

# A grand day out

Located just 26 miles from Camping Landal Warsberg, the grand duchy of Luxembourg is so small you can see the best of it in a day as Jo Caird discovers.

River Alzette





Camping Landal Warsberg

Luxembourg is one of those countries that most of us have heard of, but very few of us could actually place on a map. And that's not very surprising: with an area of less than 100 square miles, it's one of Europe's smallest sovereign nations.

Bordering France, Belgium and Germany, the world's only Grand Duchy has a lot to offer. A day trip – taking in culture, history, Luxembourgish cuisine and some truly spectacular landscapes – offers elements of these three nations that combine to create a very special destination all of its own.

#### Soak up the history

Start your day in Diekirch, a pretty town on the banks of the River Sûre with an excellent museum dedicated to the Second World War.

The National Museum of Military History looks in particular at the Battle of the Bulge, the last major German offensive on the Western Front, which took place in the Ardennes region of Luxembourg, Belgium and France in the final weeks of 1944. It took the Allies completely by surprise, resulting in many thousands of American casualties.

Luxembourg was occupied by the Germans in May 1940; its government-in-exile was based in London for the duration of the war. The museum brings the conflict here alive with life-size displays, weapons and vehicles. It also tells the story of the service of Luxembourgish soldiers' in Allied armies as well as exploring the Luxembourg Army's more recent involvement in NATO and the European Union.

Continue on page 26 >



Luxembourg City

## Where to stay

A day trip to Luxembourg could form a memorable part of a holiday at Camping Landal Warsberg, Saarburg (pictured above), western Germany.

### Camping Landal Warsberg

This well-equipped spacious campsite is a chairlift ride away from the pretty town of Saarburg. Camping Landal Warsberg offers an excellent base for a relaxing holiday, either as a family or a couple. When you're not busy exploring the region and beyond, you'll be kept entertained by plenty of on-site facilities including a pool complex, sauna and solarium, and a lively evening entertainment programme during July and August. This campsite is open until 1 November.

### Reaching Luxembourg

The campsite is based close to the German border and is just 26 miles from Luxembourg City – an hour's drive. You can also catch a train to Luxembourg from Saarburg and the journey takes around one hour.

### More exploring

Camping Landal Warsberg is also a good base for visiting:

- Trier – Thought to be Germany's oldest city, this fascinating town is great for exploring classical architecture and Roman heritage and culture.
- Berncastel-Kues – this popular tourist destination is a well known wine-growing region centre so perfect if you would love to add a vineyard tour to your camping holiday.

### Book it

7 nights at Camping Landal Warsberg is from £366 for a party of up to five or six staying in a Maxi Tent, arriving on site on Saturday 28 June.

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### Indulge in some culture

For something a little lighter, you'll find Vianden just a few miles up the road. This petite and picturesque city boasts a fairytale castle built between the 11th and 14th centuries on the foundations of a Roman fort. For hundreds of years it was home to the Counts of Vianden, an influential family with connections to both the French and German monarchies.

Guided tours are available, and you shouldn't miss the extraordinary two-level chapel or enormous Knights' Hall. Then take a ride on Luxembourg's only chairlift to rise 440m above sea level for unrivalled views of the château, town and surrounding valley. You can enjoy a bite to eat at the café at the top or head back to town for a picnic by the river.

For those of a literary bent, there's the Maison de Victor Hugo, a small museum located in the Vianden house where the

French writer lived in exile in 1871 following holidays in the area in the 1860s. Letters and sketches by the Les Misérables author are on display along with furniture from his time in the house.

### Stretch your legs

Clervaux is a great jumping off point for adventure pursuits like hiking and mountain biking, but the Lac de la Haute-Sûre further south in the Luxembourg Ardennes, should be your first port of call when it comes to experiencing the best of the great outdoors in the Grand Duchy.

This huge body of water, created by the damming of the Sûre in 1961, provides most of Luxembourg's drinking water. It's also a wonderful place to swim, kayak and fish, and you can hike or ride bikes and horses in the surrounding Naturpark Öwersauer. A more gentle option is to tour the lake by solar-powered boat; trips take around two hours and run regularly.



Clervaux chapel

### A slice of city life

Round off your day in the bustle of Luxembourg City, the Grand Duchy's capital. There's a lot to do here – enough for a day trip all by itself – but a few hours is enough to get a sense of this compact metropolis.

The city is built on and around a sandstone promontory, known as the Bock, riddled with 23km of underground fortifications. The Bock Casemates date back to the 17th century and were used as bomb shelters, accommodating up to 35,000 people during the Second World War. The views from the balconies are spectacular.



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Lac de la Haute-Sûre

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On top of the Bock Promontory is the Ville Haute, where the city's grand squares and heritage buildings lie within a few minutes' walk of one another. Tucked away behind the city's main square, Place Guillaume II – site of a bi-weekly flower and produce market – is the Grand Ducal Palace, the official residence of Grand Duke Henri, Luxembourg's reigning monarch. It isn't open to the public but its 16th century exterior is a photographer's delight.

Below is the Grund, the sleepy old town nestling in the gorge of the River Alzette that on summer evenings turns into a vibrant spot for drinking and dining. The former industrial area, Rives de Clausen, is the coolest place to be.

The engaging displays at the nearby Luxembourg City History Museum, which boasts a room-sized panoramic lift, offer a good introduction to the city, while culture vultures will relish a visit to MUDAM, the Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean. It's a great place to pick up a postcard – or take a selfie – to send home with details of your day in the world's last remaining Grand Duchy.



Vianden



Echternach procession

## Top tips for a day out in Luxembourg

Here are our tips for getting the best out of Luxembourg in a day.

### When to go

The best time to go is from May to October to take advantage of sunny days and warm weather. Luxembourg City, like many European capitals, is very quiet in August, so best avoided if you want to get a sense of the city's buzz.

### Budget boost

The Luxembourg Card grants free entry to 60 attractions (including all those listed here) and free travel on trains and buses. It costs €11/£9 for a one-day pass and you can buy it online in advance of your trip at:

[www.visitluxembourg.com/en/luxembourg-card](http://www.visitluxembourg.com/en/luxembourg-card)

### Child's play

If you're travelling with kids, try the Robbesscheier Tourist Center, in Munshausen, an open-air museum where visitors can learn about traditional crafts and farming and take a ride in a traditional horse-drawn wagon.

[www.destination-clervaux.lu/robbesscheier-de](http://www.destination-clervaux.lu/robbesscheier-de)

### Dining out

If you only eat in one place it should be at the Kniddelkinnek, an intimate yet informal restaurant in the centre of Luxembourg City specialising in 'kniddelen', a local dumpling served with a range of sauces and accompaniments.

[www.kniddelkinnek.lu](http://www.kniddelkinnek.lu)

### Date for the diary

On 10 June, the little town of Echternach is taken over by the last (and oldest) traditional dancing procession in Europe. Watch the parade as it snakes through the town or join in with Catholic pilgrims from all over Luxembourg in celebration of Willibrond, the country's patron saint.