Open daily lunch/dinner except Sunday evening.

ALCIDE → Refreshingly sleek after all the old-worldy restaurants in Lille. Bit of a biz scene, but always packed with well-heeled locals, super service and spot-on food. Like fresh oysters, moules frites (mussels 'n' chips), seasonal salads and Flemish stews. 5 rue Debris St Etienne, +33 3 20 12 06 95. **€36** Open daily lunch/dinner.

L'ORANGE BLEUE → The brick-and-mustard-walls are smattered with Art Nouveau posters in this understated eatery with fabulous

food, from fresh pastas to generous crunchy salads. Try dishes of the North, like croquettes of grey shrimps and Carbonade Flamande (beef braised in beer and onions). 30 rue Lepelletier, +33 3 20 55 04 70. **€25** Open daily lunch/dinner except Sunday.

LA PART DES ANGES → Sit on a barrel, and order wine by the glass or hearty beers on tap. Soak up with a breadboard platter of charcuterie and cheese, followed by the beef, rare (say: saignant). Spit 'n' sawdust style, top notch food and friendly service. 50 rue de la Monnaie, +33 3 20 06 44 01. **€20** Open daily 9am–2am.

ESTAMINET 'T RIJSEL → An estaminet is a cosy rustic Flemish pub. Easy food (roast chicken in local Maroilles cheese, cod fillet in cherry beer). Warm service. Steamy windows. The place is packed. Come early, and if you fail to land a table, try opposite at Chez La Vieille, another traditional estaminet. 25 rue de Gand, +33 3 20 55 09 45. **€15** Open Tuesday–Saturday, lunch/dinner.

Price is per person for 3 courses without drinks. Tip 10%-ish.



LA PISCINE, ALBERT BAERT, 1934,
JEAN LEVASSEUR, 1934, CHICAGO,
PARKLAND, PONT DES BOIS

■ PISCINE, ROUBAIX

DAY TRIPPING → THE METRO IS A DESTINATION IN ITSELF. THE WORLD'S FIRST UNMANNED UNDERGROUND TRAINS OFFER YOU THE CHANCE TO SIT UPFRONT AS YOU CAREER AROUND BENDS AND THROUGH DARK TUNNELS. PLONK YOURSELF AT THE FRONT OF THE FIRST CARRIAGE, AND CHOOSE BETWEEN THE *PISCINE* IN ROUBAIX OR THE MODERN ART MUSEUM.



■ THE CIRCUS, FERNAND LEGER

PISCINE, ROUBAIX → A converted Art Deco swimming pool, now housing the **Museum of Art and Industry**. Take Metro Line 2 to Gare Jean Lebas. Exit the station and walk 200m up avenue Jean Lebas, to find the redbrick **public baths** on your right. Inside is a glorious space, filled with **marble statues**, lit by stained glass sunshine and with the intermittent blast of kids squealing on loudspeakers – an echo of former days. The exhibitions are rather disjointed, so buy the helpful guidebook. Entrance €5. Closed Monday.

MODERN ART → For contemporary art fans, head to the **Modern Art Museum** in Villeneuve d'Ascq, set in lovely parkland. Take Metro Line 1 to Pont des Bois. Exit the station and catch bus 41 four stops to the Parc Urbain-Musée stop. Walk behind the bus stop, down the dirt trail, through a courtyard, and into the grounds. The museum houses a remarkable collection of **Modigliani** oils, and **Cubist masterpieces** by Picasso, Braque and Laurens. Entrance €6.50. Closed Tuesday.



WALKING → START AT **LILLE CATHEDRAL**, WITH ITS MODERN FAÇADE AND FAR-REACHING GOTHIC INTERIORS. INSIDE IS THE MOST EXHILARATING, EMOTIONAL STATIONS OF THE CROSS PAINTED BY BRAZILIAN SERGIO FERRO: FOURTEEN TORTURED, MANNERIST COLLAGES OF CHRIST'S JOURNEY HAULING THE CRUCIFIX. PONDER AT



■ GRAND' PLACE

NUMBER EIGHT, PARTLY PAINTED BY FERRO'S SON. FERRO BELIEVED HIS SIX-YEAR-OLD WOULD BETTER DEPICT THE WORLD OF CHILDREN. → WALK ON THROUGH THE COBBLED MEDIEVAL STREETS OF **VIEUX LILLE**, PAST ORNATE



■ RUBENS

GUILDHALLS, THE **BOURSE** AND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE – NOTABLY MORE CENTRALLY LOCATED THAN THE CHURCH. → FIND THE TOWN'S MAIN SQUARE, THE **PLACE GENERAL DE GAULLE** (OR GRAND' PLACE), AND MAKE YOUR WAY TO THE **PALAIS DES BEAUX ARTS** WITH MASTERS BY VAN DYCK, RUBENS AND BRUEGHEL. THIS GALLERY IS CONSIDERED FRANCE'S #2 AFTER THE LOUVRE. DON'T MISS GUSTAVE CRAUK'S STATUE *LE BAISEUR* AND THE 17TH-CENTURY GLOBES OF CARTOGRAPHER VINCENZO MARIA CORONELLI. FLOP INTO THE MUSEUM'S SOFT CHAIRS.



THE PERFECT WEEKEND

→ **FRIDAY** PULL INTO LILLE-EUROPE STATION IN TIME FOR DINNER, AND TAKE A TAXI TO LOW-KEY **L'ORANGE BLEUE**. DRINKS AT **CHEZ MOREL**, BEFORE BEDDING DOWN AT **HOTEL BRUEGHEL** OR **L'HERMITAGE**, DEPENDING ON YOUR BUDGET. → **SATURDAY** BREAKFAST AT **PAUL** ON THE **GRAND' PLACE**. SHOP IN COBBLED **VIEUX LILLE** WITH A LIGHT LUNCH AT **ESTAMINET 'T RIJSEL**. TOUR THE **PALAIS DES BEAUX ARTS** AND BUY POSTCARDS OF YOUR FAVOURITE PAINTINGS. SPLURGE ON DINNER AT **A L'HUITRIÈRE** – NO CONTEST. AFTERWARDS, QUIET DRINKS AT **L'ILLUSTRATION**, **SAPO** FOR A COCKTAIL SCENE, **LA SCALA** FOR DANCING. → **SUNDAY** BEELINE TO **WAZEMMES MARKET** TO FIND A BARGAIN. EAT AT **PAIN ET VIN**, BEFORE TAKING THE METRO TO **ROUBAIX** (MUSEUM OF ART AND INDUSTRY) OR **VILLENEUVE D'ASCQ** (MODERN ART MUSEUM). LATE AFTERNOON TEA AT BELLE ÉPOQUE SALON **MÉERT** OR A QUICK DINNER AT **LA PART DES ANGES**. HURRY TO THE STATION 30MIN BEFORE DEPARTURE.



LIVING FOR THE WEEKEND → PASSIONATE ABOUT THEIR DESTINATIONS, EUROSTAR ASKED CREATIVE TRAVEL WRITER MICHELLE JANA TO FIND THE ESSENCE OF A FLEETING, INSPIRING VISIT TO THE CITIES THEY ADORE. TO LOCATE THE IMAGINATIVE AND OFFBEAT. TO SHARE THE STUFF WEEKENDS ARE MADE OF. **LOOK NO FURTHER.**

GETTING THERE → BUY TICKETS/BOOK HOTELS AT WWW.EUROSTAR.COM OR CALL 08705 186186. JOURNEY TIME FROM LONDON WATERLOO IS 1HR 40MIN, AND 55MIN FROM ASHFORD, KENT. DON'T FORGET TO ADJUST YOUR WATCHES. IT'S SO EASYPEASY TO GET THERE, YOU HARDLY REALISE YOU'VE CROSSED TIME ZONES.

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