

# Spiritual Tourism in (South-)Limburg

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South-Limburg, the most remote part of the Netherlands, but also the centre of Europe!



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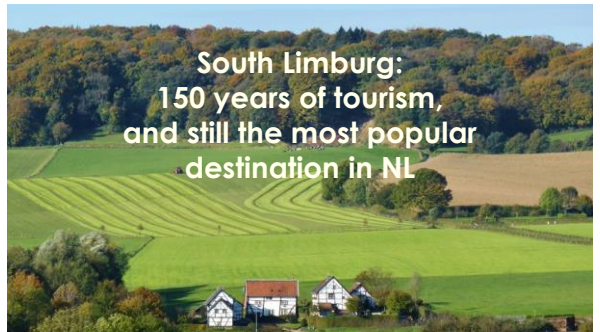
## Facts

- Surface : 25 x 25 km
- Turnover : ± € 1.200.000.000 (industry-wide)
- Employment : 20.000 persons + 12.000 overflow
- Overnights : 5 million
- Spenditure : highest in NL: € 44 pppn (NL = € 33)
- Guest come : because of our landscape & culture
- From where? : 89% domestic, mostly short breaks

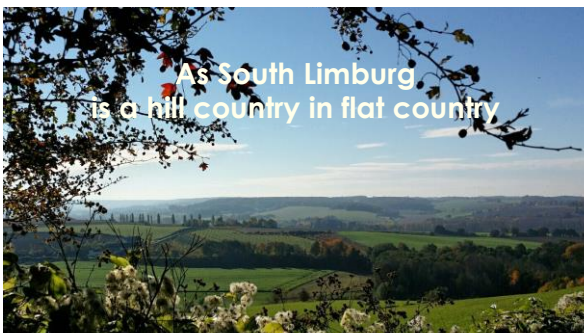
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South Limburg:  
150 years of tourism,  
and still the most popular  
destination in NL



As South Limburg  
is a hill country in flat country



As South Limburg  
is a French wine country...





As South Limburg is a German culture country...



As South Limburg is a Catholic country in a Protestant country

**Trends**

People are on a quest to discover the 'meaning of life'

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**Trends**

Spirituality has become 'something personal', and NOT something of an 'Institution'

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**Trends**

Spirituality has become: 'self discovery', 'personal development', 'search for happiness'

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**Trends**

People want 'religion à la carte'

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### Trends

People call it 'meditation'  
instead of prayer!

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### Trends

It is all about  
the 'experience'

(like Christmas)

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### Trends

80% of the Dutch  
say they regularly feel  
the need for self reflection.

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### Trends

Spirituality is about  
body AND mind, like yoga

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### Trends

The demand for spirituality is latent.

In other words:  
there is a desire, of which people are  
unaware. Therefore there is no action  
taken to fulfil this desire.

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### Trends

There is a growing need for  
digital detox

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## We see 4 types of spiritual tourism

1. **Religious tourism**  
-> worship at religious locations, pilgrimage
2. **Spiritual tourism**  
-> spiritual thoughts, reflection, yoga, meditation
3. **Spa tourism**  
-> wellbeing for body and soul
4. **Business tourism**  
-> team building, reflection on leadership

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## Spiritual Tourism in Limburg

Research by ZKA & Hotel Management School Maastricht

### SWOT, + strengths:

- Wide ranging of offers, like nature, spas, religious places, etc.

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## Spiritual Tourism in Limburg

### SWOT, - weaknesses

- Absence of spiritual landmarks
- Lack of experience in tourism
- Weak structure and organisation
- Mostly religious offers
- Product approach instead of guest approach

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## Spiritual Tourism in Limburg

### SWOT, + opportunities:

- Flourishing tourism industry
- It is in line with current trends
- Secularisation
- Strong religious history and traditions, in comparison to the Dutch market.
- Growing focus on physical and mental health

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## Spiritual Tourism in Limburg

### SWOT, - threats:

- Cultural and religious heritage should not become a mass product or commodity
- Competition with other regions

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## Our goal?

More **visitors!**

**NOT** an increase of religious believers!

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## Our strategy? 3 lines

1. **Defining** our spiritual products
2. **Tailoring** the product to the tourism market  
>so creating **experiences** that are accessible & bookable
3. **Making it known**

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## Strategy line 1: defining the product

Meaning: **what is** our product?  
And what makes us **unique**?  
In comparison to our competition?

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## Our product

- **Locations & Monuments**  
-> focus on Catholic / religious offers



## Our product

- **Roman Catholic Traditions**  
-> pilgrimage, processions, religious rituals, Limburg's culture



## Our product

- **Contemporary events & festivals**  
-> Cultural events like the art festival 'Musica Sacra', the St Matthew Passion at Easter, etc.



## Our product

- **Nature**  
-> Silent walks, listening to trees



### Our product

- Spas
- > Thermal spas, wellness, massages



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### Strategy line 2:

**tailoring** the spiritual product to the tourism market

- so creating **experiences** that are accessible & bookable

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### How did we tailor the spiritual offer to the tourism market?

- Creating a **foundation 'Bezin in Limburg'** with members out of the spiritual field
- Organising **workshops** 'how to deal with tourists'
- Encouraging **cooperation** and have members compose interesting package deals
- Stimulating members by **making offers** that can be booked quickly and easily

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### Strategy line 3:

**Making it known**

- So setting up a marketing program
- Presenting our spiritual offer in every step of the **customer journey**

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- And now some **examples** of marketing actions

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**Creating awareness:**

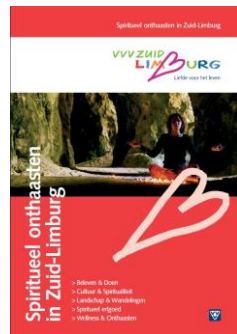
**shelter ad campaigns**

**'Love for the Origin'**



**Product Development:**

**General brochure with our spiritual offer, including where to sleep**



**Product Development:**

**Brochure with spiritual activities**



**Product Development:**

**Walking routes alongside road crosses**



**Product Development**

**Brochure with religious monuments**

**Product Development:  
Bezinningslint cycling routes**



**Spiritual' corner at the Tourist Information Centres**

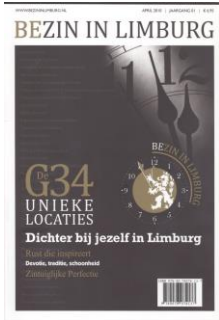


**Commercials for the Tourist Information Centres based on the theme 'Love for the Origin'**



**Online performance of our spiritual products**





Magazine on spirituality in Limburg, developed by the 'Bezin in Limburg' foundation



Organising spiritual tourism events

Accompanying initiatives: Cittaslow expansion, Limburg is the only region in NL with 4 Cittaslow municipalities: Echt-Susteren, Eijsden-Margraten, Vaals and soon Gulpen-Wittem



Transnational cooperation



Transnational cooperation: Spirith Youth with Necstour

