

## The Noaber trail, along the Dutch – German border, a long distance trail

The Noaberpad is a marked long-distance hiking trail of 415 kilometers ( 260 miles) between Nieuweschans in Groningen and Emmerich in Germany. The LAW 10.

It follows the border area of the noabers of Germany and the Netherlands. An area where the residents on both sides of the border mostly speak the same dialect. And where, long before Schengen experienced the border as inconvenient rather than useful. Many noabers on the Dutch side were and or wanted to dependent on German products, on merchandise but also on music and television programs. Or watched a German channel for the weather forecast, because "on the Dutch TV was only about the weather in "the West" anyway.

And did the noabers on the German side much prefer the market in Almelo, for example. Or Winterswijk. Or Emmen. Or Ter Apel. Or Enschede.

Through such an area this trail goes, crossing the border frequently, without checking. Sometimes without realize that you have crossed the border.

**Stages:** for the whole route you should count on 20 - 25 day-hikes.

**Maps:** [The Nivon](#) in cooperation with the St. Wandelnet Amersfoort has published the walking guide NOABERPAD. It contains a lot of information about the route and detailed route maps.

**Marking:** the route is marked with the well-known white-red stripes.

**Accommodation:** from hotels to simple accommodation in private homes. The hiking guide contains a list of many accommodation options. Wild camping is not allowed.

**Transportation:** both Nieuweschans and Emmerich can be reached by train. For the intermediate stage locations it is a matter of further research at home. Bus stops are indicated on the maps But that may change! There is a fast train running between Schiphol airport and Groningen: 3 hrs. Groningen - Nieuweschans: 1 hrs. by local train. A fast train between Emmerich and Schiphol is running. About 2 hrs.



**Vastness of the landscape**

## The route

### Province of Groningen

Almost from the start at the **Nieuweschans** train station you are introduced to the vastness of the clay soils cultivated by farmers. If you walk there during the sugar beet campaign, the clay is everywhere. It seems boring, at first, but after walking several kilometers through this vast land you start to love it!

I'm sure!

The clay fields and meadows continue until just south of **Oudeschans**. Where the sand and peat lands begin. **Bellingwolde**: an attractive regional village with a protected townscape. Monumental mansions and farms. With the necessary Art Nouveau features. And a very old church from the 16th century.



**Oudeschans ( ramp, a fortress) 1593**

**Oudeschans**, a fortified village. Once intended to close off the connection to and from the city of Groningen - held by the Spanish.

Built in 1593.

Currently a lively, inhabited village.



**Magnus church, Bellingwolde, 1527**

At **Wedderbergen** - the name says it all - you enter a completely different landscape: slopes and trees and the remnants of wooded banks. And shifting dunes, created in the Middle Ages by deforestation and overgrazing. You see: nothing new under the sun.

A little further on in **Wedde** is the House at Wedde ( a mansion) to admire.

After Wedde, you walk through the basin of the Ruiten Aa. Work is underway to restore the meandering character of the stream. The stream valley should become more meandering, wetter, more colorful and varied. It used to be: get rid of the water as quickly as possible. Now it is: hold it as long as possible.

At **Wollinghuzen** you turn off in the direction of **Bourtange**. A fortified village that was built during the Revolt. Or 80-year war. A village in the Bourtange Moor, the only place - on a *tange*, a stretch of firmer sand - where you could pass through the area towards Groningen. Of strategic importance, in other words. For example, to isolate the Spaniards in Groningen. Before you walk into the fortress, you can take a loop walk east of the village. An area with sparse grassland and low bushes. A bird-rich area. The adder has also been spotted there!



**The entrance to Fort Boertange (village) 1580**



William of Orange began the construction of the fortress in 1580. Help from the Westervold farmers was minimal. And when the prince ran out of money, it was the end of the story.

Thirteen years later, Willem Lodewijk took up the thread again. This time with success.

A siege and attack by the Spanish general Verdugo failed!

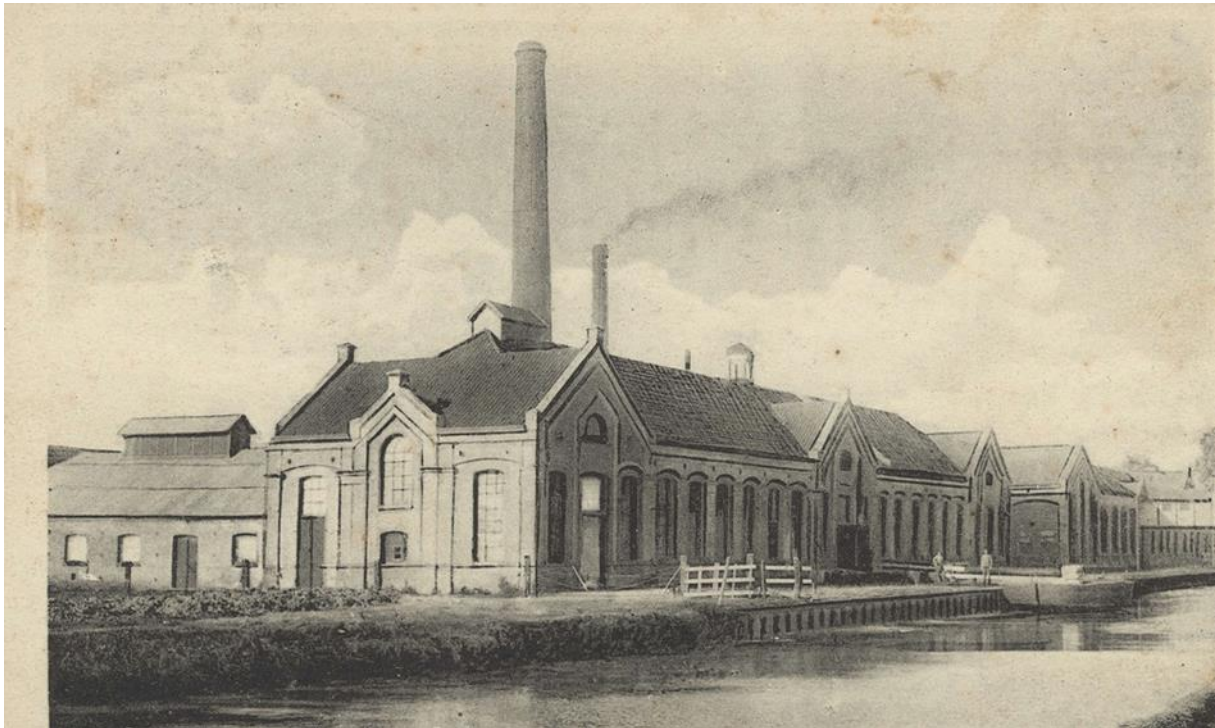
In 1851, the end of the fortress. Farmers took possession of the village. And then you know: most of the ramparts were demolished and the ramparts filled in. The farmers didn't like the fortress. Farmers think about land. And land. And finally land.

Much of what you see now is due to restoration work.

Then you head toward **Selling** through a hushed landscape, vast, forests, a moorland clearing. And through **ter Borg**, four farms and a sheepfold and a heathland of 35 hectares.

And on to "below," the southernmost tip of the province of Groningen.

The land of potatoes, potatoes and potatoes. And of the potato flour factory.



**a potato flour factory in former times**

And also the land of anarchists, communists, Domela Nieuwenhuis, the SDAP, the socialist union, the CPN.....(communist party of the Netherlands) .

Poverty and unemployment were the order of the day in this region.

You walk before entering **Ter Apel** through the monastery forests. With imposing beeches and oaks.

They are the oldest forests of Groningen.

Ter Apel also lies on the Ruiten Aa river.

After which you can admire the beautiful monastery in the village of ter Apel. Now a museum including a permanent exhibition "copper engravings from the States Bible of 1682 printed by the Keur brothers at Dordrech".



**Monastery Museum ter Apel**

The route continues through peat-colonial farmlands. Excavated bogs, straightforward land development. You are in Drente.

**Province of Drente.**

Quite unlike all the beauty this province has to offer in terms of hiking areas, this entrance is rather mediocre. Barren and vast. **Emmer-Compascuum** is a typical peat colony, built along a canal. Compascere = grazing together.

From here to the border at **Schoonebeek**, no expense is spared to return the old landscape or to cherish the remnants of raised bog. The Amsterdamsche Veld, the Schoonebekerveld, Bargerosterveen..... you will walk through them for miles. Wonderful!



**The trail....**



### Torf

From one fuel to another: from peat to oil.

In 1943, an oil field was found below Schoonebeek. Jackhammers were used to pump up the oil for years. During your yet you will see several jackhammers. Which no longer work. The oil is now brought to the surface using steam. Huge pipes across the fields and meadows.

The first introduction to Schoonebeek, however, is Het Oosterse Bos, a collection of old Saxon farmhouses with the requisite reed weaving.

After Schoonebeek, you walk into the county of **Bentheim**, Germany.

As said: there is no visible border.

### County of Bentheim (Germany)

A gently sloping area with, over the centuries, the Vechte (the river Vecht) as its main lifeline. The river was also an important transportation artery. The Bentheimer sandstone quarried in this area went on boats to Amsterdam, among other places, for the palace on Dam Square. Or for the cathedral in Utrecht. Or the church in **Coevorden**. (Netherlands)

The route runs, from **Emlichheim**, partly along the Vecht river.

You then also walk on [the Vechtdalpad](#), an equally beautiful multi-day hiking route from Zwolle along the river.

The last piece through the county is also, scenically, the most beautiful: the Wilsumer Berge. With a highest point of 85 meters. Foothills of a moraine, formed by a sliding glacier that left behind a mixture of sand, loam, boulders and gravel.

A walk over hills, through forests, moors and sand drifts. Beautiful views.

In this region live and work farmers who have land both in the Netherlands and in Germany.

South of **Uelsen**, the last village before you walk into Twente, are some burial mounds. Tumuli.

The trail passes them. Once there were many more visible, but yes....the land consolidation. The farmer knew what to do with such an awkward hill on his land.



**Tomb mound near Uelsen (Germany)**

### **Twente region**

Unnoticed, you walk back into the Netherlands. At a moor named Paardenslenkte. A name that recalls the smuggling of horses. What was not smuggled!

After the first left turn you meet the [Twente path](#). In the report on this path you will find detailed information about the origins of the Twente landscape.

It now heads together towards the Springendal. Hills, springs, lakes, hay fields, heathland, historic farms.....and streams, including the beautiful Mosbeek. Not on the route, but the Mosbeek "feeds" the water mills of Bels and Frans. Take a detour?

You are now walking through one of the most beautiful parts of [the Noaberpad](#).

On to **Ootmarsum**. A town (from about 1300) with a protected townscape in which 30 national monuments.



**Ootmarsum ( Netherlands)**

The Noaberpad takes you to the Kuiperberg (71 meters), part of the lateral moraine between Ootmarsum and Uelsen (D). And via **Groot-Agelo** it goes to the Almelo-Nordhorn canal. Dug at the end of the 19th century. The last stretch was completed in 1902. A lot of unemployed people earned - and spent - their bread here as part of the work relief program! - . The canal never got its intended function. It is now an extremely beautiful nature reserve.

After a few kilometers you turn right into the Twente landscape. This time with the pocket forests, blue grasslands, hornbeams and fens.

Where we eventually come across Havezathe Het Everloo. An estate with a monumental building house. With floors of Bentheimer sandstone. Bordering the Roderveld, a wooded and especially wet heathland. Now again in private ownership.

After which the route runs through **Hoog Lutte**. Including the Paasberg (80m). Over beautiful paths and trails Lutte is reached. And you cross the Töddenweg and the Fabriceurpad. Just the multitude of marked paths indicates that you are walking through a unique part of the Netherlands here!



**View**



**Mark**



Southwest of **de Lutte** you cross the A1, highway. Via estate the Snippert with the eye-catcher the farm Judithhoeve, the Oldenzaalse Veen we cross the border again at **Glane**. It must not have been easy for the route makers to find a good passage in this busy corner of Enschede, Gronau, Glanerbrug.

But fortunately there is soon the Aamsveen. With its living raised bog. The Aamsveen was spared during the reclamation drives. Peace, vastness.....shallow grassland, peat pits, heaths, trouser forests...a great variety.... peat mosses, fragrant night orchid....



**Aamsveen border, in autumn**

After which the route heads west again, to the Smalenbroek estate located just south of Enschede. A park, beautiful stately avenues, a pond, the meandering Brunninksbeek. A surprise! No real time to catch your breath here.

The White moor ( Witte Veen) awaits you. Partly in the Netherlands, partly in Germany. A small-scale landscape with peat, heath, forest and water and swamp forests. If you still have fitness and time left: take a trip to the **Haarmühle** in Germany. Not for the gallows (it is long gone) but for a nice lunch or a drink in beautiful "antique" surroundings.

At **Buurse** you can switch to the Trekvogelpad and/or the Overijsselpad, so to speak. This part of rural Netherlands is the land of long-distance hiking trails!

In sight comes the wonderful surroundings of the Buurserveen and the Haaksbergerveen. Peatlands. And on the German side the Ammeloer Venn. A remnant of a large bog area. Forests, impoverished soils, moors, dry heath with - so it sounds - a large bird population. Ponds.



**Buurserveen**

On to **Oldenkotte** and - after that - the Zwillbrockervenn.

Where exactly it happened we do not know, but we are now in the Achterhoek region.

### **Achterhoek region**

At **Oldenkotte/Rekken**, the Berkel river enters the Netherlands

Due to changed insights in the field of water management and nature development, attempts have been made in recent years to give nature and the river space once again. They have stopped mowing the river banks, in some places the river bank has been partially excavated to allow the river to meander a little and they are trying to involve the old river branches in the stream again wherever possible (From: *Wikipedia*).



**Berkel river**

You walk through the area where there was still considerable fighting, looting, killing and destruction during the 80 Years' War, while the Golden Age was "underway" in the West. There was absolutely no Golden Age here. There are historians who believe that this situation is the origin of the view prevailing in the East to this day that the West is "all-important."

See also the texts on weather forecasting at the beginning of this article. Or else: distrust the West. Or else again: it is the feelings of inferiority in the East that are decisive.

Anyway, you move on to the Zwillbrockervenn, a large pond, home to a sizeable gull colony. The official estimate comes to 15,000 of these birds. It is also the world's northernmost nesting site for a colony of about forty flamingos.



**Foto: Tubantia (Esther Reijrink)**

On view from March through June.

You are in Germany again.

Back to **Zwolle**. Not the Hanseatic city, but the hamlet. Also called Zwolle bie Grolle. To make the difference clear.

Near this hamlet a nice stretch along the river Slinge.

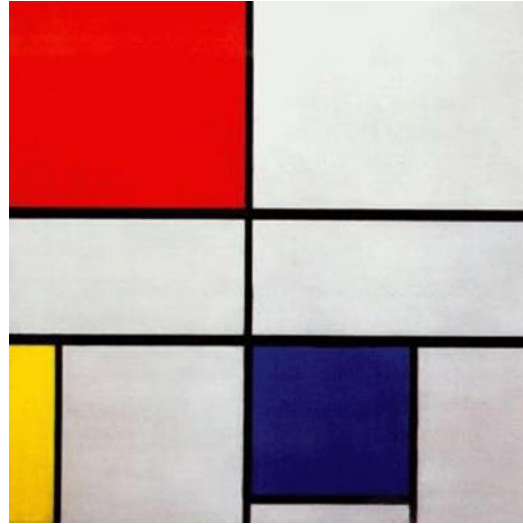
Where you come across another long-distance path: the Scholtenpad. 105 kilometers, around **Winterswijk**. As said: you are in the region with a lot of long distance hiking trails.

Through a landscape where powerful gentlemen farmers - the Scholten - have had their influence. To eventually become more powerful than the nobility. You can see it in the farms. They radiate something.

Winterswijk includes the Museum Mondrian, where he lived from age 8 to 20.



**Mondriaan, Haystack with willow trees**



**Mondriaan, composition c large**

From Winterswijk via - the view of - the quarry across the border again to **Oeding**. In the quarry 240 million years old layers of earth come to the surface. And you can find fossils.

And after Oeding it continues through the beautiful scenery of the Achterhoek. Wide avenues, sandy paths, mighty rows of trees, impressive farmhouses, various efforts to restore natural waterways, meandering streams, fens in green meadows.....an old - neglected - railroad track as a beautiful nature reserve.

On to **Bocholt**. One of the largest cities the route visits.

With some fine old historic buildings, including the town hall and the St. Georg church.

*"Nörgens bäter as in Bokelt."*

Via the Bocholter Aa (strang) we leave the city. Along a beautiful hiking and biking path next to the river.



**Bocholt Aa river**

You are now gradually walking into Montferland through a landscape initially dominated by meadows along various rivers. Like the Rhine and the Old IJssel. And the German IJssel.

Apparently very suitable for building castles and setting up estates.

Anholt Castle (D), Landford House (detour for a while), Hardenberg House, Engbergen estate.....

After this, the route gets rather boring for a while. West of **Gendringen**.

On the Galgenberg, part of Huis Bergh in '**s-Heerenberg**, it goes straight south. Through a wooded area.



Huis Berg/ Berg Castle

'**s-Heerenberg** with its castle, beautiful town hall (1531, the Drost Daemhuis and some 50 other monuments!)

Through **Stokkum** and the beautiful Montferland you reach, in Germany, **Hoch Elten**. At the top of the Eltenberg (83 meters). The spire of the St. Vitus Church can be seen from afar, no matter at which angle you stand. Also note the Drusesbrunnen, 57 meters deep, a well.

And again you encounter another long-distance trail: this time the Pieterpad. 501 kilometers, 26 etappes/stages. (311 miles).



**Hoog Elten, St Vitus church**

At the top of Hoch Elten you have already seen and shadow of the Rhine. At **Spijk** you walk the final stage of the Noaberpad along this river.

In Emmerich (Germany) you can get on the train, to....?



**Emmerich am Rhein (Rhine)**



resting on the Rhine. The finish!



the dotted line is the border Germany-Netherlands (left)