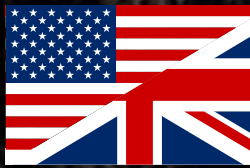
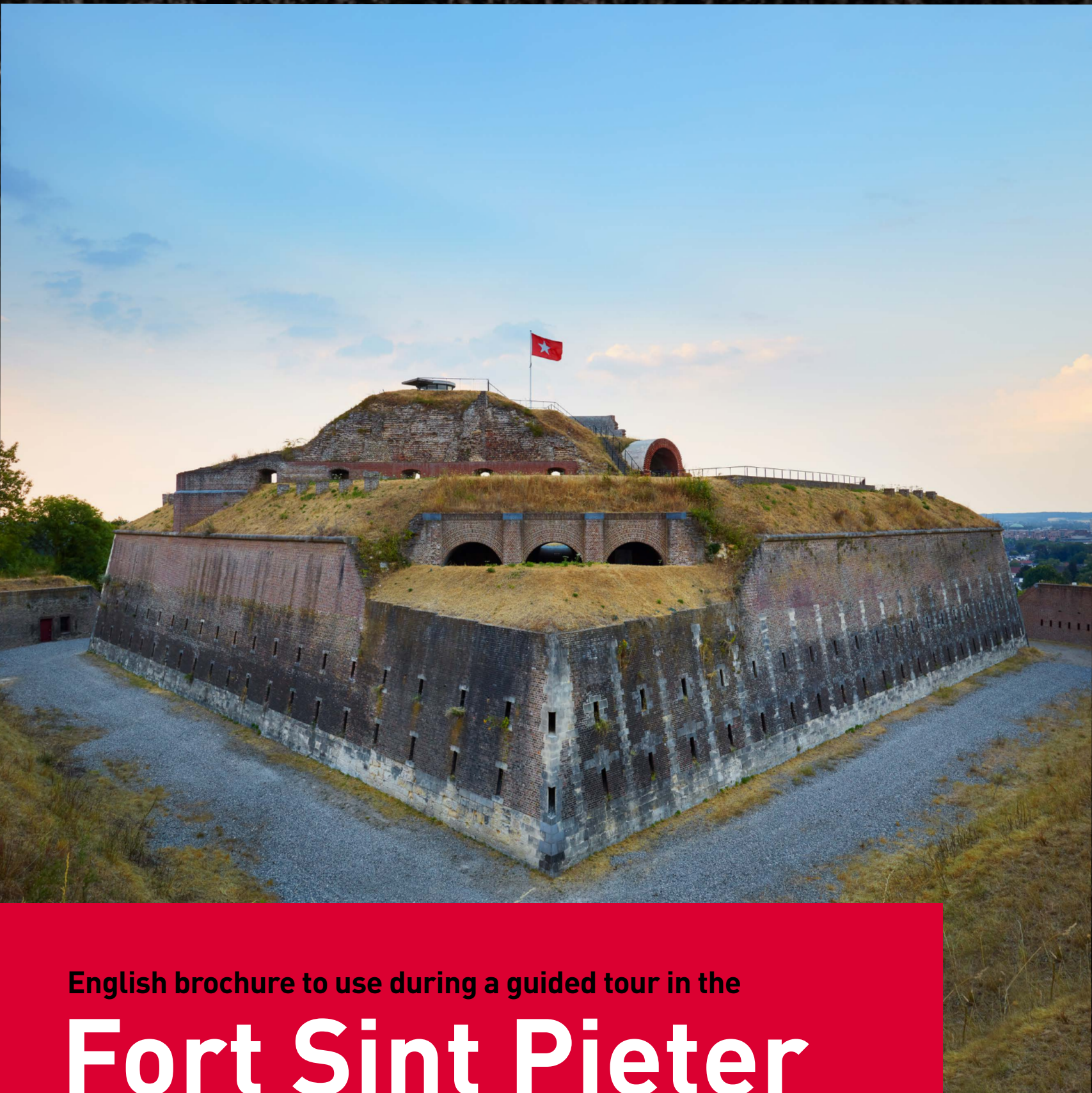


maastricht under ground



FORT | CAVES | CASEMATES



English brochure to use during a guided tour in the

Fort Sint Pieter



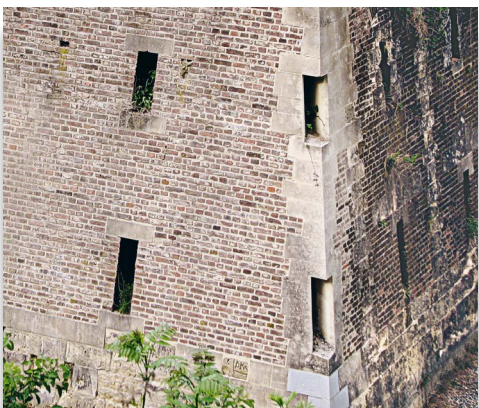
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MENU

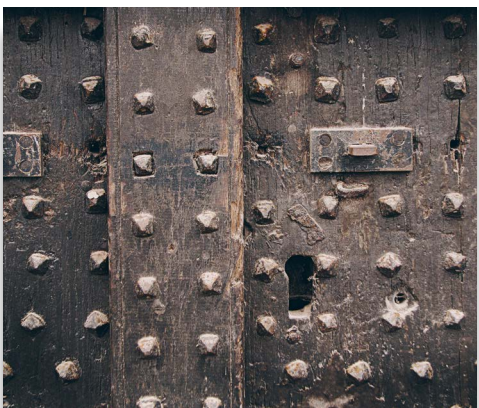
MENU 



WELCOME
& SAFETY



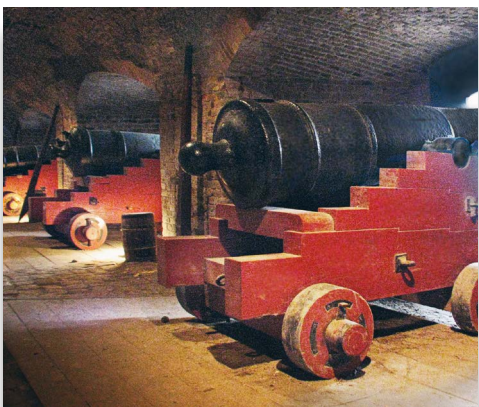
INTRODUCTION



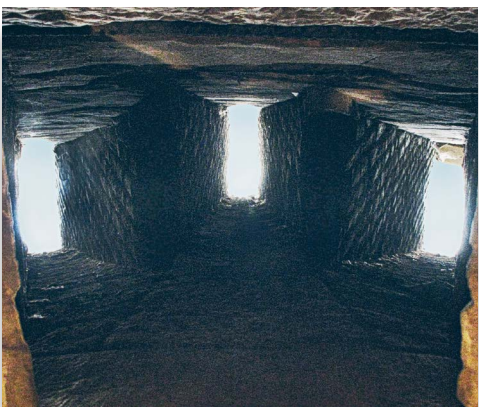
MAIN
ENTRANCE



WATER WELL



CANNON
GALLERY



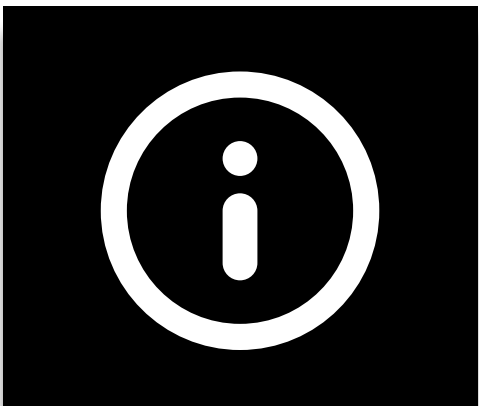
LOOPHOLES
FOR MUSKETS



MORTAR
CASEMATE



TOP OF
THE FORT



MORE
INFORMATION

WELCOME TO FORT SINT PIETER

MENU 



On behalf of Maastricht Underground and Natuurmonumenten (Society for the Preservation of Nature Monuments in the Netherlands) we extend to you a warm welcome to the more than 300 year old Fort Sint Pieter. →

On behalf of Maastricht Underground and Natuurmonumenten (Society for the Preservation of Nature Monuments in the Netherlands) we extend to you a warm welcome to the more than 300 year old Fort Sint Pieter.

During this guided (1 hour) tour you will see the most interesting parts of Fort Sint Pieter. It's however possible that you won't see all the highlights described in this document (depending on the size and fitness of the group, the weather conditions and other activities in the fort). The order of the sights may vary and therefore not always be the same as in this document. Taking a look at previous menu can help you to find the according page. Please feel free to ask questions.

We hope you will enjoy your guided tour!

SAFETY

MENU 

First of all we ask your attention for some safety aspects:

- ⚠ Some floors are uneven. Please take care when walking on such floors.
- ⚠ Please stay with your group and follow the directions given by your guide.

INTRODUCTION

MENU 

This Fort has a pentagonal ground plan with a circular gallery along the five outer walls. The walls are connected via 2 main galleries which cross in the middle of the Fort.



The point of this fortification is called the “saillant” and it is pointed towards the enemy. In this case southwards, because most of the attacks came from this direction: Spain and especially France.

During one of the sieges by the French in 1673, King Louis XIV attacked Maastricht with an army of 40.000 men. The personal bodyguards of the King were the Musketeers, amongst which the famous d’Artagnan, from the stories of Alexandre Dumas. →



To determine the strategy of the attack, the King brought a genial strategist: Vauban. Looking at the possibilities he saw that he could use the northern slope of mount Sint Pieter. This, combined with the use of the latest available cannons made that the city was conquered in a record breaking time of just 13 days. →

In order to prevent this from ever happening again, it was decided to build a fort on the northern slope. The first lower levels were built in 1701/1702, probably using the ideas of Vauban.

This fort was in a strategic important position and with its cannons it could cover a large area.

Although this fort is small, it did its job very well. At full strength there were over 400 soldiers working in the fort. That happened only one time in history, when it was under fire from the hill “Louwberg”. The fort was never taken.

From 1816 on they started to expand the fort as weapon technology improved. For that reason 2 more levels were added to the fort (the 2 top levels). →

The first one was a level with bunkers for mortars and the second level consisted of 12 cannon casemates. To prevent a collapse inside the fort, due to the extra weight of these 2 levels, some buttresses were added to the main galleries in the form of constrictions.

In the middle of the fort, where the 2 main galleries intersect, there is a ventilation-shaft. Using this shaft, the soldier standing on the original top of the fort could pass on information about the enemy.



MAIN ENTRANCE

The main entrance of Fort St. Pieter is a heavy oak door with slots for shooting at the approaching enemy.

At this location you can see how thick the walls of the fort are. These walls consist entirely of brickwork. Outside the main entrance was a wooden staircase. This could be taken away or burned, when there was an attack.

Inside, opposite the main entrance, you will notice 2 stairs. These stairs lead up to the “terre-plein”, on top of the fort. →



MENU

In between is one of the main galleries, leading to the saillant (point of the fort).

The stairs to the left and right of the main entrance lead down to the 4 caponnières. From the caponnière, the dry moat could be covered with gunfire.

In the walls left and right of the entrance we can also see 2 lines of loopholes for muskets. There are vent holes in the ceiling for gun smoke.



WATER WELL

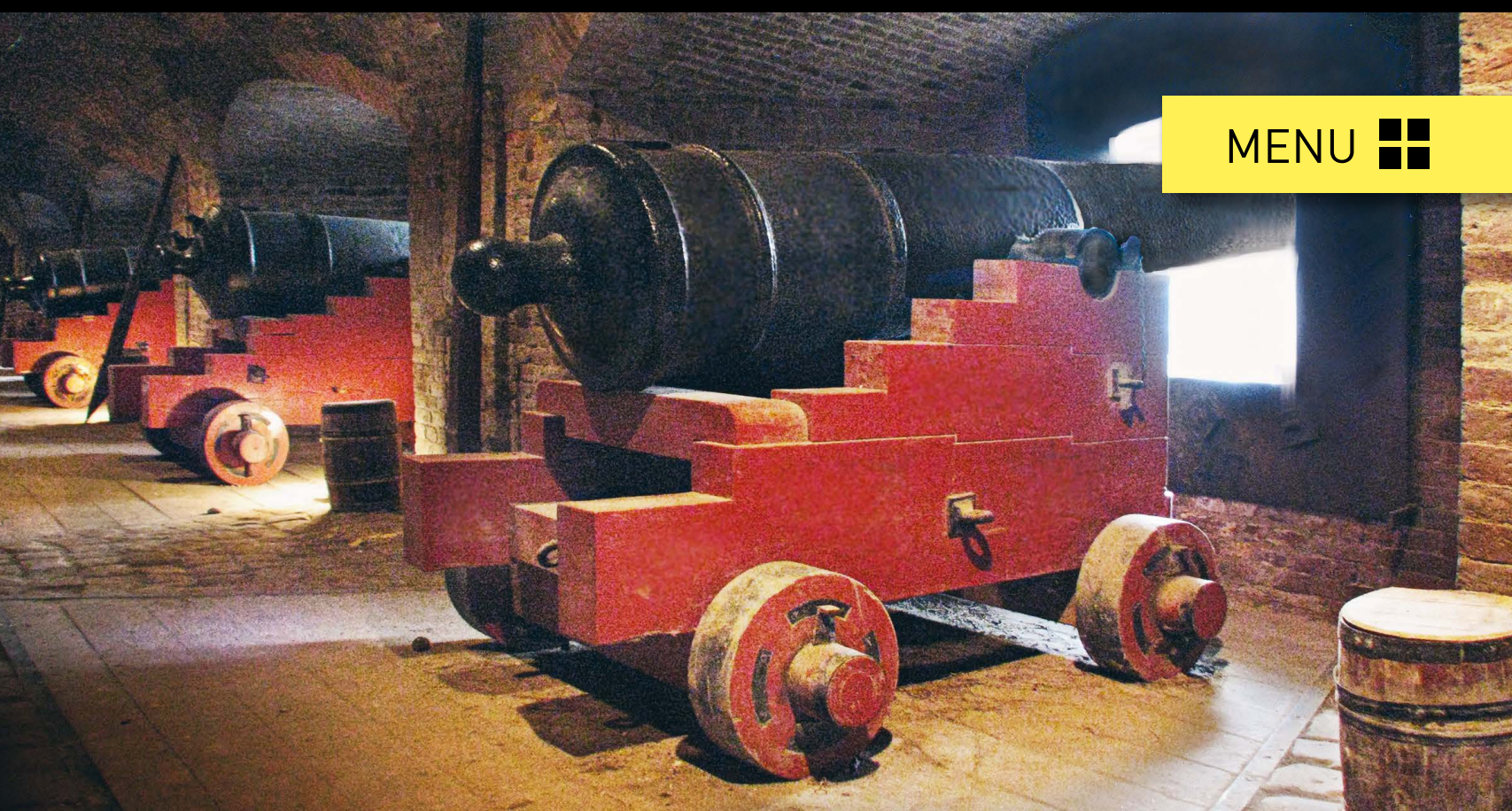
Just off-center of the middle of Fort St. Pieter is a 40 meter (130 feet) deep water well. The water was hoisted up using a leather bucket.

Making a 40 meter deep water well is of course no easy job. But water was important, not only for drinking, but also for cooling the cannons. →

The shaft of the well was also used for bringing up supplies like (packed) food, gunpowder and cannonballs. These supplies were stored in the cave system of mount Saint Pieter, underneath the fort. Above the well you can still see the pulley system that was used. In addition to that there was a hoist mechanism on the southern side of the well.

Around the well a spiral staircase leads down to the caves. This connection still exists, but because of the poor condition of the steps the stairs are no longer accessible.





MENU

CANNON GALLERY

The cannons on this side of Fort St. Pieter had to defend the area between the fort and the river Meuse, and also the Meuse itself.

These are front loaders. To load them, you had to pull them backwards, but only for the first shot; the recoil of these guns is very strong! The tools you see behind the cannons were used during the loading. They started with loading the gunpowder, then some straw and, last but not least; a heavy and solid cannonball with more straw. →



At first, the cannonballs were made of stone, later of cast iron.

Immediately after the cannon was fired, the soldiers started to prepare it for a next shot. But first they had to cool the barrel with water from the water well. The time between 2 shots was about 10 minutes.

Only under the guns there are wooden floors. The cannons were equipped with iron “tires” to prevent the wooden wheels from breaking. Iron on top of cobblestones could form sparks. →

In a room with a lot of gunpowder sparks are not very welcome. Also, the weight of the cannons could break the cobblestones, whereas wood bends back. This is why they made these wooden floors.

CANNON FACTS (30 POUNDER)	
Weight	2.500 kg (5,510 pounds)
Minimum range	600 meters (1960 feet)
Maximum range	3.000 meters (9840 feet)
Amount of gunpowder	4,9 kg (10,8 pounds)
Max. speed cannonball	1980 km/hr (1230 mph)
Cannonball weight	13,6 kg (30 pounds)



LOOPHOLES FOR MUSKETS

There are 2 lines of loopholes: The upper ones are for shooting in a straight line at approaching enemies. The lower ones are for covering the dry moat around the fort.

From every loophole you could choose 3 different directions (left, straight ahead and right), →

there are some exceptions with up to 5 different directions. Because the loopholes from the left and right directions cross in the middle of the wall, the amount of loopholes is the same at the inside as at the outside.

Because of the thickness of the walls and the tightness of the loopholes, it is almost impossible to aim. You couldn't see the enemies. But shooting at a high pace and with in random different directions all the time, the enemy didn't know what to expect.

There are 110 loopholes in total. During an exercise or a real attack, all these muskets produce a great quantity of gunpowder smoke. The galleries would be completely filled with smoke within minutes.



MORTAR CASEMATE

The lowest level on top of the fort is called the “terre-plein”. The mortar casemate is at the other end of the passage “1821”. This is the year this part of the fort was built. Halfway in the passage you will walk over a grate; this is the communication shaft.

In the mortar casemate there was room for 3 mortars. You can see a replica of the type of mortar that was used here. →

A mortar was loaded with hollowcast iron balls. These were filled with gunpowder and even with nails and broken glass. The ball had its own fuse. Of course the length of this fuse was longer than that of the mortar itself...





TOP OF THE FORT

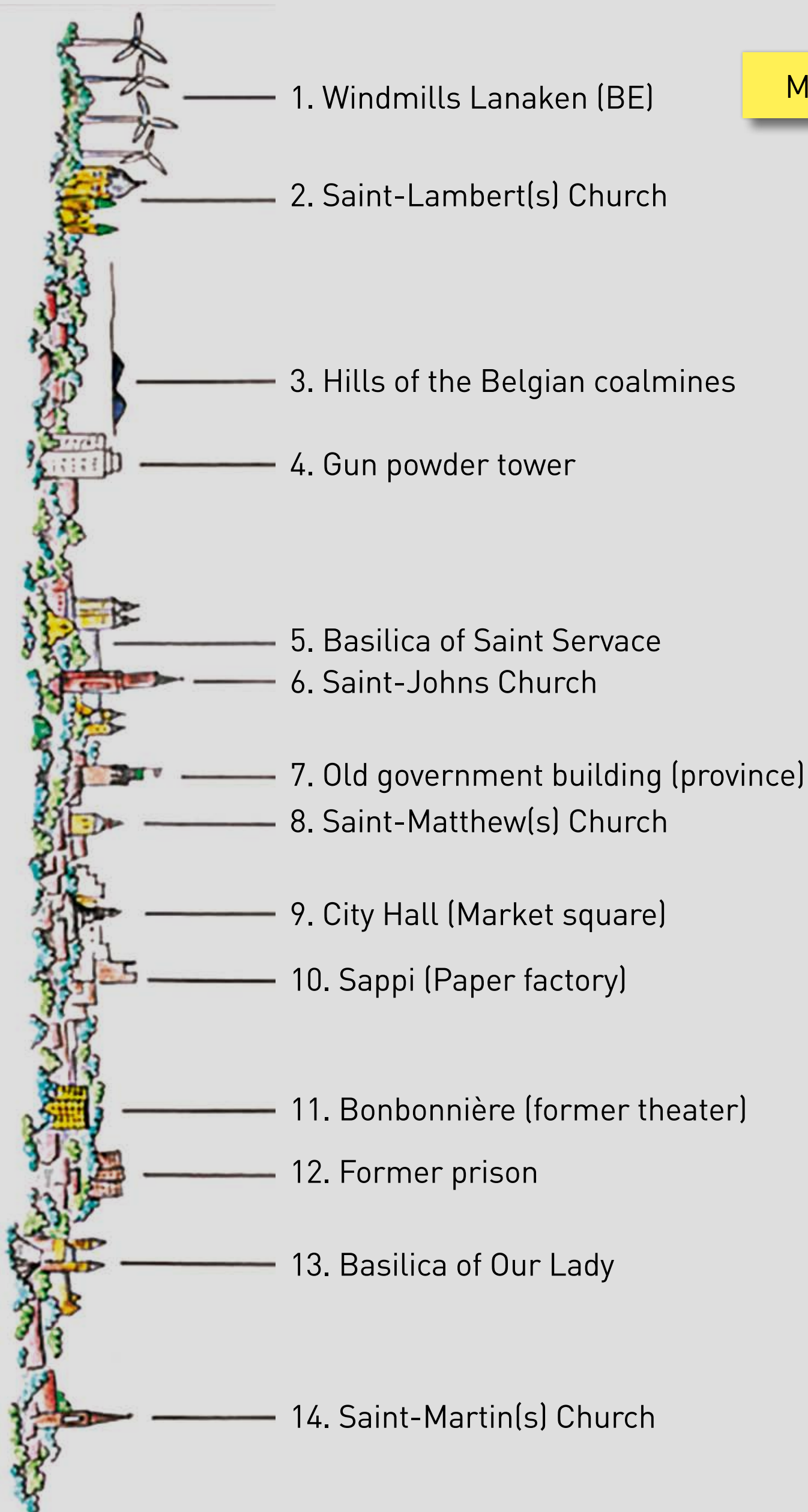
When weather conditions permit, your guide may take you up to the highest point of Fort Saint Pieter. This is also the highest viewpoint of the city.

The concrete bunker was used in the 2nd World War and even during the Cold War. It was used to spot military aircraft and pinpoint their location with the help of other high observation post spread over the city. →

On top of the fort you'll see the flag of the city of Maastricht; a red flag with a white star in the middle. This flag is flying above the fort, except for some special occasions. At certain public holidays the flag of The Netherlands will fly.

Southwards you have a view over Mount Saint Pieter (Mount Saint Pieter) between the rivers Meuse and Jeker. Here you can spot the chimney of the ENCI (cement industry). More to the right (west) you see the vineyard "Apostelhoeve", at the other side of the Jeker-valley.

You can find an explanation of the skyline of the city centre on the next page →



MORE INFORMATION

MENU 

We have come to the end of this guided tour through Fort Sint Pieter. We hope you enjoyed your walk in this authentic part of the city of Maastricht. We would like to hear your opinion on this guided tour. To do so, please go to the [**Tripadvisor – Maastricht Underground**](#)

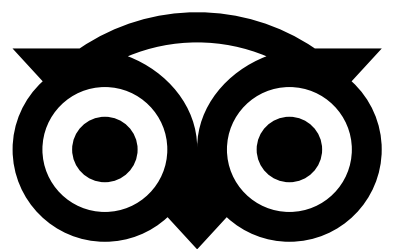
For information on other locations of Maastricht Underground, go to [**www.maastrichtunderground.nl**](http://www.maastrichtunderground.nl) or ask your guide.

More information about geology, the cretaceous period and fossils visit the Maastricht Natural History Museum, De Bosquetplein 7, Maastricht: [**www.natuurmonumenten.nl**](http://www.natuurmonumenten.nl)

maastricht under ground

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