

The French Flemish melting pot of Lille is a great place to start a European adventure with a stroll.



## Strolls

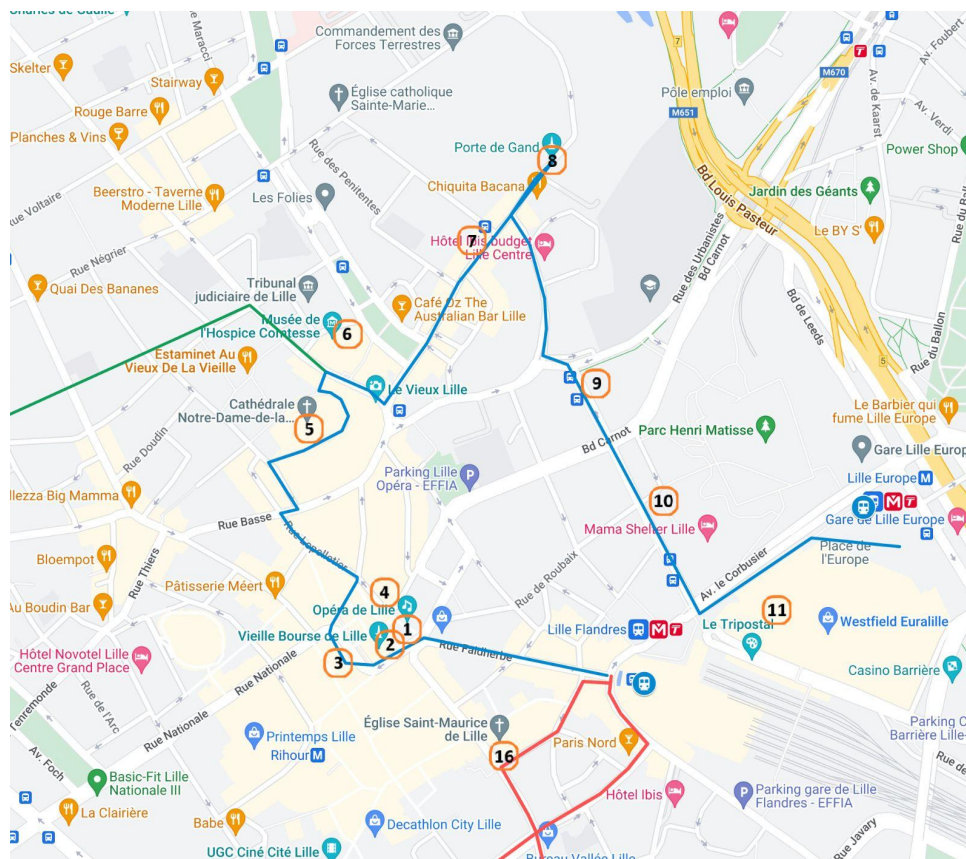
- [Lille Flanders to Lille Europe, a long way around \(2.9km blue\)](#)
- [Citadelle wander \(3.3km green\)](#)
- [View the Beaux Arts \(2.7km red\)](#)

## Interactive Map

Here is a [link to a map](#) that can help you find your bearings.

## Lille Flanders to Lille Europe, a long way around (2.9km blue)

Lille Flanders and Lille Europe are just a short walk apart, so why not go the long way around and take in the main sights as well. By the way, if you aren't going from one station to the other, you could easily turn it into a circular walk for either...



- 1 Lille Opera
- 2 La Vieille Bourse
- 3 Grand Place
- 4 CCI de Lille
- 5 Notre-Dame-de-la-Tr
- 6 l'Hospice Comtesse
- 7 Estaminet Du Welsh
- 8 Porte de Gand
- 9 Musée de Canonnier
- 10 Porte de Roubaix
- 11 Westfield Euralille
- 12 Monument Achille Te
- 13 Pigeons voyageurs
- 14 Obélisque de Bouffler
- 15 Citadelle de Lille
- 16 Saint Maurice Catholi
- 17 Beffroi de Lille
- 18 Porte de Paris
- 19 Beffroi de Lille
- 20 Palais des Beaux Arts

Leave the station and walk straight ahead down the Rue Faidherbe, which thanks, to the road narrowing, and liberal use of bollards around town, has plenty of space for cyclists, street art and us. At the end is the impressively high-scaled [Opera House](#) (1) with equally impressively low ticket prices (starting at 5 Euros).

But the star of the show in this square, the Vieille Bourse (Old Stock Exchange)(2) on the left, which was built in the 1650s and is actually 24 houses joined together. It was needed to support the booming textile industry which made this place one of the wealthiest parts of Europe.



*Opera - Google*



*Vieille Bourse - Google*

It was built with the approval of the king - that's to say the King Phillip IV of Spain as this was part of the Spanish Netherlands at the time. But making such a great show of wealth was always going to attract attention.

Over the border in France King Louis XIV a.k.a the Sun King, had his eye on this little gem and thanks to the genius of military engineer, [Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban](#), Lille became French 1668.

These days, the main action taking place is in the arcaded courtyard in the middle where locals like to hangout playing chess and buying second-hand books.

Meanwhile the businessmen got to play in the new Chamber of Commerce which nestles between the Vieille Bourse and the Opera house - nice clock.

Behind the Vieille Bourse is the Grand Place (3) with *the Goddess* on a column pointing down at the ground - as if she's just seen a bit the street cleaners forgot to sweep.

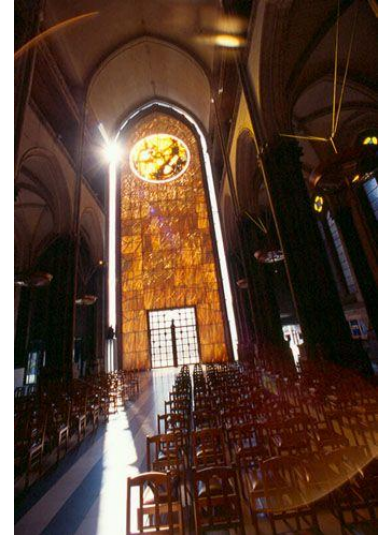


*The Goddess - Google*

Continue through the square and down Rue de la Bourse on the right, which brings us to the back end of the new Chamber of Commerce (4).

Now we are going to head for the old town and the Cathedral.

Head down Rue Lepelletier, past the solitary tree and all the way to the end (becoming Rue Bartholomé Masurel) which sweeps round to the first view of the Cathedral (5) which might come as a bit of a surprise.



*Cathedral - wiki commons*

In the mid 19th Century, the wealthy (and pious) denizens of Lille realised their huge city was missing something - a Cathedral. This took place at a time when there were [various sightings](#) of the Virgin Mary who seemed keen to help the locals out. Other cities like Lyon and Boulogne decided to build new basilicas to the Virgin Mary and this was Lille's contribution. A lack of funds meant that it wasn't completed until the 1990s, but that meant new building techniques could be employed, like the luminous marble wall - go inside to see the effect.

After you have finished, continue on through to the Old Town charm of Rue de la Monnaie. At this point, if you are feeling sprightly and want to see Vauban's handywork, you could follow the fortress path below (black).

Also, just around the corner from here is [Musée de l'Hospice Comtesse](#) (6), where you can learn about the history of Lille and see its eclectic collection of paintings, sculptures, tiles and puppets from the last 400 years.

Otherwise, let's carry on to our right down the Rue de la Monnaie and left through Pl. Louise de Bettignies and on to Rue de Gand. All around here are plenty of places to stop, and lounge around over a cafe and something interesting to nibble. But if you want to try a trending gourmand experience, you could stop at Estaminet Du Welsh (7) and grab yourself some Welsh Rarebit made with cheddar cheese. Unlike his erstwhile

British counterpart, President Macron hasn't had a hissy fit about embracing foreign food.

At the end of Rue to Gand is the Porte de Gand, Ghent in French, (8) where the brickwork looks like it's trying to direct the traffic to anywhere else.



*Porte de Gand - Google*



*Porte de Roubaix - Google*

Now we have reached the ramparts, it's time to turn around and head towards the station. Turn left down Rue de Courtrai. As the road widens out we need to wiggle left, then right down the Rue des Canoniers. There's a gunners (Canoniers) museum (9) which is just behind the street (entrance on Rue des Urbanistes) where you can find out more about what firepower was needed to defend or take a city like Lille.

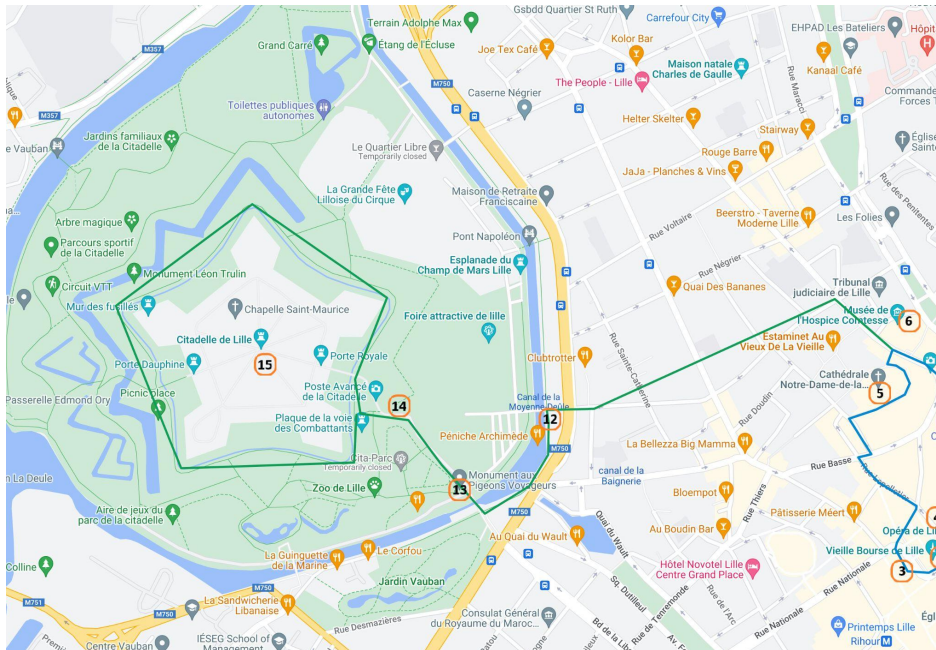
Further down the street, after crossing Boulevard Carnot is the Porte de Roubaix (10) on the left - so you can see we are following the path of the city walls.

The stations are in the regenerated area known as 'Euralille' (11) and just in case you don't get the hint, there's a big sign.

Go through the Plaza and to your left for Lille Europe and to your right to get back to Lille Flandres.

## Citadelle wander (3.3km green)

If you fancy a stroll with a bit of greenery, sturdy walls and to see why Lille is French why not pop over to the Citadelle?



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Continue down Rue de la Monnaie and then turn left onto Rue d'Angleterre which becomes Rue Léonard Danel after crossing Rue Royale all the way to the Pont du Ramponneau. There's a monument to 19th Century French politician [Achille Testelin](#) but let's turn left and go and see a different monument to a different type of hero.

Follow the canal along to the next bridge, the Pont de la Citadelle. On the other side is the Monument aux pigeons voyageurs - a monument to the carrier pigeons that were so instrumental in the First World War.



*Monument aux pigeons  
voyageurs*



*Fortress*



*Marshal Boufflers - Google*

Continue up to the Citadelle which was masterminded by Vauban.

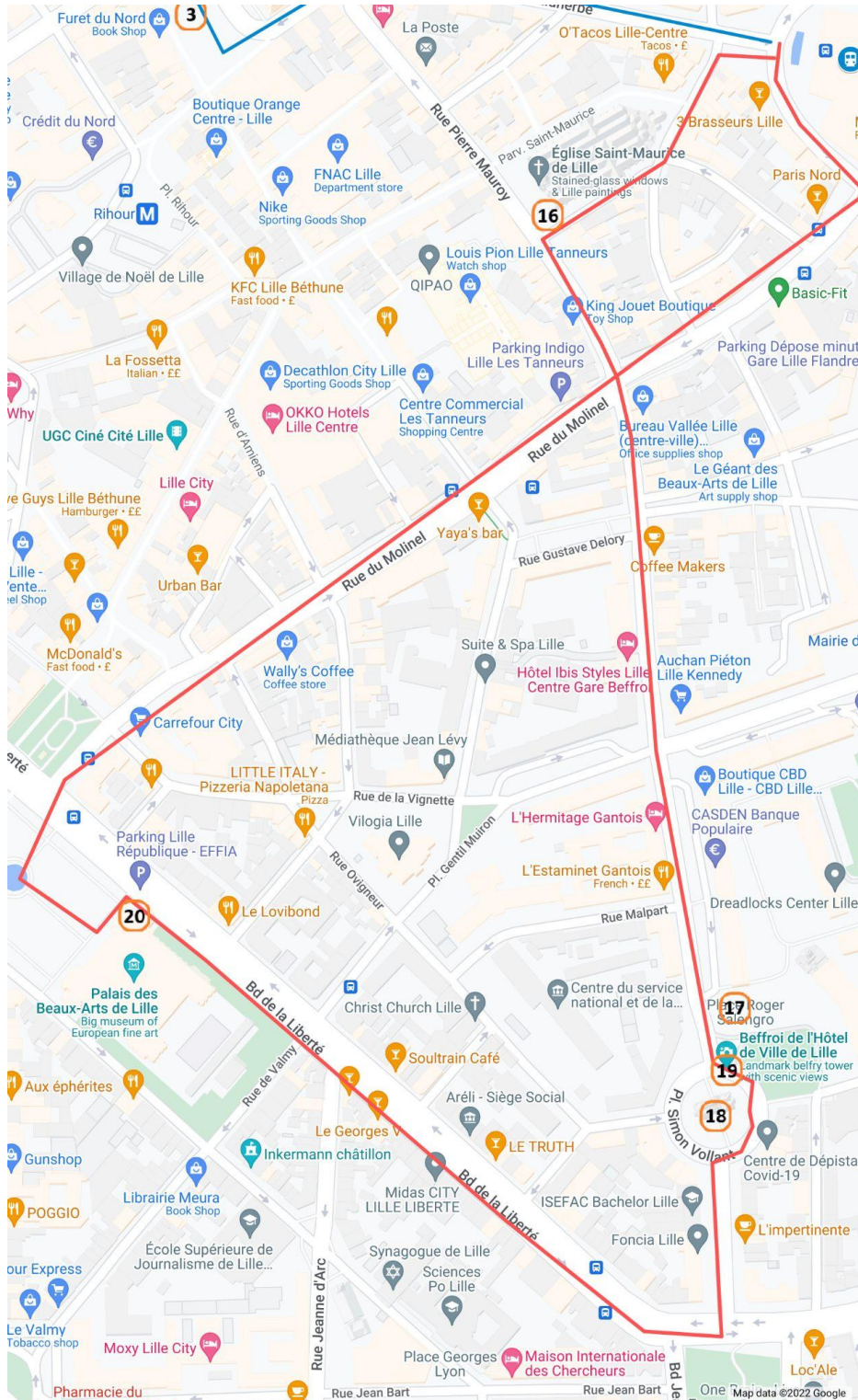
There's a monument on the right to [Marshal Boufflers](#) for holding out against the British for three months in 1708 (with a large slice of help from his fortress...)

A path takes you all the way around the fortress and will get you back to where you started.



## View the Beaux Arts (2.7km red)

If you are a fan of the fine arts, then this walk should be up your street.



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Leave the station and go straight ahead then turn left onto Rue du Priez. This leads to the backend of Saint-Maurice church (16) which we can skirt around around its front, on a sunny day you may fancy popping in to see its vivid stained-glass windows.

Turn left onto Rue Pierre Mauroy then continue all the way down to the 17th Century Port de Paris (18) which was built to 'celebrate' the capture of the city by the French. This upmarket roundabout also is home to its iconic Flemish belfry with its low-slung clock (19) - which was rebuilt after its predecessor's destruction in the First World War. You can go up the belfry for a great view of the city.



*Beffroi/Belfry*



*Port de Paris*



*Palais des Beaux Arts - Google*

Continue along to the Boulevard de la Liberte and turn right. This takes us to the Palais des Beaux Arts and its fancy fountains.

To head back, turn right onto Rue du Molinel which you can follow all the way back to the Place de la Gare and the station.