

## MUSEUM OF ARCHAEOLOGY

A Louis XV mansion covered in Virginia creeper, the former Refuge D'Orival, the museum houses various treasures : works by Laurent Delvaux (18<sup>th</sup> century), a Brussels tapestry (Coxie), furniture and art from the Nivelles area, musical instruments, 4 fine 15<sup>th</sup> century statues of the Brabant School and numerous objects from the Palaeolithic to Merovingian periods.



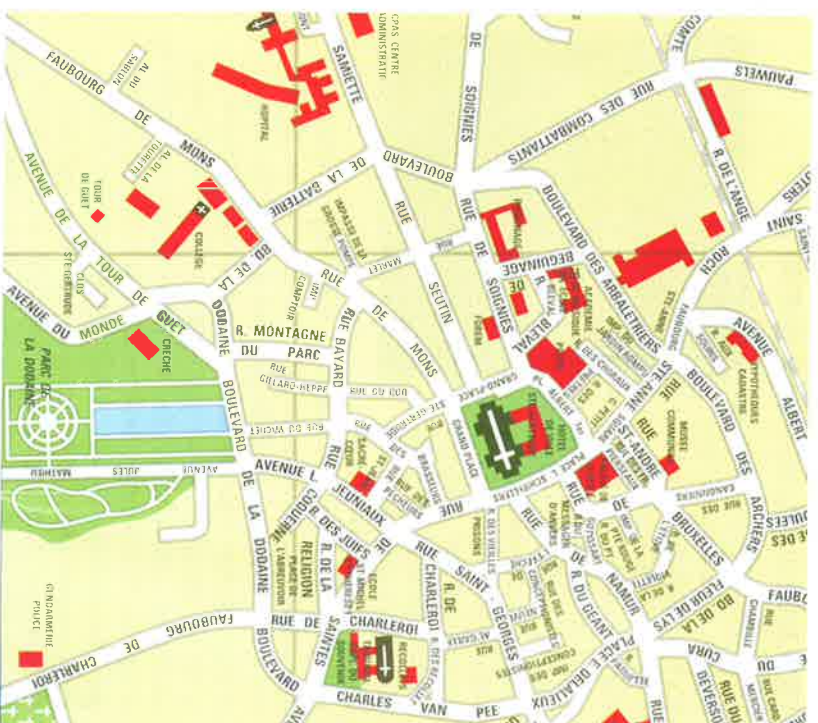
## DODDAINE PARK

A classified site of natural interest, the former marsh, now an area of pleasant walks, was landscaped by



Jean-Baptiste Dangoneau, mayor of Nivelles using unemployed workers during a period of hardship in Napoleonic times (1817). The park is divided into 4 parts: the rectangular pond surrounded by hundred-year-old trees, the French garden, the lake and the Queen Astrid sports ground, inaugurated in 1938. Begun in 1935, this was the first major public health project of the town, an enterprise again providing work for the unemployed.

The site was classified on the 28th April 1945 and since then an English Garden has been added (1955), as well as a sports hall, covered swimming pool, sports ground and aquapark.



## PRACTICAL INFORMATION :

Collegiate Church, Old Town, Dodaine Park, Museum.

**Half day :** Reception (coffee), guided tour, meal.

**Full day :** Reception (coffee), guided tour of the Collegiate Church, meal, choice of further visit.

**Meal :** Starter, main course, dessert - Drinks NOT included.

**Languages :** Fr, Nl, En, De, It, Sp.

**Minimum 25 , maximum 150 people for the Collegiate Church.**

**Reservation essential :** 30% down-payment required at time of reservation. Balance to be paid no later than one week before visit.

No refund for cancellations made within the week preceding the visit.

**Contact :**

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OFFICE DU TOURISME

Package N°1



ONCE UPON A TIME IN NIVELLES....

LA WALLONIE  
LA CHALEUR DE VIVRE.



The town of Nivelles grew up in the valley of the river Thines around the abbey founded in 645 by Irte, wife of Pepin I, mayor-of -the-palace to King Dagobert, and ancestor of Charlemagne. Their daughter, St Gertrude, was its first abbess. This double community, ruled over by a woman, became an imperial institution under Charlemagne. Exclusively for canons of noble birth, it was suppressed at the French Revolution. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Nivelles was a thriving centre of activity both religious (13 parishes, 3 almshouses, 1 convent of Beguines) and commercial (lace and cambric making, brewing, tanning etc). In 1940, early in the war, Nivelles was bombed by the Germans. The spire of the collegiate church was set on fire and the treasure destroyed. Spend a day discovering the charming streets and see the 12<sup>th</sup> century tower of the old town ramparts (Tour Simone), the convents of the Annunciation, and of the Recollets (Gothic church and cloister), the Refuges of Aywieres, the Knights of Malta, the Trinitarians of Orival, the mansions of Riffart d'Irte, Dept, Biourges etc.

### COLLEGIATE CHURCH OF ST GERTRUDE

1350 years of architecture can be seen here, from the first Merovingian church (646) to today. The church of St Gertrude is an abbey, (the 13<sup>th</sup> century cloister remains), a collegiate church (seat of a chapter of canons and canonesses from the 19<sup>th</sup> century on) and a pilgrim church (purpose built hall-crypt with ambulatory corridors (these no longer extant). It also features a westwork, including counter-choir, apse, towers, and tribune chapels. Above these, the "gayoies" were used as prisons, and the splendid Imperial Room is thought to have functioned as court-room and reception room for the abbess when exercising her civic roles of mayor and judge : until the French Revolution, Nivelles was ruled by a woman. The church is built in the Ottonian style of the great imperial monuments (Holy Roman Empire): Early Romanesque for the 11<sup>th</sup> century construction, and Late Romanesque for the exceptional Westwork of the late 12<sup>th</sup>. The ground-plan with a choir at each end is in the Carolingian tradition. The Westwork features no less than 8 cupolas: this is unique in Belgium and emphasises the imperial nature of the foundation. The Romanesque cloister dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> century. St Gertrude's was consecrated in 1046 by Wazon,



bishop of Liège in the presence of the Holy Roman Emperor Henry III. Inside, see the 15<sup>th</sup> century processional cart, Renaissance stalls, funerary monuments (16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries), 15<sup>th</sup> century polychrome statue of the Virgin, statues and pulpits by Laurent Delvaux, wall-paintings etc. The Romanesque pilgrim hall-crypt is one of the largest in the country. In the exceptional archaeological basement can be found the remains of churches dating from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> centuries (Merovingian, Carolingian, Early Romanesque). Visit the tomb of Ermentrude, grand-daughter of Hugh Capet, king of

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France. See that of Himeltrude, possibly the first wife of Charlemagne. The remains of the Gothic shrine (late 13<sup>th</sup>), a master-piece in gilded silver, partially destroyed in the bombing of 14<sup>th</sup> May 1940, are displayed in the westwork.



### JEAN DE NIVELLES



The jaquemart, symbol of Nivelles, strikes the hour, dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> century and was a gift from Charles the Bold.



### CHURCH OF THE RECOLLETS

20 years after the death of St Francis of Assisi (1226) the Franciscans came to Nivelles. Sacked in 1580 by the protestants, the church was reconstructed on the orders of Margaret of Austria in the late Gothic style, and has a Brabantine chevet and windows with tracery in the flamboyant style. The shrine of St Mary of Oignies can be seen and there is a very romantic cloister, Nivelles' second.

