

## A circular walk through rural Netherlands, through the National Landscape Park Northeast Twente

The Twente path is a signposted long-distance walking route through the National Landscape Park Northeast Twente. In the east of the Netherlands. This regional circular walk was created by the Wandelnet Foundation and can be walked in three, four or five days.

Length of the walk: 87 km. ( 54 miles). Maximum altitude on trail: 84 meters (275 feet)!



Mosbeek dales

### **The landscape, its genesis in a nutshell**

The present hills in northeast Twente are a result of the penultimate ice age. The glaciers followed river valleys thousands of years ago, deepening them considerably and creating moraines. Such as the North Twente lateral moraine of Ootmarsum and the moraine between Oldenzaal and Denekamp. Again years later, enormous portions of shifting ice left behind boulder clay: a combination of boulders, gravel, clay, loam and sand. In the last ice age, with the long and arid northern winds, hefty portions of cover sand over it, ranging from a few inches to meters high.

And when it thawed, meltwater formed new stream valleys.

In the Middle Ages, a patchwork of fields and pastures emerged, bordered by hedgerows. To keep the cattle in and the predators out. The rest was peat, heath, marsh, wetlands. Wilderness.

Then things moved quickly. Population pressure, influence of the nobility and increasing pressure on the production of food caused major interventions in the landscape. Reclamations, forest clearing.

Many a primeval forest fell prey to the axe. A barer landscape emerged, in which new crops could be grown.

At the time when the French provided the necessary bureaucracy, such as laws, division of the land, private ownership, it appeared that 33% of the Twente land was already under cultivation. After which the textile "fabriceurs" and their successors devoted themselves to the planting of forests (wood!) and the establishment of estates and country houses. Compare this development with the development of Tuscany, in a previous article. With the advent of fertilizer, things went into high gear. Barbed wire in the prairie! Unemployed people put to work en masse digging canals. Or to clear "wasteland" to reclaim. And then the land consolidation had yet to begin! Meandering streams were laid along the ruler. Fields were smoothed out and meadows were cleared of all herbs. Rye-grass! Efficiency and the bank made their appearance and the rest is history. The ability of the landscape to "manage" water became less and less. Floods! Or periods of drought. After all, rainwater was "so gone." In recent years, much is being done to return to "earlier times." Rivers are meandering again, nature along the rivers is being restored, old plant species stimulated. There subsidized field edge management, ditch edge management, meadow bird management, plot management, pond management, shrubland management, thicket hedge management, alder belt management, wooded bank management, pollard willow management.....etc. etc. Water should be retained in the environment as much as possible and necessary. The Water Boards continue to have work to do. And then it turns out that the substantial nitrogen emissions from farms and (airline) traffic in particular are breaking down a lot of nature, including carefully restored nature. Whether there is then nothing of value and attraction left to see? In sparsely populated northeast Twente, the aforementioned developments have not affected this area. The harmful effects were and are less here. As a result, an attractive, hilly and authentic area has remained. And is emerging. A Landscape Park, where it is more than fine walking. You will encounter many of the facets of and developments in the landscape on your walk through the Park.



**Almelo castle**

### **The trail**

From the Almelo train station - 2,5 hours by train from Schiphol airport - you walk directly into the renovated city center. The Twente textile industry belongs to the past. At the beginning of your route in Almelo you see the last remnant of a textile factory: the gatehouse and chimney, integrated into modern architecture. Now furnished as a restaurant. Water has recently returned to the city center. In the center of town is Huize Almelo, a castle that dates in its present form from 1662.

The trail follows the Gravenallee ( a 2,4 km long avenue to and from the castle), towpaths, wide and small paths, bicycle paths and sometimes small asphalt roads, through a landscape characterized as bocage or coulisse.

You briefly follow the Almelo-Nordhorn Canal, which was dug from 1884 by unemployed people. 20 years later, the canal was completely finished. And obsolete. Hardly ever used by boaters used. Partly because of this, now a unique natural area.



**Almelo-Nordhorn (Germany) canal**

Largely along the banks of the Markgraven stream you reach Tubbergen. Just before Tubbergen the Hondenven, a remnant of the last ice age. And if you look closely you can see in the distance the meters-high statue of Bishop Dr. H.J.A.M. Schaepman, statesman, overlooking the Tubberg heath. To be climbed via a high, steep staircase. With such a statesman you don't just come in contact with! You mostly look up to him.

After Tubbergen you gradually walk into the beautiful area around Ootmarsum. The circles of Jannink, two circular (heath) fields on the Manderheide where in the late 1920s the textile manufacturer Jannink experimented with new farming methods.

Also on the program is the ascent of the Galgenberg. In the Middle Ages the executions executions took place here. The hanged had a sad fate but a beautiful view! After which the beautiful valley of the Mosbeek.

The soil of boulder clay and covering sand is poorly permeable in places. Therefore sources can spring. These sources were responsible for the creation and survival of the three streams, including the Mosbeek.

A visit to the Ice and Ash Infocentre about the history of northeast Twente is worthwhile. Next to the visitor center are the beautiful water mills of Bels and Frans.

Furthermore, the tour goes through the Springendal. A lovely valley, with streams, then again dry, then again wet parts. The name says it all: with springs. With beautiful flowering meadows in the spring. With rare flora. An erosion valley from the last ice age.



**Watermill of Frans**



**Mosbeek dale**



**Farmland in the morning**

After 40 kilometers - two days? -you reach the ancient town of Ootmarsum.

Ootmarsum presents itself very successfully as a town of artists. And from the art presented here art you have to love. The town still cherishes many old customs, including the "vlöggeln" at Easter. A kind of initiation ritual. Inform yourself in advance.

Much of the center has been preserved that is worth seeing.

After which it goes in the direction of Oldenzaal. Partly through an area where the effects of land consolidation striking. Wet meadows largely disappeared. Streams were straightened. Wooded banks made acquaintance with the axe. A few small pieces survived. The farmer mostly had other priorities than (unsubsidized) nature management.

After a stretch along the Almelo-Nordhorn canal, the route heads toward the Singraven estate. With House Singraven, the Coach House, a watermill and a diverse landscape with woods, lanes, fields meadows and some swamps. And of course the ever-present river Dinkel.

In the vicinity of Oldenzaal you come across several country houses. Built from the profits of the textile industry. The buitenplaats. Or Buitenplaets. The manufacturers knew where the most beautiful places in the hills and built beautiful accommodations. By the looks of it, the profits were substantial. Some of them also devoted themselves to agriculture. With model farms. To meet the demand of the growing (working-class) cities. If you keep the production of basic necessities you can also keep wages lower. Thus and often heard explanation for the "hobby" of these manufacturers.



Ootmarsum



Rural path



**Watermill of Singraven**

And on it goes through the hilly scenery: the Tankenberg, the Paasberg, the Hakenberg. Up to 80m high. You can't get any higher in this part of the country. ! A beautiful area! Where you will find several other long-distance hiking trails: the Noaberpad, the Fabricieurspad, the Hilligenpad, the Havezatenpad. To name a few.

Oldenzaal is especially characterized by the presence of the Plechelmus Basilica. Romanesque architectural style. Of sandstone. From the middle of the 12th century. Due to lack of money, a rigorous renovation did not go ahead. With which one of the few Romanesque churches in the Netherlands was preserved! As described, nature took a different course.



**View from the Paasberg**



**Middelkamp (Museum)**

From Oldenzaal begins the last stage, back to Almelo. 30 kilometers.

Through the recreation resort and estate Het Hulsbeek. Through the coulisse landscapes typical of Twente, along a few streams and the Molenven: a piece of rugged nature, open water willow forest and trouser forest. A remnant of what was once common.....

The mill of Saasveld and the open-air theater of Hertme. Where, among other things, the Africa Festival takes place. Once built to stage the passion plays there.



**Bornse beek (creek)**



With some nice stretches along the Born creek. To come back again for a canoe trip?  
To see almost at the end of the hike the beginning of the Doorbraak: a new meandering watercourse between Bornse Beek and Regge. 13 kilometers of new nature. A fine example of how conceptions of nature management, water discharge or water retention, relatively clean cherish water, have become more firmly established. A feat of the Water Board.  
You are then back on the Gravenallee, where your walk began. Make a note of how the old Count of Almelo knew how to maintain his estate perfectly!  
Only 2.5 kilometers remain. To the NS Station Almelo.



**Gravenallee Almelo**



**rural path**

### General route tips

- Maps: the hiking guide Twente path, regional path 2, with detailed topographic maps, scale 1:25,000. With information about overnight accommodations on the route and public transportation (train, bus). Publisher: Wandelnet-LAW Amersfoort.  
Or buy one of the topographic maps at the VVV tourist office.
- -Accommodation: see the guide. Hotels, B&B 's, on the farm, guesthouses, whatever you like (pay). Also possible: "Free" pole camping spots. Although we do wonder if the latter still exists. Inquire about it in advance at a local tourist office. Wild camping is not allowed.
- Altitude: up to 80m. The Paasberg. Or the Galgenberg, near the German border: 70m.! Real mountains!
- Total length of the hike: about 84 km. The route begins and ends at the train station of Almelo.
- The whole path is marked yellow-red. The colors of the regional trails.
- The route has the stage locations: Almelo, Tubbergen, Ootmarsum, Oldenzaal, Hertme.
- Oldenzaal also has an NS-train station. So you can also start here.



little chapel



**The Dinkel river, Lutterzand nature reserve**



**Springendal (sources)**



**Ural path in autumn**



**farm on trail**

