



Lille in 500 words:

Situated in the North of France, Lille—by train—is only 80 minutes from London, 60 minutes from Paris, and 38 minutes from Brussels. The city is at the heart of Europe, both geographically and culturally. Lille is accessible from countless international destinations thanks to the Lille-Lesquin airport, which is 20 minutes from the city center, and Paris' Charles de Gaulle airport, which can be reached in 50 minutes from Lille by train.

Lille today is an industry leader, with 5 competitive clusters in the metropolitan area in the following sectors: nutrition health and longevity, transportation, commerce, textiles, and domestic materials.

Lille is proud of the city's architectural history. Today, many of Lille's once abandoned buildings have been renovated to take on a second life, keeping a part of the city's past, while demonstrating its creativity and desire to innovate.

Being the youngest metropolitan area in France (36 percent of the population is under 25) makes this need for both change and energy understandable. One of the best examples of the region's liveliness is its love for festivities. Year around, the year is brimming with activity and excitement, beginning with Lille's annual antique and flea market in September. Whether it is a cultural event or simply meeting friends for a beer, there's always a good reason to celebrate. And in the North of France, this means tourists and locals alike as the region has a reputation of welcoming visitors with open arms.

Far from being stuck in a traditional Flemish rut, the city is forward thinking in the arts and in fashion, creating and scheduling ambitious cultural events. In 2004, Lille was named European capital of

culture and on the heels of the celebration's immense success came Lille 3000, which celebrated India in 2006 and the countries of Central Europe in 2009 (Europe XXL).

Sustainable development is at the top of Lille's agenda, and this dedication has paid off. A study conducted by Ernst & Young—and communicated by the Lille Metropole Development Agency in November 2008—found Lille's businesses to be the "greenest" in Europe. The Nord-Pas de Calais region has long understood the value of caring for the environment, and in turn its inhabitants. The region has made it a mission to respect the needs of the environment, without sacrificing economic development or the interests of its population. Today Lille is a leader in the field of sustainable development, and has proven its commitment through concrete actions and solid results. In January 2004, the region adopted the "Agenda 21," defining and promoting sustainable development, becoming the first region in France to do so.

Another first—this time in Europe—is the Lille Convention Bureau's receiving the DMAP accreditation (Destination Marketing Accreditation Program). The accreditation is evidence of the Convention Bureau's dedication and commitment to delivering clients outstanding service based on international standards and benchmarks in the field.

Ecologically speaking, the city's carbon footprint is the smallest in Europe. And Lille is proud to be the first European city with a convention bureau accredited DMAI.