



Discover all the historic hotspots

Did you know that the origin of our Royal House lies in Breda? Explore Royal Breda takes you on a discovery of the places that remind you of Breda's royal roots and connects surprising new places with history. We embrace old and new pride and look at our Nassau past with today's eyes. Also check out royalroots.nl for more in-depth information about Breda's Royal Roots.

Feel free to explore the local hotspots in your own order and pace. Besides the historical route, there is also a green and creative route. Combine the routes and discover Breda as a limitless, green and hospitable city. To do so, download the Explore Breda App.

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👑 Nassau Baroniemonument

Delpratsingel 1

Engelbrecht I of Nassau and Johanna van Polanen made their entrance as the new Lord and Lady of Breda six hundred years ago. Festivities in the city!

The 'Blyde Incomste' of Engelbrecht and Johanna was immortalized in stone five hundred years later by architect Pierre Cuypers, known for his other works like the Rijksmuseum and Central Station in Amsterdam. Queen Wilhelmina came to inaugurate the monument.

Engelbrecht and Johanna made Breda their home. Their marriage became the beginning of our Dutch royal family. The eleven years old Johanna would've never dared to dream of that moment. Breda became a Nassau city and reaped the benefits, because during the 150 years that the Nassaus lived in Breda, the city became richer and more beautiful.



🗼 The Lighthouse

Academiesingel

If you are wondering why there is a lighthouse in the Academiesingel, the answer is simple: purely for decoration. Not to show ships the way, because the age of ships that came from the sea to Breda is long behind us.

'The Lighthouse' was conceived by artist and architect Aldo Rossi. A modern eye-catcher on the edge of the historic centre. Breda loves contrasts.

Aldo Rossi was not the first Italian artist that worked for Breda. Hendrik III of Nassau and his wife Mencia de Mendoza brought Tommaso Vincidor to Breda. Five centuries ago, the latter converted the Castle of Breda into a magnificent Renaissance palace. A first for Northern Europe!



3

🌳 Park Valkenberg

J.F. Kennedylaan

At first glance, Park Valkenberg looks like a park like any other. But if you dig deeper, you discover that this piece of Breda has a history of its own.

Originally the park was a real forest with tall trees. Here, the castle residents used caged falcons to hunt. What's in a name! Hendrik III and his wife Mencia de Mendoza had a modern Italian garden created here. Later, the park was remodeled in French style with flowerbeds that contained statues. The inhabitants of Breda did not have much use for this. The park was only for castle residents and their guests.

Fortunately, much has changed over the centuries. Now everyone gets to enjoy the park. And on King's Day and during festivals like Parkies and Breda Barst, Valkenberg is the place where all of Breda comes together.



4

🏰 Castle of Breda

Kasteelplein 10

Count Engelbrecht I was the first Nassau to live at Breda Castle. For Willem van Oranje, too, the Castle was his home. Since 1828, officers have been trained here for the Dutch army.

Hendrik III, Willem van Oranje's uncle, was married to a wealthy Spanish woman. They had the Castle converted into a magnificent palace.

The Nassaus were often visited by other nobles at the Castle. They threw large parties there, because that was part of their status or on the occasion of a special event. Over time, besides counts, dukes and kings, two emperors came to visit: Maximiliaan I and Karel V. A special guest was the fugitive English king Karel II. He stayed with his sister Maria Stuart, the widow of Stadholder Willem II, for a few months in 1660. There will be another big party here in 2028, when the Royal Military Academy will celebrate its 200th anniversary.



5

🌉 Hoge Brug

Prinsenkade

The Hoge Brug at the harbor is less than twenty years old, but its name refers to the high bridge that was here in the sixteenth century. Back then the harbor was an important trading place.

On one side, you overlook the towers of the Spanjaardsgat, built by Hendrik III to defend the Castle. Turn a quarter turn clockwise and you will see the covered fish hall, built around 1800 to trade sea fish. Back then, Breda still had an open connection to the sea.

Another quarter turn further, you look out over the harbour, filled in in the 1960s but reopened since 2007. With terraces, canal boats and other water-based entertainment, the harbour has become a cosy downtown hotspot.



6

🎨 Muurschilderingen

Potkanstraat

Blind Walls Gallery realised murals in Potkanstraat to beautify the alley.

The lady surrounded by water plants and an octopus is a painting by Rutger Termohlen. In it, he pays tribute to the harbour and the entertainment district that lies just around the corner.

The Blind Walls Gallery tells the stories of Breda through almost 150 murals. You can find the artworks throughout the city.



7

Big Belly

Prinsenkade 3

In the sixteenth century there were about forty breweries around the harbor, now the bar of the Breda's brewery Big Belly is still located here. Beer was hugely popular hundreds of years ago, but not just because it tasted good.

In those days, the quality of water was so poor that beer was a lot healthier. It did contain less alcohol back then. A lot of beer was shipped from Breda via the Mark to big cities like Rotterdam, Amsterdam and Antwerp.

The brewers of Big Belly retraced the sixteenth-century recipe of 'Bredaas Wit' and turned it into their own beer: 'De Baron'. So step into Big Belly and taste the centuries-old history.



8

Sol y Sombra

Prinsenkade 1

In this tiled storefront on the corner of Old Haagdijk, you can taste the Spanish atmosphere. Mencía de Mendoza, the Spanish wife of Hendrik III, would certainly have felt at home here.

Hendrik III was married to Mencía de Mendoza, Spain's richest woman. They made Breda an international meeting place for artists and scientists.

Before the Eighty Years' War, the Netherlands and Spain had a fruitful relationship. Painters, architects and makers of books and carpets inspired each other and collaborated a lot. You could see the influence of Spanish fashion in large round collars. From South America, tomatoes came to our country via Spain, as did Spanish peppers.



9

Haagdijk

Haagdijk

Haagdijk is one of Breda's oldest shopping streets and connected the city with Princenhage.

The houses on Haagdijk used to have names rather than numbers, such as "The Prince's Mantle" and "The Red Deer". You can see those names as new signs on the facades.

Haagdijk has a rich history. There used to be merchants, breweries and shipyards here. Halfway down, near Pelmolenstraat, there were small one-room houses for soldiers' families. There was also a home there for single men over 60. Today, the Haagdijk is home to specialty stores, eateries and cafes of all cultural backgrounds.



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Muurschilderingen

Rozemarijnstraat

Rozemarijnstraat

Two completely different murals adorn Rozemarijnstraat. They refer to tattoos and the industrial revolution in Breda.

Bunker Tattoo has been a household name in Breda for more than 20 years. At the request of Blind Walls Gallery, the team designed flash tattoos for the place. Breda artist Rutger Termohlen, also a tattoo artist at Bunker, converted them into a mural. He created several works for the Blind Walls Gallery. These often feature animals and people. Just down the street you will find Robot Dino by Polish artist M-City. The robot refers to industry, such as Etna, which rose in this part of Breda at the beginning of the industrial revolution. Blind Walls Gallery tells the stories of Breda through its now almost 150 murals. You can find the artworks throughout the city.

Tip: Just around the corner, in a former carpet factory, you will find Galerie Ecker where you can regularly view an exhibition. Please note the opening hours.



Nieuwe Mark

Markendaalseweg/Nieuweweg

For now, the 'New Mark' is still quite a construction site, but the first contours of this new urban river with green quays are already visible.

The New Mark brings more nature and water into the city centre. This provides cooling, beautification and greening. The material of the quay walls allows plants to germinate and grow easily. The horizontally grown trees planted in the quay walls are also innovative. With these 'GreenQuays', Breda is another step closer to its ambition of becoming City in the Park.

Across the street, old and new blend seamlessly. The tower of the Marquant apartment complex fits in nicely with the former chapel that now belongs to Hotel Nassau Breda.



Hotel Nassau Breda

Nieuwstraat 23

The name Hotel Nassau Breda already reveals something about the history of the impressive property. It is composed of three monumental houses from the 15th and 16th centuries. Here lived influential families, connected to the Nassaus who lived at the Castle. They also had their court houses in other places in the city, a short distance from the Castle.

From the street you can see an octagonal tower sticking out above the roof. That belonged to the Assendelft House that was once inhabited by an illegitimate son of the Nassau family. In the 19th century, the court houses came into the hands of an enterprising monastic order, the Franciscans. They converted the houses into a "Liefdegesticht" with schools, offices and a convent. There was also a beautiful new chapel that was restored by Hotel Nassau Breda.

The Blind Wall by Levi Jacobs across the street symbolizes a girl in school uniform as they used to go to school at the Liefdegesticht.



Grote Kerk Breda

Kerkplein 2

The Grote Kerk Breda is the radiant centre of the city. Beautiful to look at and interesting to visit. With an innovative programme, the church invites you to look at its centuries-old history with today's knowledge.

The (Orange) Nassaus gave the 15th-century church its grandeur. Some ancestors of our royal family are also buried here. Engelbrecht II and his wife Cimburga of Baden have the most beautiful tomb, in the Princes' Chapel. William of Orange was the first Orange-Nassau to be interred not in Breda but in Delft. Breda was in Spanish hands when he was shot dead in Delft.

The Nassau history, spectacular architecture, impressive sculptures, funerary monuments and paintings make the Grote Kerk Breda one of the most elegant and unusual Gothic churches in the Netherlands.

The Great Church Breda was first Catholic, but became permanently Protestant in 1637. Today, it is a House of stories.

A contemporary programme connects today's world with the church's stories and collection. It is a place for meeting and inspiration and is free to visit most of the year.

Currently, the exterior of the church is undergoing extensive restoration. For the painted panels created by Blind Walls Gallery along the building fence, the creative makers took inspiration from art treasures in the church.





14

De Boterhal

Grote Markt 19

The building where you now find the Boterhal has a rich history.

The Boterhal, built as a residence, was originally called The White Lamb. In the seventeenth century it was designated as a meat hall by Prince Philip William of Nassau. Only here could meat be traded. The cattle heads in the facade still refer to this.

The real eye-catcher of this building is at the top of the facade. This statue of St. Joris and the dragon was made by Walter Pompe and installed in 1772. At that time, football guild St. Joris had its guild room on the upper floor.

After meat hall, the building had the function of butter hall, Municipal and Episcopal Museum and now so catering establishment. Since 2016, the monumental cellar houses beer brewery St. Joris.



15

Huis Ocrum (Nieuwe Veste)

St. Janstraat 18

Nieuwe Veste is a meeting place full of language, creativity and art. Nieuwe Veste consists of a modern section (by Herman Hertzberger) and House Ocrum, a court house. House Ocrum is one of Breda's most famous court houses. In the 1950s, it was the location of Breda's St. Joost art academy. Before that, it also served as a monastery, embassy, royal residence, military warehouse and orphanage.

After a major city fire, Huis Ocrum was built by nobles from the court of Hendrik III. The house had three wings and a stair tower. In 1806, the French king of Holland, Louis Napoleon, and his wife stayed in this house. They stayed with a city administrator who borrowed luxury furniture and silver from wealthy Breda residents for the occasion to make Huis Ocrum look royal. Incidentally, the house had distinguished guests before. When the Peace of Breda was signed in 1667, Henry Coventry, the English ambassador, spent the night here.



16

Stedelijk Museum Breda

Boschstraat 22

From the Middle Ages, a hospice for travellers and the sick stood here. In 1643, the guest house became a home for old men, and since 1956 it has had a cultural function.

Stedelijk Museum Breda is housed in one of Breda's oldest buildings. The same clock has been running in its turret for over 500 years.

From 1956, it was a cultural centre with a cinema and exhibition rooms. Now, behind the old facade, you will find a modern museum with a café, shop and alternating exhibitions on visual arts and history. The permanent Nassau exhibition is an absolute must-see. You will see models of the Castle and the Turfschip, excavated objects and impressive paintings. And you can have fun with an interactive Family Trail.



17

Kapucijnenhof

Kapucijnenhof

Before a Capuchin convent settled on this spot, Charles d'Hérougère, commander of Breda's famous peat ship, lived here. Since the beginning of this century, you will find an atmospheric residential courtyard here.

The ruse with the Turfschip is known as the Breda Horse of Troy. We write 1590. Breda is occupied by the Spaniards and Prince Maurice of Nassau wants to retake Breda with a surprise attack. Because skipper Adriaan van Bergen regularly brings peat inside the castle gate, his ship is no longer controlled. Under the leadership of Charles d'Hérougère, 75 soldiers are smuggled in to overwhelm the enemy.



The Beguinage

Catharinastraat 45

In 1267, well before the first Nassau set foot in Breda, the Beguinage was founded. This makes it one of the oldest surviving institutions in the Netherlands. The Beguinage was originally located right next to Breda Castle, where the Castle Square is now. Two hundred years later, Hendrik III needed that space for the expansion of the Castle. The beguines were given a new place on Catharinastraat (then Katerstraat) near the Wendelinuskapel, today's Walloon Church. In exchange for the move, Hendrik III promised that he and his successors would protect the beguinage. Thanks to the Nassaus, the Beguinage was spared during the Eighty Years' War.

In the mid-nineteenth century, nine new beguinage houses were built on the northeast side. In this "New court" Johanna van Polanen received her own statue, a tribute to the first Breda Nassau woman and founder of the Wendelinuskapel.

The Beguinage has a large herb garden with more than three hundred different herbs that the beguines used to use in caring for the sick.



Willem Merkxtuin

Catharinastraat/St. Annastraat

This hidden courtyard garden is named after beloved former mayor Willem Merckx. It was his wish to turn this piece of land into something beautiful. When he quit as mayor, the garden was created as a parting gift.

From this quiet garden, apart from the tower of the Great Church, you have a nice view of the backs of several former court houses on Catharinastraat. These include House Conroy, where a bastard son of Hendrik III lived, among others.

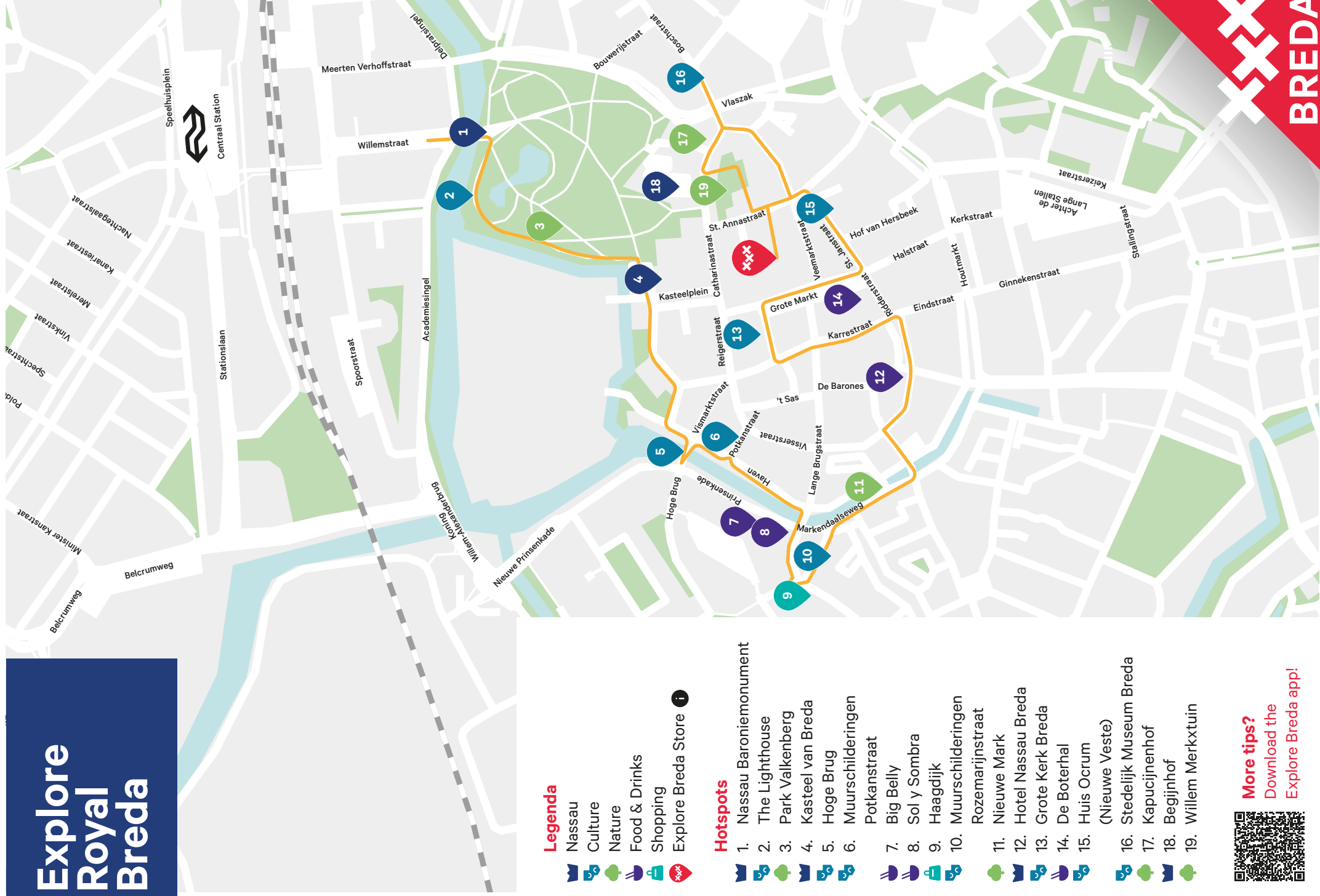
When the Willem Merkxtuin was created in 1985, the garden received 12 statues and a sundial. You'll find the most art per square metre in Breda here.

Fotobijdragen








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Explore Royal Breda



Legenda

-  Nassau
-  Culture
-  Nature
-  Food & Drinks
-  Shopping
-  Explore Breda Store 

Hotspots

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10. Haagdijk 
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15. Grote Kerk Breda 
16. De Boterhal 
17. Huis Ocrum 
18. (Nieuwe Veste) 
19. Stedelijk Museum Breda 
20. Kapucijnenhof 
21. Begijnhof 
22. Willem Merkxuin 



More tips?
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