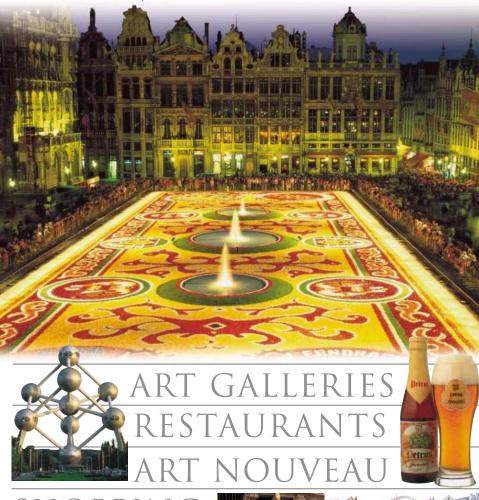


BRUSSELS

BRUGES, GHENT & ANTWERP



SHOPPING TAPESTRIES CHURCHES



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BRUSSELS

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TRAVELLERS' NEEDS

- WHERE TO STAY PAGES 124-135
- WHERE TO EAT PAGES 136-155
- SHOPPING IN BRUSSELS PAGES 156-157
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SURVIVAL GUIDE

- PRACTICAL INFORMATION
 PAGES 162–165
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- GENERAL INDEX PAGES 181–186

Brussels Area by Area

ALL THE SIGHTS that appear on the central section of the map are detailed in the Upper and Lower Town chapters of this guide. Public transport is cheap and efficient in Brussels, but the distances involved, together with the city's wealth of exceptional street architecture, make walking a pleasant option.



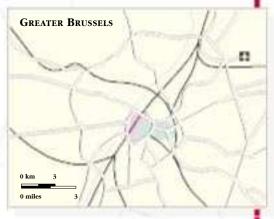
THE LOWER TOWN



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THE UPPER TOWN
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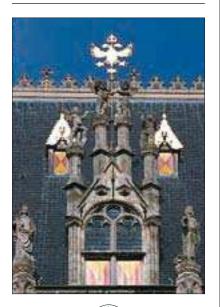
THE UPPER TOWN

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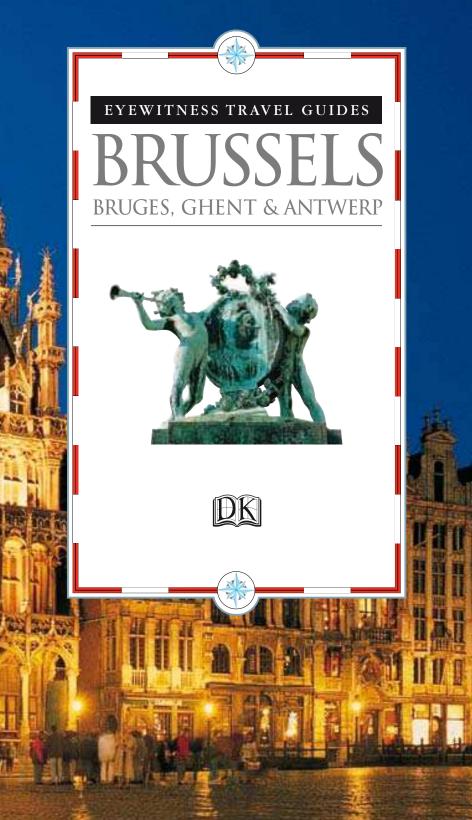
EYEWITNESS TRAVEL GUIDES

BRUSSELS Bruges, Ghent & Antwerp











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Vista of a tree-lined path in the Parc du Cinquantenaire

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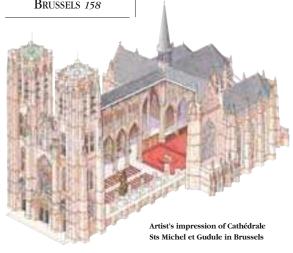
Belgian oysters

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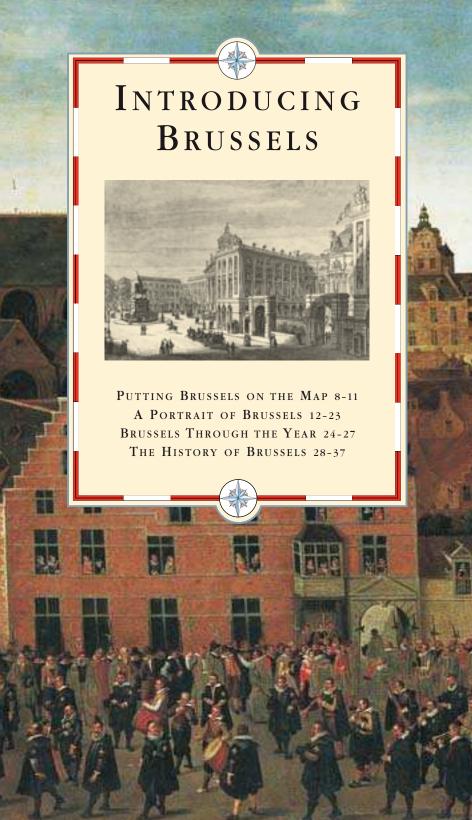
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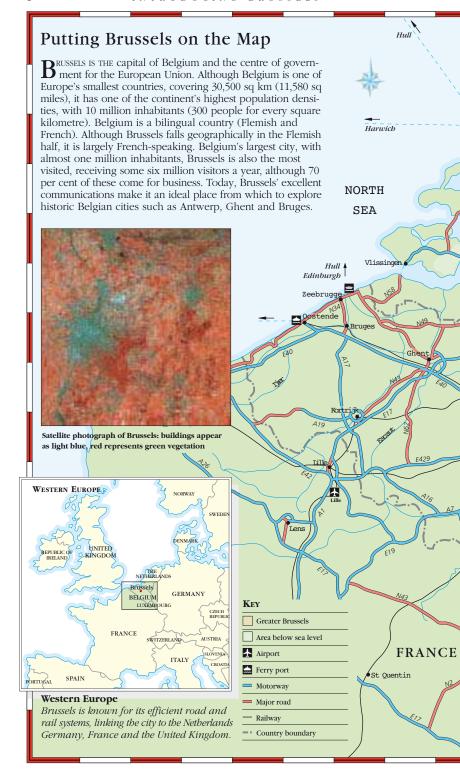
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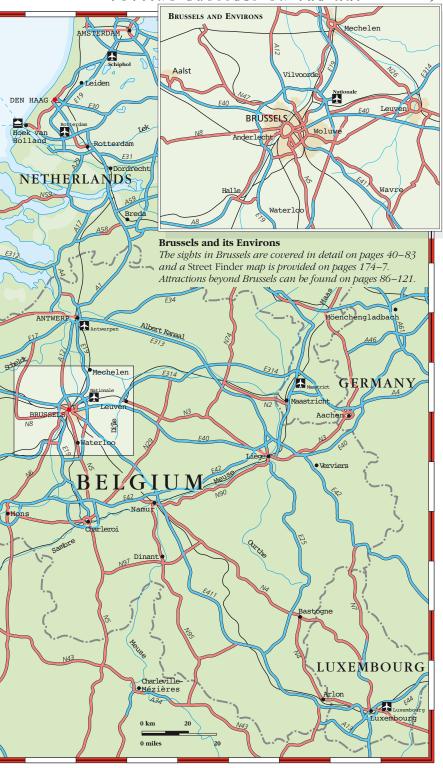
TRANSPORT MAP
Inside back cover











Central Brussels

Central Brussels is divided into two main areas, each of which has its own chapter in the guide. Historically the poorer area where workers and immigrants lived, the Lower Town contains the exceptional 17th-century heart of the city, the Grand Place, as well as the cosmopolitan Place de Brouckère, and the historic workers' district, the Marolles. The Upper Town, traditional home of the aristocracy, is an elegant area which encircles the city's green oasis, the Parc de Bruxelles. Running up through the area is Rue Royale, which ends in the 18th-century Place Royale, home to the



city's finest art museums.

Hôtel de Ville

The focus of the Grand Place, Brussels' historic Town Hall dates from the early 15th century. Its Gothic tracery façade features the famous needle-like crooked spire (see pp44–5).

Major sight Place of interest Other building Parking Tourist information Police station Hospital Bus terminus

Tram stop

Train station

Metro station

Church



La Bourse façade Overlooking the city from busy Boulevard Anspach in the Lower Town, Brussels' Stock Exchange was built in 1873 in ornate style (see p47).

Place du Petit Sablon

This square is a jewel of the Upper Town. Originally a borse market, the central area became a flower garden in 1890, surrounded by wroughtiron railings decorated with stone statuettes. Each figure represents a medieval trade or craft that brought prosperity to the capital (see p68–9).







0 metres	500
0 yards	500

Palais Royal

The official home of the Belgian monarch, this is one of the finest 18th-century buildings in the Upper Town. A highlight of Neo-Classical architecture, it overlooks Parc de Bruxelles (see pp58–9).

Brussels' Best: Architecture

EFLECTING Brussels' importance in the history of Reflecting brussels important from grand medieval towers to the glittering postmodern structures of European institutions. With a few examples of medieval Brabant Gothic still on show, the capital of Europe has the best Flemish Renaissance architecture in the world in the Baroque splendour of the Grand Place, as well as elegant Neo-Classical churches and houses. The quantity and quality of Art Nouveau (see pp16–17), with its exquisite interiors and handmade features, are highlights of 19th- and 20thcentury residential building. The cutting-edge designs in the Parliament Quarter, planned by committees of European architects, take the tour up to date.



Basilique du Sacré-Coeur Begun in 1904 and only completed in 1970, this huge Art Deco edifice is the world's fifth-largest church (see p81).

BASILIQUE DU SACRÉ-COEUR



Grand Place

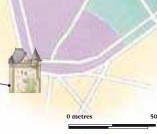
Almost entirely rebuilt by merchants after French bombardment in 1695, this cobbled square is one of the world's best Baroque ensembles (see pp42-3).

Palais de Justice

Bigger in area than St Peter's in Rome, the city's law courts were built in Neo-Classical style using the profits of colonialism, and completed in 1883 (see p69).



Porte de Hal This imposing 14thcentury tower is the only remaining trace of the city's solid, thick second perimeter wall. It owes its survival to its use as an 18th-century prison and latterly as a museum (see p79).



Lower Town

0 yards

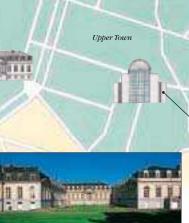
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Cathédrale Sts Michel et Gudule The white stone façade from 1250 is an outstanding example of Brabant Gothic style (see pp70–71).



Palais de la Nation
The home of the Belgian Parliament since the country's independence in 1830, this magnificent building was constructed in the late 18th century by the Neo-Classical architect Guimard, who also designed the expansive stone façade and many of the surrounding state buildings.



AREAS NIX

Palais d'Egmont

This 18th-century ducal mansion bears the name of a Flemish count executed for defending his countrymen's civil rights in 1568.



European Parliament

Named "Les Caprices des Dieux" ("The Whims of the Gods"), this postmodern building serves more than 700 politicians.

Belgian Artists

BELGIAN ART ROSE to the fore when the region came under Burgundian rule in the 15th century. Renaissance painters produced strong works in oil, characterized by intricate detail and lifelike, unidealized portraiture. The quest for realism and clarity of light was heavily influenced by the new Dutch schools of art. Yet, in contrast, Belgium's second golden artistic age, in the 20th century, moved away from these goals, abandoning reality for surrealism in the challenging work of artists such as René Magritte.

Belgium is justifiably proud of its long artistic tradition. Rubenshuis in Antwerp (see pp96–7), Brussels' Musée Wiertz (see p72) and Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts (see pp62–7) are fine examples of the respect Belgium shows to its artists' homes and their works.



Portrait of Laurent Froimont by Rogier van der Weyden

THE FLEMISH PRIMITIVES

RT IN BRUSSELS and Flanders A first attracted European attention at the end of the Middle Ages. Jan van Eyck (c.1400-41) is considered to be responsible for the major revolution in Flemish art. Widely credited as the creator of oil painting, van Eyck was the first artist to use the oil medium to fix longerlasting glazes and to mix colour pigments for wood and canvas. As works could now be rendered more permanent, the innovation spread the Renaissance fashion for panel paintings. However, van Eyck was more than just a practical innovator, and can be seen as the forefather of the Flemish Primitive school

with his lively depictions of human existence in an animated manner. Van Eyck is also responsible, with his brother, for the striking polyptych altarpiece *Adoration of the Holy Lamb*, displayed in Ghent Cathedral (see p110).

The trademarks of the Flemish Primitives are a life-like vitality, enhanced by realism in portraiture, texture of clothes and furnishings and a clarity of light. The greatest interpreter of the style was Rogier de la Pasture (c.1400–64), better known as Rogier van der Weyden, the town painter of Brussels, who combined van Eyck's light and realism with work of religious intensity, as in *Lamentation (see p66)*.

Many in Belgium and across Europe were schooled and inspired by his work, continuing and expanding the new techniques. **Dieric Bouts** (1415–75) extended

the style. With his studies of bustling 15th-century Bruges, **Hans Memling** (c.1433–94) is considered the last Flemish Primitive. Moving towards the 16th century, landscape artist **Joachim Patinier** (c.1475–1524) produced the first European industrial scenes.

THE BRUEGHEL DYNASTY

In the Early years of the 16th century, Belgian art was strongly influenced by the Italians. Trained in Rome, Jan Gossaert (c.1478–1533) brought mythological themes to the art commissioned by the ruling Dukes of Brabant.

But it was the prolific Brueghel family who had the most influence on Flemish art throughout the 16th and 17th centuries. Pieter Brueghel **the Elder** (c.1525–69), one of the greatest Flemish artists, settled in Brussels in 1563. His earthy rustic landscapes of village life, peopled with comic peasants, are a social study of medieval life and remain his best-known work. Pieter Brueghel the Younger (1564-1638) produced religious works such as The Enrolment of Bethlehem (1610). In contrast, Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568-1625) painted intricate floral still lifes with a draped velvet backdrop, becoming known as "Velvet Brueghel". His son, Jan Brueghel the Younger (1601-78) also became a court painter in Brussels and a fine landscape artist of note.



The Fall of Icarus by Pieter Brueghel the Elder



Self-portrait by Rubens, one of many from his lifetime

THE ANTWERP ARTISTS

In the 17th century, the main centre of Belgian art moved from the social capital, Brussels, to Antwerp, in the heart of Flanders. This move was largely influenced by Pieter Paul Rubens (1577-1640), who lived in Antwerp. He was one of the first Flemish artists to become known through Europe and Russia. A court painter, Rubens was also an accomplished landscape artist and interpreter of mythology, but is best known for his depiction of plump women, proud of their figures. Rubens was so popular in his own time that his bold and large-scale works were translated by Flemish weavers into series of tapestries.

Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641), a pupil of Rubens and court portraitist, was the second Antwerp artist to gain world renown. The Brueghel dynasty continued to produce notable figures: Jan Brueghel the Elder eventually settled in Antwerp to produce art with Rubens, while his sonin-law, David Teniers II (1610–90) founded the Antwerp Academy of Art in 1665.

THE EUROPEAN INFLUENCE

THE INFLUENCE OF Rubens was so great that little innovation took place in the Flemish art scene in the 18th century. In the early years of

the 19th century, Belgian art was largely dominated by the influence of other European schools. François-Joseph Navez (1787-1869) introduced Neo-Classicism to Flemish art. Realism took off with Constantin Meunier (1831-1905) and Impressionism with Guillaume Vogels (1836–96). The Brussels-based Antoine Wiertz (1806-65) was considered a Romantic, but his distorted and occasionally disturbing works, such as Inhumation précipitée (c.1830) seem to have early surrealist leanings. Fernand Khnopff (1858-1921) was influenced by the German

by the German Romantic Gustav Klimt. An early exponent of Belgian Symbolism, Khnopff's work is notable for his portraits of menacing and ambiguous women. Also on a journey from naturalism to surrealism, **James Ensor** (1860–1949) often used eerie

skeletons in his work, reminiscent of Bosch. Between 1884 and 1894, the artists' cooperative **Les XX** (**Les Vingt**) reinvigorated the Brussels art scene with exhibitions of famous foreign and avant garde painters.

SURREALISM

THE 20TH CENTURY began with the emergence of Fauvism led by **Rik Wouters** (1882–1916), whose bright sun-filled landscapes show the influence of Cézanne.

Surrealism began in Brussels in the mid-1920s, dominated from the start by **René Magritte** (1898–1967). The movement had its roots back in the 16th century, with the phantasmagoria of Bosch and Pieter Brueghel the Elder. Fuelled by the chaos of World War I, much of which took place on Flemish battlefields, Magritte defined his disorientating surrealism

as "[restoring] the familiar to the strange". More ostentatious and emotional, **Paul Delvaux** (1897–1989) produced elegant, freakish interiors occupied by ghostly figures. In 1948 the **COBRA Movement**

promoted abstract art, which gave way in the 1960s to conceptual art, led by installationist **Marcel Broodthaers** (1924–76), who used daily objects, such as a casserole dish full of mussels, for his own interpretation.

UNDERGROUND ART



Notre Temps (1976) by Expressionist Roger Somville at Hankar station

Some 58 Brussels metro stations have been decorated with a combination of murals, sculptures and architecture by 54 Belgian artists. Although none but the most devoted visitor to the city is likely to see them all, there are several notable examples.

Annessens was decorated by the Belgian COBRA artists, Dotremont and Alechinsky. In the **Bourse**, surrealist Paul Delvaux's *Nos Vieux Trams Bruxellois* is still on show with *Moving Ceiling*, a series of 75 tubes that move in the breeze by sculptor Pol Bury. At **Horta** station, Art Nouveau wrought ironwork from Victor Horta's now destroyed People's Palace is displayed, and **Stockel** is a tribute to Hergé and his boy hero, Tintin (*see pp18–19*).

Sculpture by

Rik Wouters

Brussels' Best: Art Nouveau

MONG EUROPE'S most important architectural move-A ments at the start of the 20th century, Art Nouveau in Belgium was led by Brussels architect Victor Horta (1861-1947) and the Antwerp-born interior designer Henry van de Velde (1863-1957). The style evolved from the Arts and Crafts Movement in England and the fashion for Japanese simplicity, and is characterized by its sinuous decorative lines, stained glass, carved stone curves, floral frescoes and elaborately curled and twisted metalwork. As new suburbs rose up in the 1890s, over 2,000 new houses were built in the style. Although many were demolished, details can still be seen in almost every Brussels street.



Hôtel Métropole

The high-vaulted lobby and bar of this luxurious 1894 botel recall the city's fin-desiècle *beyday* (see p49).



Old England

This former department store uses glass and steel rather than brick, with large windows and twisted metal turrets (see p60).



The Lower Town





Curved window frames and elaborate metal balconies mark this out as the home and studio of Art Nouveau's best-known architect (see p78).





This stylish 1902 townhouse was built by Jules Brunfaut (1852-1942). One of its metalframed windows has striking stained-glass panes (see p79).







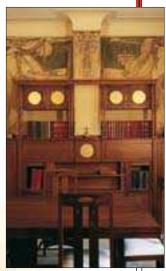


Maison Cauchie

Restored in 1989, architect Paul Cauchie's home in rue des Francs has examples of sgraffiti, a technique in which designs are incised onto wet plaster to reveal another colour beneath.



Horta's disciple Gustave Strauven was keen to outdo his mentor with this intricate façade, only 4 m (14 ft) wide (see p72).





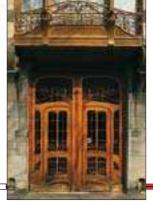




of 1894, this home was built for a wealthy family. Horta designed every element of the building, from the ochre and yellow cast-iron façade columns and glass front door to the decorative but func-

tional doorknobs (see p79).

0 metres 500 0 yards 500



Belgian Comic Strip Art



l'intin's dog Snowy

BELGIAN COMIC STRIP art is as famous a part of Belgian culture as chocolates and beer. The seeds of this great passion were sown when the US comic strip Little Nemo was published in French in 1908 to huge popular acclaim in Belgium. The country's reputation

for producing some of the best comic strip art in Europe was established after World War II. Before the war, Europe was awash with American comics, but the Nazis called a halt to the supply. Local artists took over, and found that there was a large audience who preferred homegrown comic heroes. This explosion in comic strip art was led by perhaps the most famous Belgian creation ever, Tintin, who, with his dog Snowy, is as recognizable across Europe as Mickey Mouse.



Hergé at work in his studio

HERGÉ AND TINTIN

TINTIN'S CREATOR, Hergé, was born Georges Remi in Brussels in 1907. He began using his pen name (a phonetic spelling of his initials in reverse) in 1924. At the young age of 15, his drawings were published in the Boy Scout Journal. He became the protégé of a priest, Abbot Norbert Wallez, who also managed the Catholic journal Le XXe Siècle, and was swiftly given the

responsibility of the children's supplement, *Le petit Vingtième*. Eager to invent an original comic strip, Hergé came up with the character of Tintin the reporter, who first appeared in the story *Tintin au Pays des Soviets* on 10 January 1929. Over the next 10 years the character developed and grew in popularity. Book-length stories began to appear from 1930.

Tintin continued to be published, with political references carefully omitted, in an approved paper Le Soir. This led to Hergé being accused of collaboration at the end of the war. He was called in for questionning but released later the same day without charge.

Hergé's innocence was amply

During the Nazi

occupation in the 1940s

demonstrated by his work before and during the war, where he expressed a strong

where he expressed sense of justice in such stories as King Ottakar's Sceptre, where a fascist army attempts to seize control of a central European state. Hergé took great care in researching his stories: for Le



Spirou

Lotus Bleu in 1934, which was set in China, he wrote: "I started... showing a real interest in the people and countries I was sending Tintin off to, concerned by a sense of honesty to my readers."

POST-WAR BOOM

 ${
m B}^{
m \scriptscriptstyle ELGIUM'S}$ oldest comic strip journal *Spirou* was launched in April 1938 and, alongside the weekly Journal de Tintin begun in 1946, became a hothouse for the artistic talent that was to flourish during the postwar years. Many of the country's best-loved characters were first seen in Spirou, and most of them are still in print. Artists such as Morris, Jijé, Peyo and Roba worked on the journal. Morris (b.1923) introduced the cowboy Statue of Tintin parody, Lucky Luke in

Spirou in 1947, a character who went on to feature in several live-action films and many US television cartoons.

COMIC STRIP CHARACTERS

Some of the world's bestloved comic strip characters originated in Belgium. *Tintin* is the most famous, but *Lucky Luke* the cowboy, the cheeky children *Suske* en *Wiske* and *The Smurfs* have also been published worldwide, while modern artists such as Schueten break new ground.



Tintin by Hergé



Lucky Luke by Morris

During the 1960s, the idea of the comic strip being the Ninth Art (after the seventh and eighth, film and television) expanded to include adult themes in the form of the comic-strip graphic novel.

PEYO AND THE SMURFS

BEST KNOWN for *The Smurfs*, Peyo (1928–92) was also a member of the team behind the *Spirou* journal which published his poetic medieval series *Johan et Pirlouit*, in 1952. *The Smurfs* first appeared as characters here – tiny blue people whose humorous foibles soon

numorous robies sooi eclipsed any interest in the strip's supposed main characters. Reacting to their popularity, Peyo created a strip solely about them. Set in the Smurf village, the stories were infused with satirical social comment. The Smurfs were a popular craze

between 1983 and 1985, featuring in advertising and merchandising of every type. They spawned a featurelength film, TV cartoons and popular music, and had several hit records in the 1980s.

WILLY VANDERSTEEN

WHILE SPIROU and *Tintin* were French-language journals, Willy Vandersteen (1913–90) dominated the Flemish market. His popular creation, *Suske en Wiske* has

been translated into English and appears as *Bob and Bobette* in the UK, and *Willy and Wanda* in the US. The main characters are a pair of "ordinary" kids aged between 10 and 14 years who have extraordinary adventures all over the world, as well as travelling back and forth in time. Today, Vandersteen's books sell in their millions.

COMIC STRIP ART TODAY

Comic strips, known as bandes dessinées or beeldverhaal, continue to be published in Belgium in all

their forms. In newspapers, children's comics and graphic novels the Ninth Art remains one of the country's biggest exports. The high standards and imaginative scope of a new generation of artists, such as Schueten and Marvano, have fed

growing consumer demand for comic books. Both French and Flemish publishers issue

Modern cover

by Marvano



Contemporary comic-strip artists at work in their studio

over 22 million comic books each year. Today, Belgian cartoons are sold in more than 30 countries, including the US.



Larger-than-life cartoon by Frank Pé adorns a Brussels building

STREET ART

THERE ARE currently 18 decorating the sides of buildings around Brussels' city centre. This outdoor exhibition is known as the Comic Strip Route and is organized by the Centre Belge de la Bande Dessineé (the Belgian Centre for Comic Strip Art) (see pp50-51) and the city of Brussels. Begun in 1991 as a tribute to Belgium's talent for comic strip art, this street art project continues to grow. A free map of the route is available from tourist information offices, as well as from the comic museum itself.



Suske en Wiske by Vandersteen



The Smurfs by Peyo



Contemporary cartoon strip by Schueten

Tapestry and Lace

F ta

Lacemaker's studio sign

tapestry have been highly prized luxury crafts. Originating in Flanders in the 12th century, tapestry has since been handmade in the centres of Tournai, Brussels, Arras, Mechelen and Oudenaarde, while the lace trade was practised from the 1500s onwards in all the Belgian provinces, with Bruges and Brussels particularly

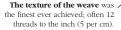
renowned for their delicate work. The makers often had aristocratic patrons; intricate lace and fine tapestries were status symbols of the nobility and staple exports throughout Europe from the 15th to 18th centuries. Today Belgium remains home to the very best tapestry and lace studios in the world.



Tapestry weavers numbered over 50,000 in Flanders from 1450–1550. With the ruling Dukes of Burgundy as patrons, weavers prospered, and bangings grew more elaborate.



Tapestry designs involve weaver and artist working closely together. Painters, including Rubens, produced drawings for a series of weavings of six or more on grand themes (detail shown).







Weavers working today still use medieval techniques to produce contemporary tapestry, woven in Mechelen and Tournai to modern designs.

TAPESTRY

By 1200, the Flemish towns of Arras (now in France) and Tournai were Europe-wide known centres of weaving. Prized by the nobility, tapestries were portable and could be moved with the court as rulers travelled their estates. As trade grew, techniques were refined; real gold and silver were threaded into the fine wool, again increasing the value. Blending Italian idealism with Flemish realism, Bernard van Orley (1492-1542) revolutionized tapestry designs, as seen above in The Battle of Pavia 1525, the first of a series. Flemish weavers were eventually lured across Europe, where ironically their skill led to the success of the Gobelins factory in Paris that finally stole Flanders' crown in the late 1700s.

The lace trade rose to the fore during the early Renaissance.
Emperor Charles V decreed that lacemaking should be a compulsory skill for girls in convents and beguinages (see p53) throughout Flanders. Lace became fashionable on collars and cuffs for both sexes. Trade reached a peak in the 18th century.









Lace makers are traditionally women. Although their numbers are dwindling, many craftswomen still work in Bruges and Brussels, centres of bobbin lace, creating intricate work by band.



Victorian Lace heralded a revival of the craft after its decline in the austere Neo-Classical period. Although men no longer wore it, the growth of the status of lace as a ladies' accessory and its use in soft furnishing led to its renewed popularity.

Belgian Lace is bought today mainly as a souvenir, but despite the rise in machine-made lace from other countries, the quality here still remains as fine as it was in the Renaissance.



Brussels: Political Capital of Europe



Manneken Pis statue

HOME TO MOST of the European Union's institutions and the headquarters of NATO, Brussels is one of Europe's most important political and business centres. Since the 1950s, the sense of Brussels as an international powerhouse has drawn an influx of people from around the world. The city has proved itself a fine host to the thousands of Eurocrats and business

people that both visit and live here, with its celebrated hotels and restaurants, as well as with its cultural heritage, reflected in its historic buildings and museums. The people of Brussels are proud of their role in the new Europe. Despite the intricate and separatist-torn nature of Belgian politics, the country is unified in its support for a united Europe.



The signing of the European Common Market Treaty, Rome, 1957

HISTORICAL BEGINNINGS

 Γ HE EUROPEAN Union has its origins in the aftermath of World War II. The spirit of postwar reconciliation led France and West Germany to ioin forces to create the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The project to continue the consolidation of Europe as a single political and financial entity began with the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957. This inaugurated the creation of a common market, the European Economic Community (EEC). Initially, six countries joined the EEC (see opposite) and the organization came into being on January 1, 1958.

The EEC was made up of two bodies, the Council of Ministers and the Commission, and coexisted with the ECSC and the atomic energy commission, Euratom. In 1967, however, these three groups merged, later becoming known as the European Community (EC). By this time the economic benefits of membership were evident, with intra-Community trade increasing by almost 30 per cent each year. The six founder members had also made an agreement on a common agricultural policy (CAP), which fixed prices and Euro coin offered grants to EEC farmers. With economic improvement came calls for political union. As early as 1961, member states discussed the possibility of collaborative government. The larger states were less enthusiastic than smaller countries, and obstructed agreements over union.

The UK, Denmark and Ireland joined the EC in 1973, increasing its population by 25 per cent. The expectation of a return to profitable trade was crushed by the world recession of the mid-1970s which brought economic hardship to each of the member states.

Nonetheless this decade saw two important innovations: the creation of the European Regional Development Fund, which offers aid to the poorest areas of the EC, including major beneficiary, Ireland, and the European Monetary System (EMS), established in 1979. Otherwise known as the Exchange Rate Mechanism or ERM, this system was designed to protect member states from the vicissitudes of world markets. The European Currency Unit or ECU, a forerunner to the single currency (the Euro), was also initiated, despite the problem of a budget deficit in the 1980s.

MAASTRICHT

AFTER THE BUDGET issue was resolved in 1988 by the then Commission President Frenchman Jacques Delors, the 12 member states began to discuss the creation of a single European currency. The foundations were laid by the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, which changed the EC into the European Union

(EU) and which set out a detailed timetable for economic and monetary union (EMU). The treaty imposed stringent economic criteria on states which wanted to participate. At the

participate. At the 1992 summit held in Edinburgh, Brussels' position as the focus city of the EU was also confirmed.

Denmark and Britain were among those reluctant to commit themselves to the single currency, a situation reflecting Britain's great wariness of the far-reaching

consequences of the idea and its ambivalence towards the European project in general. This was further illustrated by the fact that Britain is one of only two European Community countries (the other being Ireland) not to have signed up to the EU's Schengen Agreement, under which border controls between EU member states have been removed. This means that travellers can now journey around all of the other member states without once showing their passports.

THE FUTURE

THE EU DEVELOPED throughout the 1990s with the arrival of Sweden, Finland and Austria in 1995 and, in 1999, the establishment of a single European currency in 11 of the EU's member states. During this time criticism of the EU escalated, and its bureaucracy was seen as a source of irritation by many of its citizens. The EU's executive body, the Commission has also been the focus of resentment. EU President Jacques Santer was forced to resign in 1999 after allegations of incompetence, mismanagement and fraud. He was replaced by former Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi.

With the accession of 10 new states from eastern and southern Europe in 2004, the EU now has 450 million citizens. Debate continues about the long-term goal of increased political unity.

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

THE COMMISSION is the EU's executive arm, responsible for formulating policies which are then ratified or rejected by the Council of Ministers. There are 25 Commissioners, including the President, each with a specific area of responsibility ranging from transport to technology. The Commission

is responsible for ensuring that policies are carried out, and that member states do not violate EC law.

Once based in the starshaped Berlaymont building, the Commissioners have been rehoused while asbestos is removed from the building.

THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

THE COUNCIL of Ministers is L composed of representatives of each member state: each nation has a block of votes depending on its size. The Council must approve all legislation for the EU, often a difficult task given that most Europe-wide laws will seldom be to the liking of every state; most laws require a "qualified majority" (of around 70 per cent of the votes) before they are passed. The Council of Ministers meets behind closed doors, and its members are answerable only to their national governments, which has led to calls for reform.

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

THE EUROPEAN Parliament is responsible for approving the EU's annual budget, as well as monitoring the Commission's performance.

The Parliament is the only European institution subject to election by the public. There are more than 700 MEPs, elected by proportional

EU Member States and when they ioined:

1958: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands 1973: Denmark, Ireland, Great Britain 1981: Greece 1986: Portugal, Spain 1995: Austria, Finland, Sweden 2004: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia

representation. The Parliament sits in Brussels and Strasbourg. In Brussels, the glass-and-steel Parliament building on Rue Wiertz is nicknamed *Le Caprice des Dieux* (The Whims of the Gods) (see p73).

BRUSSELS' POLITICS

BELGIUM'S system of government is complex as regional interests are powerful. The country is divided into three federal regions, Flanders Wallonia and Brussels, and conflict between separatist Walloon and Fleming factions threatens Belgian unity.

The Brussels' regional government oversees the city's 19 communes. Each one has its own powers, including a police force. Separate French and Flemish organizations rule on cultural matters.



technology. The Commission | Contemporary geometric bridge in Brussels' Quartier Européen

BRUSSELS THROUGH THE YEAR

HE TEMPERATE climate of Brussels is typical of Northern Europe and means that a range of activities throughout the year take place both inside and out. Mild damp winters and gentle summers

allow the city's strong artistic life to flourish in historic buildings and modern stadiums alike. The Belgians make the most of their seasonal changes. Theatre, dance and film start their season in January, with evening venues



Revellers at Ommegang

that range from ancient abbeys lit by the setting sun to drive-in cinemas.

The city's flower festival launches the summer in highly colourful style, with the Grand Place literally carpeted in

millions of blooms every other August. Through the year, festivals in Brussels range from energetic, exuberant historic processions that have taken place yearly since medieval times, to innovative European experimental art.

SPRING

Brussels' LIVELY cultural life takes off as the crisp spring days lengthen and visitors begin to arrive in the city. Music festivals take place in a wide variety of open-air venues. As the city's parks burst into bloom, the world-famous tropical greenhouses at Laeken are opened to the public and Brussels' chocolatiers produce delicious creations for Easter.

MARCH

International Fantasy Film Festival (middle fortnight). Lovers of the weird and wonderful will find new and vintage work here in cinemas all over the city. Ars Musica (mid-Mar to early Apr). This celebration of modern music is one of Europe's finest festivals, boasting famous performers and beautiful venues, often the Musée d'art ancien (see pp62-3). The festival is now a must for connoisseurs of the contemporary music world. Eurantica (last week). The Baudouin Stadium at Hevsel plays host to hundreds of traders and members of the public anxious for bargains in the world of antiques.

Easter (Easter Sunday). The annual Easter Egg hunt, with eggs allegedly hidden by the bells of churches in Rome.
Over 1,000 brightly coloured



The Royal Glasshouse at Laeken, famed for its rare exotic orchids

Easter eggs are hidden by adults in the Parc Royal, and Belgian children gather to forage among the flowerbeds.

APRIL

Sablon Baroque Spring (third week). The Place du Grand Sablon hosts new classical ensembles in a gathering of young Belgian talent performing 17th-

century music.

The Royal Greenhouses at Lacken (12 days, dates vary). The private greenhouses of the Belgian Royal family are opened to the public as their numerous exotic plants and cacti start to flower. Breathtaking 19th-century glass and wrought ironwork shelters hundreds of rare species (see pp82–3). Flanders Festival (mid-Apr to October). A celebration

of all things musical, this

classical medley offers more than 120 performances by internationally renowned choirs and orchestras. **Scenes d'Ecran** (third weekend). Over 100 new European films draw crowds in cinemas across the city.

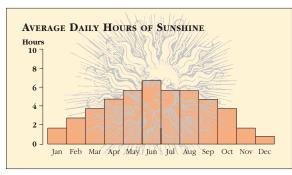
MAY

Europe Day Festivities

(7–9 May). As the capital of Europe, Brussels celebrates its role in the European Union – even Manneken



Runners taking part in the Brussels twenty-kilometre race



Climate

Belgium has a fairly temperate Northern European climate. Although not often freezing, winters are chilly and a heavy coat is required. Summers are warmer and much brighter, though you will still need a jersey for the evenings. Rainwear is always a necessity.

Pis is dressed as a Eurosupporter, in a suit of blue, decorated with yellow stars. **Kunsten FESTIVAL des Arts** (*9–31 May*). This innovative festival covers theatre and dance and is the forum for

much exciting new talent. **Queen Elisabeth Music Contest** (May to mid-June). Classical fans will flock to the prestigious musical competition, now in its fifth decade. Young singers, violinists and pianists gather in front of well-known conductors and soloists to determine the champion among Europe's finest student players.

Brussels Twenty-Kilometre Race (last Sunday). As many as 20,000 keen professional and amateur runners race round the city, taking in its major landmarks.

Jazz Marathon (last weekend). Bistros and cafés are the venues for myriad small jazz bands, with some well-known artists playing anonymously.

SUMMER

THE SEASON OF pageantry arrives with Ommegang in July, one of Europe's oldest and best-known processions, which takes place in the Grand Place and the surrounding streets. Multicultural music runs throughout the summer, with classical, jazz and avant-garde US and European performers playing in venues ranging from tiny beer cafés to the great King Baudouin stadium in Heysel. Independence is celebrated

on Belgian National Day. Families enjoy the Foire du Midi, the huge fairground over 2 km square (1 sq mile) covered with rides and stalls.

JUNE

City of Brussels Summer Festival (early June to Sep). Classical concerts take place in some of the city's bestknown ancient buildings. Festival of Wallonia

(lun-Oct). Covering Brussels and Flanders, this series of gala concerts showcases the best in young Belgian classical orchestral and soloist talent. Couleur Café Festival (last weekend). Spread over three summer evenings in the Tour et Taxis renovated warehouse, the fashionable and funky programme includes salsa, African drummers, acid jazz and multicultural music.

and multicultural music.

Fête de la Musique (last weekend). Two days of concerts and recitals featuring world music take place in the halls and museums of the city.



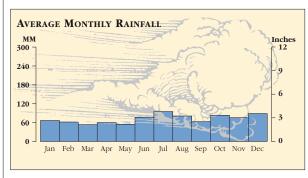
African drummer performing at the Couleur Café Festival

JULY

Ommegang (first weekend in July). This festival has been celebrated in Brussels since 1549, and now draws crowds from around the world. Translated as "a tour", the procession revolves around the Grand Place and the surrounding streets. Over 2,000 participants dress up and become members of a Renaissance town; jesters, courtiers, nobles and soldiers; they go on to parade before Belgian dignitaries. Tickets have to be booked months in advance



The Ommegang pausing in front of dignitaries in the Grand Place



Rainfall chart

On the whole Belgium is rather a rainy country, with Brussels experiencing constant low rainfall throughout the year. Spring is the driest season, but summers can be damp. In winter, rain may turn to snow and sleet.

Brosella Folk and Jazz Festival (second weekend). Musicians from all over Europe play informal gigs in the Parc d'Osseghem in the shadow of the Atomium.

Festival d'Eté de Bruxelles (Jul-Aug). Classical concerts take place through the high summer in venues around the Upper and Lower Town. Foire du Midi (mid-Julmid-Aug). Brussels' main station, Gare du Midi, is host to this month-long funfair, which attracts people in their thousands. Especially popular with children, it is one of the biggest fairs in Europe, and includes an enormous Ferris wheel. Belgian National Day (21 Iul). The 1831 declaration

of independence is com-

memorated annually with a

military parade followed by a firework display in the

Parc de Bruxelles.

Palais Royal Open Days
(last week in Jul-second
week of Sep). The official
residence of the Belgian
Royal family, the opulent
staterooms of the Palais
Royal, including the huge
throne room, are open to the
public for six weeks during
the summer (see pp58–9).

August

Plantation du Meiboom

(9 Aug). This traditional festival dates from 1213. Parading crowds dressed in huge puppet costumes parade around the Lower Town and finally reach the Grand Place where a maypole is planted as a celebration of summer



Costumed revellers at the Plantation of the Meiboom

Tapis des Fleurs (mid-Aug, biennially, for four days). Taking place on even-numbered years, this colourful celebration pays tribute to Brussels' long-established flower industry. The Grand Place is carpeted with millions of fresh flowers in patterns echoing historical scenes. The beautiful flower carpet measures 2,000 sq m (21,000 sq ft).

AUTUMN

RESH AUTUMN days are the cue for many indoor events; innovative jazz is performed in the city's cafés and the French cultural centre in Le Botanique. Architecture is celebrated in the heritage weekend where the public can tour many private houses and personal art collections.

SEPTEMBER

The Birthday of Manneken Pis (last weekend). Brussels' celebrated mascot is clothed

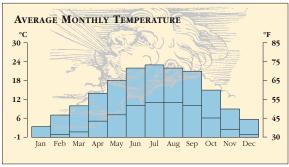
in a new suit by a chosen

dignitary from abroad. **Lucky Town Festival** (*first weekend*). Sixty concerts take place in over 30 of some of Brussels' best-known and atmospheric cafés.

Les Nuits Botaniques (last week). Held in the former greenhouses of the Botanical gardens, now the French cultural centre, this series of musical events is a delight.



The Grand Place, carpeted in millions of fresh flowers



Temperature chart
This chart gives the
average maximum
and miminum temperatures for Brussels.
Generally mild,
Brussels' climate
does produce chilly
weather and cold
winters from October
to March. Spring sees
milder temperatures
and is followed by a
warm summer.

Journées du Patrimoine/ Heritage Days (second or third weekend). Private homes, listed buildings and art collections are opened for a rare public viewing to celebrate the city's architecture.

OCTOBER

Audi Jazz Festival (mid-Oct-mid-Nov). All over Belgium informal jazz concerts bring autumnal cheer to country towns and the capital. Performers are mainly local, but some European stars fly in for performances in Brussels' Palais des Beaux-Arts. Ray Charles and Herbie Hancock have appeared in past years.

WINTER

S NOW AND RAIN typify
Brussels' winter weather,
and attractions move indoors.
Art galleries launch worldclass exhibitions and the
Brussels Film Festival showcases new and established
talent. As the festive season
approaches, the ancient Lower
Town is brightly lit and families gather for Christmas with
traditional Belgian cuisine.

November

Nocturnes des Sablons

(last weekend). Shops and galleries stay open until 11pm around the Place du Grand Sablon. Horse-drawn carriages transport shoppers around the area, with mulled wine on offer in the festively decorated main square.

DECEMBER

Fête de Saint
Nicolas (6 Dec).
The original Santa
Claus, the patron
saint of Christmas,
is alleged to arrive
in the city on this
day. Children
throughout the
country are given
their presents,
sweetmeats and
chocolate.

Reveillon/Fête de Noel (24–25 Dec). In common with the rest of mainland Europe, Christmas is celebrated over a feast on the

evening of 24 December. Gifts are given by adults on this day, and 25 December is traditionally for visiting extended family. The city's Christmas decorations provide a lively sight until 6 January.

JANUARY

Fête des Rois (6 Jan). Epiphany is celebrated with almond cake, the galette des rois, and the search for the bean inside that declares its finder king for the night. Brussels Film Festival (midlate Jan). Premières and film stars are adding weight to this European film showcase.

FEBRUARY

Antiques Fair (middle fortnight). Brussels' crossroads location is useful here as international dealers



Christmas market in the Grand Place around the traditional Christmas Pine

gather in the historic Palais des Beaux-Arts (see p60). International Comic strip and Cartoon Festival (middle fortnight). Artists and authors, both new and established, arrive for lectures and screenings in this city with its comic strip heritage.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

New Year's Day (1 Jan) Easter Sunday (variable) Easter Monday (variable) Labour Day (1 May) Ascension Day (variable) Whit Sunday (variable) Whit Monday (variable) Belgian National Day (21 July) Assumption Day (15 Aug)

All Saints' Day (1 Nov) Armistice Day (11 Nov) Christmas Day (25 Dec)



THE HISTORY OF BRUSSELS

S THE CULTURAL AND CIVIC heart of Belgium since the Middle Ages, Brussels has been the focus of much political upheaval over the centuries. But, from the battles of the 17th century to the warfare of the 20th century, it has always managed to re-create itself with vigour. Now, at the start of a new millennium, Belgium's capital is prospering as the political and economic centre of Europe.

When Julius Caesar set out to conquer the Gauls of northern Europe in 58 BC, he encountered a fierce tribe known as the Belgae (the origins of the 19th-century name "Belgium"). Roman victory led to the establishment of the region they called Gallia Belgica. The earliest mention of Brussels itself is as "Broucsella", or

"settlement in the marshes" and dates from a 7th-century manuscript.

Following the collapse of the Roman Empire in the 5th century, a Germanic race known as the Franks came to rule the region and established the Merovingian dynasty of kings, based in their capital at Tournai. They were followed by the Carolingian dynasty, which produced one of the most important figures of the Middle Ages - Charlemagne (AD 768-814). His noted military expertise ensured that invaders such as the Northern Saxons and the Lombards of Italy were repelled. He was also credited with establishing Christianity as the major religion across western Europe. The pope rewarded him by crowning him Emperor of the West in AD 800; effectively he was the first Holy Roman



tapestry showing the stars

Emperor, ruling a vast area extending from Denmark to Italy. By the 10th century, the inheritance laws of the Franks meant that the empire was divided up among Charlemagne's grandsons, Louis, Charles the Bald and Lothair. Lothair's fortress, founded in 979, marks the official founding of Brussels. The

period had brought a measure of stability to the area's volatile feudal fiefdoms, leading to a trading boom in the new towns of the low countries.

INDUSTRIAL BEGINNINGS

At the start of the 12th century, commerce became the guiding force in western Europe and the centres of trade quickly grew into powerful cities. Rivers and canals were the key to the growth of the area's trading towns. Ghent, Ypres, Antwerp and Bruges became the focus of the cloth trade plied across the North Sea between France, Germany, Italy and England. Brussels, with its skilled craftsmen, became a trade centre, and impressive buildings such as the Cathédrale Sts Michel et Gudule (see pp 70–71), built in 1225, demonstrated its stature.

TIMELINE

58-50 BC Gauls defeated by Julius Caesar and Roman occupation begins

768 Charlemagne is born and goes on to rule most of Europe as the Holy Roman Emperor

Charlemagne

1106 Dukes of Louvain become the Dukes of Brabant

600 AD

843 Emperor Otto II gives the region of Lower Lotharingia to Charlemagne's grandson, Lothair

900 1000 Lotharingia now under the rule of the

Holy Roman Emperor

1005 Henry II, Count of

695 First mention of Brussels as "Broucsella" in the Bishop of Cambrai's papers

Louvain, builds town walls around Brussels

1050



Nineteenth-century painting of the Battle of the Golden Spurs

THE CRAFTSMEN'S REBELLION

Over the next two hundred years Brussels became one of the foremost towns of the Duchy of Brabant. Trade here specialized in fine fabrics that were exported to lucrative markets in France, Italy and England. A handful of merchants became rich and exercised political power over the towns. However, conflict grew between the merchants, who wanted to maintain good relations with England, and their autocratic French rulers who relied upon tax revenue from the towns.

The 14th century witnessed a series of rebellions by the craftsmen of Bruges and Brussels against what they saw as the tyranny of the French lords. In May 1302, Flemish craftsmen, armed only with spears, defeated the French at the Battle of the Golden Spurs, named for the humiliating theft of the cavalry's spurs. Encouraged by this success, the Brussels craftsmen revolted against the aristocracy who controlled their trading economy in 1356. They were also angered by the Hundred Years' War between England and France, which began in 1337. The war threatened wool supplies from England which were crucial to their cloth-based

economy. The subsequent depression marked the beginning of decades of conflict between the craftsmen and merchant classes. In 1356. Jeanne, Duchess of Louvain. gained control over Brussels, and instituted the workers' Charter of Liberties. Craftsmen were finally given some political powers in the city. Trade resumed, attracting new people to Brussels. As the population grew, new streets were built outside the city walls to

accommodate them. Between 1357 and 1379 a second town wall was constructed around these new districts.

THE HOUSE OF BURGUNDY

The new town walls were also built in reply to the invasion of Brussels by the Count of Flanders. However, in 1369 Philip, Duke of Burgundy, married the daughter of the Count of Flanders, and when the count died in 1384 the Low Countries and eastern France came under the couple's Burgundian rule.

In the 1430s Brussels became the capital of Burgundy, a situation that was to change the city forever. Brussels



Richly detailed Brussels tapestries such as this Allegory of Hope (1525) were prized commodities



St-Michel statue

first charter, and relations between England and Flanders break down

allied to England for the Hundred Years' War

> 1356 Duchess Jeanne of Louvain grants Charter of Liberties



Painting of the family of the Hapsburg King of Austria, Maximillian I and Mary of Burgundy

was now an administrative and cultural centre, famous for its grand architecture, in the form of mansions and churches, and its luxury crafts trade.

THE HAPSBURG DYNASTY

In 1477 Mary of Burgundy, the last heir to the duchy, married Maximillian of Austria. Mary died in 1482, leaving Maximillian and the Hapsburg dynasty rulers of the city at a time when Brussels was experiencing serious economic depression. In 1488 Brussels and the rest of Flanders rebelled against this new power which had reinstated relations with France. The Austrians held on to power largely because of the

plague of 1490 which halved Brussels' population. Maximillian passed his rule of the Low Countries to his son, Philip the Handsome in 1494 the year after he became Holy Roman Emperor. When

Maximillian died, his daughter, Regent Empress Margaret of Austria, moved the capital of Burgundy from Brussels to Mechelen, where she educated her nephew, the future emperor Charles V.

SPANISH RULE

In 1515, at the age of 15, Charles became Sovereign of Burgundy. The following year he inherited the Spanish throne and, in 1519, became the Holy Roman Emperor. As he was born in Ghent, and considered Flanders his real home, he restored Brussels as the capital of Burgundy. Dutch officials arrived to run the three government councils that were now based here.

For the first time the city had a court. Both aristocratic families and immigrants, eager to cash in on the city's expansion, were drawn to the heady mix of tolerance, intellectual sophistication and business. Brussels quickly emerged as the most powerful city in Flanders, overtaking its long-standing rivals Bruges and Antwerp.

However, the Reformation, begun in Germany by Martin Luther,

was to usher in a period of religious conflict. When Charles V abdicated in 1555, he fractured the empire's unity by leaving the Holy Roman Empire to his brother Ferdinand and all other dominions to his devoutly Catholic son, Philip II of Spain. His persecution of the Protestant movement finally sparked the Revolt of the Netherlands led by the House

of Orange. Brussels' Protestant rulers surrendered to Philip in 1585. His power ended when the English defeated the Spanish Armada in 1588, by which time 8,000 Protestants had been put to death.

1419 Philip the Good succeeds as Count of Burgundy

1506 Margaret of Austria moves the Burgundian capital from Brussels to Mechelen

Portrait of Charles V.

Holy Roman Emperor

1515 Charles Hapsburg becomes Sovereign of Burgundy 1555 Catholic Philip II succeeds Charles V as religious reformation comes to Brussels

1400

1500 1490 Plague decimates the city

1488 Civil war – Brussels joins Flanders against Maximillian of Austria



1550

1566 Conseil des Troubles set up by Duke d'Alba. Prominent Counts Egmont and Hornes executed

1430 Under Burgundian control, Brussels becomes the major administrative centre of the region

1450



The armies of Louis XIV, the Sun King, bombard Brussels' city walls

THE COUNTER-REFORMATION

From 1598 Archduchess Isabella and Archduke Albert were the Catholic rulers of the Spanish Netherlands, installing a Hapsburg governor in Brussels. They continued to persecute Protestants: all non-Catholics were barred from working. Thousands of skilled workers moved to the Netherlands. But such new trades as lacemaking, diamond-cutting and silkweaving flourished. Isabella and Albert were great patrons of the arts, and supported Rubens in Antwerp (see pp96–7).



Protestant prisoners paraded in Brussels during the Counter-Reformation under Albert and Isabella

INVASION OF THE SUN KING

The 17th century was a time of of religious and political struggle all over Europe. The Thirty Years War (1618–48) divided western Europe along Catholic and Protestant lines. After 1648, France's Sun King, Louis XIV, was determined to add Flanders to his territory.

By 1633 both Albert and Isabella were dead and Philip IV of Spain, passed control of the Spanish Netherlands to his weak brother, the Cardinal-Infant Ferdinand. Keen to pursue his ambitions, Louis XIV besieged Maastricht in the 1670s and took Luxembourg. Having failed to win the nearby enclave of Namur, the piqued Sun King moved his army to Brussels, whose defences were weaker.

On August 13, 1695, the French bombarded Brussels from a hill outside the city walls, destroying the Grand Place (seepp42–3) and much of its environs. The French withdrew, but their desire to rule the region was to cause conflict over subsequent decades.

A PHOENIX FROM THE ASHES

Despite the destruction incurred by the bombardment, Brussels was quick to recover. The guilds ensured that the Grand Place was rebuilt in a matter of years, with new guildhouses as a testament to the on-going success of the city's economic life and craftsmanship.

The building of the Willebroek canal during the 17th century gave Brussels access to the Rupel and Scheldt rivers, and thus to Antwerp and the North Sea. Large industries began to replace local market trading. Factories and mills grew up around the city's harbour, and Brussels became an export centre.

TIMELINE

1599 Artist Antony van Dyck born in Antwerp

1600 Antwerp becomes the centre of Flemish art 1621 Archduke Albert dies amid new bout of Protestant/ Catholic fighting

1641 Van Dyck dies after glittering artistic career



Louis XIV of France in costume

1600

1625

1650

1675

1598 Isabella and Albert run strong Catholic, anti-Protestant regime



Manneken Pis

1640 Rubens dies after a 40-year career as painter of over 3,000 paintings

1633 Cardinal-Infant Ferdinand is new ruler 1670 Louis XIV beseiges Maastricht and Luxembourg; William of Orange goes on defensive Governor of Brussels,

Duke Charles of Lorraine

AUSTRIAN SUCCESSION

Subsequent decades were dogged by war as Austria and England sought to stave off French ambitions. When

Philip of Anjou succeeded to the Spanish throne, it looked as if the combined threat of Spain and France would overwhelm the rest of Europe. Emperor Leopold I of Austria, together with England and many German states, declared war on France. The resulting 14-year War of the Spanish Succession ended with the Treaty of Utrecht in

1713, which ceded the Netherlands. including Brussels, to Austria.

The treaty did not end the conflict. Emperor Charles VI of Austria ruled after Leopold, but failed to produce a male heir. His death in 1731 sparked another 17 years of war - The War of the Austrian Succession over whether



French prince Philip of Anjou became Philip V of Spain, sparking the War of the Spanish Succession

his daughter Maria Theresa should be allowed to inherit the crown. It was not until 1748, with the signing of the

> Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, that Maria Theresa gained control.

THE BOOM PERIOD

The endless fighting took its toll, and Brussels, along with the rest of Belgium, was impoverished. Despite the sophistication of the aristocratic elite, the majority of the population were still ruled by feudal laws: they could not change jobs or move home

without permission; and only three per cent of the population was literate.

In the 1750s Empress Maria Theresa of Austria installed her brother. Charles of Lorraine, in Brussels. Under the influence of the Enlightenment, his court attracted European artists and intellectuals, and Brussels became the most glamorous city in Europe. Industry also boomed with the construction of new roads and waterways. Brussels was transformed as the Place Royale and Parc de Bruxelles were laid out.

THE WORKERS' REVOLT

While the aristocracy and new middleclasses flourished, Brussels' workers were suffering. As the city's population grew there were more workers than jobs: wages plummeted and factory conditions were harsh.

When Joseph II succeeded Maria Theresa in 1780, he enforced a series of reforms including freedom of religion. However, he also cancelled the 500-year-old Charter of Liberties.

Influenced by the ideas of the French Revolution of 1789, the Belgians now demanded reform. Their rebellion was to result in an independent state.

1695 French Bombardment of Brussels

1713-14 Treaties of Utrecht and Rastadt mark beginning of Austrian period

Ceramic Delft blate

1760s Brussels is cultural and artistic centre of Europe

1750

1788 Joseph II cancels Charter of Liberties which results in liberal opposition

1775

1700

1725

1748 Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle restores the Netherlands to Austrian rule 1753 New roads and canals constructed.

1789 Belgian revolt for independence fired by French Revolution

1697 Willebroek Canal completed, links Brussels to the sea via Antwerp

1731 Beginning of the 17-yearlong war against Austrian rule

which boosts industry in Brussels

The Fight for Independence

BELGIUM WAS AGAIN occupied by foreign powers between 1794 and 1830. First, by the French Republican armies, then, after Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo in 1815, by the Dutch. French radical reforms included the abolition of the guild system and fairer taxation laws. Although French rule was unpopular, their liberal ideas were to influence the Belgian drive for independence. William I of Orange was appointed King of the Netherlands (which included Belgium) after 1815. His autocratic style, together with a series of anti-Catholic measures, bred discontent, especially in Brussels and among the French-speaking Walloons in

the south. The south was also angered when William refused to introduce tariffs to protect their trade – it was the last straw. The uprising of 1830 began in Brussels and Léopold I became king of the newly independent nation.



King William I of Orange William's rule as King of the Netberlands after 1815 was unpopular.



Liberals joined workers already protesting in the square outside.



A Cultural Revolution in Brussels
French ideas not only influenced the revolution, but also Belgian culture. Under
Napoleon the city walls were demolished
and replaced by tree-lined boulevards.



The Battle of Waterloo Napoleon's influence came to an end after the battle of Waterloo on 18 June, 1815. A Prussian army came to Wellington's aid, and by 5:30pm Napoleon faced his final defeat. This led to Dutch rule over Belgium.



Agricultural workers
Harsh weather in the winter of 1829 caused hardship for both farmers and agricultural labourers, who also joined the protest.



The Revolution in Industry
Unemployment, low wages and factory
closures during the early decades of the
19th century sparked unrest in 1830.



de la Patrie led the audience in the theatre on the night of 25 August, 1830, to join demonstrators outside.



BELGIAN REVOLUTION

High unemployment, poor wages and a bad winter in 1829 provoked protests about living and working conditions. The revolution was ignited by a patriotic and radical opera at the Brussels' opera house, and the largely liberal audience rushed out into the street, raising the Brabant flag. Ten thousand troops were sent by William to quash the rebels, but the Belgian soldiers deserted and the Dutch were finally driven out of Belgium.

The initial list of demands asked for administrative independence from the Dutch, and for freedom of press.



King of Belgium, Léopold I The crowning of German prince, Léopold of Saxe-Coburg, in Brussels in 1831 finally established Belgium's independence.



This symbolic illustration of the revolution shows both liberals and workers ready to die for their country.

TIMELINE

1790 Republic of United Belgian States formed. Temporary end of Austrian rule 1799 Emperor Napoleon rules France

Wellington

1815 Battle of Waterloo. Napoleon defeated by army led by the Duke of Wellington

1820

1830 Rebellion begins at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels

1830

1790

1800

1810

1831 State of Belgium formed on 21 July. Treaty of London grants independence

1794 Brussels loses its importance to The Hague

1790 War between France and Austria 1815 Belgium, allied with Holland under the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, is ruled by William I of Orange. Brussels becomes second capital

1835 Continental railway built from Brussels to Mechelen

THE FLEMISH AND THE WALLOONS: THE BELGIAN COMPROMISE

Linguistically and culturally, Belgium is divided. In the north, the Flemish have their roots in the Netherlands and Germany. In the south are the Walloons, the Frenchspeaking Belgians, culturally connected to France. The "Linguistic Divide" of 1962 officially sanctioned this situation, dividing Belgium



Bilingual road signs

into Flemish- and French-speaking zones. The exception is Brussels, an officially bilingual city since the formation of Bruxelles-Capitale in 1963, and a national region by 1989 when it came to comprise 19 outlying districts. Conflicts still erupt over the issue, but the majority of Belgians seem to be in favour of a united country.

CONSOLIDATING THE NEW STATE

During its early days as an independent nation, Brussels was a haven for free-thinkers, including the libertarian poet Baudelaire, and a refuge for exiles, such as Karl Marx and Victor Hugo. Belgium's industries also continued to expand throughout the 19th century.

to export goods all over Europe. However, the population of Brussels had almost doubled, resulting in poorquality housing and working conditions. Towards the end of the reign of Belgium's second monarch, Léopold II (r.1865–1909), industrial unrest led to new legislation which improved conditions, and all men over 25 gained the right to vote in 1893. But the king's principal concern was his colonialist policy in the Congo in Central Africa. THE GERMAN OCCUPATIONS Albert I succeeded Léopold II as

By 1870 there were no less than four

main railway stations in Brussels able

Belgium's new king. He encouraged the nation's artists and architects, and was a keen supporter of Art Nouveau (see pp16-17). All of this ended as the country entered its bleakest period.

Despite its neutral status, Belgium was invaded by the German army in the summer of 1914. All of the country, except for the northern De Panne region, was occupied by the Germans. Some of the bloodiest battles of World War I were staged on Belgian soil. Flanders was the scene of brutal trench

> warfare, including the introduction of poison gas at Ypres (see p107). Today, Belgium contains several vast graveyards, which include the resting places of the tens of thousands of soldiers who died on the Western Front.

> The Belgians conducted resistance from their stronghold in De Panne, cutting telephone wires and destroying train tracks. The Germans responded by confiscating property, deporting Belgians to German labour camps



King Léopold III visits a goldmine in the Congo in Africa

TIMELINE

1847 Opening of Europe's first shopping mall, the Galéries St Hubert

1871 Under Léopold II, the River Senne is reclaimed, and new districts built to cope with the growing city

1898 Flemish language given equal status to French in law

1914-18 World War I Germany occupies Belgium

1840



1884 Léopold II is granted sovereignty over the Congo

1870

1910 World Fair in Brussels

1900

1929-31 Great Depression and reduction in

1925

1839 Treaty of London grants neutrality to Belgium

promotes Belgium's industrial boom. Art Nouveau flourishes foreign trade



German troops raising the German flag at the Royal Castle at Laeken, near Brussels

and murdering random hostages. Belgium remained under German occupation until the last day of the war, 11 November, 1918.

The 1919 Treaty of Versailles granted Belgium control of Eupen-Malmédy, the German-speaking area in the

southeast. But by 1940 the country was again invaded by the Germans under Hitler. In May of that year, King Léopold III surrendered.

Despite national resistance to the Occupation, the King was interned at Laeken until 1944, after

which he was moved to Germany until the end of the war. Rumours that Léopold had collaborated with the Nazis led to his abdication in 1951, in favour of his 20-year-old son, Baudouin.

INTERNATIONAL STATUS

Belgium's history in the latter half of the 20th century has been dominated by the ongoing language debate between the Flemish and the French-speaking Walloons. From 1970 to 1994 the constitution was redrawn, creating a federal state with three separate regions; the Flemish north, the Walloon south and bilingual Brussels. While this smoothed over conflicts, cultural divisions run deep. Today, all parliamentary speeches have to be delivered in both French and Flemish.

Like most of Europe, Belgium went from economic boom in the 1960s to recession and retrenchment in the 1970s and 1980s. Throughout these decades Brussels' stature at the heart of Europe was consolidated. In 1958, the city became the headquarters for the European Economic Community (EEC), later the European Union. In 1967 NATO also moved to Brussels.

THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL

Modern Brussels is a multilingual and cosmopolitan city at the forefront of Europe. This historically industrial city now prospers as a base for many large corporations such as ICI and Mitsubishi.

Despite its flourishing status, the city has had its fair share of disasters, including the deaths of 38 Italian football supporters at the Heysel stadium in 1985. Also, two tragic paedophile murder cases in the 1990s led many Belgians to protest

against the apparent failures of the police system. However, Brussels' future as a city of world importance seems certain as it lies at the political centre of the European Union.



The European Parliament, Brussels

1939–45 World War II. Germany again occupies Belgium

1951 Abdication of Léopold III; Baudouin I succeeds

Baudouin I
1950
1944 Benelux Unions

1962 The Belgian Congo is granted independence European

European flag



1993 King Baudouin I dies; Albert II succeeds

2000

The euro becomes legal tender

1975

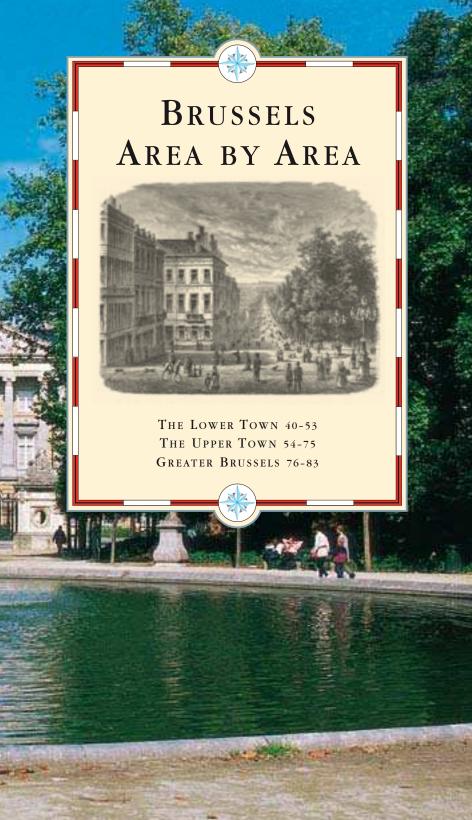
1967 Brussels is new NATO HQ

1985 Heysel Stadium disaster 1989 Brussels is officially a bilingual city with 19 outlying districts 2001 Crown Prince Philippe and Princess Mathilde have a daughter, Elisabeth

with Holland and Luxembourg formed

1934 Albert I is killed in a climbing accident







THE LOWER TOWN

ost visits to Brussels begin with a stroll around the Lower Town, the ancient heart of the city and home to its most famous area, the Grand Place. The original settlement of the city

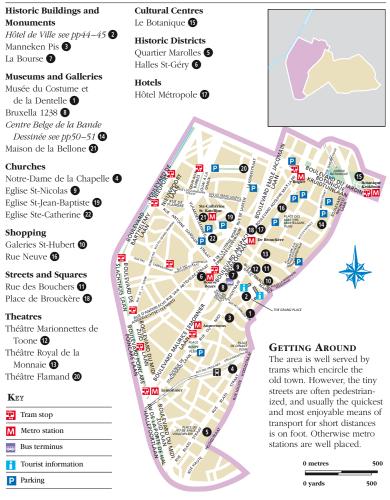


Maison du Cygne, Grand Place

was here; most of the streets surrounding this huge market square date from as far back as the Middle Ages up to the 18th century. The architecture is an eclectic blend of Gothic, Baroque and Flemish Renaissance. In and around the Place de Brouckère and the busy Boulevard Anspach are the more recent additions to the city's history. These appeared in the 19th century when the slums around the River Senne

were cleared to make way for ornate constructions such as the financial centre, La Bourse, and Europe's first shopping arcade, Galéries St-Hubert. With its many restaurants and cafés, the Lower Town is also popular at night.

SIGHTS AT A GLANCE



The Grand Place

THE GEOGRAPHICAL, HISTORICAL and commercial heart of I the city, the Grand Place is the first port of call for most visitors to Brussels. This bustling cobblestone square remains the civic centre, centuries after its creation, and offers the finest surviving example in one area of Belgium's ornate 17th-century architecture. Open-air markets took place on or near this site as early as the 11th century, but by the end of the 14th century Brussels' town hall, the Hôtel de Ville, was built, and city traders added individual guildhouses in a medley of styles. In 1695, however, two days of cannon fire by the French destroyed all but the town hall and two guild façades. Trade guilds were urged to rebuild their halls to styles approved by the Town Council, producing the harmonious unity of Flemish Renaissance buildings here today.



The morning flower market in bloom in the Grand Place



The Maison du Roi was first built in 1536 but redesigned in 1873. Once the residence of ruling Spanish monarchs, it is now home to the Musée de la Ville, which includes 16thcentury paintings, tapestries, and the 400 tiny outfits of



Manneken Pis. 1 Northeast corner



2 MAISON DU ROI

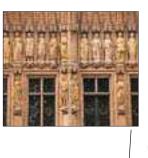




Everard 't Serclaes was murdered defending Brussels in the 14th century; touching the bronze arm of his statue is said to bring luck.



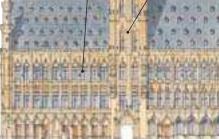
EVERARD 'T SERCLAES



The spire was built by Jan van Ruysbroeck in 1449 and stands 96 m (315 ft) high; it is slightly crooked.

Ornate

stone carvings



6 Hôtel de Ville



Le Pigeon was home to Victor Hugo, the exiled French novelist who chose the house as his Belgian residence in 1852. Some of the most complimentary comments about Brussels emerged later from his pen.

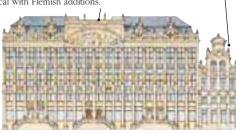


La Maison des Ducs de Brabant is a group of six guildhouses. Designed by the Controller of Public Works, Guillaume de Bruyn, the group is Neo-Classical with Flemish additions.

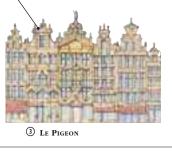


LOCATOR MAP See Brussels street finder, map 2

Stone busts of the ducal line along the facade gave this group of houses their name.



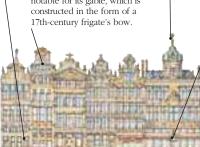
4 LA MAISON DES DUCS DE BRARANT



Le Renard was built in

the 1690s as the guildhouse of the haberdashers by the Flemish architects Marc de Vos and van Nerum. Façade details show St Nicolas. patron saint of merchants, and cherubs playing with haberdashery ribbons.

Le Cornet displays Italianate Flemish style. This Boatmen's Guildhouse (1697) is most notable for its gable, which is

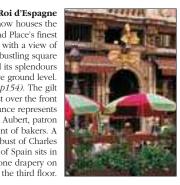


(1) LE RENARD, LE CORNET AND LE ROI D'ESPAGNE



Le Roi d'Espagne now houses the

Grand Place's finest bar with a view of the bustling square and its splendours above ground level. (see p154). The gilt bust over the front entrance represents Saint Aubert, patron saint of bakers. A vast bust of Charles II of Spain sits in stone drapery on



La Maison des Boulangers, also known as

"Le Roi d'Espagne", was a showpiece built by the wealthy and powerful guild of bakers. The 1676 octagonal copper dome is topped by a dancing golden figure.

Musée du Costume et de la Dentelle •

Rue de Violette 6, 1000 BRU.

Map 2 D3. 【 (02) 213 4450.

M Gare Centrale, de Brouckère.

10am-12:30pm, 1:30-5pm

Mon-Fri; 2-5pm Sat, Sun.

FOUND WITHIN two 18th-century gabled houses is the museum dedicated to one of Brussels' most successful exports, Belgian lace (see pp20–21). The intricate skill employed by Belgian lacemakers has contributed a vital economic role in the city since the 12th century, and the collection explains and



A wedding dress at the Musée du Costume et de la Dentelle

displays the history of this delicate craft. On the ground floor costumes from the 18th to the 20th centuries are displayed on mannequins, demonstrating how lace has adorned fashions of every era. The second floor houses a collection of antique lace, carefully stored in drawers and demonstrating the various schools of lacemaking in France, Flanders and Italy.

Manneken Pis 3

Rues de l'Etuve & du Chêne, 1000 BRU. **Map** 1 C3. **3** 34, 48, 95, 96. **2** 23, 52, 55, 56, 81. **M** Bourse, Gare Centrale.

AN UNLIKELY ATTRACTION, this tiny statue of a young boy barely 30 cm (1 ft) high relieving himself into a small pool is as much a part of Brussels as

Hôtel de Ville 2



Stone gargoyle

THE IDEA OF having a town hall to reflect Brussels' growth as a major European trading centre had been under consideration since the end of the 13th century. It was not until 1401 that the

first foundation stone was laid and the building was finally completed in 1459, emerging as the finest civic building in the country, a stature it still enjoys.

Jacques van Thienen was commissioned to design the left wing and belfry of the building, where he used ornate columns, sculptures, turrets and arcades. The tower and spire begun in 1449 by Jan van Ruysbroeck helped seal its reputation. In 1995, the 1455 statue of the city's patron saint, Michael, was restored and returned to its famous position on top of the tower in 1997, where it is used as a weather vane. Tours are available of the interior, which contains 15th-century tapestries and works of art.



137 statues adorn walls and many mullioned windows.

★ Aldermen's Room Still in use today for the meetings of the aldermen and mayor of Brussels, this council chamber contains a series of 18th-century tapestries depicting the bistory of 6th-century King Clovis.



A detail of the delicately carved facade with stone statues



- **★** Conference Room Council Chamber
- **★ Aldermen's Room**

the Trevi Fountain is part of Rome or Trafalgar Square's reclining lions are of London.

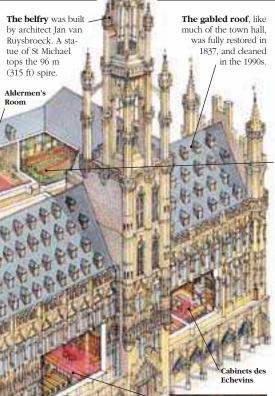
The original bronze statue by Jérôme Duquesnoy the Elder, was first placed on the site in 1619, the tongue-incheek design reflecting a genuine need for fresh drinking water in the area. Its popularity led, in 1770, to the addition of an ornate stone niche, giving more prominence to the small figure. Several attempts to steal the statue were made during the 18th century, notably by the French and then British armies in 1745. but it was the theft in

1817 by a former convict, Antoine Licas, which caused the most alarm - the robber smashed the bronze figure shortly after procuring it. A replica of the statue was cast the following year and returned to its revered site, and it is this copy that is seen today. In 1698 governor Maximilian-Emmanuel donated a suit of clothing with which to dress the statue. It was to be the beginning of a tradition that continues to this day. Visiting heads of state to Brussels donate miniature versions of their national costume for the boy, and now 400 outfits, including an Elvis suit, are housed in the Musée de la Ville (see p42).

THE LEGENDS OF MANNEKEN PIS

The inspiration for this famous statue remains unknown, but the mystery only lends itself to rumour and fable and increases the little boy's charm. One theory claims that in the

12th century the son of a duke was caught urinating against a tree in the midst of a battle and was thus commemorated in bronze as a symbol of the country's military courage.



Ornamental stone

balcony staircase

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Grand Place, 1000 BRU. Map 2
D3. (02) 279 4365. 29, 34,
47, 48, 60, 63, 65, 66, 71, 95, 96.
23, 52, 55, 56, 81. Bourse,
Gare Centrale. Museum
10am-Spm Tue-Sun (to 1pm Sat
8 Sun). pub hols, election days.
11:30am & 3:15pm Tue,
12:15pm Sun (call for details).



★ Conference Room Council Chamber

The most splendid of all the public rooms, ancient tapestries and gilt mirrors line the walls above an inlaid floor.

Wedding Room

A Neo-Gothic style dominates this civil marriage office, with its many ornate carved timbers, including ancient ebony and mahogany.

Notre-Dame de la Chapelle **4**

Place de la Chapelle 1, 1000 BRU.

Map 1 C4. 【 (02) 513 5348.

27, 34, 95, 96. ₹ 91, 92, 93, 94.

M Porte de Namur. ∑ 5:30pm

Mon−Sat; Mass 6:30pm daily.

In 1134 KING Godefroid I decided to build a chapel outside the city walls. It quickly became a market church, serving the many craftsmen living nearby. In 1210 its popularity was such that it was made a parish church, but it became really famous in 1250, when a royal donation of five pieces of the True Cross turned the church into a pilgrimage site.

Originally built in Romanesque style, the majority of the church was destroyed by fire in 1405. Rebuilding began in 1421 in a Gothic style typical of 15th-century Brabant architecture, including gables decorated with finials and interior capitals decorated with cabbage leaves at the base. The Bishop of Cambrai consecrated the new church in 1434.

One of the most striking features of the exterior are the monstrously lifelike gargoyles which peer down on the community – a representation of evil outside the sacred interior. The Baroque belltower was added after the 1695 bombardment by the French (see p32). Another moving feature is the carved stone memorial to the 16th-century Belgian artist Pieter Brueghel the Elder (see p14), who is buried here.



The cool, elegant interior of Notre-Dame de la Chapelle



.....

Rue Haute in the Quartier Marolles, with old-style shops and cafés

Quartier Marolles 6

Map 1 C5. **2**0, 27, 48. **2**91. M Louise, Porte de Hal.

Nown colloquially as "Les Marolles", this quarter of Brussels is traditionally working class. Situated between the two city walls, the area was home to weavers and craftsmen. Street names of the district, such as Rue des Brodeurs (Embroiderers' St) and Rue des Charpentiers (Carpenters' St), reflect its artisanal history.

Today the area is best known for its fine daily flea market, held in the **Place du Jeu de Balle**. The flea market has been held on this site since 1640. Between 7am and 2pm, with the biggest and best markets on Thursday and Sunday, almost anything from junk to pre-war collector's items can be found among the stalls.

Shopping of a different kind is on offer on nearby Rue Haute, an ancient Roman road. A shopping district since the 19th century, it is still popular with arty types with its specialist stores, interior and antique shops. The street has a long artistic history, too the elegant red-brick house at No. 132 was home to Pieter Brueghel the Elder and the sculptor Auguste Rodin had a studio at No. 224. No. 132 now houses the small Maison de Brueghel, dedicated to the 16th-century painter.

At the southern end of Rue Haute is **Porte de Hal**, the stone gateway of the nowdemolished outer city walls. Looming over the Marolles is the imposing Palais de Justice (see p69), which has hilltop views of the area west of the city, including the 1958 Atomium (see p83) and the Basilique Sacré-Coeur (see p81).

Maison de Brueghel

Rue Haute 132, 1000 BRU.

May-Sep: Wed & Sun pm (groups with written permission only).

Oct-Apr.



Busy restaurants and cafés outside Halles St-Géry

Halles St-Géry 6

Place St-Géry, 1000 BRU. **Map** 1 C2. 47. **2** 23, 52, 55, 56, 81. M de Brouckère.

In Many Ways, St-Géry can be considered the birthplace of the city. A chapel to Saint Géry was built in the 6th century, then in AD 977 a fortress took over the site. A 16th-century church followed and occupied the location until the 18th century. In 1881 a

covered meat market was erected in Neo-Renaissance style. The glass and intricate ironwork was renovated in 1985, and the hall now serves as a cultural centre with an exhibition on local history.

La Bourse **1**

Palais de la Bourse, 1000 BRU. Map 1 C2. ((02) 509 1211. 3, 52, 55, 56, 81.

M Bourse. 10am daily, by appointment. Sat & Sun, public hols. of the exchange market.

BRUSSELS' Stock Exchange, La Bourse, is one of the city's most impressive buildings, dominating the square of the same name. Designed in Palladian style by architect Léon Suys, it was constructed from 1867 to 1873. Among the building's most notable features are the facade's ornate carvings. The great French sculptor, Auguste Rodin, is thought to have crafted the groups representing Africa and Asia, as well as four carvatids inside. Beneath the colonnade, two beautifully detailed winged figures representing Good and Evil were Detail of a Rodin carved by sculptor statue, La Bourse

Jacques de Haen. Some areas of the building are open to the public, but a screen divides visitors from the frantic bidding and trading that takes place on weekdays on the trading floor.

Bruxella 1238 3

Rue de la Bourse, 1000 BRU. Map 1 C3. ((02) 279 4350. 🚃 34, 48, 95, 96. 📆 3, 52, 55, 56, 81. M Bourse, de Brouckère. 10:15am (English), 11:15am, 1:45pm, 2:30pm, 3:15pm, Wed. 💋 🌠 obligatory, starts from Maison du Roi, Grand Place.

NCE HOME to a church and 13th-century Franciscan convent, in the early 19th century this site became a Butter Market until the building of the Bourse commenced in 1867. In 1988 municipal roadworks began alongside the

Place de la Bourse. Medieval history must have been far from the minds of the city authorities but, in the course of working on the foundations for the Bourse, important relics were found, including 13thcentury bones, pottery and the 1294 grave of Duke John I of Brabant. Visitors can now see these and other pieces of Burgundian history in a small museum built on the site.

Eglise St-Nicolas

Rue au Beurre 1, 1000 BRU, Map 1 C2. ((02) 513 8022. 🚃 34, 48, 95, 96. 📆 3, 52, 55, 56, 81. M Bourse, de Brouckère.
8am-6:30pm daily, except during services.

T THE END of the 12th A century a market church was constructed on this site, but, like much of the Lower Town, it was damaged in the

1695 French Bombardment. A cannon ball lodged itself directly into an interior pillar and the belltower finally collapsed in

> 1714. Many restoration projects were planned but none came to fruition until as late as 1956, when the west side of the building was given a new, Gothic-style

façade. Named after St Nicolas, the patron saint of merchants, the church contains choir stalls dating from 1381 which display detailed medallions telling St Nicolas' story. Another interesting feature is the chapel, constructed at an angle, reputedly to avoid the flow of an old stream. Inside the church, works of

art by Bernard van



CIXTEEN YEARS after ascending the throne as the first king of Belgium, Léopold I inaugurated the opening of these grand arcades in 1847.

St-Hubert has the distinction of being the first shopping arcade in Europe, and one of the most elegant. Designed in Neo-Renaissance style by Jean-Pierre Cluvsenaar, the vaulted glass roof covers its three sections, Galerie du Roi, Galerie de la Reine and Galerie des Princes, which house a range of luxury shops and cafés. The ornate interior and expensive goods on sale soon turned the galleries into a fashionable meeting place for 19th-century society, including resident literati - Victor

Hugo and Alexandre Dumas

attended lectures here. The



Gothic-style façade of Eglise St-Nicolas



Pavement displays of restaurants along Rue des Bouchers

Rue des Bouchers **1**

Map 2 D2. 29, 60, 63, 65, 66, 71. ∰ 3, 52, 55, 56, 81, 90. M de Brouckère, Gare Centrale, Bourse.

LIKE MANY streets in this area of the city, Rue des Bouchers retains its medieval name, reminiscent of the time when this meandering, cobblestoned street was home to the butchers' trade. Aware of its historic importance and heeding the concerns of the public, the city council declared this area the Ilot Sacré (sacred islet) in 1960. forbidding any of the architectural facades to be altered or destroyed. and commanding those surviving to be restored. Hence Rue des Bouchers abounds with 17thcentury stepped gables and decorated doorways.

Today, this pedestrianized thoroughfare is best known as the "belly of Brussels", a reference to its plethora of cafés and restaurants. Many cuisines are on offer here, including Chinese, Greek, Italian and Indian. But the most impressive sights during an evening stroll along the street are the lavish pavement displays of seafood, piled high on mounds of ice, all romantically lit by an amber glow from the streetlamps.

At the end of the street, at the Impasse de la Fidélité, is a recent acknowledgement of sexual equality. Erected in 1987, Jeanneke Pis is a coy, cheeky female version of her "brother", the more famous Manneken Pis (see p45).

Théâtre Marionettes de Toone **©**

A POPULAR pub by day, at night the top floor of this tavern is home to a puppet theatre. During the time of the Spanish Netherlands (see p32), all theatres were closed because of the satirical performances by actors aimed at their Latin rulers.

This began a fashion for

Harlequin This began a fashio puppet shows, the

vicious dialogue more easily forgiveable from inanimate dolls. In 1830, Antoine Toone opened his own theatre and it has been run by the Toone family ever since; the owner is the seventh generation, Toone VII. The classics are enacted by these wooden marionettes in the local Bruxellois dialect, and occasionally in French, English, German or Dutch.

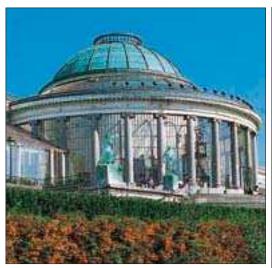
Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie 🛭

THIS THEATRE was first built in 1817 on the site of a 15th-century mint (Hôtel des Monnaies) but, following a fire in 1855, only the front and pediment of the original Neo-Classical building remain. After the fire, the theatre was redesigned by the architect, Joseph Poelaert, also responsible for the imposing Palais de Justice (see p69).

The original theatre was to make its historical mark before its destruction, however, when on 25 August, 1830, a performance of La Muette de Portici (The Mute Girl) began a national rebellion. As the tenor began to sing the nationalist Amour Sacré de la Patrie (Sacred love of the homeland), his words incited an already discontented city, fired by the libertarianism of the revolutions taking place in France, into revolt. Members of the audience ran out into the street in a rampage that developed into the



The original Neo-Classical façade of Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie



The 19th-century glasshouse of Le Botanique in summer

September Uprising (see p34-5). The theatre today remains the centre of Belgian performing arts; major renovations took place during the 1980s. The auditorium was raised 4 m (13 ft) to accommodate the elaborate stage designs, but the luxurious Louis XIV-style decor was carefully retained and blended with the new additions. The central dome is decorated with an allegory of Belgian arts.

Centre Belge de la Bande Dessinée @

See pp50-51.

Le Botanique 6

Rue Royale 236, 1210 BRU. **Map** 2 E1. ((02) 226 1211. **3** 38, 58, 61. 9 92, 93, 94. **M** Botanique. 10am–6pm daily.

In 1797, the city of Brussels created a botanical garden in the grounds of the Palais de Lorraine as a source of reference for botany students. The garden closed in 1826, and new gardens were relocated in Meise, 13 km (9 miles) from Brussels.

A grand glass-and-iron rotunda was designed at the centre of the gardens by the French architect Gineste. This iron glasshouse still stands, as does much of the 19th-century statuary by Constantin Meunier (see p15), including depictions of the Four Seasons. The glasshouse is now home to the French Community Cultural Centre and offers plays, concerts and exhibitions.

Rue Neuve 6

Map 2 D2. ■ 29, 60, 63, 65, 66, 71. ■ 3, 52, 55, 56, 81, 90. ■ Bourse, de Brouckère, Rogier.

BRUSSELS shoppers have been flocking to the busy Rue Neuve since the 19th century for its reasonably priced goods and well-located stores.



Rue Neuve, the longest pedestrian shopping street in the city

Similar to London's Oxford Street, but now pedestrianized, this is the heart of commercial shopping. It houses well-known international chainstores and shopping malls, such as City 2, which has shops, cafés and the media store Fnac all under one roof. Inno department store was designed by Horta (see p78), but after a fire in 1967 was entirely rebuilt.

To the east of Rue Neuve is Place des Martyrs, a peaceful square where a monument pays tribute to the 450 citizens killed during the 1830 uprising.

City 2

Rue Neuve 123, 1000 BRU. **(** (02) 211 4060. 10am-7pm Mon-Thu & Sat, 10am-8pm Fri.

Sun, public hols.

Hôtel Métropole **©**

THE AREA lying between Place Rogier and Place de Brouckère is known as the hotel district of Brussels, and one of the oldest and grandest hotels in the area is the Métropole.

In 1891 the Wielemans Brewery bought the building and commissioned the architect Alban Chambon to redesign the interior, with money no object. The result was a fine Art Nouveau hotel which opened for business in 1895 and has since accommodated numerous acclaimed visitors to the city, including actress Sarah Bernhardt. In 1911 the hotel was the location of the science conference Conseil Physique Solvay, attended by the great scientists Marie Curie and Albert Einstein.

The Hôtel Métropole continues to welcome guests from all walks of life, at surprisingly reasonable cost given its beauty, history and location. It is particularly popular for drinks in its café and heated pavement terrace, which are both open to non-residents to enjoy cocktails and cappuccinos in elegant surroundings.

Centre Belge de la Bande Dessinée o

FFECTIONATELY KNOWN as cébébédé, the Museum of Comic Strip Art pays tribute to the Belgian passion for comic strips or bandes dessinées and to many world-famous comic strip artists from Belgium and abroad.

Arranged over three levels, the collection is housed in a Horta-designed Art Nouveau building. One of the most popular permanent exhibitions is a tour of the great comic strip heroes, from Tintin to The Smurfs, both of whose creators were Belgian. Other displays detail the stages of putting Tintin rocket together a comic strip, from examples

of initial ideas and pencil sketches through to final publication. The museum regularly holds major exhibitions featuring the work of famous cartoonists and studios, and also houses some 6,000 original plates, displayed in rotation, as well as a valuable archive of photographs and artifacts.



Three Comic Figures Tintin, Professor Calculus and Captain Haddock greet visitors on the 1st floor.







The Smurfs

The famous

These tiny blue characters first appeared in the Spirou journal in 1958. By the 1980s they had their own TV show and bit records.

A Suivre

Founded in 1978, A Suivre expanded the comic strip genre, and led to the new form of graphic novels: adult stories in cartoon form.



★ Life-size Cartoon Sets

A series of authentic comic scenes encourages children to enter the world of their favourite comic strip characters.

STAR SIGHTS

- **★** Entrance Hall
- **★** Life-size Cartoon sets





VISITORS' CHECKLIST

20 rue des Sables, 1000 BRU.

Map 2 E2. [(02) 219 1980.]
38, 58, 61.]
56, 81, 90. [M

Botanique, Rogier, Centrale.]
10am-6pm Tue-Sun. [Mon, 1 Jan, 25 Dec. []

★ Entrance Hall

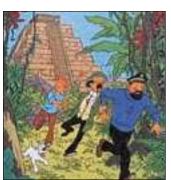
This airy space designed by Victor Horta features stained glass and wrought-ironwork.



Comic Library

The museum library doubles as a study centre for both art students and enthusiasts of all ages. This unique collection includes a catalogue of bundreds of old comic strips, artists' equipment, biographies, comic novels and photographs.



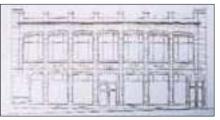


A HORTA-DESIGNED BUILDING

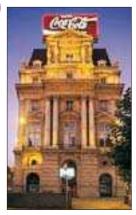
This beautiful building was constructed between 1903 and 1906 to the design of the Belgian Art-Nouveau architect Victor Horta. Originally built as a fabric warehouse, and known as the Waucquez Building, it was one in a series of department stores and warehouses in the city designed by him. Saved from demolition by the French Cultural Commission of Brussels, in 1989 the building re-opened as a museum dedicated to the comic strip, Belgium's socalled Ninth Art (see pp18–19). Carefully restored, the building has many classic features of Art Nouveau design, including the use of curves on structural iron pillars. In the impressive entrance hall is a dis-Cast-iron pillar play of Horta's architectural drawings for the building, and on the right the Brasserie Horta serves traditional Belgian dishes in a charming glass and marble Art Nouveau setting.

THE CHANGING FACE OF HERGE'S TINTIN

Perhaps the best-known Belgian comic character, *Tintin* made his debut in a children's paper in 1929. He began life as a simple black line drawing, featuring the famous quiff, but no mouth. By 1930 Hergé began to produce *Tintin* in book-form and gave him both a mouth and a more complex character suggested by a greater range of facial expressions. By the 1940s *Tintin* was appearing in colour, alongside such new characters as Captain Haddock, the Thompsons and Professor Calculus.



Horta's drawing of the CBBD building



Nineteenth-century building in Place de Brouckère

Place de Brouckère @

Map 2 D2. 🚃 29, 60, 63, 65, 66, 71. 📆 3, 52, 55, 56, 81, 90. M de Brouckère, Bourse.

 \mathbf{I}^{N} 1872 A DESIGN competition was held to encourage the construction of buildings of architectural interest in de Brouckère. Twenty winning applicants were selected and commissioned to give prominence to this Brussels junction. The Parisian contractor Jean-Baptiste Mosnier was responsible for taking the original plans through to completion.

The French influence of Mosnier and his workers is still evident on the square. Many of the buildings were erected in stone, common in France at the end of the 19th century. whereas brickwork was more usual in Brussels. Several original façades survive today, including the 1874 Hôtel Continental by Eugene Carpentier.

One of the great hotels of Brussels, the Hôtel Métropole (see p49) is situated on the south side of the square. The 1900-10 interior is splendidly gilded and can be seen either through the doorway or by pretending to be a guest. Café Métropole next door is, however, open to the public; here the lavishly ornate surroundings date from around 1890.

In the 20th century, architectural style was still at a preNeo-Classical cinema was erected with an impressive Art Deco interior. During the 1960s, two imposing glass buildings blended the contemporary with the classical. Today, the varied historic architecture of Place de Brouckère enhances one of the city's busiest squares, despite recent additions of advertising hoardings.

Eglise St-Jean-Baptiste-au-Béguinage **©**

Place du Béguinage, 1000 BRU. Map 1 C1. (102) 217 8742. 47. M Ste-Cathérine. 9am-5pm Tue-Sat, 10am-8pm Sun. ■ Mon. &

THIS STONE-CLAD church was consecrated in 1676 around the long-standing and largest béguine community in the country, established in 1250. Fields and orchards around the site contained cottages and houses for up to 1,200 béguine women, members of a lay religious order who took up charitable work and enclosed living after widowhood or failed marriages. In medieval times the béguines ran a laundry, hospital and windmill for the people of the city. Still a popu-

lar place of

worship, the

church is also notable for its Flemish Baroque details from the 17th century, especially the onion-shaped turrets and ornamental walls. The nave is also Baroque, decorated with ornate winged cherubs, angels and scrolls. The confessionals are carved with allegorical figures and saints. A more unusual feature are the aisles, which have been widened to allow more light in. In the apse is a statue of St John the Baptist. The 1757 pulpit is a fine example of Baroque woodcarving, showing St Dominic and a heretic.

Théâtre Flamand 🚳

Rue de Laeken 146, 1000 BRU. Map 1 C1. 🚃 47. 🏥 18. M Yser. w www.kvs.be

THE FORMER QUAY area of Brussels, on the banks of the old River Senne, still survives as a reminder that the city was once a thriving port. In 1882, architect Jean Baes was commissioned to enlarge one of the former waterfront warehouses and





mium in the district. In 1933 a | The ornate façade of Eglise St-Jean-Baptiste-au-Béguinage

addition to this, the Théâtre Flamand has other interesting design features peculiar to the late 19th century. The four exterior metal terraces and a staircase leading to the ground were built for audience evacuation in the event of fire. The theatre has recently undergone a major restoration programme, which has not only restored the fabric of the original building but has also improved the facilities.



The 19th-century interior staircase of Théâtre Flamand

Maison de la Bellone **2**

 $T^{\scriptscriptstyle ext{HIS}}$ 17th-century aristocratic residence, now

shielded under a glass roof and no longer visible from the street, was once the headquarters of the Ommegang procession (see p25). The original façade is notable for its decoration. There is a statue of Bellona (goddess of war), after whom the house is named,

above the central arch, and the window ledges have medallions of Roman emperors.

Stonework on the

Maison de la Bellone

Today the house, its exhibition centre and once-private theatre are open for dance and cinema shows, and temporary exhibitions of art and furniture.

THE BÉGUINE MOVEMENT

The béguine lifestyle swept across Western Europe from the 12th century, and Brussels once had a community of over 1,200 béguine women. The religious order is believed to have begun among widows of the Crusaders, who resorted to a pious life of sisterhood on the death of their husbands. The women were lav nuns, who opted for a secluded existence devoted to charitable deeds, but not bound by strict religious vows. Most béguine convents disappeared during the Protestant Reformation in



Béguine lay nun at prayer in a Brussels béguinage

much of Europe during the 16th century, but begijnhofs (béguinages) continued to thrive in Flanders. The grounds generally consisted of a church, a courtyard, communal rooms, homes for the women and extra rooms for work. The movement dissolved as female emancipation spread during the early 1800s, although 20 convents remain, including those in Bruges (see p117) and Ghent.

Eglise Ste-Catherine **2**

Place Ste-Catherine 50, 1000 BRU.

Map 1 C2. [1] (02) 513 3481.
47. [1] 3, 52, 55, 56, 81, 90.
M Ste-Catherine, De Brouckère.
8:30am -5:30pm daily.
on request.

Sadly, the only remnant of the first church here, built in the 15th century, is its Baroque tower, added in 1629. Inspired by the Eglise St-Eustache in Paris, the present church was redesigned in 1854–59 by Joseph Poelaert in a variety of styles. Notable features of

the interior include a 14th-century statue of the Black Madonna and a portrait of St Catherine herself. A typically Flemish pulpit was installed at some stage; it may have come from the parish of Mechelen. Two impressive tombs were carved by

Gilles-Lambert Godecharle. To the east of the church is the Tour Noire (Black Tower), a surviving remnant of the 12th-century stone city walls.

Although this area has been dedicated to the saint since the 13th century, the square

of Place Ste-Catherine was only laid in front of this large church after the basin once here was filled in. Paved in 1870, the square contrasts the peacefulness of the religious building with today's vigorous trade in good fish restaurants.

The central square was once the city's main fish market, and this is still the best place to indulge in a dish or two of Brussels' famous seafood, but prices are generally high. Flanking the square, Quai aux Briques and Quai au Bois à Brûler (Brick Quay and Timber Quay, named after their industrial past), contain lively parades of fish restaurants.



Eglise Ste-Catherine showing the spacious Victorian interior



THE UPPER TOWN

RUSSELS' UPPER TOWN is separated from the lower part of the city by an escarpment that runs roughly northsouth from the far end of Rue Royale to the Palais de Justice. Modern developments are now scattered across the whole city, and the difference between the two areas is less distinct than in the past; traditionally the Lower Town was mainly Flemishspeaking and a bustling centre

for trade, while the Upper Town was home to French-speaking aristocrats and royalty. Today the Upper Town is known for its beautiful Gothic churches, modern architecture and fine museums. The late 18th-century elegance of

the Parc de Bruxelles and Place Royale is complemented by Emperor Leopold II's sweeping 19th-century boulevards that connect the Parc du Cinquantenaire to the city centre.

> best option is to take one of the many buses that run

through the Upper Town.

Peter Pan statue in Palais d'Egmont

SIGHTS AT A GLANCE



Bus terminus

Parking

Street-by-Street: Quartier Royal

THE QUARTIER ROYAL has traditionally been home to Brussels' nobility and rulers. Chosen because the air was purer on the hill than it was in the Lower Town, the area once known as Coudenberg Hill was occupied by the 15thcentury Coudenberg Palace, home to the Dukes of Brabant and Renaissance rulers. In 1731, the palace was destroyed in just six hours by a fire. Slowly rebuilt during the 18th and 19th centuries, four new palaces and much of the park were designed in Neo-Classical style chosen by Charles de Lorraine (see p33). Today

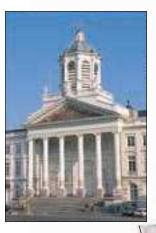
the Royal Quarter presents a peaceful elegance, with some of Europe's finest 18th-century buildings framing the tree-lined paths and fountains of Parc de Bruxelles.

Rue Royale runs for 2 km (1 mile) from the Quartier Royal to Jardin Botanique. In contrast to the 18th-century Neo-Classicism of its beginnings, along its route many fine examples of Victorian and Art Nouveau architecture stand out.

Eglise St-Jacques-sur-Coudenberg

in park

One of Brussels' prettiest churches, St-Jacques' 18th-century façade was modelled exactly on a classical temple. The barrel-vaulted nave and half-domed apse are sprinkled with floral plasterwork and contain several fine Neo-Classical paintings 3



★ Place Royale In the centre of this attractive, symmetrical square is a statue of Godefroi of Bouillon, a Brabant soldier who fought the first Catholic Crusades and died in Palestine 4

KEV

Suggested route

STAR SIGHTS

- ★ Palais Royal
- **★ Parc de Bruxelles**
- **★ Place Royale**

Place des Palais divides Palais Royal and the park. In French, "Palais" refers to any large stately building, and does not have royal connotations.

100



★ Parc de Bruxelles

On the site of medieval hunting grounds once used by the dukes of Brabant, the park was redesigned in the 1770s with fountains, statues and tree-lined walks.



LOCATOR MAP See Streetfinder Map 2



Palais de la Nation Designed by French architect Barnabé Guimard, the Palais de la Nation was built in 1783 and restored in 1883 after a fire. Since 1831, it has been the home of both chambers of the Belgian Parliament.



★ Palais Royal

The largest of the palaces, the lowrise Palais Royal is the official home of the Belgian monarch and family. A flag flies to indicate when the king is in the country 2



Built in 1823 as the residence of the Crown Prince, this has been the private premises of the Académie Royale de Belgique since 1876.

Musée de la Dynastie 1

Place des Palais 7, 1000 BRU.

Map 2 E4. (02) 545 0800.

20, 27, 34, 38, 54, 60, 71, 95, 96.

92, 93, 94. M Trone, Parc. 10am–5pm Tue–Sun. Mon, 1 Jan, 21 Jul, 25 Dec.

₹HE MUSÉE de la Dynastie contains a broad collection of paintings, documents and other royal memorabilia charting the history of the Belgian monarchy from independence in 1830 to the present day. Since 1992 it has been housed in the former Hôtel Bellevue, an 18th-century Neo-Classical building lying adjacent to the Palais Royal, which was annexed to the palace in 1902. A permanent exhibition in honour of the late, immensely popular, King Baudouin (r.1951-1993) was added in



The Neo-Classical façade of the Musée de la Dynastie

1998. As well as official portraits, informal photographs are on display which give a fascinating insight into the private lives of the Belgian royal family. The collection is displayed in chronological order in a series of rooms with a bust of the sovereign to which it is devoted at the entrance to each one.

Place Royale, 1000 BRU. **Map** 2 E4. **((**02) 511 7836. **(**30) 521 7836. **(**30) 27, 34, 38, 54, 60, 71, 95, 96. **(**31) 92, 93, 94. **(**31) Trone, Parc. **(**33–5pm Mon, 10am–6pm Tue–Sat, 9am–noon Sun.

THE PRETTIEST building in the Place Royale, St-Jacquessur-Coudenberg is the latest in a series of churches to have occupied this site. There has been a chapel here since the 12th century, when one was built to serve the dukes of Brabant. On construction of the Coudenberg Palace in the 13th century, it became the ducal chapel. The chapel suffered over the years: it was ransacked in 1579 during conflict between Catholics and Protestants, and was so badly damaged in the fire of 1731 that destroyed the

The Field Marshal's Room contains a portrait

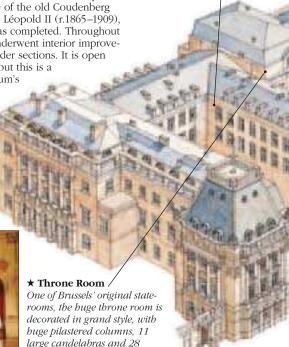
of the first Belgian king, Léopold I, after Winterhalter's 1843 original.

Palais Royal •

The Palais Royal is the most important of the palaces around the Parc de Bruxelles. An official residence of the Belgian monarchy, construction of the modern palace began in the 1820s on the site of the old Coudenberg Palace. Work continued under Léopold II (r.1865–1909), when much of the exterior was completed. Throughout the 20th century the palace underwent interior improvements and restoration of its older sections. It is open only from July to September, but this is a fine opportunity to tour Belgium's lavish state reception rooms.

STAR SIGHTS

- **★** Throne Room
- **★ Small White Room**



wall-mounted chandeliers.



The 19th-century cupola of Eglise St-Jacques-sur-Coudenberg

Coudenberg Palace that it was demolished soon after. The present church was built in the Neo-Classical style of the rest of the area and was consecrated in 1787, although it served several years as a Temple of Reason and Law during the French Revolution,

returning to the Catholic Church in 1802. The cupola was completed in 1849. The interior is simple and elegant, with two large paintings by Jan Portaels on either side of the transept, and a royal pew.

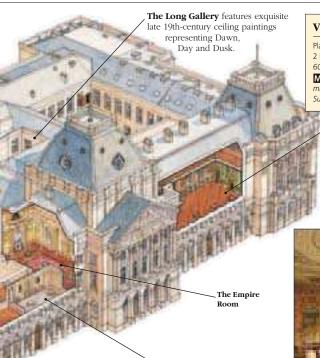
Place Royale 4

Map 2 E4. 🚃 20, 27, 34, 38, 54, 60, 71, 95, 96. 📆 92, 93, 94. M Trone, Parc.

THE INFLUENCE OF Charles de Lorraine is still keenly felt in the Place Royale. As Governor of Brussels from 1749 to 1780 he redeveloped the site once occupied by the Coudenberg Palace along Neo-Classical lines reminiscent of Vienna, a city he greatly admired.

When the area was being worked on, the ruins of the burnt-down palace were demolished and the entire site was rebuilt as two squares. However, in 1995, excavation work uncovered ruins of the 15th-century Aula Magna, the Great Hall of the former palace. This was part of the extension of the palace started under the dukes of Brabant in the early 13th century and then developed under the rule of the dukes of Burgundy, in particular Philip the Good. It was in this room that the Hapsburg emperor Charles V abdicated in favour of his son, Philip II. The ruins can now be seen in a corner of the Place Royale.

Although criss-crossed by tramlines and traffic, the Place Royale maintains a feeling of dignity with its tall, elegant, cream buildings symmetrically set around a cobbled square. Visitors can tour the area on foot, admiring the exceptional Neo-Classical buildings.



Rows of 19th-century royal portraits dominate this gilt chamber with its large candle-lit chandeliers and late 18th-century rococo furnishings.

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Place des Palais, 1000 BRU. Map 2 E4. ((02) 551 2020. 🚃 38, 60, 95, 96. 📆 91, 92, 93, 94. M Trone, Parc. mid-Julmid-Sep: 10:30am-4:30pm Tue-Sun. Mon, Oct–Jun. 👢 🇯

Hall of Mirrors

This large room is famous for its grandiose effect similar to the mirrored chamber at Versailles. Ceremonial occasions are often held here, where invited guests are presented to the king and queen.





The Victor Horta-designed façade of the Palais des Beaux-Arts

Palais des Beaux-Arts 6

Rue Ravenstein 23, 1000 BRU. **Map** 2 E3. (02) 507 8200,
511 3433. 20, 71, 60, 95, 96.

92, 93, 94. (Centrale.

11am – 7pm daily. public hols.
(02) 507 8468.

THE PALAIS des Deaux

Owes its existence to Henri Le Boeuf, a music-loving financier who gave his name to the main auditorium. In 1922 he commissioned the architect Victor Horta (see p78) to design a cultural centre which would house concert halls and exhibition areas open to all visitors and embracing the artistic fields of music, theatre, cinema and art. The construction took seven years as the building was on a slope but could not be so tall as to block the view of the town from the Palais Royal: Horta had to revise his plans six times. The centre was the first of its kind in Europe.

The complex has a fine reputation and has played a key role in the cultural life of Brussels for over 70 years. It is the focus for the city's music and dance, and is home to the Belgian National Orchestra.

The complex also houses the **Musée du Cinema**, set up in 1962, with its fine archive and exhibition of old cameras and lenses. Its main activity is the daily screening of classic films.

Musée du Cinema

Rue Baron Horta 9, 1000 BRU.

(102) 507 8370. 5:30 –10:30pm daily.

Hôtel Ravenstein 6

Rue Ravenstein 3, 1000 BRU.

Map 2 E3. ■ 20, 60, 71, 95, 96.

9 92, 93, 94. M Centrale, Parc.

restaurant only.

VER THE centuries the Hôtel Ravenstein has been the home of patrician families, soldiers and court officials, and, for the past 100 years, the Royal Society of Engineers. The building was designed at the end of the 15th century for Adolphe and Philip Cleves-Ravenstein; in 1515 it became the birthplace of Anne of Cleves. Consisting of two parts, joined by Old England, home to gardens and the Musée Instrumental

stables, it is the last remaining example of a Burgundian-style manor house. The Hôtel Ravenstein was acquired by the town in 1896 and used to store



The pretty open courtyard of the Hôtel Ravenstein

artworks. Sadly, it fell into disrepair and renovation took place in 1934. One half is now a Belgian restaurant, the other the Royal Society of Engineers' private HQ. However, the pretty, original inner courtyard can still be seen.

Musée Instrumental **o**

Rue Montagne de la Cour 2, 1000 BRU. **Map** 2 E4. **(** (02) 545 0130.

9:30am-5pm Tue-Fri (to 8pm Thu), 10am-5pm Sat & Sun. 20, 38, 60, 71, 95, 96. 92, 93, 94.

O NCE A department store, the building known as Old England is a striking showpiece of Art Nouveau architecture located by the Place Royale.

Architect Paul Saintenoy gave full rein to his imagination when he designed these shop premises for the Old England company in 1899.

The façade is made entirely of glass and elaborate wrought iron. There is a

domed gazebo on the roof, and a turret to one side. Surprisingly, it was only in the 1990s that a listed buildings policy was adopted in Brussels, which

has secured treasures such as this. Much preservation work is now taking place. Old England is one of the buildings that has undergone extensive renovation work, having been used until recently as a temporary exhibition space. The building is now home to the Musée Instrumental, moved from the Sablon. Meanwhile, the Old England company is still flourishing, with its premises now at No. 419 in the fashionable Avenue Louise.

The collection of the Musée Instrumental began in the 19th century when the state bought 80 ancient and exotic instruments. It was doubled in 1876 when King Léopold II donated a gift of 97 Indian musical instruments presented to him

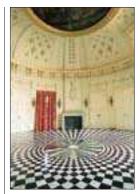
by a maharajah. A museum displaying all of these artifacts opened in 1877, and by 1924 the museum boasted 3,300 pieces and was recognized as a leader in its field. Today the collection contains more than 6,000 items and includes many fine examples of wind, string and keyboard instruments from medieval times to the present. Chief attractions include prototype instruments

by Adolphe Sax, the Belgian inventor of the saxophone, mini violins favoured by street musicians and a violin maker's studio. In June 2000 the museum moved to its specially designed home in the newly renovated Old England building, where there is much more room in which to display this world-Antique violin class collection.

Palais de Charles de Lorraine 3

Place du Musée 1, 1000 BRU. **Map** 2 D4. **(1)** (02) 519 5371. **(2)** 27, 34, 60, 65, 66, 71, 95, 96. **(3)** 92, 93, 94. **(M.** Centrale, Parc. **(1)** 1-5pm Tu-Fri. **(2)** pub hols, last two weeks in Aug, 25 Dec-1 Jan. **(2)** for details **(1)** (02) 519 5786.

HIDDEN BEHIND this Neo-Classical façade are the few rooms that remain of the



The state room with marble floor at the Palais de Charles de Lorraine

palace of Charles de Lorraine. Governor of Brussels during the mid-18th century. He was a keen patron of the arts, and the young Mozart is believed to have performed here. Few original features remain, as the palace was ransacked by marauding French troops in 1794. Extensive renovations were recently completed. The bas-reliefs at the top of the stairway, representing air, earth, fire and water, reflect Charles de Lorraine's keen interest in alchemy. Most spectacular of all the original features is the 28-point star set in the floor of the circular drawing room. Each of the points is made of a different Belgian marble, a much sought-after material which was used in the construction of St Peter's Basilica in Rome.

Avenue des Arts 16, 1210 BRU.

Map 2 F2. [(02) 218 5382, 220
2690. 23, 63, 65, 66. M Madou,
Arts-Loi. noon-5pm Tue-Sat.

THIS QUIET MUSEUM Was once the home of Henri van Cutsem, a wealthy collector and patron of the arts. In 1890 he asked the young architect Victor Horta to re-design his house as an exhibition space for his extensive collections. Van Cutsem died, and his friend, the sculptor Charlier. installed his own art collection in the house. Charlier commissioned Horta to build another museum, at Tournai in southern Belgium, to house van Cutsem's collection. On Charlier's death in 1925 the house and contents were left to the city as a museum.

The Musée Charlier opened in 1928. It contains paintings by a number of different artists, including portraits by Antoine Wiertz (see p72) and early landscapes by James Ensor. The collection also includes sculptures by Charlier, and the ground floor contains collections of glassware, porcelain, chinoiserie and silverware. Of special note are the tapestries. some from the Paris studios of Aubusson, on the staircases and the first floor, and the displays of Louis XV- and Louis XVI-style furniture on the first and second floors.



Musée Charlier, home to one of Belgium's finest individual collections of art and furnishings

Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts: Musée d'art ancien o

Hercules Sculpture

JOINTLY KNOWN AS the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, The Musée d'art ancien and Musée d'art moderne are Brussels' premier art museums. The museums' buildings, adjacent to the Place Royale, are home to exhibits from two eras, *ancien* (15th–18th century) and *moderne* (19th century–present day). Housed in a Neo-Classical building designed by Alphonse Balat between 1874 and 1880, the Musée d'art ancien is the larger of the two sections. The art collection dates back to the

18th century when it consisted of the few valuable works left behind by the French Republican army, which had stolen many of Brussels' treasures and taken them back to Paris. This small collection was initially exhibited in the Palais de Charles de Lorraine (*see p61*), but donations, patronage and the recovery of some pieces from the French, enlarged the collection. The present gallery opened in 1887. The Musée d'art ancien is best known for the finest collection of Flemish art in the world, and many Old Masters, including van Dyck and Rubens, are also well represented.



Façade of museum
Corinthian columns
and busts of Flemish
painters adorn
the entrance.

Ground level



STAR EXHIBITS

- ★ The Assumption of the Virgin by Rubens
- ★ The Annunciation by the Master of Flémalle





Interior of the Main Hall Founded by Napoleon in 1801 to relieve the packed Louvre in Paris, these are the oldest museums in Belgium. More than 2,500 works are exhibited in the museums' buildings.



Lower level

Entrance to

Musée d'art

moderne



VISITORS' CHECKLIST



The Census at Bethlehem (1610) Pieter Brueghel the Younger (c.1564–1638) produced a version of this subject some 40 years after the original by his father. Shown together, the two works illustrate the development of Flemish painting in its peak period.

Madonna with Saint Anne and a Franciscan donor (1470) Hugo van der Goes (c.1440–82) was commissioned to paint this symbolic work for the monk shown on the right for his personal devotional use.





\star The Annunciation (c.1406–7)

The Master of Flémalle (c.1378–1444) sets the holy scene of the Archangel Gabriel announcing the impending birth of the Messiah in a homely, contemporary setting, with daily objects an apparent contrast to the momentous event.

KEY

- 15th−16th century (blue route)
- 17th-18th century (brown route)
- Sculpture gallery
- Temporary exhibitions
- Non-exhibition space

GALLERY GUIDE

In the gallery different coloured signs are used to lead the visitor through different eras of art (see pp66–7). On the first floor, in rooms 10 to 34, the blue route covers the 15th and 16th centuries. The brown route is in rooms 50 to 62 and covers the 17th and 18th centuries. The sculpture gallery is boused on the lower ground floor.

Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts: Musée d'art moderne

PENED IN 1984, the Musée d'art moderne is situated in a unique setting: eight levels of the building are underground, but a lightwell allows many of the works to be seen by natural daylight filtering in from the Place du Musée. The top three levels above ground are temporary exhibition space. As is the case for the Musee d'art ancien, the collection of works is wide and varied, displayed in chronological order. Many well-known 20th-century artists from 1900 to the present day are included, but the most popular paintings are those of the Belgian Surrealists.

Skeletons Fighting over a Pickled Herring (1891)

Moving from a naturalistic style, James Ensor became the leading light of the Belgian Surrealist artists. His uneasy preoccupation with death and the macabre is shown in this witty, disturbing oil.



level 3

Ground

level -1

level -2

To Musée

level

View of London (1917). Heavily influenced by Monet's work, Emile Claus developed a variant of Impressionism with fellow artists called "Luminism". The Belgian Claus was a refugee to London, and his Luminist interest in light

effects is shown through the damp fog of this London twilight. The painting shows a clarity of definition that is almost realist in technique.









The yellow route, in rooms 69-91, is dedicated to the 19th century. Level -4 covers work from the first quarter of the 20th century and its various art movements, such as Fauvism and Cubism. Level -5 contains the Surrealist collection. Level -6 includes the Magritte exhibition, the Jeune Peinture Belge and COBRA schools. Levels -7 and -8 exhibit works from the 1960s to the present day. Levels 2, 3 and 4 contain temporary exhibitions that are changed regularly.

The Orange Market raw colour and tone: bustle is secondary to

STAR EXHIBITS

- **★** Woman in a Blue Dress by Rik Wouters
- **★** The Domain of Arnheim by René Magritte



Composition (1921) (detail shown) Two stylized human figures form the centre of this work by Belgian painter Pierre-Louis Flouquet, combining

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Place Royale 1, 1000 BRU. Map 2 D4. ((02) 508 3211. = 20, 27, 34, 54, 60, 71, 95, 96. 91, 92, 93, 94. M Gare Centrale, Parc. 10am-5pm Tue-Sun Mon, public hols. 👃 🎉 📋

www.fine-arts-museum.be

★ Woman in a Blue Dress in front of a Mirror (1914)

Rik Wouters was a Fauvist painter whose fascination with colour led him to innovative spatula painting techniques, as seen bere.



Draped Woman on Steps (1957-8) The prolific British artist Henry Moore is the world's most exhibited sculptor. This piece reveals his characteristic fluidity of line, together with tension in the waiting figure.



level -4

level -6

level -8

Arnheim (1962) The museum contains the world's largest collection of work by surrealist René Magritte (see p15). Here, an eagle-mountain rears over a small bird's nest. The inexplicable nature of the eerie composition draws its elements into question, but answers are made

level -5



level -7

19th century (yellow route)

20th century (green route)

Non-exhibition space

Exploring the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts

SIX CENTURIES OF ART, both Belgian and international, are displayed in the two museums that make up the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts. The combination of the two museums contains works from many artistic styles, from the religious paintings of the 15th-century Flemish Primitives to the graphic art of the 1960s and 1970s. The Musée d'art moderne also stages regular temporary exhibitions. The museums are very well set out, guiding the visitor easily through the full collection or, if time is short, directly to the art era of special interest. Each section is highly accessible, as both museums are divided into different coloured routes which relate to the art of each century, taking the visitor through galleries representing the varied schools of art by period.

THE BLUE ROUTE

 $T^{ ext{HIS ROUTE}}$ leads visitors through a large display of works dating mostly from the 15th and 16th centuries. In the first few rooms are works by the renowned Flemish Primitive School (see p14). As is the case with much painting of the Middle Ages, the pictures are chiefly religious in nature and depict a variety of biblical scenes and details from the lives of saints. A work of particular note is The Annunciation by the Master of Flémalle, which shows the Archangel Gabriel appearing to the Virgin Mary as she sits at her fireside in a typically Flemish parlour. Also on display are a number of pictures by Rogier van der Weyden, the most famous of all the Flemish Primitive artists and city painter to Brussels during the mid-15th century; of note is his version of the

Lamentation. The work of Bruges artist Hans Memling is mostly shown in his native city, but his *The Martyrdom of* Saint Sebastian is found here.

The most important works in this collection are the paintings by the Brueghels, father and son. Both were renowned for their scenes of peasant life, and on display are *The Bird Trap* (1565) by Pieter Brueghel the Elder, and *The Village Wedding* (1607) by his son, Pieter.

Also on view are beautiful tapestries and the Delporte Collection, which groups sculpture, paintings and *objets d'art* from around the world.

THE BROWN ROUTE

THE SECOND route wends its way through the works of the 17th and 18th centuries. The rooms are wider and taller here in order to house the larger canvases of that time.



Lamentation (c. 1420-50) by Rogier van der Weyden



Flemish still life, *Vase of Flowers* (1704) by Rachel Ruysch

A highlight of the route is the world-famous collection of works by Pieter Paul Rubens (1557-1640), which affords a fine overview of the artist's work. As well as key examples of his religious works, there are some excellent portraits, such as Hélène Fourment, a portrait of his young wife. Of special interest are the sketches and paintings made in preparation for Rubens' larger works, such as Four Negro Heads, a work made in preparation of the 1620 Adoration of the Magi.

Other works of note in this section are the paintings by Old Masters such as van Dyck's Portrait of a Genoese Lady with her Daughter of the 1620s and Frans Hals' Three Children with Goatcart, as well as several paintings by representatives of later Flemish schools, including Jacob Jordaens and his depiction of myths, such as Pan and Syrinx (c.1645) and Satyr and Peasant. Baroque and Flemish art are all well represented on the tour, a journey through the best painting of the time.

Also on display are some small sculptures which were studies of larger works by Laurent Delvaux, a leading sculptor of the 18th century, particularly *Hercules and Erymanthian Boar*, a study for the sculpture by the staircase in the Palais de Charles de Lorraine (*see p61*).

Works of the Italian, Spanish and French schools of this era are also represented, notably a depiction by Claude Le Lorrain in 1672 of the classical poetic scene *Aeneas bunting the Stag on the Coast of Libya*.

THE YELLOW ROUTE

THIS SECTION covers the 19th century and is closer to the contemporary collection both in position and period. It is an informed introduction to the cutting-edge displays nearby.

The works along the yellow route vary greatly in style and subject matter, from Romanticism, exemplified by David, and Neo-Classicism, to Realism and Symbolism. There are, as in the other sections, examples of work by artists from outside Belgium, including Pierre Bonnard's *Nude against the Light* (1907), Edouard Vuillard's *Two Schoolchildren* (1894) and Monet's *Sunset at Etretat* (1885), but once again most emphasis is on Belgian artists.

Social realist artist Constantin Meunier (1831-1905) is represented by many of his sculptures, including Firedamp (1888). Much of the work of Iames Ensor (1890-1949) remains in his native city Ostend, but many of his macabre works are displayed here, such as Scandalized Masks (1883) and Two Skeletons Fighting over a Pickled Herring (1891). This section also offers the chance to see pictures by artists who are less well known outside Belgium, such as Henri Evenepoel (1872-99) whose lively Arab scene Orange Market at Blidah (1898) provides a contrast to the stark works of painters such as Ensor. The work of Impressionist Emile Claus is of value to followers of the movement. Of local interest is the landscape of Brussels by van Moer, painted in 1868,

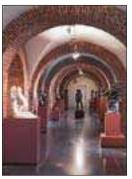


Death of Marat (1793) by David, a leading work on the yellow route



Le Joueur Secret (1927) by Magritte

which clearly shows the River Senne before it was covered over for hygiene reasons. Moving from the passion of Romanticism to grim industrial realism and gentle Impressionism, this survey is definitive.



The underground Sculpture Gallery, with carvings and bronzes

THE ORANGE ROUTE

NYONE WITH an interest in A sculpture should follow this route down to the lower ground level in the Musée d'art ancien. Here, 18th- and 19thcentury stone, marble and bronze Belgian sculpture is displayed alongside an exhibition explaining various methods behind many of the works on show, from carving to casting and burnishing in the materials of past centuries. There is also access to a sculpture terrace from outside the entrance of the Musée d'art ancien.

THE GREEN ROUTE

THE COLLECTION of modern art is wide and varied and includes works by well-known 20th-century painters from Belgium and around the world. There is no clearly defined route to follow within this section, nor are the exhibits strictly grouped by period or movement, so it is best to wander through the collection, stopping at areas of interest.

There are a number of works by the leading Belgian artists of the 20th century, such as Fauvist painter Rik Wouters' (1882-1916) The Flautist (1914). International artists include Matisse, Paul Klee and Chagall. But the real draw for most people is the collection of pictures by the Belgian Surrealists, in particular René Magritte (1898-1967). His best-known paintings, including The Domain of Arnheim (1962), are on display here. Another noted Surrealist, Paul Delvaux, is also well represented with works such as Evening Train (1957) and Pygmalion (1939).

Belgian art of the 20th century tends to be severe and stark, but the postwar *Jeune Peinture Belge* school reintroduced colour in an abstract way and is represented in works such as Marc Mendelson's 1950s *Toccata et fugue*.

Sculpture highlights in this section include Ossip Zadkine's totem pole-like *Diana* (1937) and Henry Moore's *Draped Woman on Steps* (1957–8).



Busy café scene at Place du Grand Sablon

Place du Grand Sablon **a**

Map 2 D4. ■ 27, 34, 48, 95, 96. 92, 93, 94. M Gare Centrale, Louise, Parc.

STUATED ON the slope of the escarpment that divides Brussels in two, the Place du Grand Sablon is like a stepping stone between the upper and lower halves of the city. The name "sablon" derives from the French "sable" (sand) and the square is so-called because this old route down to the city centre once passed through an area of sandy marshes.

Today the picture is very different. The square, more of a triangle in shape, stretches from a 1751 fountain by Jacques Berge at its base uphill to the Gothic church of Notre-Dame du Sablon. The fountain was a gift of the Englishman Lord Bruce, out of gratitude for the hospitality shown to him in Brussels. The square is surrounded by elegant town houses, some with Art Nouveau facades. This is a chic, wealthy and busy part of Brussels, an area of up-market antiques dealers, fashionable restaurants and trendy bars, which really come into their own in warm weather Notre-Dame du Sablon window when people stay drinking outside until the early hours of the

morning: a good place in

which to soak up the

atmosphere. Wittamer, at No. 12, is a justifiably well-known *patisserie* and chocolate shop, which also has its own tea room on the first floor.

Every weekend the area near the church plays host to a lively and thriving, if rather expensive, antiques market.

Notre-Dame au Sablon @

A LONG WITH THE Cathédrale Sts Michel et Gudule (*see p70–71*), this lovely church is one of the finest remaining examples of Brabant Gothic architecture in Belgium.

A church was first erected here when the guild of crossbowmen was granted permission to build a chapel to Our Lady on this sandy

hill. Legend has it that a young girl in Antwerp had a

vision of the Virgin Mary who instructed her to take her statue to Brussels. The girl carried the statue of the Virgin to Brussels down the Senne river by boat and gave it to the crossbowmen's chapel, which rapidly became a place of pilgrimage. Work to enlarge the church

began around 1400 but, due to lack of funds, was not completed until 1550. All that remains today of the incident are two carvings depicting the young girl in a boat, since the statue was destroyed in 1565.

The interior of the church is simple but beautifully proportioned, with inter-connecting side chapels and an impressive pulpit dating from 1697. Of particular interest, however, are the 11 magnificent stainedglass windows, 14 m (45 ft) high, which dominate the inside of the church. As the church is lit from the inside. they shine out at night like welcoming beacons. Also worth a visit is the chapel of the Tour et Taxis family, whose mansion once stood near the Place du Petit Sablon, In 1517 the family had tapestries commissioned to commemorate the legend that led to the chapel becoming a place of pilgrimage. Some now hang in the Musées Royaux d'art et d'histoire in Parc du Cinquantenaire (see p75), but others were stolen by the French Revolutionary army in the 1790s.



The magnificent interior of the church of Notre-Dame du Sablon

Place du Petit Sablon ®

Map 2 D4. ■ 20, 27, 34, 48, 95, 96. ■ 92, 93, 94. M Gare Centrale, Louise, Parc.

THESE PRETTY, formal gardens were laid out in 1890 and are a charming spot to stop for a rest. On top of the railings that enclose the gardens are 48 bronze statuettes by Art Nouveau artist Paul Hankar, each one representing a differ-



One of the lavish fountains in the gardens of Petit Sablon

ent medieval guild of the city. At the back of the gardens is a fountain built to commemorate Counts Egmont and Hornes, the martyrs who led a Dutch uprising against the tyrannical rule of the Spanish under Philip II, and were beheaded in the Grand Place in 1568 (see p.31). On either side of the fountain are 12 further statues of 15th- and 16th-century figures, including Bernard van Orley, whose stained-glass windows grace the city's cathedral, and the Flemish

whose 16th-century projection of the world forms the basis of most modern maps.

mapmaker

Gerhard Mercator,

and again in 1891, following a fire. Today it belongs to the Belgian Foreign Ministry. It was here that Great Britain, Denmark and Ireland signed as members of the EEC in 1972. Though the palace itself is closed to the public, the gardens, whose entrances are on the Rue du Grand Cerf and the Boulevard de Waterloo, are open. There is a statue of Peter Pan, a copy of one found in Kensington Gardens, in London. Many of the Statue of Peter Pan in

has twice been rebuilt, in 1750

down, and plans have started to restore the ancient orangery and the disused ice house.

gardens' buildings

are now run

Palais d'Egmont gardens

Palais de Justice ®

Place Poelaert 1, 1000 BRU. Map 1 C5. (1) (02) 508 6111. 34. 19 91, 92, 93, 94. 10 Louise. 10 8am–5pm Mon–Fri. 10 Sat & Sun, Jul, public hols. 18

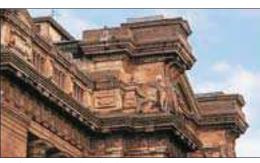
THE PALAIS DE JUSTICE rules the Brussels skyline and can be seen from almost any vantage point in the city. Of all the ambitious projects of King Léopold II, this was perhaps the grandest. It occupies an area larger than St Peter's Basilica in Rome, and was one of the world's most impressive 19th-century buildings. It was built between 1866 and 1883 by architect Joseph Poelaert who looked for inspiration in classical temples, but sadly died mid-construction in 1879. The Palais de Justice is still home to the city's law courts.

Palais d'Egmont @

Rue aux Laines, 1000 BRU.

Map 2 E4. 27, 34, 95, 96. 91, 92, 93, 94. Louise, Parc.

THE PALAIS d'Egmont (also known as the Palais d'Arenberg) was originally built in the mid-16th century for Françoise of Luxembourg, mother of the 16th-century leader of the city's rebels, Count Egmont. This palace



Detail of a cornice at the Palais de Justice

Galerie Bortier 6

Rue de la Madeleine 55, 1000 BRU.

Map 2 D3.
20, 38.
92, 93,
94.
Gare Centrale.
9am−6pm

Mon−Sat.
Sun, public hols.

GALERIE BORTIER is the only shopping arcade in the city dedicated solely to book and map shops, and it has become the haunt of students, enthusiasts and researchers looking for secondhand French books and antiquarian finds.

The land on which the gallery stands was originally owned by a Monsieur Bortier, whose idea it was to have a covered arcade lined with shops on either side. He put

160,000 francs of his own money into the project, quite a considerable sum in the 1840s. The 65-m (210-ft) long Galérie Bortier was built in 1848 and was designed by Jean-Pierre Cluysenaar, the architect of the Galéries St-Hubert nearby (*see p47*). The Galérie Bortier opened along with the then-adjacent Marché de la Madeleine, but the latter was unfortunately destroyed by developers in 1958.

A complete restoration of Galérie Bortier was ordered by the Ville de Bruxelles in 1974. The new architects kept strictly to Cluysenaar's plans and installed a replacement glass and wrought-iron roof made to the original 19th-century Parisian style. The Rue de la Madeleine itself also offers plenty of browsing material for bibliophiles and art lovers.



Crammed interior of a bookshop at the Galérie Bortier

Cathédrale Sts Michel et Gudule o

The CATHEDRALE Sts Michel et Gudule is the national church of Belgium, although it was only granted cathedral status in 1962. It is the finest surviving example of Brabant Gothic architecture. There has been a church on the site of the cathedral since at least the 11th century. Work began on the Gothic cathedral in 1225 under Henry I, Duke of Brabant, and continued over a period of 300 years. It was finally completed with the construction of two front towers at the beginning of the 16th century under Charles V. The cathedral is made of a sandy limestone, brought from local quarries. The interior is very bare.

made of a sandy limestone, broug quarries. The interior is very bare; this is due to Protestant iconoclast ransacking in 1579–80 and thefts by French revolutionists in 1783. It was fully restored and cleaned in the 1990s and now reveals its splendour.

★ Last Judgement window

At the front of the cathedral, facing the altar, is a magnificent stained-glass window of 1528 depicting Christ awaiting saved souls. Its vivid reds, blues and yellows place it in the 16th-century style. The Renaissance panes are surrounded by later Baroque garlands of flowers.

The twin towers rise above the city. Unusually, they were designed as a pair in the 1400s; Brabant architecture typically has only one.



STAR SIGHTS

- **★** Last Judgement window
- **★** Baroque pulpit

Romanesque remains of the first church here, dating from 1047, were discovered during renovation work. They can be seen and toured in the crypt.

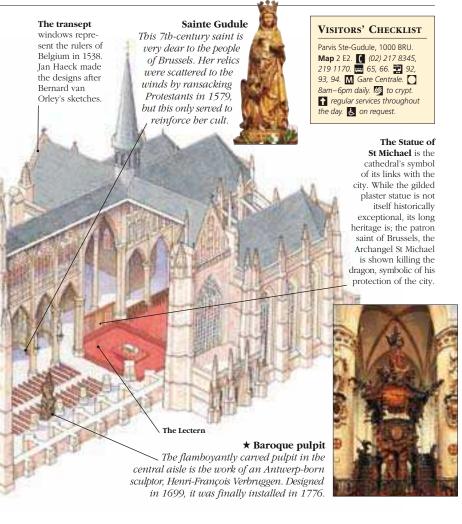
THIS LITTLE church once stood on the site now occupied by the Gare Centrale, but it was moved, stone by stone, further down the hill to make way for the construction of the Art Deco-style station and its car park during the early 1950s.

The 17th-century façade of the church has been restored. The original 15th-century interior has been replaced by



A view of the Chapelle de la Madeleine with restored brickwork

a plain, modest decor, with simple stone pillars and modern stained-glass windows. Off the regular tourist track, the chapel is used by people as a quiet place for worship. The Baroque chapel which was once attached has now gone.





The Art Nouveau facade of No. 11 Square Ambiorix

Square Ambiorix **@**

Map 3 B2. = 54, 63. M Schuman.

LOSE TO THE EU district, but and spirit, lies the beautiful Square Ambiorix. Together with the Avenue Palmerston and the Square Marie-Louise below that, this marshland was transformed in the 1870s into one of the loveliest residential parts of Brussels, with a large central area of gardens, ponds and fountains.

The elegant houses, some Art Nouveau, some older, have made this one of the truly sought-after suburbs in the city. The most spectacular Art Nouveau example is at No. 11. Known as the Maison St Cyr after the

whose home it once was, this wonderfully ornate house, with its curved wrought-iron balustrades and balconies, is a fine architectural feat considering that the man who designed it, Gustave Strauven, was only 22 years old when it was built at the turn of the 20th century.

Quartier Européen 🚳

Map 3 B3. . 20, 21, 22, 27, 34, 38, 54, 68, 80, 95, 96. M Maelbeek, Schuman.

 $\Gamma^{ ext{HE AREA}}$ at the top of the Rue de la Loi and around the Schuman roundabout is where the main buildings of the European Union's administration are found.

The most recognizable of all the EU seats is the star-shaped Berlaymont building, now nearing completion following the removal of large quantities of asbestos discovered in its structure. The Berlaymont, formerly the headquarters of the European Commission, will continue to be refurbished until further notice. The commission workers (the civil servants of the EU) are at present dotted around the area. The Council of Ministers. which comprises representatives of member-states' governments, now meets in the sprawling pink granite block across the road from the Berlaymont, known as Justus Lipsius, after a Flemish philosopher. Further down the road from the Justus Lipsius building is the Résidence Palace, a luxury 1920s housing complex that boasts a theatre,





The Justus Lipsius, the pink granite EU Council building

several floors of private flats. It now houses the International Press Centre. Only the theatre is open to the public, but EU officials are allowed into the Art Deco swimming pool.

This area is naturally full of life and bustle during the day, but much quieter in the evenings and can feel almost deserted at weekends. What is pleasant at any time, though, is the proximity of the city's green spaces including Parc du Cinquantenaire (see pp 74-5), Parc Léopold and the verdant Square Ambiorix.



Paintings and sculpture on show in the Musée Wiertz gallery

Musée Wiertz 🛭

Rue Vautier 62, 1000 BRU. Map 3 A4. (1 (02) 648 1718. 👼 21, 22, 27, 34, 38, 54, 59, 60, 80, 95, 96. M Maelbeek, Schuman, Trone. 10am-noon, 1-5pm Tue-Fri; every 2nd weekend. Mon, weekends Jul-Aug, public hols. 🚳

USEE WIERTZ houses some **IVI** 160 works, including oil paintings, drawings and sculptures, that form the main body of Antoine Wiertz's (1806-65) artistic output. The collection fills the studio built for Wiertz by the Belgian state, where he lived and worked from 1850 until his death in 1865, when the studio became a museum.

The huge main room contains Wiertz's largest paintings, many depicting biblical and Homeric scenes, some in the style of Rubens. Also on display are sculptures and his death mask. The last of the six rooms contains his more gruesome efforts, one entitled Madness, Hunger and Crime.



A tall European parliament building rising up behind the trees of Parc Léopold in the Parliament Quarter

Parliament Quarter 2

Map 3 A4. E 21, 22, 27, 34, 38, 54, 60, 80, 95, 96. M Maelbeek, Schuman.

→HE VAST, MODERN, steel-andglass complex, situated just behind Quartier Léopold train station, is one of three homes of the European Parliament, the elected body of the EU. Its permanent seat is in Strasbourg, France, where the plenary sessions are held once a month. The administrative centre is in Luxembourg and the committee meetings are held in Brussels.

This gleaming state-of-the-art building has many admirers, not least the parliamentary workers and MEPs themselves. But it also has its critics: the huge domed structure housing the hemicycle that seats the 600-plus MEPs has been dubbed the "caprices des dieux" ("whims of the gods"), which refers both to the shape of the building which is similar to a French cheese of the same name, and to its lofty aspirations. Many people also regret that, to make room for the new complex, a large part of Quartier Léopold has been lost. Though there are still plenty of restaurants and bars, a lot of the charm has gone. When the MEPs are

absent, the building is often used for meetings of European Union committees.

Institut Royal des Sciences Naturelles @

Rue Vautier 29, 1000 BRU, Map 3 A4. (02) 627 4238. 🚃 20, 21, 22, 34, 38, 54, 59, 60, 80, 95, 96. M Maelbeek, Schuman. 7 9:30am-4:45pm Tue-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat & Sun. Mon, 1 Jan, 1 May, 25 Dec. **⊌** € 🗷 🗈 🗈

THE INSTITUT Royal des Sciences Naturelles is best known for its fine collection of iguanadon skeletons dating back 250 million years. The museum also contains interactive and educational displays covering all aspects and evolutionary eras of natural history.

Parc Léopold @

Rue Belliard. Map 3 B4. . 20, 27, 59, 80. M Maelbeek, Schuman.

OARC LEOPOLD occupies part of the grounds of an old estate and a walk around its lake follows the old path of the Maelbeek river which was covered over in the 19thcentury for reasons of hygiene.

At the end of the 19th centurv. scientist and industrialist Ernest Solvay put forward the idea of a science park development. Solvay was given the Parc Léopold, the site of a zoo since 1847, and set up five university centres here. Leading figures including Marie Curie and Albert Einstein met here to discuss new scientific issues. The park is still home to many scientific institutes, as well as a haven of peace in the heart of this busy political area.



Whale skeleton inside the Institut Royal des Sciences Naturelles

Parc du Cinquantenaire o

THE FINEST OF LEOPOLD II's grand projects, the Parc and Palais du Cinquantenaire were built for the Golden Jubilee celebrations of Belgian independence in 1880. The park was laid out on unused town marshes. The palace, at its entrance, was to comprise a triumphal arch and two large exhibition areas, but by the time of

the 1880 Art and Industry Expo, only the two side exhibition areas had been completed. Further funds were eventually found, and work continued for 50 years. Before being converted into museums, the large halls on either side of the central archway were used to hold trade fairs, the last of which was in 1935. They have also been used for horse races and to store homing pigeons. During World War II, the grounds of the park were used to grow vegetables to feed the Brussels people.



★ Musée de l'Armée

Opened in 1923, the museum covers all aspects of Belgium's military history, and exhibits over 200 years of militaria. Historic aircraft are on display in the hall next door.



View of Park with Arch

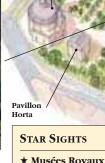
Based on the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, the arch was not completed in time for the 50th Anniversary celebrations but was finished in 1905.

The Grand Mosque was built in Arabic style as a folly in 1880. It became a mosque in 1978.



Tree-lined Avenue

In part formal garden, part forested walks, many of the plantations of elms and plane trees date from 1880.



- ★ Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire
- ★ Musée de l'Armée

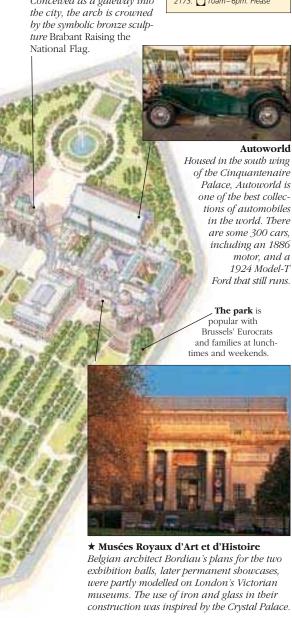
Underpass

0 metres 100

0 yards 100

The Central Archway

Conceived as a gateway into the city, the arch is crowned by the symbolic bronze sculpture Brabant Raising the



VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Ave de Tervuren, 1040 BRU. Map 3 C3. E 21, 22, 27, 28, 36, 61, 80. 🏗 81, 82. M Schuman, Mérode. 👃 📋 Autoworld: (02) 736 4165. 10am-5pm (Apr-Sep: to 6pm). 🔲 1 Jan, 25 Dec. 🟀 👢 🗖 The Grand Mosque: (02) 735 2173. 10am-6pm. Please

Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire

Parc du Cinquantenaire 10. ((02) 741 7211. 79:30am-5pm Tue-Sun (from 10am Sun and pub hols).

1 Jan, 1 May, 1 & 11 Nov, 25 Dec. 💋

Also known as the Musée du Cinquantenaire, this excellent museum has occupied its present site since the early 1900s, but the history of the collections goes back as far as the 15th century, and the quantity of exhibits is vast. Sections on ancient civilizations include Egypt and Greece, and also Persia and the Near East. Other displays feature Byzantium and Islam, China and the Indian Subcontinent, and the Pre-Columbian civilizations of the Americas. There are decorative arts from all ages, with glassware, silverware and porcelain as well as a fine collection of lace and tapestries. Religious sculptures and stained glass are displayed around a courtyard in the style of church cloisters.



The aircraft display at the Musée Royal de l'Armée

Musée Royal de l'Armée et d'Histoire Militaire

Parc du Cinquantenaire 3. (02) 737 7811. 9am-noon, 1-4:30pm Tue-Sun. Mon, 1 Jan, 1 May, 1 Nov, 25 Dec. Together with the section on aviation, displays cover the Belgian Army and its history from the late 1700s to today, including weapons, uniforms, decorations and paintings. There is a section covering the 1830 struggle for independence (see p34-5). Two new sections show both World Wars, including the activities of the Resistance.



GREATER BRUSSELS

AST THE heart-shaped ring-road of Brussels city centre lie 19 suburbs (communes) which form the Bruxelles-Capitale region. While many are residential, a handful are definitely worth the short ride to sample outlying

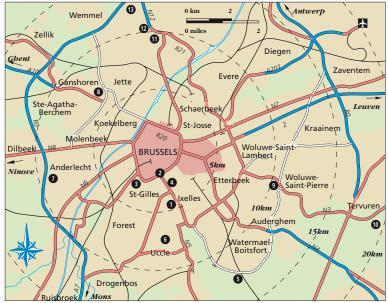


the huge Sacré-Coeur basilica, started



colonial past in the Congo, and the tram museum takes a journey through Brussels' urban past. Peace and tranquillity can be found close to the metropolis, in the orderly landscape of Royal Laeken and the lush green spaces of the Bois de la Cambre and the Fôret de Soignes.

SIGHTS AT A GLANCE Churches and Cathedrals Parks and Gardens Musée Royal de Basilique Nationale du Bruparck 13 l'Afrique Centrale 10 Sacré-Coeur 8 Domaine de Laeken see pp82-3 **11** KEY Historic Monuments. Fôret de Soignes 5 **Buildings and Districts** Central Brussels Anderlecht 7 Museums and Greater Brussels Avenue Louise 2 **Exhibition Areas** Airport Ixelles 4 The Atomium 1 St-Gilles 3 Musée Horta see p78 1 Major Road Uccle 6 Musée du Tram 9 Minor Road 0 km Antwerp Wemmel



Musée Horta o

ARCHITECT VICTOR HORTA (1861–1947) is considered by many to be the father of Art Nouveau, and his impact on Brussels architecture is unrivalled by any other designer of his time. A museum dedicated to his unique style is today housed in his

Art Nouveau candelabra restored family home, which he designed from 1898 to 1901. His skill lay not only in his grand,

overall vision but in his equal talent as an interior designer, blending themes and materials into each detail. The airy interior of the building displays trademarks of the architect's style – iron, glass and curves – in every detail, while retaining a functional approach.

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Rue Américaine 23–25, 1060 BRU. (02) 543 0490. 54.

81, 82, 91, 92. M Albert, Louise. 2–5:30pm Tue–Sun.

Mon, public hols.

★ Central Staircase

Decorated with curved wrought iron, the stairs are enhanced further by mirrors and glass, bringing natural light into the house.

The bedroom

features Art Nouveau furniture, including a wardrobe inlaid with pale and dark wood.



★ Dining Room

White enamel tiles line the walls, rising to an ornate ceiling, decorated with the scrolled metalwork used in other rooms.

Madame Horta's / sitting-room features blue-and-cream wool rugs woven to Horta's design,

and a marble fireplace.

Living Room

The detail of Horta's work can be best seen here, from sculpted bannister ends to finely wrought door handles that echo larger forms.

STAR FEATURES

- **★** Central Staircase
- **★** Dining Room



Front



Exclusive boutique in the chic Avenue Louise

Avenue Louise 2

Map 2 D5. 🚃 34, 54. 🚉 81, 82, 93, 94. M Louise.

OST VISITORS to Brussels come across this busy thoroughfare, its various underpasses constructed in the 1950s and 1960s to link up the city centre with its suburbs. In fact, the avenue was constructed in 1864 to join the centre with the suburb of Ixelles. However, the north end of the avenue retains a chic atmosphere; by the Porte de Namur, fans of designer labels can indulge themselves in Gucci and Versace, as well as investigating the less expensive but no less chic boutiques.

The avenue also has its architectural treasures. The Hôtel **Solvay** at No. 224 was built by Victor Horta in 1894 for the industrialist Solvay family. Its ornate doorway, columns and balconies are a fine example of Art Nouveau style (see p16-17). The house is still a private home. At No. 346, Hôtel Max Hallet is one of Horta's masterpieces, built in 1903. Continuing south leads to the peaceful atmosphere of Ixelles and its parkland.

St-Gilles

20, 48. 1 23, 55, 81, 82, 90. M Porte de Hal, Parvis St-Gilles.

TAMED AFTER THE patron saint of this district's main church, St-Gilles is traditionally one of Brussels' poorer areas. However, amid the low-quality functional housing are architectural survivors which make the suburb well worth a visit. Art Nouveau and sgraffiti gems (see p17) can be found in streets such as Avenue Iean Volders and Rue Vanderschrick. The **Hôtel** Hannon (1902), now a photography gallery, remains one of the city's most spectacular Art Nouveau structures. Restored in 1985, it has a stained-glass window and ornate statuary that take this architectural style to its peak (see p16).

Art Nouveau details can be seen in the nearby streets, particularly in Rue Felix Delhasse and in the nearby Rue Africaine.

One of the most striking features of St-Gilles is the Porte de Hal. Brussels' second set of town walls, built in the 14th century, originally included seven gateways, of which Porte de Hal is the only survivor (see p12). Used as a prison from the 16th to 18th centuries, it was restored in 1870. Today it houses a small small museum of folk art, including a collection of 19th-century toys.

Ave de la Jonction 1, BRU 1060.

🕅 Porte de Hal

Blvds de Midi & de Waterloo, BRU 1000. 🚺 (02) 534 1518. 🚃 20, 48.

Ixelles 4

🚃 54, 71, 95, 96. 🏩 23, 81, 82, 90, 93, 94. M Porte de Namur.

LTHOUGH ONE of Brussels' A largest suburbs and a busy transport junction, the heart of Ixelles remains a peaceful oasis of lakes and woodland.

The idyllic Abbave de la Cambre was founded in 1201, achieving fame and a degree of fortune in 1242, when Saint Boniface chose the site for his retirement. The abbey then endured a troubled history in the wars of religion during the 16th and 17th centuries. It finally closed as an operational abbev in 1796 and now houses a school of architecture. The abbey's pretty Gothic church can be toured and its grassy grounds and courtyards offer a peaceful walk.

South of the abbey, the Bois de la Cambre remains one of the city's most popular public parks. Created in 1860, it achieved popularity almost immediately when royalty promenaded its main route. Lakes, bridges and lush grass make it a favoured picnic site.

The Musée Communal d'Ixelles nearby has a fine collection of posters by 19thand 20th-century greats, such as Toulouse Lautrec and Magritte, as well as sculptures

by Rodin. The former home of one of Belgium's finest sculptors is now Musée Constantin Meunier, with 170 sculptures and 120 paintings by the artist, and his studio preserved in its turn-of-the-century style.

Art Nouveau detail on

facade in Rue Africaine

₩ Abbaye de la Cambre

Ave de Général de Gaulle, BRU 1050. ((02) 648 1121. 9am-noon, 3–6:30pm daily. public hols.

Musée Communal d'Ixelles

Rue J Van Volsem 71, BRU 1050. ((02) 515 6421. 1–6:30pm Tue-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat-Sun.

Mon, public hols.

Musée Constantin

Meunier Rue de l'Abbaye 59, BRU 1050.

((02) 648 4449. 10am-noon, 1–5pm Tue–Sun. Mon, public hols.



((02) 538 4220. M Albert.

3, 55, 90. M Porte de Hal. 10am−4:45pm Tue−Sun. 💋 👃



The Forêt de Soignes, once a royal hunting ground and now a park

Forêt de Soignes 6

🚃 71, 72. 🏩 23, 90. M Demey, Hermann Debroux. 🌠 Thu, Sun. (02) 215 1740.

 Γ HE LARGE FORESTED area to the southeast of Brussels' city centre has a long history: thought to have had prehistoric beginnings, it was also here that the Gallic citizens suffered their defeat by the Romans (see p29). However, the forest really gained renown in the 12th century when wild boar roamed the landscape, and local dukes enjoyed hunting trips in the woodland.

The density of the landscape has provided tranquillity over the ages. In the 14th and 15th centuries it became a favoured location for monasteries and abbeys. Few have survived, but Abbaye de Rouge-Cloître is a rare example from this era.

In a former 18th-century priory is the Groenendaal Arboretum, in which more than 400 forest plants are housed, many of which are extinct elsewhere. The most common sight, however, is the locals enjoying a stroll.

Groenendaal Arboretum

Duboislaan 14, 1560 BRU. (02) 657 0386. 8:30am-5pm, Mon-Fri.

Uccle 6

🚃 49, 50, 60. 菓 18, 23, 52, 90.

CCLE IS A smart residential district, nestling in its treelined avenues. Not immediately a tourist destination, it is worthwhile taking a trip to the

Musée David et Alice van

Buuren. The 1920s residence of this Dutch couple is now a small museum, displaying their eclectic acquisitions. Amid the Dutch Delft-

ware and French Lalique lamps are great finds, such as original sketches by Van Gogh. Visitors will also enjoy the modern landscaped gardens at the rear.

m Musée David et Alice van Buuren

Ave Léo Errera 41, 1180 BRU. ((02) 343 4851. 1–6pm Sun, 2–6pm Mon. Group visits by appointment. 24–31 Dec. 🚳

Anderlecht •

🚍 46, 49, 63, 89. 🚉 56, 82. M Bizet, Clemenceau, St-Guidon,

ONSIDERED to be Brussels' I first genuine suburb (archaeological digs have uncovered remnants of Roman housing), Anderlecht is now best known

as an industrial area, for its meat market, and its successful football club of the same name. Despite this, the Modernist Spanish painter Joan Mirò added a unique artistic contribution inspiring bright cartoon-like murals on Rue Porcelaine.

Although only a few pockets of the suburb are now residential, during the 15th century this was a popular place of abode and some houses remain from that era. Maison Erasme, built in 1468, is now named after the great scholar and religious reformer, Erasmus (1466-1536), who lived here for five months in 1521. The house was restored in the 1930s. Now a museum dedicated to the most respected

thinker of his generation, it displays a collection of 16thcentury furniture and portraits of the great humanist by Holbein and van der Weyden.

Nearby is the huge edifice of Eglise Sts-Pierre-et-Guidon. This 14th-century Gothic church, com-

pleted with the addition of a tower in 1517, is notable for its sheer size and exterior gables, typical of Brabant architecture. The life of St Guidon, patron saint of peasants, is depicted on interior wall murals.

Illustrating a more recent history, the Musée Gueuze is an operational family brewery that has opened its doors to the public to witness the production of classic Belgian beers such as lambic, gueuze and kriek (see pp142-3).





Mirò-style drawings,

Anderlecht

Maison Erasme in Anderlecht, with its courtyard and fountain



The Basilique Nationale du Sacré-Coeur rising over the city

ffi Maison Erasme

Rue du Chapitre 31, 1070 BRU.

♠ Eglise Sts-Pierreet-Guidon

Place de la Vaillance, 1070 BRU.

2–5pm Mon–Fri. Sat & Sun.

Musée Gueuze

Rue Gheude 56, 1070 BRU. (a) (02) 521 4928. 3 9am-5pm

Mon−Fri, 10am−5pm Sat.

Sun, public hols.
including 1

Basilique Nationale du Sacré-Coeur ®

Parvis de la Basilique 1, Koekelberg, 1083 BRU. (02) 425 8822.

M Simonis. 49, 87. 19. 19. 9am – 4pm (8am – 6pm summer), daily. 4 by appointment.

ATHOUGH A small and popular suburb among Brussels' residents, there is little for the visitor to see in Koekelberg other than the striking Basilique Nationale du Sacré-Coeur, but this does make the journey worthwhile for those interested in the best of Art Deco.

King Léopold II was keen to build a church in the city which could accommodate vast congregations to reflect the burgeoning population of early 20th-century Brussels.

He commissioned the church in 1904, although the building was not finished until 1970. Originally designed by Pierre Langerock, the final construction, which uses sandstone and terracotta, was the less expensive adaptation by Albert van Huffel. Very much a 20th-century church, in contrast to the many medieval religious buildings in the city centre, it is dedicated to those who died for Belgium, in particular the thousands of Belgian soldiers who were never to return from the two world wars, killed in battles fought on their own terrain.

The most dominating feature of the church is the vast green copper dome, rising 90 m (295 ft) above ground. For those who do not manage to visit the church itself, it is this central dome that is visible from many points in the city, including the Palais de Justice.

Musée du Tram O

Ave de Tervuren 364b, BRU 1150. (1) (02) 515 3108. (2) 39, 44 (2) Apr-Sep: 1:30pm-7pm Sat & Sun, pub hols. Group tours possible. Every Sun and pub hol, the museum organizes a tour to Heysel (9:45am). (2) Oct–Mar.

This museum traces the history of public transport in Belgium, with marvellous displays of heritage machinery. Horse-drawn trams are available to transport visitors round the site, which features fully-working early versions of the electric tram, buses and plenty of interactive exhibits.

Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale **o**

In the 19th century, the colony of the Belgian Congo was Belgium's only territorial possession. It was handed back to self-government in 1960 and eventually renamed Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo). This museum, opened in 1899, is a collection gleaned from over 100 years of colonial rule. Galleries show ceremonial African dress and masks, and displays on colonial life.

Dugout canoes, pagan idols, weapons and stuffed wildlife, feature heavily. There is a horrifying collection of conserved giant African insects, much beloved by children. The museum has been adding constantly to its collection and is now a memento to a past way of life in the Congo.



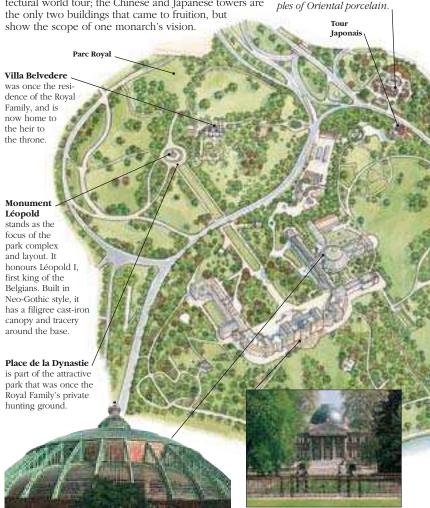
The Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale façade in Tervuren

Domaine de Laeken o

'N THE 11TH CENTURY Laeken became popular among pilgrims after reported sightings of the Virgin Mary. Since the 19th century, however, it has been firmly etched in the minds of all Belgians as the residence of the nation's monarchy. A walk around the sedate and peaceful area reveals impressive buildings constructed in honour of the royal location, not least the sovereign's official residence and its beautifully landscaped parkland. More surprising is the sudden Oriental influence. The great builder, King Léopold II, wanted to create an architectural world tour; the Chinese and Japanese towers are the only two buildings that came to fruition, but show the scope of one monarch's vision.



★ Pavillon Chinois Architect Alexandre Marcel designed this elaborate building in 1909; inside are exam-



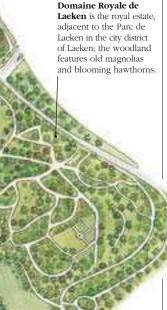
* Serres Royales

These late 19th-century glasshouses are home to exotic trees, palms and camellias. Open to the public annually in April, they are the King's private property. Château Royal

The Belgian royal residence, in the heart of the 160-ha (395-acre) estate, was heavily restored in 1890, with a facade by architect Poelaert covering the 18th-century original.

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Laeken, 1020 BRU. . 53, 84, 89. 19, 23, 81, 94. M Heysel. Château Royal Ave du Parc Royal. to public. Serres Royales Ave de Prince Royal. (02) 513 8940. Apr-May (phone for details). 🚳 evenings only. Pavillon Chinois Ave J van Praet 44. ((02) 268 1608. 10am-5pm Tue-Sun. My Tour Japonais Avenue J van Praet 44. (02) 268 1608. 10am - 5pm Tue-Sun. Eglise Notre Dame de Laeken Avenue de la Reine. (02) 478 2095, 420 4416. 3-5pm Sun only. www.tib.be



STAR SIGHTS

* Serres Royales

0 metres

0 yards

250

250

★ Pavillon Chinois



.....

The Atomium rising 100 m (325 ft) over the Bruparck at dusk

The Atomium @

Boulevard du Centenaire, 1020 BRU.

((02) 475 4777. 884, 89. 223, 81. M Heysel. 10205 for restoration work.

BUILT FOR THE 1958 World Fair (see p37), the Atomium is probably the most identifiable symbol of Brussels. As the world moved into a new age of science and space travel at the end of the 1950s, so the design by André Waterkeyn reflected this with a structure of an iron atom, magnified 165 billion times. Each of the nine spheres that

m (60 ft) in diameter, and linked by escalators. They include exhibition rooms and a smart restaurant at the top of the structure.

make up the "atom" are 18

Bruparck @

Boulevard du Centenaire, 1020 BRU.

(02) 474 8377. 884, 89. 223, 81. M Heysel. Mini-Europe

& Océade (02) 478 4944 (Mini-Europe): (02) 478 4924 (Océade).

Apr-Sep: 9:30am-6pm daily
(lul-Aug: to midnight); Oct-mid-Jan: 10am-5pm daily. 9 end Jan-Mar.

Kinepolis (02) 474 2600. 9 perfomances. 69 for film screenings.

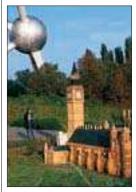
ALTHOUGH NOWHERE near as large or as grand as many of the world's theme parks, Bruparck's sights and range of fast-food restaurants are always a popular family destination.

The first and favourite port of call for most visitors is Mini-

Europe, where more than 300 miniature reconstructions take you around the landscapes of the European Union. Built at a scale of 1:25, the collection displays buildings of social or cultural importance, such as the Acropolis in Athens, the Brandenburg Gate of Berlin and the Houses of Parliament from London. Even at this scale the detail is such that it can be second only to visiting the sights themselves.

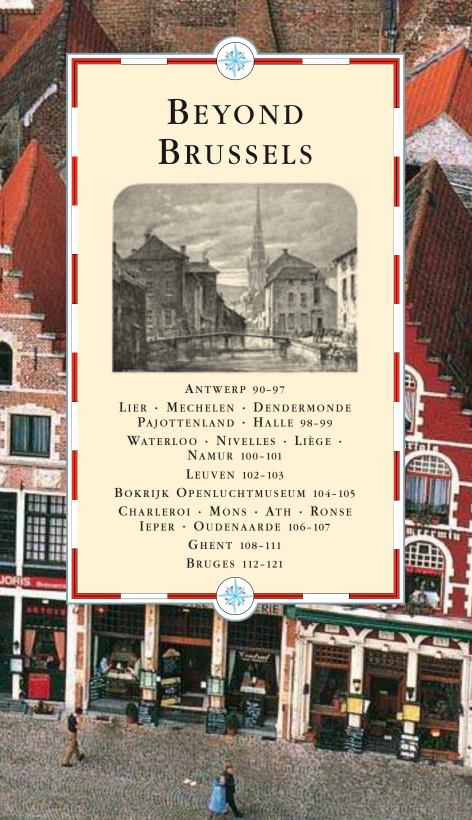
For film fans, Kinepolis cannot be beaten. Large auditoriums show a range of popular films from different countries on 29 screens. The IMAX cinema features surround sound and a semi-circular 600 sq m (6,456 sq ft) widescreen.

If warmth and relaxation are what you are looking for, Océade is a tropically heated water park, complete with giant slides, wave machines, bars, cafés and even realistic re-created sandy beaches.



London's Houses of Parliament in small scale at Mini-Europe







BEYOND BRUSSELS

Russels is at the heart not only of Belgium, but also of Europe. The city marks the divide between the Flemish north and the French-speaking Walloon south. Its central position makes Brussels an ideal base for visitors: within easy reach are the ancient Flemish towns of Antwerp, Ghent and Bruges, each with their exquisite medieval architecture, superb museums and excellent restaurants.

Although Belgium is a small country, it has Brussels one of the highest population densities in Europe. An incredibly efficient road and rail network also means that large numbers of people move around the country every day, with around half the population employed in industry, particularly in textiles, metallurgy and chemicals. Despite this, parts of Belgium are still farmed. Stretching south from the defences of the North Sea is the plain of Flanders, a low-lying area which, like the Netherlands, has reclaimed land or *polders*, whose fertile soil is intensively cultivated with wheat and sugar beet. Bordering the Netherlands is the Kempenland, a sparsely populated area of peat moors, which in the 19th century was mined for coal.

There are small farms here today which cultivate mainly oats, rye and potatoes. Northeast Belgium also contains the large port of Antwerp, a major centre of European industry, with its ship-building yards, oil-refineries and car factories. The towns of Leuven, Lier and Mechelen are noted for their medieval town centres, while Oudenaarde produces exceptionally fine tapestries in a trade dating back to the 13th century.

Brussels itself is surrounded by both Flemish and Walloon Brabant, a fertile region famous for its wheat and beet farms and pasture for cows. Just a few kilometres south of the capital is Waterloo, the most visited battlefield in the world, where Napoleon was defeated by Wellington in 1815.



Visitors sail under the Blinde Ezelstraat Bridge on a tour of Bruges

Exploring Beyond Brussels

 ${f B}^{ ext{ELGIUM}}$ occupies one of the most densely populated parts of Europe, with a concentration of towns and villages across the flat landscapes of the Flemish plain. Along the North Sea coast there are fewer settlements, set among fertile farmland. To the north and west of Brussels are the three easy-to-reach towns of Antwerp, Ghent and Bruges which, with their ancient buildings and vibrant cultural life, are attractive destinations.

IEPER

East of Brussels is the charming university town of Leuven, and further on is the open-air museum of Bokrijk, whose restored buildings focus on the • OOSTENDE the history of the Flemish people. BRUGES 20



Bronze statue of Silvius Brabo in Antwerp's Grote Markt

N61

GHENT 4 DENDERMONDE

PAJOTTENLAND

E429

HALLE 6

OUDENAARDE 18

KEY Motorway Major road Minor road

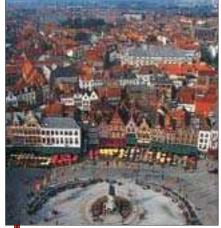
River

RONSE TOURNAL

KORTRIJK

0 km 0 miles

MONS 14



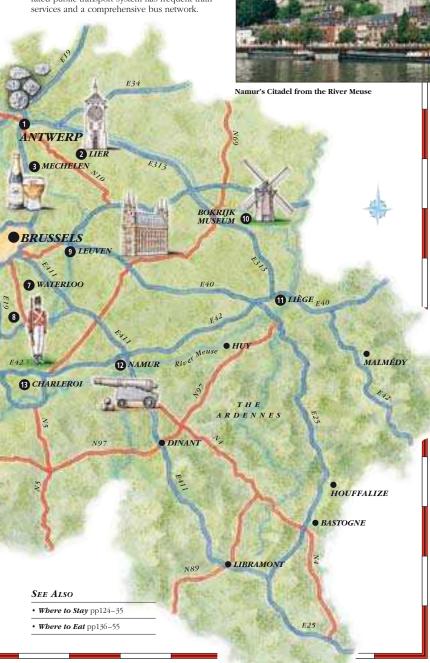
SIGHTS AT A GLANCE Antwerp 1

Leuven 9 Ath 🚯 Liège 🛈 Bokrijk Museum 10 Lier 2 Bruges 20 Mechelen Charleroi B Mons 🚯 Dendermonde 4 Namur 12 Ghent 19 Nivelles 8 Halle 6 Pajottenland 5 Ieper 🕡 Ronse 66 Oudenaarde 18 Waterloo 7

View over Bruges from the Belfort

GETTING AROUND

In Belgium distances are short, with a wide choice of routes – even the tiniest village is easily reached. Brussels sits at the hub of several major highways such as the E19 and the E40 (which link the capital to the country's principal towns). The fully integrated public transport system has frequent train services and a comprehensive bus network.



Street-by-Street: Antwerp •

are within easy walking distance

Fanning out from the east bank of the River Scheldt, Antwerp is Belgium's second-largest city. It is also the centre of the international diamond trade, which is run from the unassuming buildings that line the streets near Centraal Station. Today, the city's industries lie away from its medieval core whose narrow streets and fine buildings cluster around the cathedral and the Grote Markt. Most sites of interest

Gilt statue on guildhouse

of the Grote Markt whose surrounding streets house museums, shops and exuberant cafés and bars.



Nationaal Scheepvaartmuseum

This model of an 18th-century armed merchant ship is in Antwerp's Maritime Museum.





Occupied by the Butcher's Guild for three centuries, this beautiful 1504 building has striking layers of brick and stone that look like alternating strips of fat and lean meat.



KEY

Suggested route

STAR SIGHTS

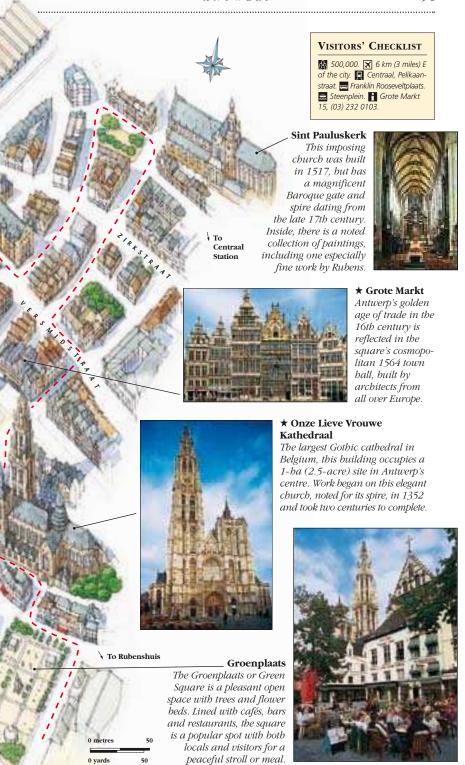
- ★ Grote Markt
- **★** Kathedraal

The Ethnografisch | Museum has artifacts from around the world.

Stadhuis

The Brabo Fountain

This statue, in the centre of the Grote
Markt, depicts the fearless soldier, Silvius Brabo. Said to be the nephew of Julius Caesar, Brabo is shown throwing the hand of the mythical giant, Antigonius, into the River Scheldt.



Exploring Antwerp

THERE HAS BEEN a settlement here, on the banks of the River Scheldt, since the 2nd century. The city of Antwerp grew up and became part of the Duchy of Brabant in 1106. Within 200 years it was a thriving hub of the European cloth industry and Brabant's main port. Today, Antwerp is the principal city of Flemish-speaking Belgium. It is a large metropolis whose port and older residential areas surround a compact centre packed with evidence of its rich history. There are exquisite guildhouses, where the medieval merchants once traded, and imposing churches and several museums, where collections of paintings by the city's most famous son, Pieter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), are also to be found. Antwerp also has many contemporary attractions, such as excellent restaurants, busy nightclubs and bars. Thanks to the Antwerp Six, a group of adventurous designers, the city also has a reputation for cutting-edge fashion.



Visitors tour Antwerp on an historic horse-drawn bus

Getting Around

The best way to get around Antwerp is by using the public transport system. The excellent bus and tram network is focused on Centraal Station. where most visitors arrive. Fast and frequent trams and

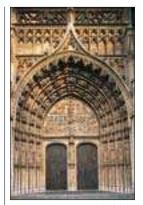
buses travel from here to the centre. Most of the city's main sights are within walking distance of the Grote Markt.

Grote Markt

Grote Markt. ((03) 232 0103. & Antwerp's central square, or Grote Markt, is flanked by the ornately gabled Stadhuis (town hall), which was built in 1564 by the architect and sculptor Cornelis Floris. Its interior was restored in the 19th century and houses a series of paintings which celebrate the city's history. The north side of the square has a series of guildhouses, each of which is decorated with gilded figures. The tallest of these is the House of the Crossbowmen at number seven, on top of which is a statue of St George and the dragon. The Brabo fountain in the middle of the square is one of Antwerp's noted landmarks.



Fresco paintings of the dukes of Brabant adorn the Stadhuis walls



Carvings above the cathedral door depict the Last Judgement

♠ Onze Lieve Vrouwe Kathedraal

Groenplaats 21 or Handschoenmarkt. ((03) 213 9940. 10am–5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat, 1-4pm Sun.

The building of Antwerp's Onze Lieve Vrouwe Kathedraal (Cathedral of Our Lady) took almost two centuries, from 1352 to 1521. This magnificent structure has a graceful tiered spire that rises 123 m (404 ft) above the winding streets of the medieval city centre. Inside, the impression of light and space owes much to its sevenaisled nave and vaulted ceiling. The collection of paintings and sculpture includes three works by Rubens, of which two are triptychs - the Raising of the Cross (1610) and the Descent from the Cross (1612).

Sint Pauluskerk

St-Paulusstraat 22 or Veemarkt 14. (03) 231 3321. Easter Sat–Sep. 2-5pm daily. [3pm Sun & pub hols. Completed in the early 17th century, this splendid church is distinguished by its combination of both Gothic and Baroque features. The exterior dates from about 1517, and has an added elaborate Baroque gateway. The interior is noted for its intricately carved wooden choir stalls. St Paulus also possesses an outstanding series of paintings illustrating the Fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary, one of which, The Scourging of the Pillar, is an exquisite canvas by Rubens. There are also paintings by van Dyck and Jordaens.

₩ Vleeshuis

Vleeshouwersstraat 38-40. (03) 233 6404. 10am-4:45pm Tue-Sun, Easter Mon. 1 & 2 Jan, 1 May, Ascension, 1 & 2 Nov, 25 & 26 Dec. The Vleeshuis (Meat Hall) was completed in 1504 to a design by Herman de Waghemakere.

The structure features slender towers with five hexagonal turrets and rising gables, all built in alternate strips of stone and brick - giving it a streaky bacon-like appearance.

Inside, there is an impressive collection

of medieval woodcarvings and old musical instruments. In the 17th century, Antwerp was renowned for Statue of an ogre outside its manufacture the Maritime Museum of instruments. including the eccentrically shaped harpsichords and clavichords on display here. There are also paintings, but the highlight is the retable (altarpiece), depicting Christ's Entombment, Crucifixion and Ascent to Heaven, which was

M Nationaal Scheepvaartmuseum

Cothem in 1514.

Steenplein 1. ((03) 201 9340. 10am−5pm Tue−Sun. Mon. 🔀 The Maritime Museum is located in the gatehouse of Antwerp's original fortress, or

carved in wood by Jacob van

View of the Vleeshuis' striking façade

Steen, the oldest building in the city. Built from the 10th to 16th centuries, it was used in medieval times as a prison. Today, this restored building has 12 rooms devoted to the history of all things nautical,

from fearsome Viking ships' heads to the small but elegant gondola built for the visit of Napoleon to the city in 1808. Outside, moored along the riverside, is a selection of old canal tugs and barges.

> Rubenshuis Rubenshuis See pp96-7.

♠ Sint Jacobskerk Lange Nieuwstraat

73-75, Eikenstraat. (03) 225 0414. Apr-Oct: 2-5pm

Mon-Sat; Nov-Mar: 9am-noon, Mon−Sat; Sun services only. K Noted as Rubens' burial place, this sandstone chuch, built over three centuries from 1491 to 1656, occupies the site of a chapel which lay along the pilgrimage route of St James of Compostella. The rich interior contains the tombs of several other notable Antwerp families, as well as much 17th-century art, including sculptures by Hendrik Verbruggen, and paintings by van Dyck, Otto Venius (Rubens' first master) and Jacob Jordaens. When Rubens died, in 1640, he was

> buried in his family chapel, located directly behind the high altar. The chapel altar is where one of Rubens' last paintings, Our Lady Surrounded by Saints (1634), is displayed.

⊞ Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten See pp94-5.

Modenatie

Nationalestraat 28. (103) 226 1447. 🚺 10am–6pm Tue-Sun, 2-6pm Mon. The Fashion Museum houses the Flanders Fashion Institute, the Fashion Department of Antwerp's Royal

Academy, as well as a museum of fashion (MOMU).

ff Provincial Diamond Museum

Koningin Astridplein 19–24. (03) 202 4890. 10am-5pm (6pm in summer) daily. 🟀 This museum is dedicated to the world of diamonds.



Late 16th-century printing press in the Museum Plantin-Moretus

Museum Plantin-Moretus Vrijdagmarkt 22-23. ((03) 221 1450.

10am–5pm Tue –Sun, Easter Mon. Mon, 1 & 2 Jan, 1 May, Ascension, 1 & 2 Nov, 25 & 26 Dec. 169 This fascinating museum occupies a large 16th-century house that belonged to the printer Christopher Plantin. who moved here in 1576. The house is built around a courtyard, and its ancient rooms and narrow corridors resemble the types of interiors painted by Flemish and Dutch masters. The museum is devoted to the early years of printing, when Plantin and others began to produce books that bore no resemblance to earlier, illuminated medieval manuscripts.

Antwerp was a centre for printing in the 15th and 16th centuries, and Plantin was its most successful printer. Today, his workshop displays several historic printing presses, as well as woodcuts and copper plates. Plantin's library is also on show and includes an array of beautifully made volumes. One of the gems here is an edition of the Gutenberg Bible - the first book to be printed using moveable type, a new technique invented by Johannes Gutenberg in 1455.

First Floor

Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten

ANTWERP'S LARGEST and most impressive fine art collection is exhibited in the Museum voor Schone Kunsten, which occupies a massive late 19th-century Neo-Classical building almost 2 km (1 mile) to the south of the Grote Markt. The permanent collection contains both ancient and modern works. The earlier collection on the upper floor begins with medieval Flemish painting and continues through the 19th century, with the 'Antwerp Trio' of Rubens, van Dyck and Jordaens well represented. At ground level, modern exhibits include the work of Belgian artists René Magritte, James Ensor and Paul Delvaux, as well as a major collection of work by Rik Wouters, an Impressionist influenced by Cézanne. Tissot and van Gogh are among the foreign artists on show.

Façade of Gallery Building began on this imposing structure in 1884. The Neo-Classical façade with its vast pillars has carved women charioteers atop each side. It was opened in 1890.





* Saint Barbara (1437)/ Jan van Eyck's painting of Saint Barbara in several tones of grey shows the saint sitting in front of a huge Gothic cathedral tower still under construction, while a prayer book lies open on her lap.

STAR PAINTINGS

- ★ Saint Barbara by Jan van Eyck
- ★ Adoration of the Magi by Pieter Paul Rubens
- ★ Woman Ironing by Rik Wouters



Main Entrance iΛ

★ Woman Ironing (1912)
This peaceful domestic scene by
Rik Wouters employs the muted
colours of Impressionism. This was
a productive period for Wouters
who painted 60 canvases in 1912.

GALLERY GUIDE

The gallery is divided into two floors. Flemish Old Masters and 19th-century painters are boused on the first floor, while the ground floor focuses on James Ensor and the 20th century. Each room is lettered and visitors may view exhibits chronologically, starting in the entrance hall.



★ Adoration of the Magi (1624) One of Rubens' masterpieces, this painting displays a remarkable freedom of composition.

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Leopold de Waelplaats 1–9. (03) 238 7809. 1, 23, 290. 4, 8. 10am–5pm Tue–Sun.



As the Old Sang, the Young Play Pipes (1638) Jacob Jordaens' (1593–1678) joyous celebration of life in this painting of a family enjoying a musical evening contrasts with his religious paintings.



Pink Bows (1936)
Paul Delvaux's dream-like style clearly shows
the influence of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theories on Surrealist painting.



Madame Récamier (1967) René Magritte's macabre version of the original painting by David is a classic Surrealist work.

KEY

- ☐ 15th-century paintings
- 16th-century paintings
- ☐ 17th-century paintings
- ☐ 17th century in Holland
- 19th-century paintings
- ☐ 19th-century salon
- 20th-century paintings
- Temporary exhibitions
- Non-exhibition space

Ground Floor

Rubenshuis

Statue of Neptune

RUBENSHUIS, ON Wapper Square, was Pieter Paul Rubens' home and studio for the last thirty years of his life, from 1610 to 1640. The city bought the premises just before World War II, but by then the house was little more than a ruin, and what can be seen today is the result of careful restoration. It is divided into two sections. To the left of the entrance are the narrow rooms of the artist's living quarters, equipped with period furniture. Behind this part of the house is the kunst-kamer, or art gallery, where Rubens exhibited

both his own and other artists' work, and entertained his friends and wealthy patrons, such as the Archduke Albert and the Infanta Isabella. To the right of the entrance lies the main studio, a spacious salon where Rubens worked on – and showed – his works. A signposted route guides visitors through the house.



Façade of Rubenshuis
The older Flemish part of the
bouse sits next to the later house,
whose elegant early Baroque
façade was designed by Rubens.



Formal Gardens

The small garden is laid out formally and its charming pavilion dates from Rubens' time. He was influenced by such architects of the Italian Renaissance as Vitruvius when he built the Italian Baroque addition to his house in the 1620s.



★ Rubens' Studio

It is estimated that Rubens produced some 2,500 paintings in this large, high-ceilinged room. In the Renaissance manner, Rubens designed the work which was usually completed by a team of other artists employed in his studio.

STAR SIGHTS

- ★ Kunstkamer
- ★ Rubens' Studio

Bedroom

The Rubens family lived in the Flemish section of the house, with its small rooms and narrow passages. The portrait by the bed is said to be of Rubens' second wife, Helena Fourment.

The Familia Kamer.

or family sitting room, is cosy and has a pretty tiled floor. It overlooks

> Wapper Square.



Dining Room

Intricately fashioned leather panels line the walls of this room, which also displays a noted work by Frans Snyders.

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Wapper 9-11. ((03) 201 1555. 🚃 1, 9, 19. 🏩 2, 15. 🔃 10am– 5pm Tue-Sun, Easter Mon. 1 & 2 Jan, 1 & 2 Nov, 25 & 26 Dec. 🎉





This art gallery contains a series of painted sketches by Rubens. At the far end is a semi-circular dome. modelled on Rome's Pantheon, displaying a number of marble busts.



One of the few remaining original features, this portico was designed by Rubens, and links the older house with the Baroque section. It is adorned with a frieze showing scenes from Greek mythology.



Chequered

floor

mosaic tiled



The Centenary Clock on Lier's Zimmertoren or watchtower

Lier 2

LIER IS AN attractive small town, just 20 km (12 miles) southeast of Antwerp. The Grote Markt is a spacious cobbled square framed by handsome historic buildings. The Stadhuis (town hall) was built in 1740, and its elegant dimensions contrast strongly with the square, turreted 14thcentury Belfort (belfry) adjoining. Nearby is the Stedelijk Museum Wuyts, with its collection of paintings by Flemish masters including Jan Steen, Brueghel and Rubens. East of here the church of St Gummaruserk, with its soaring stone pillars and vaulted roof, evokes medieval times, and the carved altarpiece is notable for the intricate detail of its biblical scenes. The stained-glass windows are among the finest in Belgium and were a gift from Emperor Maximillian I in 1516.

One of Lier's highlights is the **Zimmertoren**, a 14thcentury watchtower that now houses the clocks of Lodewijk Zimmer (1888– 1970). This Lier merchant wanted to share his knowledge of timepieces.

Florent van Cauwen straat 14.

(03) 491 1396. Apr–Oct:

10am–midday 1–5pm Tue–Sun.

₩ Zimmertoren Zimmerplein18. ((03) 491 1395. daily. 🚳

Mechelen 6

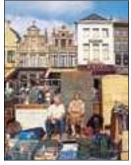
75,000. 💂 🚃 🚹 Hallestraat 2, Grote Markt, (015) 29 7655.

THE SEAT of the Catholic Archbishop of Belgium, Mechelen was the administrative capital of the country under the Burgundian prince, Charles the Bold, in 1473. Today, it is an appealing town whose expansive main square is flanked by pleasant cafés and bars. To the west of the square is the main attraction. St Romboutskathedraal, a huge cathedral that took some 300 years to complete. The building might never have been finished but for a deal with the Vatican: the cathedral was allowed to sell special indulgences (which absolved the purchaser of their sins) to raise funds, on condition that the pope received a percentage. Completed in 1546, the cathedral's tower has Belgium's finest carillion, a set of 49 bells,

whose peals ring out at weekends and on public holidays. The church also contains *The Crucifixion* by Antony van Dyck (1599–1641). Less well-known in Mechelen are three

in Mechelen are three 16th-century houses by the River Dilje. They are not open to visitors, but their exteriors are delightful. The "House of the Little Devils" is adorned with carved demons. Mechelen is famous for its local beers, and visitors should try the Gouden Carolus, a dark brew, which is said to have been the favourite tipple of the Emperor Charles V.

7655. obligatory. Easter–Sep: 2pm Sat, Sun & pub hols; Jun–mid-Sep: 7pm Mon (Jul & Aug: also 2pm). Tours depart from the Tourist Office.

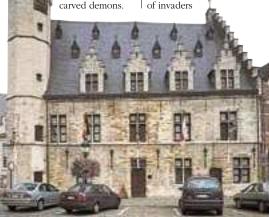


Mechelen's main square, the Grote Markt, on market day

Dendermonde 4

40,000. Stadhuis, Grote Markt, (052) 21 3956.

A QUIET, INDUSTRIAL town, Dendermonde is about 20 km (12 miles) southeast of Ghent. Its strategic position, at the confluence of the Scheldt and Dender rivers, has attracted the attention of a string



Vleeshuis façade on the Grote Markt in Dendermonde



Wood panelled walls and paintings adorn the hall at Gaasbeek Castle

over the centuries, including the Germans who shelled Dendermonde in 1914. But the town is perhaps bestknown as the site of the Steed Bayard, a carnival held every ten years at the end of August.

Today, the town's spacious main square is framed by the quaint turrets and towers of the the Vleeshuis or Meat Hall. The Town Hall is an elegant 14th-century building which was extensively restored in 1920. Dendermonde also possesses two exquisite early religious paintings by Anthony van Dyck which are on display in the Onze Lieve Vrouwekerk (Church of Our Lady).

Pajottenland 6

111,700. Toerisme Pajottenland en Zennevalaaei, (02) 356 4259.

The PAJOTTENLAND forms part of the Brabant province to the southwest of Brussels, and is bordered in the west by the Dender River. The gentle rolling hills of the landscape contain many farms, some of which date back to the 17th century. The village of Onze Lieve Vrouw Lombeek, just 12 km (7 miles) west of Brussels, is named after its church, an outstanding example of 14th-century Gothic architecture.

Just a few kilometres south of the village lies the area's main attraction, the castle and grounds of Gaasbeek. The castle was remodelled in the 19th century, but actually dates from the 13th century, and boasts a moat and a thick curtain wall, strengthened by huge semi-circular towers. The castle's interior holds an excellent collection of fine and applied arts. Among the treasures are rich tapestries, 15th-century alabaster reliefs from England, silverware and a delightful ivory and copper hunting horn which belonged to the Protestant martyr Count Egmont in the 16th century.

The Pajottenland is also known for its beers, especially lambic and gueuze. Lambic is one of the most popular types of beer in Belgium (see pp142–3).

Gaasbeek

Kasteelstraat 40. [(02) 532 4372. Apr-Oct: 10am-5pm Tue-Sun. Nov-Mar.

Halle 6

OCATED ON THE outskirts of ■ Brussels, in the province of Brabant, Halle is a peaceful little town. It has been a major religious centre since the 13th century because of the cult of the Black Virgin, an effigy in the Onze Lieve Vrouwebasiliek, the town's main church. The holy statue's blackness is due to its stained colour, which is said to have occurred through contact with gunpowder during the religious wars of the 17th century.

The virgin has long been one of Belgium's most venerated icons and each year, on Whit Sunday, the statue is paraded through the town.



THE STEED BAYARD

Dendermonde's famous carnival of the Steed Bayard occurs every ten years at the end of August. The focus of the festival is a horse, the Steed Bayard itself, represented in the carnival by a giant model. It takes 34 bearers to carry the horse which weighs 700 kg (1,540 lb) and is 5.8 m (19 ft) high. A procession of locals dressed in medieval costume re-enact the Steed Bayard legend – a complex tale of chivalry and treachery, family loyalty and betrayal. The four Aymon brothers (who were said to be the nephews of Emperor Charlemagne) ride the horse, and it is their behaviour towards the animal which serves to demonstrate their moral worth.

Waterloo o



THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO was fought on 18 June, 1815. It pitted Napoleon and his French army against the Duke of Wellington, who was in command of troops mostly drawn from Britain, Germany and the Netherlands. The two armies met outside the insignificant

hamlet of Waterloo, to the south of Brussels.

The result was decisive. The battle began at 11:30am and just nine hours later the French were in full retreat. Napoleon abdicated and

was subsequently exiled to the island of St Helena, where he died in mysterious circumstances six years later.

Despite its importance, the battlefield has not been conserved, and part of it has been dug up for a highway. However, enough remains to give a general sense of the battle. The best place to start a visit here is at the Musée Wellington, some 3 km (2 miles) from the battlefield.

Musée Wellington

Chaussée de Bruxelles 147. (02) 354 7806. de daily. 12 1 lan, 25 Dec. 25 W www.museewellington.com The Waterloo inn where Wellington spent the night before the battle has been turned into the Musée Wellington, its narrow rooms packed with curios alongside plans and models of the battle. One curiosity is the artificial leg of Lord Uxbridge, one of Wellington's commanders. His leg was blown off by a cannon ball during the

battle and buried in Waterloo. After his death, the leg was sent to join the rest of him in England and, as recompense, his relatives sent his artificial one back to Waterloo.

⋒ Eglise St-Joseph

Chaussée de Bruxelles.

(02) 354 0011.

Across the road from the Musée Wellington is the tiny church of St-Joseph, which was built as a royal chapel at the end of the 17th century. Its dainty, elegant cupola

predates the battle, after which it was extended, with the newer portions containing dozens of memorial plaques and flagstones dedicated to those British soldiers who died at Waterloo. Several of these plaques were paid for by voluntary contributions from ordinary soldiers in honour of their officers.



The Butte de Lion viewed from the Waterloo battlefield

₩ Butte de Lion

149 Chaussée de Bruxelles, N5, 3km (2 miles) S of Waterloo.

(02) 385 1912. addily. Dating from 1826, the Butte de Lion is a 45-m (148-ft) high earthen mound built on the



spot where one of Wellington's Dutch generals, the Prince of Orange, was wounded during the battle. Steps lead to the top, which is guarded by a huge cast-iron lion, and from here there is a great view over the battlefield. The French army approached from the south and fought up the slope across farmland that became increasingly marshy as the day went on, while their opponents had the drier ridge at the foot of the mound. A plan of the battle is displayed at the top.

➡ Panorama de la Bataille 252–254 Route du Lion, Braine-L'Alleud.

N5, 3 km (2 miles) S of Waterloo. ((02) 385 1912. daily. 🚱 This is perhaps the most fascinating of the several attractions located beneath the Butte de Lion. This circular painting of the battle by artist Louis Demoulin was erected in 1912. It is 110 m (360 ft) long and stretches right round a circular, purpose-built gallery. Panoramic, circular paintings came to be very popular in the late 19th century; this is one of the few works that remain intact.

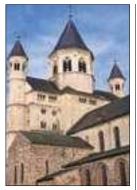
Musée de Cire

315-317 Route du Lion, N5, 3 km (2 miles) S of Waterloo. ((02) 384 6740. Apr-Oct: daily; Nov-Mar: pub hols, Sat & Sun. 🌃 The Musée de Cire is a wax museum where pride of place goes to the models of soldiers dressed in the military regalia of 1815. It seems strange today that the various armies dressed their men in such vivid colours. which made them easy targets. Indeed, many commanders paid for the uniforms of their men themselves, competing with each other for the most flamboyant design.

<u>⋒</u> Napoleon's Last Headquarters

66 Chaussée de Waterloo, Vieux-Genappe, N5, 7 km (4.5 miles)
S of Waterloo. (102) 384 2424.

Image: 1 Jan, 25 Dec. 1 Napoleon spent the eve of the battle in a farmhouse, Le Caillou. This is now a museum containing some artifacts from Napoleon's army, a bronze death mask of the Emperor and his army-issue bed.



Southeast side of Nivelles' imposing church, Collégiale Ste-Gertrude

Nivelles 3

UCKED AWAY among the rolling hills of the province of Brabant, the little town of Nivelles was, for centuries, the site of one of the wealthiest and most powerful abbeys in the region. Earlier it was the cradle of the Carolingian dynasty, whose most celebrated ruler was the Emperor Charlemagne (747–814). The main sight today is the vast church, the Collégiale Ste-Gertrude, that dominates the town centre. Something of an architectural hotchpotch, the church dates back to the 10th century and is remarkable in that it has two imposing chancels - one each for the pope and the king.

Leuven

See pp102-103.

Bokrijk Museum o

See pp104-105.

Liège 0

400,000. 🗖 🚃 🚹 En Féronstrée 92, (04) 221 9221.

BELGIUM'S THIRD-biggest city, Liège is a major river port and industrial conurbation at the confluence of the rivers Meuse and Ourthe. The city

has an unusual history in that it was an independent principality from the 10th to the 18th century, ruled by Prince Bishops. However, the church became widely despised and when the French Republican army arrived in 1794, they were welcomed by the local citizens with open arms.

Today, Liège possesses some notable attractions and highlights include the **Musée de la Vie Wallonne** (Museum of Walloon Life), housed in an outstanding 17th-century friary. The museum focuses on Walloon folklore and culture, which is depicted in a series of reconstructed interiors and craft workshops from the city's history.

<u>Musée de la Vie Wallonne</u> Cour des Mineurs. **(1)** (04) 237 9040.

☐ 10am–5pm Tue–Sat. 🍪

Namur @

100,000. 📮 🚃 🚉 🚺 Square Léopold, (081) 24 64 49.

RENCH-SPEAKING Namur is Fa friendly, attractive town whose narrow central streets boast several elegant mansions and fine old churches, as well as lots of lively bars and outstanding restaurants. Until the Belgian army left in 1978, Namur was also a military town. The soldiers were stationed within the Citadel, located on top of the steep hill on the south side of the centre, which remains the town's main attraction. An exploration of its bastions and subterranean galleries takes several hours.



Namur's ancient walls or Citadel seen from the River Meuse

Leuven o

Font Sapienza

7 ITHIN EASY STRIKING distance of Brussels, the historic Flemish town of Leuven traces its origins to a fortified camp constructed here by Julius Caesar. In medieval times, the town became an important centre of the cloth trade, but it was as a seat of learning that it achieved international prominence. In 1425, Pope Martin V and Count John of Brabant founded Leuven's university, and by the mid-1500s it was one of Europe's most prestigious academic institutions, the home of such famous scholars as Erasmus and Mercator. Even today, the university exercises a dominant

influence over the town, and its students give Leuven a vibrant atmosphere. The bars and cafés flanking the Oude Markt, a large square in the centre of town, are especially popular. Adjoining the square is the Grote Markt, a triangular open space which boasts two fine medieval buildings, the Stadhuis and St Pieterskerk.



Lively café society in the Oude Markt

TOude Markt

This handsome, cobblestoned square is flanked by a tasteful ensemble of highgabled brick buildings. Some of these date from the 18th century; others are comparatively new. At ground level these buildings house the largest concentration of bars and cafés in town, and as such attract the town's university students in their droves.

Stadhuis

Grote Markt. ((016) 21 1539. daily. 🌠 🌠 obligatory. At 3pm daily (Apr-Sep: also at 11am Mon-Fri). Built between 1448 and 1463 from the profits of the cloth trade, Leuven's town hall, the Stadhuis, was designed to demonstrate the wealth of the city's merchants. This distinctive, tall building is renowned for its lavishly carved and decorated facade. A line of narrow windows rise up over three floors beneath a steeply pitched roof adorned with dormer windows and

pencil-thin turrets. It is, however, in the fine quality of its stonework that the building excels, with delicately carved tracery and detailed medieval figures beneath 300 niche bases. There are grotesques of every description as well as repre-

sentations of folktales and biblical stories, all carved in exuberant late-Gothic style. Within the niche alcoves is a series of 19th-century statues depicting local dignitaries and politicians. Guided tours of the interior are available, and include three lavishly decorated reception rooms.



Stone carvings of medieval figures decorate the Stadhuis façade



Huge buttresses support the tower of the Church of Saint Peter

A St Pieterskerk and Museum voor Religieuze Kunst

Grote Markt. ((016) 29 5133.

Mar-Oct: daily, Nov-Feb: Tue-Sun. 💋 to museum. Across the square from the Stadhuis rises St Pieterskerk, a massive church built over a period of two hundred years from the 1420s. The nave and aisles were completed first, but when the twin towers of the western facade were finally added in 1507, the foundations proved inadequate and they soon began to sink. With money in short supply, it was decided to remove the top sections of the towers - hence the truncated versions of today.

Inside the church, the sweeping lines of the nave are intercepted by an impressive 1499 rood screen and a Baroque wooden pulpit, depicting the conversion of Saint Norbert. Norbert was a wealthy but irreligious German noble, who was hit by lightning while riding. He was unhurt but his horse died under him, and this led to his devoting himself to the church.

The church also houses the Religious Art Museum which has three exquisite paintings by Dieric Bouts (1415-75). Born in the Netherlands, Bouts spent most of his working life in Leuven, where he became the town's official artist. In his Last Supper (1468), displayed here, Bouts painted Judas's face in shadow, emphasizing the mystery of Holy Communion rather than the betrayal.

(016) 21 1539.

Fochplein

Adjacent to the Grote Markt is the Fochplein, a narrow triangular square containing some of Leuven's most popular shops, selling everything from fashion to food. In the middle is the Font Sapienza, a modern fountain that shows a student pouring water through his empty head – a pithy view of the town's student population.

<u>M</u> Museum Vander Kelen-Mertens

Savoyestraat 6. (016) 22 6906. Tue-Sun.

The Museum Vander Kelen-Mertens has fair claim to be Leuven's most enjoyable museum, with its well-presented collection arranged over two floors. Once the home of the Vander Kelen-Mertens family, the rooms are furnished in a variety of historical styles, ranging from a Renaissance salon to a rococo dining room.

Much of the art on display is by the early Flemish masters, including the work of Quentin Metsys (1466–1550), who was born in Leuven and is noted for introducing Italian style to north European art. The collection also includes a beautiful Holy Trinity by Rogier

van der Weyden (1400–1464). Fine art is located in the firstfloor galleries where there is also an impressive display of 16th- and 17th-century embroidered vestments, stained glass and Oriental ceramics.

♠ St Michielskerk

Naamsestraat.

Jun-Sep: Wed, Sat & Sun. One of Leuven's most impressive churches, St Michielskerk was built for the Jesuits in the middle of the 17th century. The church was badly damaged during World War II, but has since been carefully restored. Its graceful facade with its flowing lines is an excellent illustration of the Baroque style. The interior is regularly open to visitors for three afternoons during the summer months. The stunning 1660 carved woodwork around the altar and choir are well worth seeing.

♠ Groot Begijnhof

Schapenstraat. daily, for street access only. Founded around 1230, the Groot Begijnhof was once one of the largest béguinages in Belgium, home to several hundred béguines (see p.53).

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

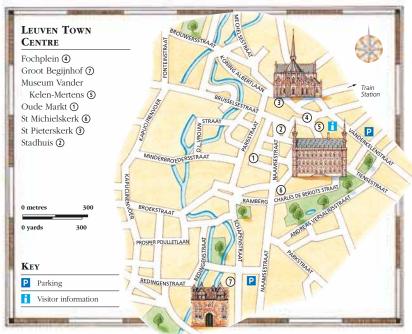
85,000. Bondgenotenlaan. Grote Markt 9.
Grote Markt 9, 3000 Leuven,

The complex of 72 charming red-brick cottages (dating mostly from the 17th century) is set around the grassy squares and cobbled streets near the River Dilje. Leuven university bought the complex in 1961 and converted the cottages

into student accommodation.



The red-brick houses of Leuven's Groot Begijnhof



Bokrijk Openluchtmuseum o

BOKRIJK VILLAGE CONTAINS an immensely popular openair museum devoted to Flemish rural life before 1900. Set among the forest and rolling pasture of Limburg province, about 10 km (6 miles) northeast of the town of Hasselt, the open-air museum was established in 1953 by the provincial government. The land has been farmed since the Middle Ages, and in the early 20th century was used by the Belgian Farmer's Union for agricultural trials.

Bokrijk is made up several settlements which have been moved here and reconstructed, and has more than a hundred restored buildings. The collection is divided into three main sections, each representing a distinct geographical area. Manned by costumed guides, the farmhouses, barns and workshops offer various live demonstrations of an assortment of traditional crafts.



Costumed character
Characters such as this man,
dressed in typical peasant's
clothing of the 19th
century, enhance the
Bokrijk's authentic
atmosphere.



The museum offers the chance to participate in a range of activities from cycling and rope-making to such traditional crafts as baking and wood-carving.

The Old Town



Pigeon Tower

The pigeon nests in this 1634 tower were located in the upper part of the building, which was accessible only by ladder, to prevent the theft of the young birds.

Fertile Uplands: Limburg Haspengouw and the Maasland





VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Domain Bokrijk, 3600 Genk. (
(011) 26 5300. MX (011) 26 5310.

☐ Bokrijk. Mar-Sep: 10am6pm daily. Oct-Feb.
☐ W
www.limburg.be/bokrijk



★ Agricultural architecture

This 16th-century farmhouse was built in the style of houses seen in Brueghel's paintings. The windmill dates from 1788 and was used to grind grain. It still contains the original millstones.

The Poor Heathlands,

or the Kempen, is one of the principal geographical areas in the museum. It was an area of waste land where villagers eked out a living from their farms.



Grain store

This elegant, timber-framed grain store, or spijker, dates from the 16th century. This building comes from Limburg province, where it probably formed part of a brewery.

STAR FEATURES

★ Agricultural architecture

★ Interior features

Village priest
Many of the Bokrijk's
costumed workers, such
as this village priest, are
on hand to explain what
life was like in these preindustrial rural areas.

0 metres 0 yards

50

🔼 200,000. 🛪 💂 🚃 🚹 Square de la Gare du Sud, (071) 31 8218.

TITH A POPULATION of more than 200,000, the industrial centre of Charleroi is one of the largest cities in Frenchspeaking Belgium. Named after the Hapsburg king Charles II, who had the town fortified in 1666, it achieved prominence in the 1800s as the focus of a burgeoning coalmining and steel area known as the Pays Noir (Black Country). Its busy centre fans out from the River Sambre, dividing into the Lower City, which is largely concerned with commerce and is of little interest to the casual visitor, and the Upper City, an older quarter around Place Charles II. The highlights are the Museum of Fine Art and the Musée

du Verre (Glass Museum), with its collection of glass ranging from Assyrian necklaces to contemporary glasswork. From Charleroi, it is around 20 km (12 miles) west to the little town of Binche, the site of one of Belgium's most famous carnivals. Every year in March, parties lead up to a Shrove Tuesday festival.



Charleroi's Upper City

ff Museum of Fine Art Place Charles II. ((071) 86 1132. 9am−12:30pm 1:15–5pm Tue –Sat. 🚱

m Musée du Verre

Blvd Defontaine 10. ((071) 31 0838. Tue-Sun. Mon. 🚳

Mons @

🔼 90,000. 💂 🚃 嵿 Grand Place 22, (065) 33 5580

PERHAPS BEST known for its association with both World Wars, Mons is actually an ancient town. The capital of the French-speaking province of Hainaut, Mons lies across the steep hill that first made



The summer drawing room in the 18th-century Chateau d'Attre, near Ath

it important. Natural strongpoints are rare in this part of the country and the Romans, observing the lay of the land, established a fortified camp here in the 1st century AD.

Today, Mons is a friendly town whose social life focuses around the Grand Place and its

pavement cafés. Also overlooking the Grand Place is the 15th-century Hôtel de Ville, an imposing Gothic structure. A castiron monkey, known as the Singe du Grand Garde, sits on the outside wall near the main entrance, and is meant to bring good luck to those who stroke its head. South-

west of the Grand Place are the town's well-preserved medieval streets and the Collégiale Ste-Waudru, a late-Gothic church.

Mons' other important sights are the Musée du Guerre, which focuses on the role of Mons in both World Wars, and the Musée du Vieux Namy, with its collection of ceramics and Delftware.

Musée du Guerre

Rue Houdain 13. (065) 33 5213.

Tue-Sun.

Musée du Vieux Namy

Rue Mouzain 31, Namy. (065) 36 0825.

Apr-Sep: Sat-Sun.

Ath 6

🔥 11,700. 💂 📮 🕆 Rue de Pintamont 54, (068) 26 9230, 26 5170.

This quiet town grew up around the River Dendre. Ath is known for its festival the Ducasse - which occurs every year on the fourth weekend in August. Held over two days, it features the "Parade of the Giants", a procession of gaily decorated giant figures representing characters from local folklore and the Bible, such as the Aymon brothers and the Steed Bayard (see p99), as well as David, Goliath and Samson.

The surrounding country of gently rolling hills is dotted with hamlets and farms, as well as historical sights. A few



The Gothic church Collégiale Ste-Waudru, Mons

.....

in the region, the **Château d'Attre**. This handsome 18th-century palace was built in 1752 by the Count of Gomegnies, chamberlain to the Hapsburg Emperor Joseph II, and was a favourite haunt of the Hapsburg aristocracy. Its interior is opulent, with ornate plasterwork, parquet floors and paintings. The River Dendre crosses the delightful grounds.

♣ Château d'Attre



The southeast entrance of the chapel of St Hermes, Ronse

Ronse @

SET AMONG the pretty hills of the Flemish Ardennes, Ronse is famous for its Zotte Maandag, or Crazy Monday festivities. Every year, on the second weekend in January, a boisterous procession of masked medieval characters parades through the town.

In medieval times, Ronse was where thousands of the mentally ill were taken to seek a cure. The object of the pilgrimage was a visit to the chapel of Hermes, a Roman saint thought to be an expert in exorcism. Today, the chapel retains three rusty iron rings that recall the days when the insane were chained up awaiting a miracle. A painting here depicts St Hermes on a horse, dragging a devil behind him.

Ieper 0

35,000. 📮 📮 🔒 34 Market Square, (057) 23 9220.

The Flemish name of the town familiar to hundreds of thousands of British soldiers as Ypres – its French appellation. During World War I, this ancient town, which was once a centre of the medieval wool trade, was used as a supply depot for the British army fighting in the trenches just to the east.

The Germans shelled Ieper to pieces, but after the war the town was rebuilt to its earlier design, complete with an exact replica of its imposing, 13th-century Lakenhalle (cloth hall). The original building was located by the River Ieperlee (which now runs underground), and boats could unload their wares on site. Today, part of the interior has been turned into the excellent "In Flander's Fields" Museum. a thoughtfully laid-out series of displays that attempt to coniure the full horrors of World . War I. There is a simulated gas attack, personal artifacts and an array of photographs.

Another reminder of war is the huge Menin Gate memorial (just east of the Grote Markt) inscribed with the names of over 50,000 British and Commonwealth troops who died in and around Ieper but have no known resting place. The last post is sounded here every evening at 8pm.



Weaving a tapestry at the Huis de Lalaing workshop, Oudenaarde

Oudenaarde @

STRATEGICALLY situated beside the River Scheldt, the little town of Oudenaarde has suffered at the hands of many invaders, and little remains of the old town. The 16th-century Stadhuis has survived, and is adorned with beautiful stonework. The interior is open to visitors and is famous for an exquisitely carved oak doorway and its outstanding collection of tapestries – one of the finest in the country.

Oudenaarde was once a centre of tapestry manufacture and its products were bought by monarchs across Europe. Today, visitors can see tapestries being made at the Huis de Lalaing, a workshop near the Grote Markt.

THE YPRES SALIENT

The Ypres Salient was the name given to a bulge in the line of trenches that both the German and British armies felt was a good place to break through each others' lines. This led to large concentrations of men and four major battles including Passchendaele in July 1917, in which hundreds of thousands of men died. Today, visitors can choose to view the site with its vast cemeteries and monuments by car or guided tour.



View of the battlefield at Passchendaele Ridge in 1917

Street-by-Street: Ghent o

As a TOURIST DESTINATION, the Flemish city of Ghent has long been over-shadowed by its neighbour, Bruges. In part this reflects their divergent histories. The success of the cloth trade during the Middle Ages was followed by a period of stagnation for Bruges, while Ghent became a major industricts the 10th period of the period industrial to the 10th period of the period of the

trial centre in the 18th and 19th centuries. The resulting pollution coated the city's antique buildings in layers of grime from its many factories. In the 1980s Ghent initiated a restoration programme. The city's medieval buildings were cleaned, industrial sites were tidied up and the canals were cleared. Today, it is the

Ghent initiated a restoration programme. The city's medieval buildings were cleaned, industrial sites were tidied up and the canals were cleared. Today, it is the intricately carved stonework of its churches and antique buildings, as well as the city's excellent museums and stern, forbidding castle that give the centre its character.



★ Het Gravensteen Ghent's centre is dominated by the thick stone walls and imposing gatebouse of its

ancient Castle of the Counts.

★ Museum voor Sierkunst

This elegant 19thcentury dining room is just one of many charming period rooms in the decorative arts museum. The collection is boused in an 18thcentury mansion and covers art and design from the 1600s to the present.



Graslei

One of Ghent's most picturesque streets, the Graslei overlooks the River Leie on the site of the city's medieval barbour. It is lined with perfectly preserved guildhouses; some date from the 12th century.



STAR SIGHTS

- ★ St Baafskathedraal
- **★** Het Gravensteen
- ★ Museum voor Sierkunst



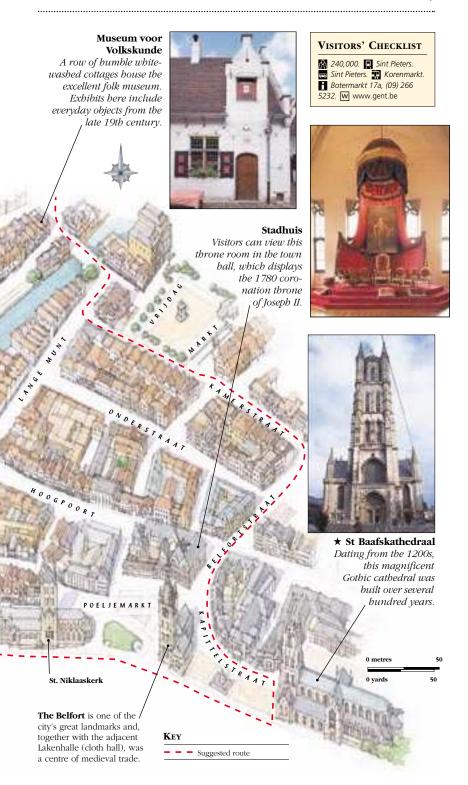
Korenmarkt /

GRASBURG

This busy square was once the corn market; the commercial centre of the city since the Middle Ages. Today, it is lined with popular cafés.

To Ghent

St-Pieters



Exploring Ghent



Charles V's

The heart of Ghent's historic centre was originally built during the 13th and 14th centuries when the city prospered as a result of the cloth trade. Ghent was founded in the 9th century when Baldwin Iron-Arm, the first Count of Flanders, built a castle to protect two important abbeys from Viking raids. Despite constant religious and dynastic conflicts, Ghent continued to flourish through-

out the 16th and early 17th centuries. After 1648, the Dutch sealed the Scheldt estuary near Antwerp, closing vital canal links, which led to a decline in the fortunes of both cities. By the 19th century there was a boom in cotton spinning, and the wide boulevards in the south of the city reflect the affluence of the factory owners. Today, textiles still form a big part of Ghent's industry.



The Gothic turrets of Sint-Niklaaskerk seen from St Michael's Bridge

Getting around

Ghent is a large city with an excellent bus and tram system. The main rail station, St Peters, adjoins the bus station from where several trams travel to the centre every few minutes. However, many of Ghent's main sights are within walking distance of each other. Canal boat trips are also available.

⚠ St Baafs<u>k</u>athedraal

St Baafsplein. (09) 225 1626.

daily. Adoration of the Mystic
Lamb Apr-Oct: daily; Nov-Mar:
Sun-Fri. (2)

Built in several stages, St Baafskathedraal has features representing every phase of Gothic style, from the early chancel through to the later nave, which is the cathedral's architectural highlight. The cavernous nave is supported by slender columns and has a soft dappled light filtering through the windows. In a small side chapel one of Europe's most remarkable paintings is on display, Jan van Eyck's polyptych *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb* (1432). Van Eyck is noted for his attention to detail, but is also universally respected as the first painter to master the art of working with oils. His use of colours and

tones is so realistic that even today, hundreds of years after the work was completed, the skin of his characters looks real enough to touch. The cover screens of this seminal work feature portraits of the donor - Joos Vijd - and his wife below an Annunciation scene. The inside is stunning. Here, God the Father, John the Baptist and the Virgin Mary are pictured on the upper level in radiant tones, while the Lamb, the symbol of Christ's sacrifice, is the centrepiece below.

T Stadhuis

Botermarkt 1. (1 (09) 266 5111. May-Oct: 3pm Mon-Thu. Tours depart from the Tourist Office. The Stadhuis facade displays two different architectural styles. Overlooking Hoogstraat, the older half dates from the early 16th century, its tracery in the elaborate Flamboyant Gothic style. The plainer, newer part, which flanks the Botermarkt, is a characteristic example of post-Reformation architecture. The statues in the niches on the façade were added in the 1890s. Among this group of figures it is possible to spot the original architect, Rombout Keldermans, who is shown studying his plans.

The building still serves as the city's administrative centre. Guided tours allow a glimpse at a series of large rooms. Perhaps the most fascinating of these is the Pacification Hall, which was once the Court of Justice and the site of the signing of the Pacification of Ghent (a treaty between Catholics and Protestants against Hapsburg rule) in 1576.



The tiled floor forms a maze in the Pacification Hall in Ghent's Stadhuis

GHENT 111



Views of Graslei and 16th-century guildhouses along the River Leie

Graslei

The Graslei runs along the River Leie and is the eastern side of the Tussen Bruggen, once Ghent's main medieval harbour. The quay possesses a fine set of guildhouses. Among them, at No. 14, the sandstone facade of the Guildhouse of the Free Boatmen is decorated with finely detailed nautical scenes, while the late 17th-century Corn Measurers' guildhouse next door is adorned by bunches of fruit and cartouches. The earliest building here is the 12th-century Spijker (Staple House) at No. 10. This simple Romanesque structure stored the city's grain supply for several hundred years until a fire destroyed the interior.

♣ Het Gravensteen

Sint-Veerleplein. (09) 225 9306, 269 3730. 🔃 daily. 💽 1 & 2 Jan, 25 & 26 Dec. 🍪

Once the seat of the counts of Flanders, the imposing stone walls of Het Gravensteen (or the Castle of the Counts) overlook the city centre. Parts of the castle date back to the late 1100s, but most are later additions. Up to the 14th century the castle was Ghent's main military stronghold, and from then until the late 1700s it was used as the city's jail. Later, it became a cotton mill.

From the gatehouse, a long and heavily fortified tunnel leads up to the courtyard, which is overseen by two large buildings, the count's medieval residence and the

earlier keep. Arrows guide visitors round the interior of both buildings, and in the upper rooms there is a spinechilling collection of medieval torture instruments.

Museum voor Sierkunst

Jan Breydelstraat 5. 🚺 (09) 267 9999. Tue-Sun. 🎉 This decorative arts museum has a wide-ranging collection contained within an elegant 18th-century townhouse. The displays are arranged in two sections, beginning at the front with a series of lavishly furnished period rooms that feature textiles, furniture, and artifacts from the 17th to the 19th centuries. At the back. an extension completed in 1992 focuses on modern design from Art Nouveau to contemporary works, and includes furniture by Victor Horta (see p78), Marcel Breuer and Ludwig Mies

van der Rohe. One highlight is an Art Nouveau room designed by the noted Belgian artist Henry van der Velde.

Jordaens (1593-1678).

Sofa at Sierkunst Museum

refurbishment in the 1980s and is now one of the trendiest parts of town, with upmarket restaurants, cafés and shops.

fft Museum voor Schone Kunsten

Citadelpark. (09) 240 0700. ☐ Tue-Sun. 🍪 Ghent's largest collection of fine art is displayed in this Neo-Classical building dating from 1902. Inside, a rotunda divides the collection, with the older works in a series of rooms on the right and 19thand 20th-century art to the left. The medieval paintings include the Bearing of the Cross by Hieronymus Bosch (1450–1516). There are also works by Rubens (see pp14-15), Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641) and Jacob

The museum is closed for renovations until September

2006. In the meantime, some of the Old Masters can be seen at the cathedral and at the Museum voor Sierkunst on Jan Breydelstraat.

The Patershol

North of the Kraanlei are the quaint little lanes and low brick houses of the Patershol, a district that developed in the 17th century to house the city's weavers. This once down-atheel area underwent extensive

ff Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (SMAK)

Citadelpark. (109) 222 1703. www.smak.be.

This museum includes works by Belgian and international contemporary artists, such as Bacon, Beuys, Broodthaers, Long and Nauman.



The grand, Neo-Classical façade of the Museum voor Schone Kunsten

Street-by-Street: Bruges @



Traditional organ grinder

WITH GOOD REASON, Bruges is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Belgium. An unspoilt medieval town, Bruges' winding streets pass by picturesque canals lined with fine buildings. The centre of Bruges is amazingly well preserved. The town's trade was badly affected when the River Zwin silted up at the end of the 15th century. It was never heavily industrialized and has

retained most of its medieval buildings. As a further bonus Bruges also escaped major damage in both world wars.

Today, the streets are well maintained: there are no billboards or high rises, and traffic is heavily regulated. All the major attractions are located within the circle of boulevards that marks the line of the old medieval walls.



View of the Rozenhoedkaai A charming introduction to Bruges is provided by the boat trips along the city's canal network.



Onze Lieve Vrouwekerk

The massive Church of Our Lady employs many architectural styles. It took around 200 years to build, and its spire is Belgium's tallest.

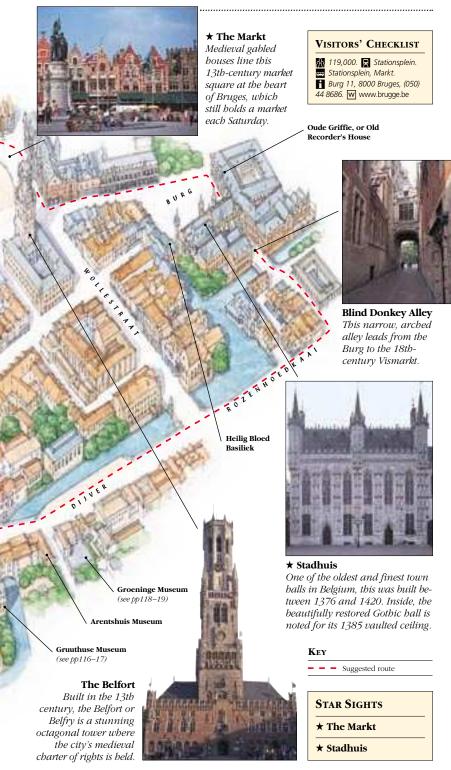
Hans Memling Museum

Six of the artist's works are shown in the small chapel of the 12th-century St Janshospitaal, a city hospital that was still operating until 1976.





NIKIAASSTA



Exploring Central Bruges

PRUGES DEVELOPED around a 9th-century fortress, built to defend the coast against the Vikings. Despite the vagaries of successive invasions by the French, between the 14th and 16th centuries Bruges became one of northern Europe's most sophisticated cities. Today, it owes its pre-eminent position to the beauty of its historic centre, whose narrow cobbled lanes and meandering canals are lined by an ensemble of medieval buildings. These are mostly the legacy of the town's heyday as a centre of the international

Bell maker in market

cloth trade, which flourished for two hundred years from the 13th century. During this golden age, Bruges' merchants lavished their fortunes on fine mansions, churches and a set of civic buildings of such extravagance that they were the wonder of northern Europe.



Bruges' medieval buildings reflected in the River Dijver

Getting Around

The centre of Bruges is compact, and as most major sights are near each other, it is easiest to walk around. However, the bus service is useful for getting from the railway station to the centre. Half-hour boat trips along the canals leave from several jetties. From March to November, boats depart twice every hour.

The Vismarkt

Braambergstraat. daily.
From the Burg an attractive arched path called the Alley of the Blind Donkey (Blinde

Ezelstraat) leads to the openair fish market with its elegant 18th-century colonnades. Fish is still sold here early each morning and business is brisk.

The Burg

The Burg, a pleasant cobbled square a few metres from the Markt, was once the political and religious focus of Bruges. It is also the site of the original fort around which the city grew. Some of the most imposing civic buildings are located here. The beautiful sandstone Stadhuis or town hall has a façade dating

from 1375, and is adorned with turrets and statues. In contrast, the Proostdij or Provost's House was built of grey stone in 1662 in the Baroque style and boasts an ornate entrance.

T Stadhuis

Burg 12. (050) 44 8111. daily.

The intricately carved façade of the Stadhuis was completed in 1375, but the niche statues are modern effigies of the counts and countesses of Flanders. These were added in the 1960s to replace those destroyed by the French army over a century before. The building is still used as a town hall. It is also a popular venue for Bruges weddings. Inside, a staircase leads up from the spacious foyer to the beautiful Gothic Hall, which is open to visitors year round. This magnificent parliamentary chamber was built around 1400. Immaculately restored, the ceiling boasts some lavish woodcarvings including 16 beautiful corbels (brackets) bearing representations of the seasons and the elements. A series of paintings around the hall was completed in 1895, each portraying a key event in the city's history.

In an adjacent building is the Renaissance Hall, which houses a massive wood, marble and alabaster chimney designed by Lanceloot Blondeel. The chimney is one of the best sculptural works of 16th-century Flanders.

A Heilig Bloed Basiliek

Burg 10. ((050) 44 8111, 33 3767. daily. Mon (in winter).
The Basilica of the Holy Blood holds one of the most sacred reliquaries in Europe. The basilica divides into two distinct sections, the lower part being the evocative St Basil's chapel with its plain stone-pillared entrance and arches. The upper chapel was rebuilt in the 19th century after the French destroyed it in the 1790s. Here, brightly coloured decorations surround a silver tabernacle of 1611 which houses a sacred phial, supposed to contain a few drops of blood and water

washed from the body of Christ by Joseph of Arimathea. The phial was brought here from Jerusalem in 1150, and is still the object of great veneration. The church also has a museum that houses paintings, vestments and other artifacts.

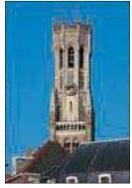
The Markt

The Markt is Bruges' main square and marketplace (a market has been held on this site since the 10th century). It is an impressive open space lined with 17th-century houses and overlooked by the Belfort on one side. The oldest facade on the square (dating from the 15th century) belongs to the Huis Bouchotte, which was the home of Charles II of England during part of his exile from 1656-7.

In the middle is a statue of Pieter de Coninck and Jan Breidel, two 14th-century guildsmen who led a rebellion against the French in 1302. Known as the Bruges Matin, they led Flemish soldiers to attack the French at dawn on May 18, 1302, killing almost all of them. This bloody uprising paved the way for a form of independence for the Low Countries' major towns. Rights such as the freedom to trade were subsequently Statue of Breidel and enshrined in the Pieter de Coninck towns' charters until the 15th century.

The Belfort Markt. 🚺 daily. 🎉

The Markt is dominated by the belfry, whose octagonal belltower rises 83 m (272 ft) above the square. Built between the 13th and 15th centuries, the belfry is Bruges' most celebrated landmark as it was used to store the town's charter, and is therefore a constant reminder of the city's past as a centre of trade. Inside the tower a winding staircase leads up, past the chamber where the town's rights and privileges were stored, to the roof, where the views across Bruges are delightful.



Bruges' Belfort or belltower overlooking the Markt

Groeninge Museum See pp118-19.

ffi Arentshuis Museum Dijver 16. ((050) 44 8763. Apr-Sep: daily; Oct–Mar: Wed–Mon. The Arentshuis Museum is housed in a genteel, 18thcentury mansion overlooking the Dijver Canal. The interior is divided into two sections,

with the ground floor devoted

to a delightful selection of

antique lace. Bruges was a centre of Belgian lace making and, although there were a few local factories, most of the work was done by women toiling in their own homes. The beautifully presented

focuses on needlepoint and bobbin lace, with

collection

several fine examples of Bruges floral or Duchesse lace as well. Upstairs is the work of Frank Brangwyn (1867–1956), a painter and sculptor who was born in Bruges of Welsh parents. Most of Brangwyn's life was spent in Britain, but he bequeathed this collection to Bruges, as well as his drawings, furniture and carpets. Among his work, the dark and powerful canvases depicting industrial scenes are perhaps the most diverting.

₩ Concertgebouw

't Zand. ((050) 47 6999. Built as part of the celebrations for Bruges' European City of Culture, this terracotta concert hall features a 28-m (92-ft) tower that offers great views.

Gruuthuse Museum See pp116-17.

♠ Onze Lieve Vrouwekerk Mariastraat. Apr-Sep: Tue-Fri & Sun; Oct–Mar: Tue–Sat. during services. 🌠 mausoleum only. The Church of Our Lady took over two hundred years to build, starting in 1220, and incorporates a variety of styles. The interior, with its white walls, stark columns and black-and-white tiled floor has a medieval simplicity, while the side chapels and pulpit are lavishly decorated in the Baroque manner.

One of the church's artistic highlights is Michelangelo's sculpture Madonna and Child (1504-5), at the end of the southern aisle. This marble statue was imported by a Flemish merchant, and was the only one of the artist's works to leave Italy during his lifetime. In the choir there are fine paintings by Pieter Pourbus including a Last Supper (1562), and the carved mausoleums of the Burgundian prince Charles the Bold and his daughter Mary.



The soaring spire of the Church of Our Lady

Gruuthuse Museum



Facial fireguard

THE GRUUTHUSE MUSEUM OCCUPIES a large medieval mansion close to the Dijver Canal. In the 15th century, it was inhabited by the merchant (or Lord of the Gruuthuse) who had the exclusive right to levy a tax on the "Gruit", an imported mixture of herbs added to barley

during the beer-brewing process. The mansion's labyrinthine rooms, with their ancient chimneypieces and wooden beams, have survived intact and nowadays hold a priceless collection of fine and applied arts. There are tapestries, wood carvings, furniture and even a medical section devoted to cures of everyday ailments such as haemorrhoids. The authentic kitchen and original 1472 chapel transport visitors back to medieval times.



Façade of the Gruuthuis

The museum's Gothic façade, with its elegant tower, stepped gables and fine stone windows, was built in the 15th century.



★ Charles V

This incredibly lifelike terracotta and wood bust of Hapsburg king Charles V was carved in 1520 and is attributed to German sculptor Konrad Meit.

STAR EXHIBITS

- **★** Charles V bust
- * Chapel



Entrance

The Seven Free Arts Dating from around 1675, this exquisite tapestry depicts the

2nd

1st

Floor

"free arts", which included music.

Ground Floor

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

GALLERY GUIDE

Laid out over three floors, the collection is organized into types of object from glassware, porcelain and ceramics to medical instruments in a series of 22 numbered rooms. Visitors may view the rooms in sequence from 1–22 and get a good sense of the original uses and layout of the house in doing so.



* Chapel

Built in 1472, this oakpanelled chapel on the museum's second floor overlooks the high altar of the church next door.

KEY

- Glassware, porcelain and ceramics
- Kitchen
- Chapel
- Musical instruments
- Coins
- Tapestries
- Tools, weights and measures
- ☐ Entrance hall
- Textiles and lace
- Household implements
- Renaissance works
- Baroque works
- Reliquary and furniture
- Medical instruments
- Great Hall
- Weaponry



House on the Southern Bridge at Minnewater

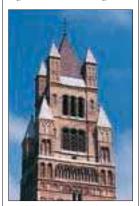
Thans Memling Museum Mariastraat 38, 8000 Bruges.

This small museum (a former 13th-century hospital) contains the works of Hans Memling (1430–94), one of the most talented painters of his era. Among them, *The Mystical Marriage of St. Catherine* (1479), the central panel of a triptych, is superb. The former wards also house a collection of paintings and furniture related to the hospital's history.

🚹 Sint Salvator-Kathedraal

St Salvatorskof 1, 8000 Bruges. (050) 33 61 88. Apr-Sep:

daily. 1 Jan, 25 Dec. 28
Built as a parish church from the 12th and 15th centuries, this large, yellow-brick building became Bruges' cathedral in 1788 when the French army destroyed the existing one. The interior is enormous and quite plain except for a handsome set of Brussels' tapestries hanging in the choir, and a 1682 organ adorned with angels.



Pale brick tower of St Salvator-Kathedraal in Bruges

Minnewater

Just south of the Begijnhof, Minnewater is a peaceful park with a lake populated by ducks and swans. Swans have been here since 1448 when Maximilian of Austria ordered they be kept in memory of his councillor, Pierre Lanchais, who was beheaded by the Bruges citizens.

Once this was a bustling harbour which connected to the canal network and the sea. Today, Minnewater can be visited by one of the tourist barges that take visitors on a tour of Bruges by canal. It is also a popular spot for walkers and picnickers who may view the pretty 15th-century lock gate and house and the 1398 tower (Poedertoren).

Begijnhof

Wijngaardplein 1, 8000 Bruges. ((050) 36 01 40. daily. Béguines were members of a lay sisterhood founded in 1245. They lived and dressed as nuns but did not take vows and were therefore able to return to the secular world at will. The beginhof or béguinage is the walled complex in a town that housed the béguines. In Bruges, this is an area of quiet tree-lined canals faced by white, gabled houses, with a pleasant green at its centre. Visitors and locals enjoy strolling here and may visit the small, simple church which was built in 1602. The nuns who live in the houses are no longer béguines, but Benedictine sisters who moved here in the 1930s. One of the houses is open to visitors and displays simple rustic furniture and artifacts that illustrate the women's contemplative lives.

Groeninge Museum

BRUGES' PREMIER FINE ARTS museum, the Groeninge, holds a fabulous collection of early Flemish and Dutch masters, featuring artists such as the influential Rogier van der Weyden (1399–1464) and Jan van Eyck (d.1441). Hieronymous Bosch (1450–94), famous for the strange freakish creatures of his moral allegories, is well represented too, as are Gerard David (d.1523) and Pieter Brueghel the Younger (1564–1638). These early works are displayed on the ground floor of the museum, as well as a collection of later Belgian painters, most notably Paul Delvaux (1897–1994) and René Magritte (1898–1967). Originally built between 1929 and 1930, the museum is small and displays its collection in rotation, along with temporary exhibitions.

Last Judgement Painted on three oak panels in the early 16th century, this detail from Hieronymous Bosch's famous tryptich depicts scenes of cruelty and torture. The strong moral tone of the work suggests that man's sinful nature bas created



★ The Moreel

Triptych (1484)

This panel of the triptych, by
German-born artist Hans
Memling, was designed to
adorn the altar in a Bruges
church. It is said to be the first
ever group portrait.



STAR PAINTINGS

- ★ Virgin and Child with Canon by Jan van Eyck
- ★ The Moreel Tryptich by Hans Memling



Museum Façade

on that of a Romanesque

convent.

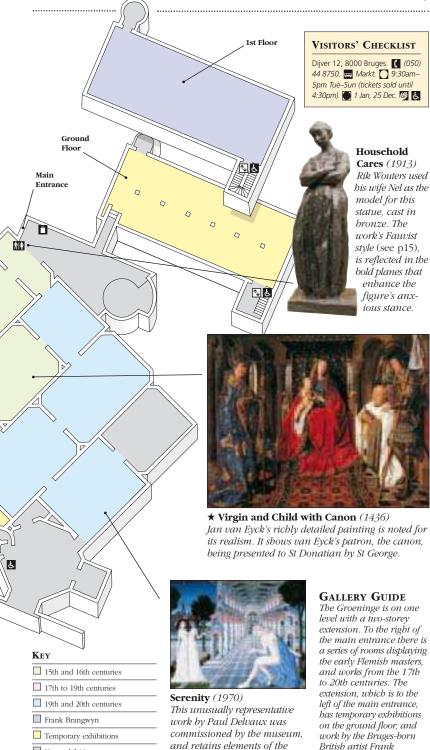
Originally built in 1930, the

gallery was extended in 1994

to a design by architect Joseph

Viérin. The old entrance is based

Portrait of Bruges family (1645) Jacob van Oost the Elder's focus on the affluence of this family overlooking their beloved city shows why he was Bruges' most popular artist of the Baroque period.



artist's surrealist style.

Brangwyn on the first floor.

Non-exhibition space

Exploring Northeast Bruges

Statue of Jan van Eyck

N THE HEIGHT OF THE summer and on holiday weekends, tourists pour into Bruges, and parts of the city centre often get too crowded for comfort. Fortunately, the narrow cobbled streets and picturesque canals to the northeast of the Markt never suffer from this, and this fascinating area remains one of the most delightful parts of Bruges. Streets of charming, medieval terraced houses are dotted with grand, yet elegant 18th-century mansions. The best approach is via Jan van Eyckplein,

in medieval times the city's busiest harbour, from where it is a short stroll along Spinolarei and Potterierei streets to the many museums and churches that are found in this historic district.



Lace-making skills on show at the Kantcentrum lace centre

M Kantcentrum

Peperstraat 3. ((050) 33 0072. Mon−Sat. The area from the whitewashed cottages to the east of Potterierei Street is one of several old neighbourhoods where the city's lace workers plied their craft. Mostly, the women worked at home, receiving their raw materials from a supplier who also bought the finished product.

Lace-making skills are kept alive at the Kantcentrum, the Lace Centre at the foot of Balstraat, where local women (and a few men) fashion lace in a variety of styles, both modern and traditional. It is a busy place, and visitors can see the lace-making demonstrations held every afternoon during the summer. Some of the finished pieces are sold in the Kantcentrum shop at very reasonable prices.

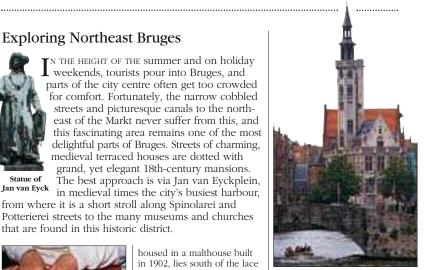
ff Brugse Brouwerij-Mouterijmuseum

Verbrand Nieuwland 10. ((050) 33 0699. daily. Call for details. Up to World War I there were 31 breweries operating in Bruges. This brewery museum, housed in a malthouse built in 1902, lies south of the lace centre and the Jerzalemkerk. On display are artifacts and documents that tell the centuries-old story of beer and brewing in the city. Next door to the museum, De Gouden Boom is a working brewery founded in 1584 that produces the noted beer Brugse Tripel and the spicy wheat beer (known as bière blanche), Brugs Tarwebier.

⋒ Jeruzalemkerk

Peperstraat. Mon-Sat. 169 Next door to the Kantcentrum, the Jeruzalemkerk is Bruges' most unusual church. The present building dates from the 15th century, and

was built on the site of a 13th-century chapel commissioned by a family of wealthy Italian merchants, the Adornes family, whose black marble tomb can be seen inside. Based on the design of the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, the structure possesses a striking tower with two tiers of wooden, polygon-shaped lanterns topped by a tin orb. Inside, the lower level contains a macabre altarpiece, carved with skulls and assorted demons. Behind the altar is a smaller vaulted chapel; leading



The historic buildings and lovely canals of northeast Bruges

from this is a narrow tunnel guarded by an iron grate. Along the tunnel, a lifelike model of Christ in the Tomb can be seen at close quarters.

The Kruispoort and the windmills

Medieval Bruges was heavily fortified. It was encircled by a city wall which was itself protected by a moat and strengthened by a series of massive gates. Most of the wall was knocked down in the 19th century, but the moat



The Jeruzalemkerk was built in 1497

has survived and so has one of the gates, the Kruispoort, a monumental structure dating from 1402 that guards the eastern approach to the city. The earthen bank stretching north of the Kruispoort marks the line of the old city wall, which was once dotted with some 20 windmills. Today, only three remain overlooking the canal. The first windmill, the Bonne Chieremolen, was brought here from a village in Flanders in 1911, but the second - St Janshuismolen – is original to the city, an immaculately restored structure erected in 1770. The northernmost mill of the three is De Nieuwe Papegai, an old oil mill that was relocated here in 1970.



The massive Kruispoort is all that remains of Bruges' old city walls

♠ English Convent

Carmersstraat 85. ((050) 33 2424. Mon−Sat. Ø obligatory. The English Convent was where dozens of English Catholics sought asylum following the execution of Charles I in 1642, and during Oliver Cromwell's subsequent rule as Lord Protector. The conventual buildings are not open to the public, but the nuns provide a well-informed tour of their beautiful church, which was built in the Baroque style in the 1620s. The interior has a delightful sense of space, its elegant proportions enhanced by its cupola, but the highlight is the altar, a grand affair made of around 20 types of marble.

∰ Museum voor Volkskunde

Rolweg 40. ((050) 33 0044.

Tue-Sun.
The Museum voor Volkskunde

The Museum voor Volkskunde is one of the best folk museums in Flanders. It occupies



These 17th-century almshouses house the Museum voor Volkskunde

an attractive terrace of low, brick almshouses located behind an old neighbourhood café called the "Zwarte Kat" (Black Cat), which serves as the entrance. Each of the almshouses is dedicated to a different aspect of traditional Flemish life, with workshops displaying old tools. Several different crafts are represented here, such as a cobbler's and a blacksmith's, through to a series of typical historical domestic interiors.

⊞ Schuttersgilde St Sebastiaan

Carmersstraat 174. (1050) 33
1626. 1740–Thu & Sat
(May–Sep: also open on Fri). (20
The Archers' guild (the
Schuttersgilde) was one of the
most powerful of the militia
guilds, and their 16th- and
17th-century red-brick guildhouse now houses a museum.

The commercial life of medieval Bruges was dominated by the guilds, each of which represented the interests



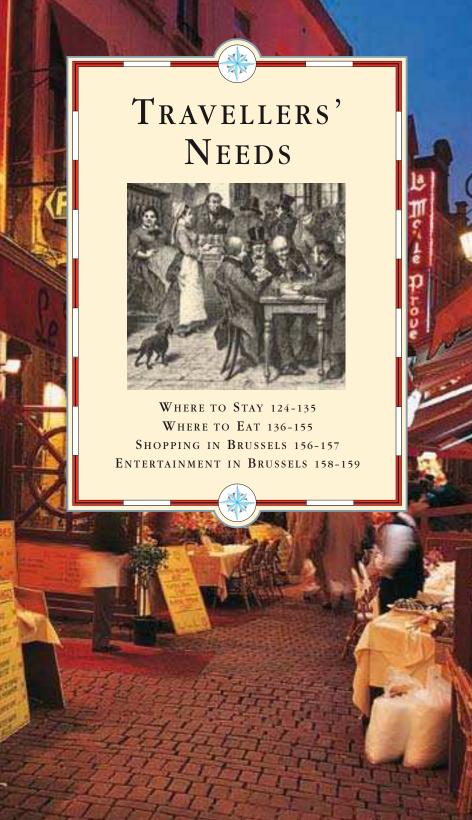
The St Sebastiaan guildhouse belonged to the archers

of a particular group of skilled workmen. The guilds guarded their privileges jealously and, among many rules and customs, marriage between children whose fathers were in different guilds was greatly frowned upon. The guild claimed the name St Sebastian after an early Christian martyr, who the Roman Emperor Diocletian had executed by his archers. The bowmen followed orders - and medieval painters often show Sebastian looking like a pincushion - but miraculously Sebastian's wounds healed and he had to be finished off by a band of club-wielding assassins. The guildhouse itself is notable for its collection of paintings of the guild's leading lights, gold and silver trinkets and guild emblems.

Museum Onze Lieve Vrouw van de Potterie

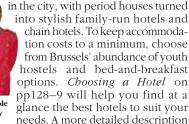
Potterierei 79. (050) 44 8777 Tue-Sun. 🍪 Located by the canal in one of the quietest parts of Bruges, the Museum Onze Lieve Vrouw van de Potterie (Our Lady of Pottery) occupies part of an old hospital that was founded in 1276 to care for elderly women. There is a 14th- and 15th-century cloister, and several of the old sick rooms are now used to display a modest collection of paintings, the best of which are some realistic 17th- and 18thcentury portraits of leading aristocrats. The hospital church is in excellent condition, too; it is a warm, intimate place with fine stained-glass windows and a set of impressive Baroque altarpieces.





WHERE TO STAY

Por Most of the year, Brussels is primarily a business or political destination, and accommodation is often priced accordingly. The wide range of top hotels has one fine advantage for the visitor; weekend and summer deals make it possible even on a modest budget to stay in some of Europe's most luxurious establishments. The mid-



luxurious establishments. The midneeds. A more detailed descripting range of hotels is also well represented of each hotel is listed on pp130–35.



Hallway in the Hôtel Métropole on Place de Brouckère (see p132)

HOTEL LOCATIONS

WHILE BRUSSELS does not have a specific hotel area, there are clusters of hotels in various parts of the city. Centrally, the most fertile ground is between Place Rogier and Place de Brouckère, which is within walking distance of both the Upper and Lower Town and a short bus ride from most major sights. The streets to the west of the Grand Place are also well supplied for those who want to be in the historic centre of town, but road noise can be a problem at night. To the north, Place Ste-Catherine or the streets behind Avenue de la Toison d'Or also have plenty of options. Following the pattern of cities worldwide, hotels generally reduce in price the further they are from the centre. Bed-andbreakfast rooms are dispersed across the capital and can often be found in residential

districts at very good rates. When arriving in the city from abroad by train or plane, it is worth knowing that the Gare du Midi and the airport both have nearby hotel colonies, although the station surroundings are run down in places. The airport has principally attracted chain hotels, which often offer good value package deals with the national airlines, although sightseeing from here is inconvenient.

ROOM RATES

HOTELS AT THE TOP end of the market offer exceptional standards of comfort and convenience to their largely corporate clients, and their prices reflect this. In general, prices are higher than in the rest of Belgium, but on a par with other European capitals. For a night in a luxury hotel, expect to pay €250 to €300 for a double room; the price for a room in the city averages in the €150 to €175 bracket.



Façade of the Crowne Plaza Hotel, one of the hotel chain (see p131)

However, there are numerous discounts available (see Special Rates, p126).

Single travellers can often find reasonable discounts on accommodation, although few places will offer rooms at half the price of a double. It is usual to be charged extra if you place additional guests in a double room. Travelling with children is not the financial burden it might be in this child-friendly society (see p127). Youth hostels cater very well to the budget student traveller and some also have family rooms.

TAXES AND CHARGES

Room taxes and sales taxes should be included in the cost of your room, so the price quoted should be what appears as the total. The price of car parking may be added. Some hotels offer free parking, others charge up to £17 a night. In hotels with no private car park, it is worth checking discounts for public parking facilities if these are located nearby. While many hotels are happy to allow pets, many will add a small nightly charge to the bill.

Breakfast is not always included in the price of a room, even in very expensive establishments. However, many hotels do offer excellent free breakfasts, so ask when you book. The fare usually consists of continental breakfasts, including good coffee, warm croissants and brioche rolls, preserves and fruit juice. Bear in mind that if the expensive place where you are staying is charging £20 for a

morning meal, there will be plenty of places nearby offering equal quality for much less money. The usual price for a hotel breakfast ranges upwards from €2.50, but coffee and rolls are usually priced at around €6.20. Unusually, youth hostels also offer lunches and dinners at around €9.90 each.

Phone calls from hotel rooms can be extremely expensive, with unit charges of €.60 for even a local call not uncommon. To make a long-distance call, buying a phonecard and using the efficient public payphone service is several times less expensive. Hotel faxes or modem charges, when available, can also mount up.

Minibar charges are usually very high, although no more so than in any other western European city. Watching satellite or pay-TV stations can also be expensive. However, Belgium's advanced cable network and proximity to other countries means that there are usually more than 20 free channels to choose from including the BBC as well as French and German television.

FACILITIES

In a City with so many luxury hotels, fierce competition has led to ever more sophisticated gadgets and services for businesspeople. Several private phone lines, screened calls, free internet access, automatic check-out services, 24-hour news via Reuters, secretarial services, free mobile phones and even executive suites designed expressly for women



A business traveller's room at the Hotel Alfa Sablon (see p132)

are all on offer. Most of the top hotels also house extensive fitness facilities, including saunas and full gymnasiums, although there are few large swimming pools.

Brussels' reputation as a centre for fine dining is significantly enhanced by the hotel trade, with major hotels often offering several options, from expert gastronomy to excellent brasserie dining. For snacks and drinks, Brussels' hotels are known for their oldstyle, entertaining bars with piano music for those guests who prefer not to venture into the city at night. A handful have nightclub facilities where lively crowds meet for cocktails and dancing.

As one of Europe's major centres for the convention trade, Brussels is not short of meeting and function rooms, with the big hotels offering dozens of spaces for anything from conferences to society weddings and even relatively modest hotels offering goodsized rooms for business seminars and the like. Many

more expensive hotels have serviced apartments on offer; these can be useful for the greater freedom they provide.



19th-century courtyard of the Conrad International (see p135)

How то Book

 $R^{ ext{OOMS}}$ are available in Brussels at most times of the year, but you should book several days in advance to ensure that you get the place you want. In mid- and toprange hotels, a credit card is the usual way to book, giving card details as a deposit; in smaller hotels, bookings can often be made simply by giving your name and details of the day and time of arrival.

The **Tourist Office** offers a free, same-day reservation service on-site. It also publishes a practical guide to Brussels hotels, updated annually, which is available on request. For booking by telephone, Belgian Tourist **Reservations** is a free service for visitors and very helpful.



Bar of the Hotel Arenberg, decorated with a cartoon mural (see p131)



View of the Grand Place from a room at Auberge Saint-Michel (see p130)

SPECIAL RATES

 $\mathbf{B}^{ ext{RUSSELS}}$ is an exceptional destination, in that relatively few people come for the weekend or in July and August, meaning that often remarkable deals can be acquired at these times.

The cost of staving in one of the top hotels over the weekend or at off-peak times can plummet by as much as 65 per cent (for example, from €300 to €100 for a double room), so checking before booking about any special deals may save a large sum of money. A few hotels also offer discounts for guests who eat in their restaurants.

Some reservation services charge a small fee, but they can usually find competitively priced accommodation. Any deposit given is deducted from the final hotel bill.

Many travel agents also offer packages for visiting Brussels or Belgium, with accommodation working out less expensively than a custom-booked break.

Another option worth looking into is to check with your airline about possible discounts through its reservation services, and to find out about frequent-flyer bargains for affiliated hotels.



Bellboy at the Conrad International

DISABLED TRAVELLERS

 $\mathbf{H}^{ ext{OTELS}}$ in Brussels and the rest of Belgium take the needs of disabled travellers seriously. Many have one or more rooms designed with wheelchair-bound guests in mind. Bear in mind that many hotel buildings in Brussels are historic and therefore may not be suitable. Most staff, however, will be helpful. It is wise to ask in advance whether the hotel can cater to travellers with special needs. Most hotels will allow the visually handicapped to bring a guide dog onto the premises, although again it is best to make sure that this is the case before you arrive.

YOUTH ACCOMMODATION

Brussels has several central, excellent youth hostels, with modern facilities, reasonably priced food and more privacy than is usually associated with hostel stays. Perhaps the best are the Jacques Brel, close to Place Madou, and the Sleep Well, which has disabled access. A bed in a fourperson room should cost in the region of €19, rising to around €26 for a single room. Breakfast is sometimes included or costs from €2.50, with lunch and dinner for a charge of around €9.90. If you are not a member of the International Youth Hostel Foundation, rates will rise by €2.50 extra per night; membership cards, priced €12.40, are available at most hostels.

Directory

RESERVATION AGENCIES

Belgian Tourist Reservations

Boulevard Anspach 111, Brussels 1000. Map 1 C3. (02) 513 7484.

Tourist Information Board

Town Hall, Grand Place 1, Brussels 1000. Map 2 D3. (02) 513 8940.

www.bitc.be

AUBERGES DE JEUNESSE/YOUTH HOSTELS:

Jacques Brel

Rue de la Sablonnière 30, Brussels 1000. Map 2 F1. (02) 218 0187.

Jeugdherberg Bruegel

Rue du Saint-Esprit 2, Brussels 1000. (02) 511 0436.

Generation Europe Rue de l'Eléphant 4,

Brussels 1080. Map 1 A1. ((02) 410 3858.

New Sleep Well

Auberge du Marais, Rue du Damier 23, Brussels 1000. Map 2 D1. (4 (02) 218 50 50. w www.sleepwell.be

BED AND BREAKFAST

Bed and Breakfast Taxi Stop

Rue du Fossé-aux-Loups 28, Brussels 1000. Map 2 D2. ((70) 22 2292.

New Windrose

Avenue de Jette 26. Brussels 1081. (02) 534 7191.

Bed & Brussels

Rue Kindermans 9. Brussels 1050. ((02) 646 0737. www.bnb-brussels.be

GAY AND LESBIAN ACCOMMODATION

Tels Quels

Rue du Marché au Charbon 81, Brussels 1000. **Map** 1 C3. ((02)



The Hilton Brussels, formerly the Albert Premier Rogier (see p130)

Joining is worthwhile when seeing the rest of Belgium, as there are over 30 hostels around the countryside.

GAY AND LESBIAN ACCOMMODATION

THERE ARE NO specifically gay or lesbian hotels in the city, but same-sex couples should have few problems finding welcoming accommodation. The Tels Quels association is the best source of information about suitable lodging, and also has a documentation centre covering most aspects of gay life in the city.

TRAVELLING WITH CHILDREN

THILDREN ARE WELCOME at all → hotels in Brussels. Most allow one or two under-12s to stay in their parents' room without extra charge; indeed, some hotels will extend this

principle to under-16s and under-18s. When travelling with children, it is worth reserving in advance as the hotel will find the room that best suits your needs. Families planning a long stay in Brussels should consider renting a suite or a self-catering apartment, which are economical.

SELE-CATERING APARTMENTS

THERE IS NO shortage of self-catering accommodation in Brussels, with many places available for a short stay as well as by the week or month. A few are attached to hotels as suites, with the rest run by private companies. Prices start at around €300 per week, for a fairly basic but furnished one- or two-bedroom apartment, to €990 or more for more luxurious lodgings. Contact the Belgian Tourist Reservations or visit the Tourist Office for a detailed list of suggestions.

BED-AND-BREAKFAST

BED-AND-BREAKFAST, also called *chambre d'hôte*. accommodation can be a very pleasant alternative to staying in a cheap hotel, and rooms can often be found even in the centre of town. You may come across a bargain by wandering the streets, but the easiest way to find bed-andbreakfast lodgings is through the Tourist Office or one of the capital's specialist agencies.



The interior of the George V hotel (see p130)

USING THE LISTINGS

Hotel listings are on pp128-35. Each hotel is listed according to area and price category. The symbols after each hotel summarize its facilities.

all rooms have bath and/or shower unless otherwise indicated

1 single-rate rooms available

rooms for more than two people available, or an extra bed can be put in a double room

24 24-hour room service

television in all rooms mini-bar in all rooms

available

air conditioning in all rooms

gym/fitness facilities available in hotel

swimming pool in hotel business facilities: these include messagetaking service, fax service, desk and telephone in each room, and meeting room within the hotel

* caters for children & wheelchair access

↑ lift

pets allowed in bedrooms P hotel parking available

garden or grounds

Y bar

restaurant

credit cards accepted: AE American Express DC Diners Club MC Mastercard/Access V Visa

Price categories for hotels are based on a standard double room per night in high season, including tax and service. As most hostel accommodation is dormitory-style, prices are based on the the cost of a single bed in a dormitory.

€) up to €62

€€ €62-112

€€€112–174

€€€€€€ €174-248 **€(€)(€)(€)** over €248

Choosing a Hotel

THE LOWER TOWN (see pp130-32)

The hotels and hostels on the following pages have all been inspected and assessed specifically for this guide. This chart highlights some of the factors that may affect your choice. During the week, Brussels is Europe's top business destination, and hotels with office facilities are included here; but sight-seeing travellers may find weekend discounts. For more information on each entry, see pp 130–35. They are listed by area and appear alphabetically within their price categories.

NUMBER OF ROOMS	BUSINESS FACILITIES	RESTAURANT	GARDEN	QUIET LOCATION	Period decor	Weekend Discounts
~	E	~	٠	0	Н	>

Barry	
George V © 16 Ibis Brussels City © 236 La Légende © 26 La Madeleine © 52 Les Eperonniers © 21 Matignon © 37 Mozart © 47 Noga © 19 Welcome © 15 Windsor © 35 Arenberg NH © 155	
This Brussels City	
La Légende © © 26 La Madeleine © © 52 Les Eperonniers © © 21 Matignon © © 37 Mozart © © 47 Noga © © 19 Welcome © © 15 Windsor © © 35 Arenberg NH © © © 155	
La Madeleine © © 52 Les Eperonniers © © 21 Matignon © © 37 Mozart © © 47 Noga © © 19 Welcome © © 15 Windsor © © 35 Arenberg NH © © © 155	
Les Eperonniers ©© 21 Matignon ©© 37 Mozart ©© 47 Noga ©© 19 Welcome ©© 15 Windsor ©© 35 Arenberg NH ©©© 155	
Matignon ©© 37 Mozart ©© 47 Noga ©© 19 Welcome ©© 15 Windsor ©© 35 Arenberg NH ©©© 155	
Mozart ©© 47 Noga ©© 19 Welcome ©© 15 Windsor ©© 35 Arenberg NH ©©© 155	
Noga ©© 19 Welcome ©© 15 Windsor ©© 35 Arenberg NH ©©© 155	
Welcome ©© 15 Windsor ©© 35 Arenberg NH ©©© 155	
Windsor ©€ 35 Arenberg NH ©€€ 155	
Arenberg NH ©©© 155	
Art Hotel Siru ©©© 101 □ 0	
Atlas €€€ 88	
Citadines St. Catharine €€€ 169	
Crowne Plaza €€€ 356	
Dome	
Hilton Brussels City €€€ 285	
Ibis off Grand Place €€€ 184	
Queen Anne ©©© 60	
Vendôme €€€ 106	
Aris ©©©© 55	
Bedford ©©©© 319 0	
Novotel off Grand Place ©©©© 136	
Radisson SAS ©©©© 281	
Amigo	
Carrefour de L'Europe €€€€€ 63	
Métropole €€€€€ 410 €	
Plaza ©©©©© 193 0	
Sheraton Towers €€€€€ 533 □	
THE UPPER TOWN (see pp132-33)	
Les Bluets © 10	
Argus ©© 42	
Sabina ©© 24	
Dixseptième ©©©© 24 0	
Hilton ©©©© 434	
Le Sablon ©©©© 32	
Sofitel ©©©© 175	
Stanhope ©©©© 50	
Astoria	
Dorint ©©©©© 212	
00000	
Royal Windsor	

Price categories for a double room (not per person), including service:

€ up to €62 €62-112 €€€€€174-248 **€€€€€** over €248

WEEKEND DISCOUNTS

Substantial drops in the room rate at weekends.

RESTAURANT

Hotel contains a dining room or restaurant serving lunch and dinner for hotel guests.

BUSINESS FACILITIES

Conference rooms, desks, fax, internet and computer service for guests.

PERIOD DECOR

Historic features, furniture and art decorate the public and private rooms.

QUIET LOCATION

Quiet residential neighbourhood or quiet street in a busy area.

NUMBER OF ROOMS	BUSINESS FACILITIES	RESTAURANT	GARDEN	QUIET LOCATION	Period Decor	WEEKEND DISCOUNTS
Z	В	\simeq	9	0	Ь	>

Greater Brussels (see pp 134–35)					
De Boeck's	€€	36			
Les Tourelles	€€	21			
Sun	€€	22			
Abbey	€€€	47			
Alfa Louise	€€€	40			
Château Gravenhof	€€€	26			
Holiday Inn City Centre	€€€€	201			
Manos Stéphanie	€€€€	55			
NH Brussels City Centre	€€€€	246			
President WTC	€€€€	302			
Sofitel	€€€€	125			
Bristol Stéphanie	€€€€€	142			
Conrad International	€€€€€	269			
Gresham Belson	€€€€€	135			
Hyatt Regency Barsey	€€€€€	99			
Montgomery	€€€€€	63			
Sheraton	€€€€€	304			
Antwerp (see p135)				Н	
Firean	€€€	15			
Hilton	€€€€€	211			
Bruges (see p135)				Ė	
de Pauw	€€	8			
't Bourgoensch Hof	€€€	22			
Hotel de Tuilerieen	€€€€€	45			
GHENT (see p135)					
Erasmus	€€	11			
Gravensteen	€€€	49			

THE LOWER TOWN

Barry

Place Anneessens 25, 1000 Brussels. ((02) 511 2795. FAX (02) 514 1465. notel.barry@skynet.be Rooms: 32. 🔝 🚹 👪 Ⅳ 🐧 🍸 🥃 AE, DC, MC, V. €

Basic but comfortable hotel in an early 20th-century building on a slightly rundown square, south of the Bourse and close by the Anneessens metro station. Breakfast is included in the already very low prices. A 10 per cent discount operates at weekends.

Auberge Saint-Michel

Grand Place 15, 1000 Brussels. Map 2 D3. ((02) 511 0956. FAX (02) 511 4600. Rooms: 15. 🙀 1 TV AE, DC, MC, V. €€

This former ducal mansion has a peerless Baroque façade and stunning views of the square and Town Hall. Unfortunately, not all the rooms face on to the Grand Place: Room 22 has the best view. Service is excellent, but the noise from the square may be a little intrusive.

George V

Rue 't Kint 23, 1000 Brussels. Map 1 B3. ((02) 513 5093. FAX (02) 513 4493. @ reservations@george5.com Rooms: 16. 🙀 1 🛱 TV 🗲 ঝ ₩ Ø AE. ®®

One of the city's few examples of English-inspired 19th-century architecture, the George V is just a short stroll from the Bourse. The hotel retains a degree of old-world charm. Recent changes have made rooms more comfortable, and those for three and four people are among the cheapest per person in Brussels.

Ibis Brussels City

Rue Joseph Plateau 2, 1000 Brussels. ((02) 513 7620. FAX (02) 514 2214. Rooms: 236. 🙀 🚺 Ⅳ 🗲 📘 👼 & **1 1 1 1 1 2 1 AE, DC, MC, V**. (€)(€)

One of the attractions of this bland but good-value hostelry just off Place Ste-Catherine was its proximity to the 12th-century Black Tower, now built into the walls of the Novotel Brussels City next door. The location is still convenient.

La Légende

Rue du Lombard 35, 1000 Brussels. Map 1 C3. (102) 512 8290. FAX (02) 512 3493. W www.hotella legende.com *Rooms:* 26. 🔝 1

This reasonably priced and touristfriendly hotel is very close to the Grand Place, and offers great value in central Brussels. Its charmingly dishevelled 18th-century buildings are arranged around a pleasant central courtyard. The rooms are clean and functional, although costs rise for rooms with bathrooms and a TV. Breakfast is included.

La Madeleine

Rue de la Montagne 20-22, 1000 Brussels. **Map** 2 D3. (02) 513 2973. FAX (02) 502 1350. Rooms: 52. V. **(€)(€)**

This friendly, basic hotel, usefully located near the Grand Place, is fêted by many Belgians for its Parisian charms. Slightly shabby furniture and frumpy decor characterize the modern public areas, but the rooms are perfectly decent.

Les Eperonniers

Rue des Eperonniers 1, 1000 Brussels. Map 2 D3. ((02) 513 5366. FAX (02) 511 3230. @ leseperonniers@ skynet.be Rooms: 21. 🙀 1 Ⅳ 😭 AE. €€

The location, on a bustling street near the Grand Place, is a great bonus for this small and very basic hotel. Low prices make it a favourite with young travellers on a budget. Many of the rooms have showers, which for a small extra fee are recommended. Breakfast is not included

Matignon

Rue de la Bourse 10, 1000 Brussels. Map 1 C2. ((02) 511 0888. FAX (02) 513 6927. Rooms: 37. 🙀 🚻 1 TV 1 ★ Y 11 Ø AE, DC, MC, V. **€€**

The beautiful, 19th-century Belle Epoque façade conceals a recently renovated, family-owned hotel in an excellent location opposite the Bourse. The spot is a noisy one, but the rooms are comfortable. Five multi-occupancy suites provide great-value accommodation.

Mozart

Rue du Marché-aux-Fromages 23, 1000 Brussels. Map 2 D3. ((02) 502 6661. FAX (02) 502 7758. hotel.mozart@ skynet.be Rooms: 47. 🔝 🚺 Ⅳ 🔀 AE, DC, MC, V. <a> € €

On a street festooned with fast-food outlets, this plain building has the advantage of being a short walk from the Grand Place. This hotel is a decent option for those on a budget, with pleasant oak-beamed rooms, all with fridges. Breakfast is included and service is helpful.

Noga

Rue du Béguinage 38, 1000 Brussels. (02) 218 6763. FAX (02) 218 1603. info@nogahotel.com Rooms: 19. AE, DC, V. €€

This smart hotel on a quiet street in the Ste-Catherine area is at the top end of the cut-price accommodation market. The modern rooms are cosy and in excellent condition. A games room with billiard table is also on site.

Welcome

Rue du Peuplier 5, 1000 Brussels. (02) 219 9546. FAX (02) 217 1887. @ info@hotelwelcome.com Rooms: 15. [V] ■ 🔂 🖸 🏋 🚹 DC, MC, V. €€

The self-styled "smallest hotel in Brussels" offers simple but tasteful rooms in a sidestreet opposite Ste-Catherine metro station. The friendly owners keep their establishment in immaculate condition and offer guests a 5 per cent discount at the hotel's restaurant, the excellent Truite d'Argent (see p153).

Windsor

Place Rouppe 13, 1000 Brussels. Map 1 C4. ((02) 511 2014. FAX (02) 514 0942. Rooms: 24. 1 TV & AE, DC, MC, V. (E)(E)

This is a cheerful and clean hotel about 15 minutes' walk from the town centre, with an appealing 19th-century stucco façade. Two people can stay here for two nights and still splash out on a meal at Comme Chez Soi, the Michelin three-star restaurant across the street, for the cost of a night in a mid-priced hotel (see p149).

Arenberg NH

Rue d'Assaut 15, 1000 Brussels. Map 2 D2. ((02) 501 1616. FAX (02) 501 1818. @ nhgrandplacearenberg@ nhhotels.be *Rooms: 155.* W Y 🗲 🗏 🔻 5 🔃 P Y 🗓

This charming hotel on a quiet street between the cathedral and Place de la Monnaie has

recently been restored. **Art Hotel Siru**

Place Rogier 1, 1210 Brussels. Map 2 D1. ((02) 203 3580. FAX (02) 203 3303. Rooms: 101. @ art.hotel.siru @skynet.be ี 🔃 🍸 🗲 🗖 🔃 🖸 **Y** ■ AE, DC, MC, V. **()**

Built on the site where 19th-century poets and lovers Paul Verlaine and Arthur Rimbaud once stayed, the

Siru was transformed in the late 1980s into one of Brussels' most distinctive hotels. Over 100 Belgian artists were invited to refurbish it, turning every room into a mini art gallery. Some would say that the hotel offers a better survey of contemporary Belgian art than any of the city's museums.

Atlas

Rue du Vieux Marché-aux-Grains 30, 1000 Brussels. **Map** 1 C2. (102) 502 6006. FAX (02) 502 6935. info@ atlas-hotel.be www.atlas-hotel.be Rooms: 88. 🔝 🚹 👪 Ⅳ 👼 👢 Ħ P Ø AE, DC, MC, V. ���

This comfortable modern hotel is off the fashionable Rue Dansaert. Rooms are spacious if slightly lacking in character. The relaxed atmosphere makes this hotel popular with businesspeople who prefer a more intimate establishment.

Citadines St. Catharine

Quai aux Bois à Bruler 51, Brussels. Map 1 C1. ((02) 221 1411. FAX (02) 221 1599. @ stecatharine@ citadines.com Rooms: 169. 🙀 1 II IV & D P @ AE, DC, V. €€€

This apartment-hotel on Place Ste-Catherine offers studios and apartments at very competitive prices. The stark modern exterior is echoed in the functional decor. There is a peaceful courtyard and well-appointed rooms compensate for the initial lack of homeliness. The apartments are particularly good for long-term visitors.

Crowne Plaza

Rue Gineste 3, 1210 Brussels. Map 2 E1. (02) 203 4011. FAX (02) 203 5555. w www.crowneplaza.com Rooms: 356. 🙀 Ⅳ 🍸 🔀 📳 🔽 ₹ 🔂 🕹 🍸 👖 💋 AE, DC, MC, V. **(€)(€)(€)**

Built by a disciple of Victor Horta in 1910, this elegant building near Place Rogier was Grace Kelly's hotel of choice when she stayed in Brussels. Art Nouveau still features strongly in the interior here. The hotel combines period elegance with modern convenience, and 30 of the rooms are furnished in lavish Second Empire style. Expensive in high season.

Dome

Boulevard du Jardin Botanique 12-13, 1000 Brussels. Map 2 E1. (02) 218 0680. FAX (02) 218 4112. @ dome@skypro.be Rooms: 125. II Ø AE, DC, MC, V. ��€€

This elegant edifice is the work of architect Alban Chambon, who also designed the Métropole. Built in 1902, at the height of the Art Nouveau movement, the Dome failed to stand the test of time, finally closing in the 1960s. Its fortunes changed, however, in 1990, with a launch combining the original Art Nouveau façade with a modern wing and minimalist decor. Each room has been individually decorated and all are spacious and comfortable.

Hilton Brussels City

Place Rogier 20, 1000 Brussels. Map 2 D1. ((02) 203 3125. FAX (02) 203 4331. @ ras.brusselscity@hilton.com Rooms: 285. 🙀 1 🛱 Ⅳ 🍸 ঝ

Before World War II, this attractive Art Deco establishment had ambitions to become one of Brussels' best hotels. After the war it went into steady decline, becoming a comfortable establishment for budget travellers. Acquire by the Hilton Group in 2001, the Brussels has been fully refurbished.

Ibis off Grand Place

Rue du Marché-aux-Herbes 100. 1000 Brussels. Map 2 D3. ((02) 514 4040. FAX (02) 514 5067. Rooms: 184. AE, DC, MC, V. €€€

This reliable, functional and professional chain hotel near the Grand Place has little to delight visitors but nothing to offend. With a sister hotel near Place Ste-Catherine, the chain is less expensive than similar hotels. Breakfast is not included.

Oueen Anne

Boulevard Emile Jacqmain 110, 1000 Brussels. Map 2 D1. ((02) 217 1600. FAX (02) 217 1838. Rooms: 60. MC, V. **(€)(€)(€)**

This family-run hotel on a main road, a short walk from the city centre is relaxed, friendly and very good value for money. Once a three-star hotel, the Queen Anne has lost its accolade but little of its charm, with sizeable rooms, a warm welcome, a homely atmosphere and a good night's sleep guaranteed.

Vendôme

Boulevard Adolphe Max 98, 1000 Brussels. **Map** 2 D1. (02) 227 0300. <u>FAX</u> (02) 218 0683. W www.hotelvendome.be Rooms: 106.

The Vendôme is a comfortable modern hotel north of Place de Brouckère catering mainly to business people. Each generously sized and tasteful room comes with an en-suite bathroom. The hotel feels less anonymous than any similar establishment.

Aris

Rue du Marché-aux-Herbes 78-80. 1000 Brussels. Map 2 D3. ((02) 514 4300. FAX (02) 514 0119. W www.arishotel.be Rooms: 55.

€€€€

Housed in a late 19th-century building with an attractive stone façade, this comfortable and efficient hotel is ideal for families. Situated right next to the Grand Place and only a few minutes walk from the Ilôt Sacré with its many restaurants, it offers a duplex room for four people at very reasonable rates. Otherwise, prices are rather expensive. although breakfast is included. There are considerable discounts to be had for weekend bookings.

Bedford

Rue du Midi 135, 1000 Brussels. Map 1 C3. ((02) 512 7840. FAX (02) 507 0010. @ info@hotelbedford.be Rooms: 319. 🙀 1 Ⅳ 🍸 🗲 📘 ₹ PY II Ø AE, DC, MC, V. **(E) (E) (E)**

Incongruously situated towards the rundown end of central Brussels, the Bedford is an efficient hotel that does what all hotels should: it keeps on improving. The rooms are excellent and the service is impeccable. Although the weekday price seems a little high, there is a 50 per cent reduction at weekends. The Grand Place is just a short walk away.

Novotel off Grand Place

Rue du Marché-aux-Herbes 120, 1000 Brussels. Map 2 D3. ((02) 514 3333. FAX (02) 511 7723. W www. novotel.com Rooms: 136.

This extremely successful midmarket chain hotel, a stone's throw from the Grand Place, is good for families and groups. A sofa bed is installed in each room and children under 16 have free accommodation. Breakfast is not included. There is a well-equipped children's play area next to the breakfast room. Single travellers should be aware that the room rate is not reduced.

Radisson SAS Hotel

Rue du Fossé-aux-Loups 47, 1000 Brussels. Map 2 D2. ((02) 219 2828. FAX (02) 219 6262. www. radisson.com Rooms: 281. 7 & ★ P Y 11 @ AE, DC,

MC, V. **(€)(€)(€)**

Built around a 12th-century section of the city walls, this Art Deco-inspired hotel near the Galéries St-Hubert is among the city's most impressive, with comfortable rooms tastefully decorated in Asian, Italian or Scandinavian styles. Services for guests include a personal answerphone and free mobile phones. If required, tours around the city, as well as golfing trips, can be organized by the hotel. The hotel also has its own restuarant, the 2star Michelin Sea Grill, which is among Brussels' finest (see p153).

Amigo

Rue de l'Amigo 1-3, 1000 Brussels. Map 1 C3. ((02) 547 4747. FAX (02) 513 5277. w www.hotelamigo. com *Rooms: 174.* 🔒 1 👪 24 TV Y F B 7 W & X P Y AE, DC, MC, V. €€€€

This elegant six-storey hotel occupies the site of a 16th-century prison, only a minute's stroll from the Grand Place. The luxurious rooms, recently renovated, are decorated in the style of the Spanish Renaissance, which was popular during the reign of the French king Louis XV. The Amigo offers a range of excellent facilities and an extremely friendly, helpful service in what is primarily a business hotel. The marble bathrooms are suavely charming if slightly cramped. There is also a good choice of restaurants. Breakfast is included in the price of the room. Rates from Friday through Sunday nights inclusive are reduced by half.

Carrefour de l'Europe

Rue du Marché-aux-Herbes 110, 1000 Brussels. Map 2 D3. (102) 504 9400. FAX (02) 504 9500. Q info@carrefoureurope.net Rooms: 63.

This business-oriented hotel is in a modern building near the Grand Place and the Gare Centrale. The rooms are uniformly decorated but comfortable; the double glazing, important in this busy city, ensures that the worst of the city's noise is kept at bay.

Métropole

Place de Brouckère 31, 1000 Brussels. Map 1 D2. ((02) 217 2300. FAX (02) 218 0220. w www.metropolehotel. be Rooms: 410. 🙀 🚺 🍱 🛂 Ⅳ YFEVERY

AE, DC, MC, V. ●●●●●

Located on the busy, crowded but central Place de Brouckère, this Belle Epoque masterpiece dates from 1895 and inside recalls the city in its Art Nouveau heyday. The period lift offers a wonderful view of the richly decorated lobby with its high ceilings, gilt cornices and crystal chandeliers. The modern rooms are comfortable if a touch less characterful. The bar is splendidly decorated with Corinthian columns, palm plants and roomy sofas. The room price includes a good continental breakfast

Plaza

Boulevard Adolphe Max 118-126, 1000 Brussels. Map 2 D1. ((02) 278 0100. FAX (02) 278 0101. W www.leplaza-brussels.be Rooms: 193

RPY II & AE, DC, MC, €€€€

The quarters of choice for senior German officers during World War II, this classic 1930s building on a rather downbeat street off Place de Brouckère has been resurrected after a 20-year closure, Combining old-fashioned style with state-of-theart facilities, period features include chandeliers and Murano glassware. Several rooms are tailored to businesswomen, and have been decorated in a gently relaxing pastel pale turquoise with hairdryers and extra-special toiletries.

Sheraton Towers

Place Rogier 3, 1210 Brussels. Map 2 D1. ((02) 224 3111. FAX (02) 224 3456. w www.sheraton.com/brussels Rooms: 533. 🙀 # 24 TV 🕎 F | V & 7 70 6 7 8 P Y II & AE, DC, MC, V. €€€€

Even among the looming skyscrapers that rear over Place Rogier, there is no mistaking the twin towers of the capital's biggest hotel. The emphasis here is firmly on comfort, with large rooms decorated in understated brown and deep red tones. This is a luxurious and relaxing environment for businesspeople to work, rest or play with ease. Some rooms have private offices, and all have wellequipped work stations. The indoor swimming-pool on the 30th floor has spectacular views over the city.

THE UPPER TOWN

Les Bluets

Rue Berckmans 124, 1060 Brussels. (02) 534 3983. FAX (02) 543 0970. w www.geocities.com/ les_bluets/angl1/html Rooms: 10. ♣ [TV] & 🔀 💋 AE, DC, MC, V. 🌘

This charming late-19th-century hotel is non-smoking throughout. The decor features antique furniture, lots of plants and caged birds. Rooms are simply furnished and breakfast is included in the already reasonable price.

Argus

Rue Capitaine Crespel 6, 1050 Brussels. Map 2 D5. ((02) 514 0770. FAX (02) 514 1222. www.hotel-argus.be Rooms: 42. 1 IV Y № P @ AE, DC, MC, V. **€**€

Handily placed between the Porte de Namur and Place Louise, this tasteful, quiet hotel makes a good base for exploring the whole city. The rooms are clean and comfortable. Prices drop further at weekends and throughout July and August.

Sabina

Rue du Nord 78, 1000 Brussels. Map 2 F2. ((02) 218 2637. FAX (02) 219 3239. W www.hotel sabina.be Rooms: 24. 🙀 1 Ⅳ N P Y Ø AE, DC. (€)(€)

This friendly and well-kept hotel occupies an elegant 19th-century building. Inside, authentic wood panelling and fireplaces enhance the peaceful atmosphere. The hotel is located on a quiet street in the residential area around Place Madou. It is also close to Brussels' main attractions and the European government institutions.

Dixseptième

Rue de la Madeleine 25, 1000 Brussels. Map 2 D3. ((02) 517 1717. FAX (02) 502 6424. info@ledixseptieme.be www.ledixseptieme.be Rooms: 24.

AE, DC, MC, V. **(€)(€)(€)** Built in the 17th century as the home of the Spanish ambassador, this small, peaceful hotel offers a Belgian artist, and enthusiasts can

calming break from the bustling Ilôt Sacré. Each room is named after a refresh their painting knowledge thanks to the art library in the lounge. Many of the rooms are authentically decorated in Baroque style with parquet flooring throughout, and flamboyant crystal chandeliers in the public areas. A splendid Louis XVI staircase connects some of the rooms, several of which look out over a private courtyard.

Hilton

Boulevard de Waterloo 38, 1000 Brussels. Map 2 E5. (02) 504 1111. FAX (02) 504 2111. W www.hilton.com Rooms: 434. 24 TV 🝸 🗲 📘 🐨 5 N & 1 P Y 11 € AE, DC, MC, V. **€**(**€**)**€**(**€**)

In addition to the usual features crisp service, business facilities and large, comfortable rooms the Hilton offers personal security guards and such facilities for Japanese visitors as Japanese speakers, newspapers and kimonos. The lobby is decorated with a large golden frieze depicting the Grand Place. The hotel also houses the Michelin-starred restaurant Maison de Boeuf.

Le Sablon

Rue de la Paille 2-8, 1000 Brussels. (02) 513 6040. FAX (02) 511 8141. w www.hotellesablon.be Rooms: 32. 🙀 🚺 Ⅳ 🍸 🔀 🗐 ▼ 1 AE, DC, MC, V. €€€€

This calm, refined hotel boasts a great location near the Place du Grand Sablon, which is noted for its appealing antique shops and enticing cafés. An attractive late 19th-century façade houses a light, inviting contemporary interior. There is a garden and a sauna, and the four large, split-level suites are particularly comfortable.

Sofitel

Avenue de la Toison d'Or 40, 1050 Brussels. Map 2 E5. (02) 514 2200. FAX (02) 514 5744. W www. accorhotels.com Rooms: 175. 🙀 Ⅳ Y F E V 5 R X P Y

Dwarfed by the looming 1960sbuilt Hilton on the opposite side of the street, this relatively discreet branch of the upmarket French chain easily holds its own in terms of elegance. The most impressive features are the English-style bar and library with its comfortable leather chairs. It is also possible to escape from the bustle of the city in the Sofitel's beautiful garden. Inside the rooms, king-size beds and a quiet, comfortable atmosphere attract plenty of admirers. The hotel does not have its own restaurant but is within a short walk of a selection of Brussels' finest.

Stanhope

Rue du Commerce 9, 1000 Brussels. Map 2 F4. ((02) 506 9111. FAX (02) 512 1708. W www.summit hotels. com Rooms: 50. 🔝 1 TV AE, DC, MC, V. €€€€

The Stanhope represents a luxurious Belgian vision of traditional upperclass historic British hospitality. The hotel has taken over three adjacent townhouses to deliver its elegant old-world service, which includes chauffeur-driven cars, afternoon tea and newspapers pushed under the door in the mornings. The rooms have marble bathrooms, handmade furniture and paintings on the walls. Breakfast is included. There are very good rates at weekends.

Astoria

Rue Royale 103, 1000 Brussels Map 2 E2. ((02) 227 0505. FAX (02) 217 1150. W www.sofitel.com Rooms: 118. 🔝 🔟 🏗 Ⅳ 🍸 🔀 **■ 7 7 10 6 14 P Y** 11 AE, DC, MC, V. <a> € <a> €</

This opulent Belle Epoque masterpiece recalls the capital's glory days of the early 20th century, when such famous statesmen as Eisenhower and Churchill were among its most distinguished guests. The lobby, staircase, wood-panelled lift and furnishings are all original. The recently renovated rooms retain their individual character, and each is triple-glazed. The Pullman bar is in a former Orient Express carriage.

Dorint

Boulevard Charlemagne 11-19, 1000 Brussels. Map 3 B2. ((02) 231 0909. FAX (02) 231 3371. W www.dorint.be Rooms: 212. 🙀 🚺 🎛 Ⅳ 🍸 🗲 TO BEN POY II AE, DC, MC, V. <a> € <a> €</

Situated near the European government complex, the Dorint is favoured by visiting journalists, diplomats and politicians. The hotel offers ISDN lines, translation cabins and a bar with a Reuters terminal updating news 24 hours a day. Try the fitness club with its Turkish bath, sauna and solarium, or take a stroll in the tranquil Oriental garden. For a taste of Brussels' culture, contemporary works by local photographers hang in the rooms.

Jolly Grand Sablon

Rue Boedenbroeck 2-4, 1000 Brussels. Map 2 D4. ((02) 512 8800. FAX ■ 7 11 Ø AE, DC, MC, V. **(€)(€)(€)(€)**

With an unbeatable location on the southern edge of the Place du Grand Sablon, this Italian chain's flagship Brussels hotel offers impeccable service and grand rooms. The facade is an unobtrusive addition to the wonderful Baroque masterpieces all around it. Good weekend rates.

Méridien

Carrefour de l' Europe 3, 1000 Brussels. (02) 548 4211. FAX (02) 548 4080. w www.meridien.be Rooms: 224. 🙀 🚹 🎛 🛂 Ⅳ 🍸 F 🗏 V 7 10 6 Y 11 8 AE, DC, MC, V. **(€)(€)(€)(€)**

This luxurious modern hotel is very close to the Grand Place but is also opposite the Gare Centrale, which can be, to some tastes, a slightly seedy area. The hotel is decorated in modern style and has a plush lobby featuring a large brass chandelier: this is a popular meeting place with a comfortable atmosphere that is enhanced by a regular pianist. The rooms are furnished in English Victorian style. The hotel manages to cater to both business travellers and families, with corporate facilities such as multilingual staff.

Renaissance **Brussels Hotel**

Rue de Parnasse 19, 1050 Brussels. (02) 505 2929. FAX (02) 505 2555. Rooms: 257. 📊 1 Ⅳ 🍸 FEVER BULL PY AE, DC, MC, V. ����€€

The first luxury hotel to establish itself near the European Parliament, just a few minutes from the Palais Royal, the former Archimède was taken over by Renaissance in 2001, Each bedroom is large and well equipped. Guests also have access to the world-class Academy Gym next door.

Royal Windsor

Rue Duquesnoy 5, 1000 Brussels. Map 2 D3. ((02) 505 5555. FAX (02) 505 5500. www.warwickhotels.com

AE, DC, MC, V. <a>® <a

This characterful deluxe hotel near the Grand Place has small but exquisite facilities. The sumptuous French-styled bedrooms are reckoned to be Brussels' most expensive per square metre. However, the wonderful marble bathrooms make up for the lack of space. Other facilities include a restaurant with a glorious circular stained-glass window in its ceiling.

GREATER BRUSSELS

De Boeck's

Rue Veydt 40, 1050 Brussels.

(02) 537 4033. FAX (02) 534 4037. @ deboecks@hotel.skynet.be Rooms: 36. 🙀 1 👪 Ⅳ 🗐 👂

De Boeck's is a converted turn-ofthe-century townhouse on a quiet street not far from Avenue Louise. The pleasant rooms have a family feel and many cared-for touches. Breakfast is included. The city centre is easily accessible by the 93 or 94 tram. There is a weekend discount on the already very reasonable daily rate.

Les Tourelles

Avenue Winston Churchill 135, 1180 Brussels. ((02) 344 9573. FAX (02) 346 4270. @ info@lestourelles.be Rooms: 21. 🛖 🚹 Ⅳ 👼 📉 🗗 AE, MC, V. €)€

Les Tourelles' fake medieval towers and rustic cottage facade stand out among the modern villas and stucco townhouses of Avenue Winston Churchill. Inside, the wood-heavy decor has an old-fashioned feel, while the hotel's atmosphere retains the personal idiosyncracies that hotel schools have, weirdly, done their best to stamp out. This family-friendly place also offers an evening babysitting service.

Sun

Rue du Berger 38, 1050 Brussels. Map 2 E5. ((02) 511 2119. FAX (02) 512 3271. @ sunhotel@ skynet.be Rooms: 22. 🙀 1 TV ₩ P @ AE, DC, MC, V. (E)(E)

If a firm mattress is essential to your slumber, then this comfortable. homely establishment near Porte de Namur will suit you. Although the quiet street on which it stands may be a little run down, this small hotel is spotlessly clean and popular, with light-green decor and a glass mural in the breakfast room.

Abbey

Kerkeblokstraat 5, 1850 Grimbergen. ((02) 270 0888. FAX (02) 270 8188. info@hotelabbey.be Rooms: 47

This modern, villa-style hotel just north of the city is a pleasant alternative to staying near the airport. It is popular with businesspeople in town for an event at the Heysel Exhibition Centre. The rooms are large and well appointed, with massage showers in the bathrooms.

Alfa Louise

Avenue Louise 212, 1050 Brussels. Map 2 D5. ((02) 644 2929. FAX (02) 644 1878. @ info@ alfalouise.be Rooms: 40. 🙀 🚹 🚻 WY ≠ ■ N PY Ø AE, DC, MC, V. **€**(**€**)**€**

This is one of the most spacious hotels in the city. All of the Alfa's rooms are extremely large, with a sizeable desk and a pleasant sitting area, while the bathrooms come with hairdryer and bathrobes. Many also have individual terraces. The city centre is a 10-minute tram-ride away (on the 93 or 94). The hotel does not possess its own fitness facilities, but there is a health centre nearby, with gym and pool.

Château Gravenhof

Alsembergsesteenweg 676, 1653 Dworp. ((02) 380 4499. FAX (02) 380 4060. W www. gravenhof.be Rooms: 26. 🙀 🚺 ## 24 IV 🗲 🗏 5 🔞 & P

For those visitors to Brussels who prefer a quieter location, this 18th-century manor house is ideal. Located in handsome grounds in a leafy village, not far south of the city, the hotel is close to a golf course and equestrian facilities. Perhaps because it is not in the city proper, Château Gravenhof attracts more convention clients than overnight visitors, which may explain the relatively low prices on offer. Period fittings and furniture create an atmosphere of relaxed gentility, and the luxurious feel of the place represents extremely good value for money.

Holiday Inn City Centre

Chaussée de Charleroi 38, 1060 Brussels. ((02) 533 6666. FAX (02) 538 9014. W www.holidayinn.com Rooms: 201. 🙀 🚹 🏗 Ⅳ 🍸 🗲 ■ 7 1 1 Ø AE, DC, MC, V. **(€)(€)(€)(€)**

The Holiday Inn's flagship Brussels branch is not exactly in the city centre, but it is close to Avenue Louise and the major sights are a short ride away on the 91 or 92 trams. The building is modern and the rooms have all the comforts of a businessoriented hotel, including a safe, room service and a trouser press. Triple-glazing makes the rooms surprisingly quiet, while the firm queen-size double beds (in some rooms) ensure a good night's sleep. The service is polite.

Manos Stéphanie

Chaussée de Charleroi 28, 1060 Brussels. (02) 539 0250. FAX (02) 537 5729. w www.manoshotel.com Rooms: 55. 🙀 1 👪 Ⅳ 🔀 €€€€

This charming, friendly hotel resides in a converted townhouse. whose Parisian flavour is popular with visiting actors and well-heeled French families. While all rooms are well-appointed and spacious, some are larger than others: the split-level room 103 is particularly enticing. Breakfast is included. There is no restaurant, but a chef is available every evening until 10:30pm for room service orders.

NH Brussels City Centre

Chaussée de Charleroi 17, 1060 Brussels. ((02) 539 0160. FAX (02) 537 9011. @ nhbrusselscitycentre@ nh-hotels.com Rooms: 246. 🙀 1 IN Y F 5 N A P Y H S AE, DC, MC, V. €€€€

This hotel has been recently refurbished, with the installation of a maritime-themed bar, Deck 17, the most obvious sign of restored pride. The rooms are all to threestar standard and the staff will make your stay as pleasant as possible.

President WTC

Boulevard du Roi Albert II 248, 1000 Brussels. Map 2 D1. ((02) 203 2020. FAX (02) 203 2440. @ wtc.info@presidenthotel.be Rooms: 302. 🙀 1 🛱 Ⅳ 🍸 🗲 V 5 N H O Y H & AE, DC, MC, V. **(€)(€)(€)**

The best of the three President hotels in Brussels, this businessoriented establishment near the World Trade Centre is the hotel of choice for conference organizers. The sky-blue and white rooms are fresher than in most business hotels, and the Jacuzzi, sunbeds and tabletennis tables are added benefits for the traveller in need of relaxation.

Sofitel

Bessenveldstraat 15, 1831 Diegem. (02) 713 6666. FAX (02) 721 4345. @ ho548@accor-hotels.be Ø AE, DC, MC, V. €€€€

This smart, professional establishment is part of an upmarket French chain. The lobby and public spaces are discreetly luxurious with deep comfortable armchairs and sofas. The rooms are large with inviting king-size double beds. Efficient triple-glazing excludes the noise

from the nearby Brussels National Airport. The open-air swimming pool, surrounded by the hotel's gardens, is a rare treat.

Bristol Stéphanie

Avenue Louise 91-93, 1050 Brussels. Map 2 D5. ((02) 543 3311 FAX (02) 538 0307. W www.bristol.be Rooms: 142. 🙀 🗓 🔣 🔃 🌠 **■ 7 & 7 M & P Y 11** AE, DC, MC, V. <a> € <a> €</

Norwegian entrepreneur Olav Thon turned the Bristol Stéphanie into a sophisticated homage to his native land. The large rooms and suites are decorated in chalet-style, with wooden floors, and some also have kitchen facilities. The hotel offers baby-sitting, as well as conference facilities and room service, and there is a heated indoor pool.

Conrad International

Avenue Louise 71, 1050 Brussels. Map 2 D5. ((02) 542 4242. FAX (02) 542 4200. w www.conradhotels. com *Rooms:* 269. 1 1 24 TV Y F B V 5 & P O Y

AE, DC, MC, V. CCCC

Combining old-fashioned elegance with business conveniences (such as multi-line phones, modem and fax in the room, and 12 meeting rooms), this palatial establishment is perhaps the best of Brussels' luxury hotels. Former US President Bill Clinton is among the hotel's many celebrity guests. Even the standard rooms are huge, often featuring a mezzanine. There are two good restaurants here: Café Wiltcher and La Maison de Maître.

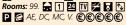
Gresham Belson

Chaussée de Louvain 805, 1140 Brussels. ((02) 708 3100. FAX (02) 708 3166. W www.ryan-hotels.com Rooms: 135. 🙀 🚺 🎛 Ⅳ 🍸 🔀 ■ V 5 N P Y S AE, DC, MC, V. **(€)(€)(€)(€)**

This efficient hotel is conveniently located between Brussels National Airport and the Grand Place, and is only five minutes' drive from the EC headquarters. Facilities are especially good for business visitors, with fax and computer points in many rooms. Transport to and from the airport is included.

Hyatt Regency Barsey

Avenue Louise 381, 1050 Brussels. (02) 649 9800. FAX (02) 640 1764.



Awarded four stars by the Belgian authorities, the Barsey employed top French interior designer

Jacques Garcia to provide an opulent feel for its loyal visitors, who are mostly businessman. The public rooms are decorated in traditional English style, with 19thcentury antique furniture and silk drapery. Many of the rooms have views out over a private garden.

Montgomery

Avenue de Tervuren 134, 1150 Brussels. Map 4 E4. (02) 741 8511. FAX (02) 741 8500. @ hotel@montgomery.be Rooms: 63. 😭 1 🖽 🖾 🔟 🍸 AE, DC, MC, V. **(€)(€)(€)(€)**

Despite the futuristic facade, this luxurious hotel near the European institutions has a resolutely oldfashioned atmosphere. The rooms are decorated in three themed styles: Oriental, English and New England. Each room has a wellequipped office area with internet and fax connections. The hotel is a member of the Leading Small Hotels of the World group.

Sheraton

Brussels National Airport, 1930 Zaventem. (02) 725 1000. FAX (02) 710 8777. www.sheraton. com/brussels Rooms: 304. 🔝 1

24 IV Y ≠ ■ ∀ 5 N & P Y II & AE, DC, MC, V. (€)(€)(€)(€)

The Sheraton is the only hotel in Belgium to have its own airport, as Belgian critics never tire of joking. While the airport is not exclusively reserved for Sheraton guests, the hotel's on-site presence makes it improbably convenient for shortstay guests. A 24-hour business centre is available for those who want to work till departure.

ANTWERP

Firean

Karel Oomsstraat 6, 2018 Antwerp. ((03) 237 0260. FAX (03) 238 1168. W www.firean.com Rooms: 15. 🙀 🔃 🖹 P 🚺 💋 AE, DC, MC, V. **€**€€

A small, family-run hotel with a warm atmosphere. Trams run from outside the hotel, housed in an Art Deco building in a residential neighbourhood, to the city centre. Breakfast is included.

Hilton

Groenplaats, 2000 Antwerp. (103) 204 1212. FAX (03) 204 1213. W www.antwerp.hilton.com Rooms: 211. 🖈 🔃 🕹 P 🚻 🖨 AE, DC, MC, V. **()()()()()()**

Situated at the heart of the Old Town, behind a listed Baroque façade, the Hilton has large, wellequipped rooms. Facilities include a sauna and a solarium.

BRUGES

de Pauw

Sint-Gilliskerkhof 8, 8000 Bruges. ((050) 33 7118. FAX (050) 34 5140. www.hoteldepauw.be

This family-run hotel, located in a quiet side street, offers great value for money and a warm, friendly service.

't Bourgoensch Hof

Wollestraat 39, 8000 Bruges. ((050) 33 1645. FAX (050) 34 6378. www.bourgoensch-hof.be Rooms: 15. 🙀 🚺 🔁 🖪 MC, V. €€€

The rooms at this cosy hotel in the heart of the city centre are decorated in Flemish style, and some have romantic views of the canal. Breakfast is included.

Hotel de Tuilerieen

Dijver 7, 8000 Bruges. ((050) 34 3691. FAX (050) 34 0400. www.hoteltuilerieen.com Rooms:

27. TI B & L Y Y P AE, DC, MC, V. OCOCO

This canalside hotel occupies a beautiful 15th-century mansion, close to some of the city's best museums and tourist attractions. The hotel also offers a heated swimming pool, sauna, jacuzzi and solarium. Childminding available.

GHENT

Erasmus

Poel 25, 9000 Ghent. ((09) 224 2195. FAX (09) 233 4241. hotel. erasmus@proximedia.be Rooms: 11.

₩ IV (AE, MC, V. (E) (E)

An immaculate family-run hotel with a lovely wood-beamed lounge and rooms with stone fireplaces. There is also a small, private garden.

Gravensteen

Jan Breydelstraat 35, 9000 Ghent. ((09) 225 1150. FAX (09) 225 1850. www.gravensteen.be AE, MC, V. €€€€

Housed in a 19th-century mansion, the Gravensteen has been refurbished in the Second Empire style.

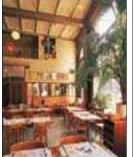
WHERE TO EAT

T IS ALMOST impossible to eat badly in Brussels. Some say one can eat better here than in Paris, and even meals in the lower- to midprice bracket are always carefully prepared and often innovative. Venues range from top gastronomic restaurants to unpretentious local taverns

servings of local specialities. If you tire of Belgian fare, try the variety of excellent local seafood and the range of ethnic cuisine that reflects the city's lively cultural diversity. The listings on pp146–53 give a detailed description of all the

fully prepared and often innovative. Venues range from top gastronomic restaurants to unpretentious local taverns where you can find generous

The listings on pp146–53 give a detailed description of all the selected restaurants and the key features of each restaurant are summarized on pp144–5.



Brasserie Horta in Centre Belge de la Bande Dessinée (see p146)

WHERE TO EAT

The Belgian love affair with dining out makes for an astonishing concentration of restaurants and eateries: a 10-minute stroll from almost anywhere in Brussels should bring you to a decent, and often almost undiscovered, tavern or brasserie. However, superb dining is to be had without leaving the Ilôt Sacré, the area around the central Grand Place, where many

very good and surprisingly reasonable restaurants abound. Beware the tourist traps around the Grand Place that make their living from gulling unwary visitors into spending far more than they intended to. The impressive displays of seafood adorning the pavements of Rue des Bouchers northwest of the Grand Place and Petite Rue des Bouchers can promote rather touristy restaurants, but those on pp146–7 are recommended.

Types of Cuisine

 $E^{\scriptscriptstyle ext{LSEWHERE IN}}$ the city centre is a wealth of quality fish restaurants, especially around the former fish market at Place Ste-Catherine, while the city's trendiest eateries can be found on Rue Dansaert and in the Place Saint-Géry district. If you are planning to explore other parts of Brussels, or if you are staying outside the city centre, you will find plenty of good Belgian fare on offer in the southern communes of Ixelles and Saint-Gilles, and in Etterbeek, where the European Commission buildings are

located. Ixelles also boasts the largest concentration of Vietnamese and Southeast Asian cuisine, especially around Chaussée de Boondael. This student area in the Matonge district is also home to several African restaurants, serving food from the Congo (formerly Zaire), Senegal and Rwanda.

North of the city centre, in the communes of Schaerbeek and Saint-Josse, Turkish and North African communities have sprung up, and excellent Moroccan and Tunisian cuisine is commonplace. There is also a growing trend for "designer couscous", with Belgian restaurateurs exploiting the popularity of North African food in spectacularly ornate venues, often featuring ethnic music in the evenings.

Spanish and Portuguese restaurants can be found in the Marolles district and in Saint-Gilles, reflecting the wave of immigration in the 1950s and 1960s when many southern Europeans chose to settle in Brussels. The city is also liberally sprinkled with Greek restaurants, although many veer on the over-touristy side. A better bet are the modern Latin American eateries.

VEGETARIANS

Despite a Marked upturn in recent years, Brussels is far from being a vegetarian-friendly city, since there are only a handful of specialist vegetarian restaurants (see p153). However, those who eat fish will find mainstream restaurants cater generously to their needs; Brussels is very strong on fish and seafood. Also, the traditional dish, stoemp, mashed potatoes



Façade of the popular brasserie La Belle Epoque (see p147)

mixed with root vegetables, is a classic vegetarian speciality. North African restaurants usually offer vegetarian couscous options, and there are plenty of Italian options for cheeseeaters. Indian restaurants are few and far between, but most offer vegetable curries. Vegans may struggle, particularly in European restaurants.

How Much to Pay

MOST RESTAURANTS, taverns and cafés display a menu in the window and the majority take credit cards. Prices usually include VAT (21 per cent) and service (16 per cent), although it is worth checking the latter before you tip. A meal at the city's most luxurious restaurants can cost up to €150 per head, but you can eat superbly for around €50 per head (including wine) and a hearty snack in a tavern should cost no more than €15. The mark-up level on wine can be very high, especially in most Mediterranean restaurants and in obviously touristic areas, but most taverns do a reasonable vin maison and serve myriad varieties of beer.

Service in all but the most expensive restaurants can be erratic by British and US standards. But beneath the sometimes grumpy exterior, you will often find warmth and an earthy, cheerfully self-deprecating sense of humour that is unique to Belgium. There are no hard and fast rules, but some diners leave an additional tip of up to 10 per cent if they are especially



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The exotic interior of the Blue Elephant, Thai restaurant (see p151)

satisfied with the quality of the meal and the service. Note that some restaurants cannot take service on a credit card slip, and this, plus the tip, will have to be paid in cash, as do other gratuities in the city.



Stall selling freshly made snacks in Saint-Gilles at the weekend

DINING ON A BUDGET

Many restaurants offer bargain, fixed-price or rapid lunchtime menus for under €12.50, plus reasonably priced dishes of the day. Even the city's most expensive

eateries have similar deals, meaning you can sample haute cuisine for less than 637. In the evening, look out for set menus with *vin compris* (wine included), which are often a way to save a large part of the dining bill. At the other end of the

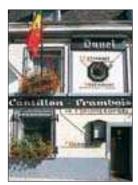
scale, Brussels has most of the usual fast-food outlets, and sandwiches are sold at most butchers or delicatessens (traiteurs), usually with tuna, cheese or cold meat fillings. Some of the latter offer sitdown snacks too. Alternatively, take advantage of Belgium's national dish, frites/frieten (French fries, hand-cut and double-fried to ensure an even crispiness). There are Friteries/Frituurs all over town, serving enormous portions of French fries with mayonnaise and dozens of other sauces, plus fricadelles (sausages in batter), lamb kebabs, fish cakes or meatballs. Inevitably, these establishments vary in quality; one sure bet is Maison Antoine on Place Jourdan in Etterbeek, where they have been frying for over half a century.

Brussels' sizeable Turkish community means that kebab, gyros and pitta restaurants are ubiquitous, especially in Saint-Josse and on the gaudy Rue du Marché aux Fromages, just off the Grand Place. Perhaps a better bet is the nearby L'Express, a Lebanese take-away specializing in chicken and felafel pittas, generously crammed with fresh salad.

Most cafés and taverns offer petite restauration (light meals) on top or instead of



Interior of Scheltema, a Belle Epoque brasserie (see p153)



Entrance of the historic tavern In 't Spinnekopke (see p146)

a regular menu. These simple, traditional snacks include croque monsieur, shrimp croquettes, chicory baked with ham and cheese, salads, spaghetti bolognaise and *américain* (raw minced beef with seasoning). Do not be fooled by the word "light" – most of these dishes will keep you going from lunchtime well into the evening.

Healthy breakfasts and light lunches with an emphasis on organic food are the staple of Le Pain Quotidien/Het Dagelijks Brood (see p155), a fashionable Belgian chain where customers are seated all together around a large wooden table: trying this out is highly recommended if breakfast is not included in

your hotel accommodation. For snackers who are sweet-toothed, waffle stands or vans appear on almost every corner, while cafés and taverns offer a tempting variety of waffles (topped with jam, cream or chocolate). Pancakes (crêpes) are just as popular – and filling – although you can cut down the calories with a savoury wholewheat pancake at one of the city's crêperies.

Ethnic food can also work out at a very reasonable price; large portions of couscous, pizzas and African specialities are often to be found at good rates in student areas and at stands throughout the city.



Open-air tables outside fish restaurants in Rue des Bouchers

OPENING TIMES

Since time-consuming business lunches are still very much part of the culture in Belgium, most restaurants are open for lunch from noon

until 2 or 3pm. Dinner is generally served from 7pm onwards and last orders are taken as late as 10pm. You are more likely to find latenight restaurants, serving until midnight, in the side streets of downtown Brussels; only a handful provide meals after 1am. Breakfast bars usually open around 7am. For details of café and bar opening times, see pp154–5.

MAKING A RESERVATION

When visiting one of the city's more celebrated restaurants, it is always wise to book in advance. The listings indicate where booking is advisable. If you are planning to go to the legendary Comme Chez Soi, you should reserve weeks ahead rather than hope for a last-minute cancellation. Trendy designer restaurants are often crowded in the evening, but usually take reservations well in advance.

READING THE MENU

MENUS AT most restaurants are written in French, sometimes in Flemish and French. Some, especially in tourist areas, may have explanations in English. Dishes of the day or suggestions are often illegibly scribbled on



The Art Nouveau interior of Comme Chez Soi, often praised as Brussels' best restaurant (see p149)



The 16th-century cellar of 't Kelderke in the Grand Place (see p147)

blackboards. Fortunately, most waiters speak at least a little English. You may find a food dictionary useful. For details of some of the most popular Belgian specialities, see pp140-41. The phrasebook on pp189-91 also gives translations of many menu items.

ETIQUETTE

 $\mathbf{B}^{ ext{RUSSELS}}$ is less relaxed than, say, Amsterdam and, although casual or smartcasual dress is acceptable in most restaurants, you will probably feel more at home dressing up for upmarket places. A few formal restaurants will insist on a jacket and tie for men. The dress code for women is more flexible, but smartness is appreciated.

CHILDREN

'N GENERAL, Brussels is family-oriented and childfriendly, perhaps because Belgian children tend to be restrained and well behaved in restaurants. Many establishments have children's menus, although they are not always a bargain, and several offer free meals for children under 12. High-chairs should be available on request, and some restaurants have inside play areas, including some of the big hotels, where children are usually welcome. On the outskirts of Brussels or near one of the city's many parks, eateries can offer extensive outside playgrounds. Ethnic restaurants, in particular Vietnamese, Greek and the

less formal Italian ones, tend to be especially accommodating. They do not always have children's menus, but are happy for adults to share their meal with youngsters. Children are usually allowed in cafés and in bars although they are forbidden to drink alcohol. Some restaurants may be too formal for children to feel comfortable.

SMOKING

 $B^{\hbox{\scriptsize RUSSELS}}$ is still very much a smokers' city. Although a new law requests all but the smallest establishments to provide non-smoking areas plus ventilation, many do not conform to this regulation. If you are truly averse to cigarette smoke, make sure you ask about arrangements when reserving, or before you take a seat. Many cafés and taverns can be very smoky, and some locals do not take kindly to



Place settings at the restaurant La Truffe Noire (see p149)

being asked to put out a cigarette. Smokers should know that most restaurants do not sell cigarettes.

DISABLED FACILITIES

ACILITIES FOR the disabled are poor in Brussels, although there have been some recent improvements. The cobbled streets and hilly areas may well be difficult to negotiate, but most people are very helpful and will go out of their way to help those with difficulty walking or in a wheelchair. There is a limited number of restaurants with ramps and ground-floor bathrooms, so do check the extent of the access before making a reservation or taking a seat. A list of restaurants and cafés with disabled facilities is published by a Flemish charity; contact AWIPH at Rue de la Rivelaine 21, 6061 Charleroi (071 205 711).

USING THE LISTINGS

Key to symbols in the listings on pp144-53:

fixed price menu, either at lunch or for dinner.

V vegetarian dishes a speciality

★ childrens' portions & wheelchair access

to all or part of the restaurant

outdoor eating good wine list f live music on some nights of the week

★ highly recommended credit cards accepted AE American Express DC Diners Club MC Master Card/Access V VISA

Price categories for a three-course meal for one, including cover charge, service and half a bottle of wine or other drinks:

 up to €25 €€ €25-37 €€€ €37-50 €€€€ €50-62 **€€€€€** over €62

A Glossary of Belgian Dishes



French fries served with mayonnaise

ELGIANS LOVE food, and the quality Bof their cooking is matched only by the vast size of their portions. The Flemish and the Walloons each have their own style of cooking, both readily available in Brussels. With its lively history of invasions from around

Europe, the culinary traditions of Holland, Spain and Austria have occasionally filtered into both cuisines. Walloon (Belgian-French) food is similar to French provincial cuisine – hearty and spicy, with rich dishes throughout the menu. Flemish cuisine is often simpler, featuring some substantial stews and traditional cooking. Many regions of Belgium have their specialities, such as Ardennes pâté and Liège sausage, but Brussels is truly the culinary heart of the country, and the city contains many fine restaurants to suit every budget. Most menus in the tourist areas will offer explanations in English but if not, usually the waiter will try to assist.



Steaming waffles freshly made on a stand, a familiar scent in the city

SNACKS

Some of the most famous Belgian food is snack food, and with the amount of chip vans and waffle stands dotted around Brussels, you need never go hungry. Perhaps not appealing to all taste buds, but authentically Belgian, are the *caricole* stands, offering steaming hot, ready to eat buttered sea snails.

Frites

Thinly cut potato chips (French fries) are twice-fried and usually served in a cardboard cone, accompanied by a dollop of mayonnaise.

Gaufres

Waffles made of sweet batter, "toasted" in a waffle iron and served with syrup, chocolate or dusted with icing sugar.

Speculoos

Sugared ginger biscuits, often baked in patron saint-shaped moulds, served with coffee.

Smoutebollen

Sugared doughnuts.

Caricoles

Salted, boiled and buttered sea snails wrapped in paper.

Round oval-shaped bread breakfast rolls, with a hard crust and fluffy white interior.

SOUPS

OUP IN BELGIUM is often a Shearty meal in itself, served in large tureens accompanied by freshly baked bread. Vegetable soups with a stock base are particularly common, using ingredients such as carrot, cauliflower, cabbage

or green peas, often mixed. Vegetarians, however, should be warned; green pea soup often includes pork and spicy sausage as well as potatoes.

Waterzooi

A stew of chicken or fish simmered in their stock, with cream and often white wine, and

served with puréed vegetables. Bisque de homard Lobster poached in reduced

seafood stock with brandy.

FISH AND SEAFOOD

MOST OF THE FISH Served in Brussels comes straight from the Ostend coast, which, on a direct route less than 90 km (55 miles) away, means that it is fresh every day. At



Moules marinières, sweated in wine and onion, served in a tureen

the turn of the 20th century, the port of Brussels extended as far north as the Eglise Ste-Catherine, with a huge covered fish market behind the church. This area is still the centre of a bustling trade in seafood; although the market has long since vanished, the surrounding streets and allevs are filled with terraced fish restaurants.

The Belgians' love of seafood extends further than the national dish, moules et frites. Ostend sole, eels in green sauce, lobster in season and crispy shrimp croquettes are just some of the favourites. While the city's more formal establishments tend to be expensive, there are plenty of simple eateries offering the day's catch at very low prices.

Moules

Mussels, traditionally served in copper tureens, cooked in white wine and onions, with a side order of frites.

Hareng

Herring, prepared in a variety of ways: roll-mop, fried, steamed, marinated in vinegar or smoked.

Langouste

Spiny lobster, brought in fresh from Ostend; when it is available much will be made of it in lavish seafood displays and on

daily "specials" menu boards.

Huîtres

Marinated herring

> Ovsters, swallowed raw or served au gratin; covered with breadcrumbs, bacon, herbs and cheese and grilled.

Anguilles au vert

Eels, commonly served with green herbs such as thyme or parsley, and cooked in butter.

Sole Ostendaise

Fresh sole fillet served with lemon and butter.

MEAT

LTHOUGH HAPPY to use A poultry in soups and lighter dishes, Belgians use their abundant supplies of red meat to create hearty main meals. often marinated in cream sauces or alcohol

Choesels

Very fresh sweetbreads in cream sauces are a Brussels speciality.

Ragôut d'agneau

Lamb braised for hours with chicory, onions and herbs.

Gentse stoverii

Ghent's long-standing culinary legacy takes the form of a beer and beef stew with mustard.

Ardennes pâté

A coarse pork pâté often flavoured with garlic.

Bloedpens

Black pudding with chopped bacon. Lapin

Rabbit will be seen in many guises, but it is most traditionally served with prunes soaked in brandy. or with beer and mustard.

Carbonnades flamandes A popular Flemish dish for centuries, fillets of beef are braised very slowly in gueuze

beer, or occasionally kriek, cherry fruit beer. Faisan à la Brabanconne Pheasant roasted with braised

chicory, herbs and bacon.

VEGETABLES

EGETABLES are often treated as accompaniments to the main meat or fish course, although some can be served as dishes in their own right.



Witloof, chicory wrapped in ham and braised au gratin

Choux de Bruxelles

The Brussels sprout is served young, fresh and dripping with crispy lardons and butter.

Witloof/Chicon

Chicory, a favourite vegetable all over Brussels, is often served with ham and cheese.

Jets de houblon Young Belgian hop shoots are braised to make a tender side dish. Stoemp

Coarse mash of

potatoes and vegetables (usually carrots or cabbage) served with sausage.

DESSERTS

Carbonnade of beef

LMOST ANY DESSERT wished A for can be found in restaurants in Brussels, from chocolate cake, mousses and profiteroles, to the classic French dishes, tarte tatin (upside-down apple cake) and crème caramel. Second only to the reputation of Belgium's Profiteroles chocolatiers is that of its

pastry- and cakemakers. Using the same fine ingredients, and techniques honed since the 18th century, pastry chefs create concotions as breathtakingly good-looking as they are delicious to eat.



Shelves of fresh cream and chocolate cakes in a pâtisserie

A common way to finish off a meal, however, is with cheese, served before or instead of dessert. Often mild and uncured, local cheeses are made in the damp, fertile, cattlegrazing land of Wallonia and delivered fresh to the city.

Herve

A soft runny cheese, often served in bowls, with bread. Tartine de fromage blanc This soft cheese open sandwich is eaten with radishes.



Tarte tatin, upside-down apple cake made with fresh fruit

BELGIAN CHOCOLATE

Belgian chocolate is considered by many to be the finest in the world. The chocolate manufacturing industry took off during the 1880s, aided by the acquisition of the Belgian Congo (see p36), which meant easy access to Africa's cocoa plantations. Traditionally Belgian chocolates, known as pralines, are filled with cream, nuts or a high-quality rich dark chocolate and covered with milk or white chocolate. Plain chocolate has a high cocoa

content, usually at least 70 per cent. Belgian chocolate houses have passed down their recipes over generations, the contents of which are highly guarded and secret. Some

of the renowned "grandes maisons de chocolat' include Mary, Neuhaus, Godiva, Léonidas and Wittamer. Ideal for a gift, buying chocolates is a treat; individually picked, they are often packaged in crêpe tissue in a finely decorated box.



Belgian chocolates wrapped in a typical luxury gift box

Belgian Beer



Gambrinus. legendary Beer King

ELGIUM MAKES MORE beers, in a greater mix of styles and flavours, than any other country in the world. The Belgian citizen drinks on average 100 litres (200 pints) a year, and even small bars will stock at least 20 varieties. The nation's breweries produce over 400 different beers.

The cheerful peasants in Brueghel the Elder's 15th-century medieval village scenes would have been drinking beer

from their local brewery, many of which had been active since the 11th century, as every small town and community produced its own beer. By 1900 there remained 3,000 private breweries throughout Belgium. Today, more than 100 still operate, with experts agreeing that even large industrial concerns produce a fine quality beer.



Detail from The Wedding Dance by Pieter Brueghel the Elder



Chimay label with authentic Trappist mark



Label for Westmalle Trappist beer

TRAPPIST BEERS

THE MOST REVERED of refreshments, Belgium's Trappist beers have The Most revered of refleciments, begains the monks began brewing them. The drink originated in Roman times when Belgium was a province of Gaul, Gallia Belgica. Beer was a private domestic product until the monasteries took over and introduced hops to the process. Today's production is still controlled solely by the five Trappist monasteries, although the brewers are mostly laymen. Trappist beers are characterized by their rich, yeasty flavour. They are very strong, ranging from 6.2 to 11 per cent in alcohol content by volume. The most celebrated of the 20 brands is Chimay, brewed at Belgium's largest monastic brewery in Hainaut. This delicate but potent bottled beer has three different strengths, and is best kept for many years before drinking. The strongest Trappist beer is Westvleteren, from Ypres.

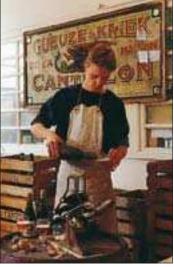
Chimay served in its correct glass

LAMBIC BEERS

ADE FOR CENTURIES in the Senne Valley around M Brussels, the unique family of lambic beers are made using yeasts naturally present in the air to ferment the beer, rather than being added separately to the water and grain mix. Containers of unfermented wort (water, wheat and barley) are left under

> a half-open roof in the brewery and wild airborne yeasts, only present in the atmosphere of this region of Belgium, descend to ferment it. Unlike the sterility of many breweries and officially exempt from EU hygiene regulations, lambic cellars are deliberately left dusty and uncleaned in order for the necessary fungal activity to thrive. Matured in untreated wooden casks for up to five years, the lambic is deliciously sour to drink, with a moderate strength of 5 per cent alcohol.

Young and old lambic beers are blended together to produce the variant of gueuze. A tiny bead, distinctive champagne mousse and a toasty, slightly acid flavour, are its main characteristics. Bars and restaurants lay down their gueuze for up to 2 years before it is drunk.



Brewer sampling beer from the vat at a brewery outside Brussels



SPECIALITY BELGIAN BEERS











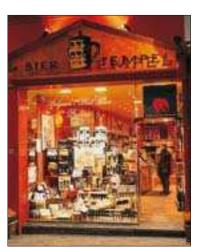
Brugse Tripel Kwak Frucht

 $S^{\text{PECIALITY BEERS}}$ are common in Belgium, where the huge variety of brands includes unusual tastes and flavours. Fruit beers are a Brussels speciality but are available throughout the country. The most popular, kriek, is traditionally made with bitter cherries grown in the Brussels suburb of Schaerbeek; picked annually, these are added to the lambic and allowed to macerate, or steep. The distinctive almond tang comes from the cherry stone. Raspberries are also used to make a framboise beer, or frambozen.

For a characterful amber ale, Kwak is good choice. Strong beers are also popular; apart from the Trappist beers, of which

Fruit beer mat of Chapeau brewery

Chimay is a popular variety, the pilseners De Verboden Frucht (meaning "forbidden fruit") and Duvel ("devil") are almost as strong as red wine. Brugse Tripel, from Bruges, is also popular. Even Belgium's best-sellers, Jupiler and Stella



Artois, are good quality beers. The façade of a beer emporium in Brussels

BLANCHE BEERS

Hoegaarden

BELGIUM'S REFRESHING wheat beers are known as "blanche", or white beers, because of the cloudy sediment that forms when they ferment. Sour, crisp and light, they are relatively low in alcohol at 5 per cent. Blanche is produced in the western region of Hoegaarden, after which the bestknown blanche is named. Many people now serve them with a slice of lemon to add to the refreshing taste,

especially on warm

summer evenings.

HOW TO DRINK BELGIAN BEER

HERE ARE NO snobbish distinctions made in Belgium between bottled and casked beer. Some of the most prestigious brews are served in bottles, and, as with casks, bottles are often laid down to mature. The choice of drinking glass, however, is a vital part of the

beer-drinking ritual. Many beers must be drunk in a particular glass, which the barman will supply, ranging from goblets to long thin drinking tubes. Beers are often served with a complementary snack; cream cheese on rye bread and radishes are a popular accompaniment.



The traditional drinkers' snack of fromage blanc on rye bread

IIY RECOMMENDED

OIT CARDS

RACTER SETTING

ES OUTSIDE

O-PRICE MENU

D FRIENDLY

Choosing a Restaurant

T the restaurants in this guide have been selected for their good value, exceptional food and interesting location. This chart highlights some of the factors which may influence your choice. Entries are listed in alphabetical order within price category, starting with the least expensive. The more detailed listings on pp146–53 are arranged by type of cuisine. Information on cafés and bars is on pp154–55.

on cafés and bars is on pp154-55.			CREDI	Нісні	FABLE	CHAR.	ETHNI	FIXED	Снпр
		PAGE	Ö	H	Ţ	Ö	E	Fr	Ö
THE LOWER TOWN									
Brasserie Horta (Belgian)	€	146							
Chez Léon (Belgian)		146							
El Papagayo (Latin American)		152							
La Grande Porte (Belgian)		146				ī			
Le Petit Chou de Bruxelles (Belgian)		146							
Al Barmaki (Lebanese)	® €	151							
Auberge des Chapeliers (Belgian)	 €€	146							
Aux Paves de Bruxelles (Belgian)	€€	146							
Bij den Boer (Seafood)	€€	153							
Brasserie de la Roue d'Or (Belgian)	€€	146							
Cantina Cubana (Latin American)	€€	152							
Casa Manuel (Portuguese)	€€	152							
Chez Patrick (Belgian)	€€	146							
Domaine de Lintillac (French)	€€	148							
In't Spinnekopke (Belgian)	€€	146							
Kasbah (Moroccan)	€€	150							
L'Achepot (Seafood)	 €€	153							
La Marée (Seafood)	 €€	153							
La Rose Blanche (Belgian)	€€	147							
Rugantino (Italian)	€€	149			0				
't Kelderke (Belgian)	€€	147							
Aux Armes de Bruxelles (Belgian)	€€€	147							
Aux Marches de la Chapelle (French)	€€€	148							
Bonsoir Clara (French)	€€€	148				ī			
La Taverne du Passage (Belgian)	€€€	147				ī			
Le Pou qui Tousse (Sardinian)	€€€	150				ī			
La Truite d'Argent (Seafood)	€€€€	153							
L'Ogenblik (French)	€€€€	149							
Scheltema (Seafood)	€€€€	153							
Comme Chez Soi (French)	©©©©©	149							
Sea Grill (Seafood)	©©©©©	153							
	00000								
THE UPPER TOWN									
La Pirogue (African)	€	150							
Entrée des Artistes (French)	€€	148							
Au Vieux Saint-Martin (Belgian)	€€€	147							
La Porte des Indes (Indian)	€€€	151							
L'Estrille du Vieux Bruxelles (Belgian)	€€€	147							
Chez Moi (Belgian)	€€€€	147							
L' Ecailler du Palais Royal (Seafood)	€€€€€	153							
GREATER BRUSSELS									
Dolma (Vegetarian)	€	153							
Gri Gri (African)	€	150							
Hông Hoa (Vietnamese)	€	150							
La Cantonnaise (Chinese)		151							
Le Pacifique (Vietnamese)		151							

Price categories for a threecourse meal for one, including cover charge, service and half a bottle of wine or other drinks:

② up to €25 **③** €25–37

©©© €37–50 ©©©© €50-62

©©©©© Over €62

CREDIT CARDS

Establishment accepts a combination of major credit cards.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

The quality of the dishes, decor and service are especially highly commended.

TABLES OUTSIDE

Outdoor dining facilities and service in summer.

CHARACTER SETTING

Unusually attractive interior decor and/or street setting and atmosphere.

ETHNIC

Exotic world cuisine of a high standard from outside Europe.

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BELGIAN

Although Belgium is a relatively new European state, its culinary traditions date back to the Middle Ages, when the dukes of Burgundy ruled over the Low Countries. To this day Burgundian is a synonym for hearty extravagance, of which the Belgians are inordinately fond. Authentic Belgian cooking is very rooted in peasant traditions, including warming winter stews such as waterzooi (chicken or fish stewed with cream), or carbonnades (beef casseroled in beer) as well as the national vegetable, chicory. Slow cooking in beer is also an integral part of Belgian cuisine. Dieting is not, and never will be, compatible with rich Belgian food.

Most of the restaurants in this section offer authentic versions of Belgian dishes, usually at relatively affordable prices. While some pay great attention to presentation, lesser establishments are often more rewarding; this is a cuisine robust enough to cope with a few rough edges and dated decor.

Brasserie Horta

Rue des Sables 20. Map 2 E2.

((02) 217 7271. 🛭 AE, DC, MC, V. 🔵 10am–6pm daily. 🕇 👢 🌘

The Comic Strip Centre's restaurant is worth a visit to see the airy, highceilinged Art Nouveau brasserie designed by Victor Horta. Admire the cartoons of Tintin, the Smurfs and Lucky Luke while sampling cheap, hearty portions of chickenstuffed vol-au-vents, spicy meatballs, waterzooi, beef stewed in beer and home-made frites. The bar is open during restaurant hours.

Chez Léon

Rue des Bouchers 18. Map 2 D2. (02) 513 0426. AE, DC, MC, V. 11:30am−11pm daily. 🚼 📻 🍽 📵

It may be more a fashionable factory-style diner than an intimate dining experience, but this casual haunt near the Grand Place provides unquestionable value for money in an expensive area (and has been doing so since 1893). It also offers a wide range of moules-frites dishes and a free menu for children under 12.

La Grande Porte

Rue Notre-Seigneur 9. Map 1 C4. ((02) 512 8998. 💋 MC, V. noon-3pm, 6pm-2am Tue-Fri; 6pm−2am Sat. 👃 🌘

This late-night spot in the Marolles area combines French chanson background music and an artfully chaotic interior adorned with finds from the flea market on Place du

Jeu de Balle. Enjoy quality versions of basic Belgian fare such as stoemp, meatballs in tomato sauce or the traditional chicory grilled with cheese and, in winter, onion soup.

Le Petit Chou de Bruxelles

Rue du Vieux-Marché-aux-Grains 2. Map 1 C2. (1 (02) 502 6037.

noon–10pm daily. Wed &

Despite the dingy glass-fronted interior and non-existent decor, this café near Place Ste-Catherine is well worth the visit, especially for a full meal outside normal eating hours. Old-fashioned cooking includes home-made pork rillettes and horse steaks. In summer, the renovated outdoor terrace is pleasant.

Auberge des Chapeliers

Rue des Chapeliers 3. Map 2 D3.

((02) 513 7338. AE, DC, MC, V. noon-2pm, 6:30-11pm daily (until midnight on Sat). **€**(€)

This 17th-century building near the Grand Place houses a cosy split-level eatery with several dining sections and, unusually, a nonsmoking area. The menu features sizeable helpings of classic Belgian dishes: mussels in a variety of preparations, black pudding Brussels-style (boudin), rabbit cooked in kriek beer with cherries, and marinated herring fillets.

Au Brabançon

Rue de la Commune 75. Map 3 A1. 🚺 (02) 217 7191. ★ 💋 AE, MC, V. noon-2:30pm, 7-9:30pm Mon−Sat. Sun. ¶ (€) (€)

This tiny St-Josse restaurant is a haven for lovers of authentic Belgian specialities. The formidable septuagenarian owner loves to cook offal, including brains and sweetbreads. The faint-hearted can opt for creamy chicken waterzooi or Marollesstyle meatballs once they have deciphered the handwritten menu. As with much Belgian food, this is not an establishment for slimmers or vegetarians.

Aux Paves de Bruxelles

Rue Marché-aux-Fromages 1-3. Map 2 D3. ((02) 502 0457. AE, DC, MC, V. □ noon-2:30pm, 7–11pm Mon–Fri; 7pm–midnight Sat. Sun. ■ €€

At this old-fashioned eatery in a 17th-century house near the Grand Place, good prices and a sturdy emphasis on red meat keep the place packed for lunch and dinner. While Argentine steaks and spare

ribs are house specialities, the mussel dishes should satisfy non-carnivores and fish-eating vegetarians.

Brasserie de la Roue d'Or

Rue des Chapeliers 26. Map 2 D3. (02) 514 2554. 🛨 💈 AE, DC, MC, V. noon-12.30am daily.

■ mid-Jul– mid-Aug. <</p>

This upmarket Art Nouveau brasserie with Surrealist murals excels in modernism. The greatvalue menu blends Belgian and French cuisine: eel in mustard sauce, pig's trotter vinaigrette, prawn croquettes, snails in garlic butter and home-made frites. Pierre Wynants, the chef of Michelin threestar Brussels restaurant Comme Chez Soi, is an enthusiastic visitor.

Chez Patrick

Rue des Chapeliers 6. Map 2 D3. ((02) 511 9815. 🛨 🔁 AE, DC, Tue-Sat. & ¶⊕¶ €€

Despite its popularity with tourists and expats, the family-run Chez Patrick has remained quintessentially Bruxellois since it opened in 1931. Wooden benches and white tiles give the dining room a spartan, functional feel and the daily specials are scribbled on to mirrors on the walls. Beer cuisine figures large, but you can also tuck into choucroute (cabbage and sausage hotpot) or chicken waterzooi.

In 't Spinnekopke

Place du Jardin aux Fleurs 1. Map 1 B2. ((02) 511 8695. AE, DC, MC, V. noon-3pm, 6-11pm Mon-Fri; 6pm−midnight Sat. 👃 🛱 📵 📵

This former coaching inn at the end of Rue Chartreux is popular with canny tourists and local politicians alike. Enjoy Belgian fare and creative beer cuisine in 18th-century decor: the restaurant's name means "In the spider's head" and, while spider is not on the menu, exotic dishes include guinea-fowl in raspberry beer and calf's head with vinaigrette. There is a huge choice of small cottage-industry beers.

La Belle Epoque

Avenue Houba de Strooper 188. (02) 478 9647. AE, DC, MC, V. noon-11pm Sun-Thu; noon-midnight Fri & Sat. ★ & 🗊 🎏 🌘

One of the best restaurants near the Atomium, this hospitable 1920s brasserie offers French and Italian cuisine as well as Belgian classics. Dishes include eels in herbs, rabbit in gueuze beer and osso bucco (stewed veal in wine and tomatoes)

La Danse des Paysans

Chaussée de Boondael 441. ((02) 649 8505. ★ 🛭 MC, V. 🚺 noon-3pm, 6:30-11:30pm Mon-Fri; 6:30−11:30pm Sat. 🖬 🗨 €

In the heart of the university area. this rustic restaurant is a perfect spot to sample authentic beer cooking such as scampi stew with white beer and lamb in pastry with mint and the blanche beer Duvel.

La Rose Blanche/ De Witte Roos

Grand Place 11. Map 2 D3. ((02) 513 6479. AE, DC, MC, V.

One of the best places for traditional Belgian beer cuisine, this Baroque tavern serves mussels in beer, roast salmon with Faro beer, chicken in kriek and even waffles with an Ardennes brew called La Chouffe. The popular three-course menu is centred around three different types of beer, with a bottle of each included in the set price.

Mon Village

Rue Champ de la Couronne 6 ((02) 478 3579. AE, DC, MC, V. noon-3pm, 7-11:30pm Tue-Sat.

At this informal restaurant close to Parc de Laeken, the owner also does the cooking, and favourites include chicken cooked in strong Duvel beer and rillettes prepared with white beer.

't Kelderke

Grand Place 15. Map 2 D3. ((02) 513 7344. ★ 🛭 AE, DC, MC, V. noon-2am daily. **€**€

This reasonably priced restaurant in a 17th-century cellar feels genuine despite its commercial location. Speedy waiters proffer huge pots of mussels and goodsized portions of traditional Belgian food. Waffles with a topping of whipped cream make a fine ending to a meal. No reservations are accepted, so queues are not uncommon.

Volle Gas

Place Fernand Cocq 21. (02) 502 8971. ★ 🛭 MC, V. 🚺 11am–1am Mon-Sat. 末 も 月 V Y 命 **†@!** €€

There has been a restaurant here, on the pleasant square opposite Ixelles town hall, since 1849. The current occupant is a traditional Brussels establishment, serving mussels, waterzooi and superb stoemp royal (with bacon, sausages and eggs).

Au Vieux Saint-Martin

Place du Grand Sablon 38. Map 2 D4. ((02) 512 6476. MC, V. noon–midnight daily. ★ 🛛 🗨 🗨

A truly professional establishment with crisp modern decor, swift and courteous waiters, this restaurant also boasts a contemporary art collection. The accomplished menu features regional specialities like stoemp, rabbit in kriek and filet américain, prepared to a recipe conceived by the restaurant's founder in the 1920s.

Aux Armes de Bruxelles

Rue des Bouchers 13. Map 2 D2. ((02) 511 5550. 🖨 AE, DC, MC, V. noon-11pm Tue-Sun. mid-Jun-mid-Jul. 🔛 🛛 🎁 🕯 🗐 🗐 🗐 🌑

This friendly restaurant was a favourite of Belgian chanson legend Jacques Brel. Some critics complain that its charm has faded a little in recent years, but the restaurant still offers classic, highquality cuisine including lobster, mussels, poached cod, veal and, in season, game. The freshly made shrimp croquettes are a must. It is important to reserve in advance.

Den Dyver

Dijver 5, Bruges. ((050) 33 6069. * Thu-Tue. Thu lunch. 🗊 🗸 🎁 €€€

This excellent restaurant, located close to the Markt, specializes in Flemish beer cooking. There is no drinks list, and diners are automatically served a glass of the beer that features in their dish.

La Brouette

Boulevard Prince de Liège 61, Anderlecht. ((02) 522 5169. 9:30pm Tue-Sun. Sat lunch, Sun eve. \$\bigg\ \overline{\Omega} DC, MC, V. \$\bigg\ \overline{\Omega} \overline{\Omega} \overline{\Omega}

A restaurant with a well-deserved Michelin star, La Brouette is a iewel off the beaten track. Chef Hermann Dedapper, a top sommelier, provides gourmet food and an innovative menu in an unpretentious setting.

La Taverne du Passage

Galerie de la Reine 30. Map 2 D2. (02) 512 3731. 🛨 🛭 AE, DC, MC, V. noon-midnight daily. Dun-Jul: Wed & Thu. 🕁 🗜 🌒 🌒

This Belgian brasserie has an alluring Art Deco interior and 70 years' worth of culinary expertise. Housed in the elegant Galerie de la Reine, between Rue des Bouchers and Rue du Marché aux Herbes, it features roasts carved at your table, as well as shrimp croquettes, steak tartare and mussels. The waiters are helpful and efficient; this is a popular choice with families. Relax on the terrace in the arcade and watch the world go by under the Art Deco roof.

L'Estrille du Vieux Bruxelles

Rue de Rollebeek 7. Map 2 D4. ((02) 512 5857. AE, DC, MC, V. noon-2pm, 7-10pm Mon-Fri; noon-3pm, 7-10:30pm Sat & Sun. **⊞** €€€

Just off the Place du Grand Sablon and housed in an elegant 16thcentury building, this cosy tavern specializes in meat grilled over an open fire in the main room. Homely dishes include beef stew, rabbit with plums and gueuze beer, eel in herbs and, in season, game. The background music is usually classical or jazz.

't Buikske Vol

Kraanlei 17, Ghent. (109) 225 1880. ★ 🛭 AE, V. 🚺 noon–2pm, 7-9:30pm Mon, Tue, Thu; 7-9:30pm

The trendy Patershol district is home to many upscale restaurants, and this is one of the best. The beautifully prepared dishes range from river fish waterzooi to sweetbreads with rabbit.

Chez Moi

Rue du Luxembourg 66. (02) 280 2666. ☑ DC, MC, V. O noon-3pm, 7–10pm Mon–Fri. 📻 🖫 🎁 €€€€

Close to the European Parliament, this welcoming restaurant is popular with Eurocrats at lunch, but quieter and more romantic in the evening. The menu offers fish and game with good vegetable side dishes.

de Karmeliet

Langestraat 19, Bruges. (09) 33 8259. ★ 🛭 AE, DC, MC, V. 🚺 noon-1:30pm, 7-9:30pm Tue-Sun.

Tue lunch, Sun eve. Y V 📻

Impeccable service, lavish surroundings in the centre of town and exquisite Belgian/French cuisine have earned this restaurant in the heart of historical Bruges three Michelin stars. Try the rabbit with Rodenbach beer and the delicious thin omelettes.

't Bourgoensche Cruyce

Wollestraat 41, Bruges. (050) 33 7926. ★ 🛭 AE, MC, V. 🚺 noon-2pm, 7–9:15pm Thu–Mon.

₹ V X 1€1 @@@@

This 19th-century wooden building is the ideal place for a romantic, canalside meal. The perfect setting is matched by superior cuisine, especially the seafood dishes.

FRENCH

Perhaps unsurprisingly given its proximity to France, Brussels has a large number of extremely good French restaurants, from grand Parisian-style brasseries to modern establishments serving nouvelle cuisine. While the brasserie menus sometimes overlap with their Belgian counterparts, the nouvelle cuisine places offer a lighter option for those fed up with frites. Many of the city's great French restaurants are expensive, but there are plenty of bargains to be had, especially at lunchtime or following the set menus. Value for money is almost universally guaranteed.

Domaine de Lintillac

Rue de Flandre 25. Map 1 B1. ((02) 511 5123. noon-2pm, 7:30 – 10pm Tue – Sat. 👢 €)€)

This small restaurant serves nothing but duck: wine-soaked pâté, sliced breasts, rillettes cooked in lard and pounded to a fine paste, confit, as well as the gourmet foie gras. Each of the tables has a toaster to ensure your pâté toast is cooked to perfection. The main courses include a marvellous cassoulet, with duck, pork and goose cooked for hours in duck fat, a rich wine tomato sauce and haricot beans. For dessert, try the excellent crême brulée. The rich fare is not for those on a diet, but is delicious for a special occasion.

Entrée des Artistes

Place du Grand Sablon 42. Map 2 D4. ((02) 502 3161. 🛭 AE, MC, V. 8am–2am daily. 🛣 🖬 🍽 🗨 €

The Grand Sablon can be an unsatisfyingly expensive place to eat, but this unassumingly trendy brasserie is a happy exception. Cinema posters and licence plates decorate the walls and the welljudged brasserie fare includes toast with mushrooms, salmon steaks and lobster. A plat du jour at lunchtime costs around 7.

Le Grain de Sel

Chaussée de Vleurgat 9. (102) 648 1858. ☑ MC. ★ 🔲 noon–3:15pm, 7:30-10:30pm Tue-Fri; 7:30-10pm Sat. Iunch Sat. 191 V 🖼 €€ Tucked away in a townhouse near Place Eugène Flagey in Ixelles, this exquisite eatery is one of Brussels' best-kept secrets. Book in advance to ensure a spot on the rambling rose-filled patio, then settle down to a selection of light, fresh dishes that make up the regularly changing menu. Past dishes have included cannelloni with goat's cheese and spinach, scampi in creamy curry sauce, pan-fried beef with rocket and exquisite home-made ice cream. The three-course menu offers a wide selection of regular dishes and daily suggestions.

Pakhuis

Schuurkensstraat 4, Ghent. (109) 223 5555. 🛭 AE, DC, MC, V. noon-2:30pm, 6:30pm-midnight

Mon–Sat. ☑ 🗎 🖸 🍽 👀

This popular brasserie occupies a huge, early-19th-century converted warehouse. Its special attractions are the oyster bar and the fresh shellfish served daily.

't Zolderke

Hoofdkerkstraat 7, Antwerp. (03) 233 8427. ★ 💈 MC, V. 🚺 6–11pm Mon-Fri, noon-midnight Sat & Sun.

The menu at this light and airy French restaurant features old classics such as steak in peppercorn and bearnaise sauce with fries, and meats such as boar and deer when in season.

Amadeus

Rue Veydt 13. ((02) 538 3427. AE, DC, MC, V.
 noon−3pm, 6:30pm-midnight Tue-Fri, Sun; 6pm−12:30am Mon & Sat. V 🕏

Ⅲ Ⅲ ◎◎◎

Near the Place Stephanie, off Chaussée de Charleroi, this romantic candle-lit restaurant and wine bar was once the studio of 19th-century French sculptor Auguste Rodin. Diners come more for the ornate mirrors and intimate corners than the brasserie fare, which is adequate but unremarkable by Brussels standards. The wine list, however, is top quality, and the view of the entrance hall alone is worth the trip.

Aux Marches de la Chapelle

Place de la Chapelle 5. Map 1 C4. ((02) 512 6891. AE, MC, DC, V. noon-2:30pm, 6-11pm Mon-Fri; 7pm-midnight Sat; noon-2:30pm, 7–10pm Sun. ₺ 🍽 🍽 🗨 A Brussels institution, this stylish

restaurant with opulent Belle

Epoque decor and chandeliers is

a favoured gourmet haunt. Try the excellent sauerkraut, poached egg with grey shimps, or eel dishes.

Bonsoir Clara

Rue Antoine Dansaert 22. Map 1 B2. ((02) 502 0990. AE, MC, V. noon-2:30pm, 7-11:30pm Mon-Fri; 7-midnight Sat & Sun. £ \ \ €€€

Like most of the restaurants started by young restaurateur Frederic Nikolay, Bonsoir Clara is a great place to eat in, rather than a great place to eat. The city's fashionable crowd are drawn by the prime location on Brussels' trendiest street, by the extravagant decor, a confection of multicoloured quilting and garish mirror walls, and by the chance to see and be seen. The food is upmarket brasserie cooking, with dishes including seared tuna and caramelized duck among the regular specialities.

Le Doux Wazoo

Rue du Relais 21. (02) 649 5852. AE, DC, MC, V.
 ☐ noon-2:30pm, 7-11pm Mon-Fri; 7-11:45pm Sat. Mon pm. **∏ †**(**●**) **€**(**●**)

A small, cheerful turn-of-thecentury bistro in the university district, where the owners' bohemian philosophy is applied to the atmosphere rather than the service. Confit of duck, roast lamb with pepper purée or duck stew are on the menu, all made with quality local produce. The restaurant's name translates as "the sweet bird", although nonnatives might find this hard to work out.

Le Fils de Jules

Rue du Page 35. ((02) 534 0057. AE, DC, MC, V.

 noon−2:30pm, 7–11pm Mon–Fri; 7pm–midnight Sat. 🔛 🔲 🎁 €€€

Brussels' only Basque restaurant offers rich, imaginative cuisine and fine wines from southwest France in a plum spot near Ixelles' busy Place du Châtelain. Dishes include spiced squid, foie gras with a compote of figs, and duck breast in walnut sauce. While the cooking is clearly Mediterranean, the setting is a stylishly minimal blend of Art Deco and the French modernist designer Philippe Starck, who has designed many of Europe's top restaurants including the London Conran chain. Reserve in advance.

Le Pain et le Vin

Chaussée d'Alsemberg 812a. (02) 332 3774. AE, MC, V. noon-2:30pm, 7-10:30pm Mon-Fri; 7–10:30pm Sat. 🖼 🖫 €€€

Eric Boschman is one of Belgium's most talented sommeliers, so it is no surprise that his restaurant on the southern tip of Brussels offers a splendid selection of French and New World wines at extremely reasonable prices. The good news is that it also offers light, imaginative French and modern Mediterranean cuisine, with an emphasis on fish, and a candle-lit garden.

Les Amis du Cep

Rue Theodore Decuyper 136. (02) 762 6295. 🛭 AE, MC, V. 🚺 noon-2pm, 7–10pm Tue−Sat. 📻 🎁 🖠 €€€

This refined restaurant housed in a Thirties villa in the residential Woluwe-Saint-Lambert district offers classic and modern French food. Most people choose the four-course "surprise menu" for two, but some may prefer to stick to the à la carte menu, which includes quail stew with foie gras, and scallop tartare. The lunch menu is fantastic value.

Les Brasseries Georges

Ave Winston Churchill 259. (02) 347 2100. ★ 💈 AE, DC, MC, V. 11:30am-midnight Sun-Thu; 11:30am−1am Fri & Sat. 😭 🔽 🕏 €€€

The first thing to notice here is the ostentatious pavement stall, piled high with tubs of oysters and lobsters. Inside, the brash, bustling brasserie has become one of southern Brussels' landmarks. The service is professional if a little brusque, which is understandable given the volume of custom. The extensive wine list includes several vintages by the glass, and menu staples vary from grilled tuna with herb butter to kidneys in mustard sauce, although the Georges' fame depends partly on the exquisitely fresh seafood platters.

L'Ogenblik

Galerie des Princes 1. Map 2 D2. (02) 511 6151. 🛨 🛭 AE, MC, DC, V.
☐ noon-2:30pm, 7pm-midnight Mon-Thu; 7pm-12:30am Fri & Sat. **⊞** €€€€

In a little side street off the Rue des Bouchers, this classy but informal establishment masks its quality behind artfully faded Parisian-style bistro decor. The creative dishes, among them fillet of sea bass with aubergine caviar and calf sweetbreads with cheesetopped courgette, are prepared with impeccably fresh ingredients. Despite the central location, the lively crowd is mostly composed of well-heeled locals.

Comme Chez Soi

23 Place Rouppe. **Map** 1 C4. (02) 512 2921. ★ 💈 AE, DC, MC, V. noon-1:30pm, 7-9:30pm Tue-Sat. ₩ ₩ ¶ ¶ ®®®®®

Brussels' best restaurant works hard to maintain its three Michelin stars, with head chef Pierre Wynants continually creating adventurous market-based dishes for those not satisfied by his legendary sole fillet with Riesling mousse. The game, foie gras and caviar are superlative, as is the Art Nouveau decor, although the intimacy can border on the cramped. Tables must be booked weeks in advance.

La Truffe Noire

Boulevard de la Cambre 12. (02) 640 4422. 🖨 AE, DC, MC, V. noon-2pm, 7–10pm Mon-Fri; 7–10pm Sat. 🚺 🔛 🎛 🎁 €€€€

This gourmet restaurant is seventh heaven for truffle-lovers. The location - a townhouse on a quiet street near Bois de la Cambre - has a discreetly exclusive feel, heightened by the fresh, modern interior and the classical background music. Indulge in truffle-stuffed pigeon, truffle carpaccio, truffle purée or the extravagant sixcourse menu, which takes in all aspects of this delicious fungus.

ITALIAN

Belgium has a sizeable Italian community, most of whom arrived in the 1950s to work in the mines of Wallonia. Many moved to Brussels, where they opened unpretentious trattorias or pizzerias. The bulk of the capital's Italian restaurants fall into this category, and are often unremarkable, though handy for those on a budget. Brussels also has several upmarket Italian restaurants, serving more accomplished and authentic food. These establishments tend to be rather formal, and booking is always advisable.

Aux Anges

Rue Diderich 33-35. ((02) 539 3906. MC, V.
 ☐ noon-2pm Mon; noon-2pm, 7–11pm Tue−Sat. **V** 📻 **©©**

This small hideout in the backstreets of St-Gilles is a must for couples, not least because of the half-veiled corner niche designed especially for two. The decor features statuettes of angels and Raphael reproductions, while the menu offers modern, sophisticated pasta dishes such as penne with foie gras and truffle oil. Light modern cuisine is also represented in the use of grilled polenta and macerated olive oils.

Rugantino

Blvd Anspach 184-186. Map 1 C3. ((02) 511 2195. ★ 🛭 AE, MC, V. noon-3pm, 6:30pm-midnight Mon−Fri; 6:30−11:45pm Sat. **V**

A short walk from the Grand Place, this airy, high-ceilinged trattoria has cream-coloured walls and flamboyant Art Deco motifs. The owner is from Abruzzi in Italy and the menu reflects his origins, with signature dishes including beef topped with rocket and Parmesan, rosemary roast lamb and pasta with spinach and ricotta.

A'mbriana

Rue Edith Cavell 151. (02) 375 0156. AE, DC, MC, V. noon-2:30pm, 7-10:30pm Wed-Mon; 7-

Exquisite Italian food and wine and a warm welcome have earned this slick modern eatery near Parc Montjoie a fine reputation, helped by the low prices of the fixed and lunch-time menus. Classic dishes include carpaccio of swordfish, beef with rocket and black lasagne with seafood and leeks. Much favoured by Eurocrats, the menu changes often but manages to stay both fresh and modern. Booking in advance is recommended.

La Fin de Siècle

Avenue de l'Armée 3, Map 4 F4. 🕻 (02) 732 7434. ★ 🥃 V. noon-2:30pm, 7-10:30pm Mon-Fri. 🔛 €€€

Younger Eurocrats get business off their mind in this restfully Baroque restaurant, where candles and classical music ensure a harmonious ambiance. The creative, contemporary Italian menu includes linguine with scallops and truffle oil or smoked salmon with saffron and mascarpone. Its sister restaurant, Fin de Siècle, occupies a townhouse on Avenue Louise, with similar setting and dishes, but improved facilities for disabled travellers.

La Scala

Chaussée de Wayre 132. Map 2 F5. ((02) 514 4995. 🖨 AE, DC, MC,V. noon-2:30pm, 7-10pm Mon−Fri; 7–11pm Sat. 🖪 €€€

One of the best Italian deals in town, this upbeat eatery has a popular fixed menu, which includes wine and coffee. Classical dishes include veal kidneys, foie gras with wild mushrooms and duck ravioli. Candle light and the owner's occasional tinklings on the piano provide plenty of romantic atmosphere.

Le Pou qui Tousse

Vieille Halle aux Blés 49. Map 1 C3 ((02) 512 2871. AE, DC, MC, V. noon-2pm, 6:30-10pm Mon, Tue, Thu-Sat; noon-2pm Wed.

Sun. €€€€

Le Pou qui Tousse (the coughing louse) is a pleasant, family-run Sardinian restaurant just off Rue de Lombard, where you can watch the chefs prepare risotto with cuttlefish ink, grill Mediterranean fish or toss seafood salad in an openplan kitchen. The walls are hung with contemporary European art.

Osteria delle Stelle

Avenue L. Bertrand 53-61. (1 (02) 241 4808. ★ 💈 AE, DC, Mon-Sat. ***(3) (€) (€)**

A hundred years ago, the northern commune of Schaerbeek was one of Brussels' most elegant districts, and the splendid Art Nouveau interior of this Italian brasserie provides a poignant reminder of former glories. A delightful place to dine, fresh octopus salad, or sea bass caught on a line accompany gorgonzola polenta on the wide menu. The all-you-can-eat buffet of antipasti costs around just 15. It is wise to reserve.

NORTH AFRICAN AND CENTRAL AFRICAN

Whether the sharp, nutty tastes of central Africa or a spicy couscous from Morocco appeal, African cooking is among the world's most vibrant, and the sizeable communities from the Democratic Republic of Congo and North Africa have brought plenty of flavour to Brussels' dining scene. The city's more enterprising entrepreneurs have opened lavishly decorated "designer couscous" eateries, although many feel these are not entirely authentic. Central African food can vary sharply, and although the quality of the cooking is not always consistent, dishes such as the peanut-based chicken moambe and chicken yassa, made with limes, are deliciously simple. The relaxed atmosphere is great.

Gri Gri

Rue Basse 16. (02) 375 8202. ★ 🖾 AE, DC, MC, V. 6:30-11pm Mon; noon-3pm, 6:30-11pm Tue-Fri; 6:30-11pm Sat.

■ 1 101€

South of the city centre in the district of Uccle, this small, brightly decorated restaurant is an education for those unfamiliar with central

African cooking. The starters include spicy cod croquettes and crispy meat samusas (deep-fried mince-filled filo parcels) with a sweet sauce. Kenyan-style scampi with sweet curry and crocodile, chicken yassa (in a lime sauce) or stuffed crab are among the main courses. On occasion, the owner plays the drums for his customers.

La Pirogue

Rue Sainte-Anne 18. Map 2 D4. ((02) 511 3525. 3–10:30pm Tue-Fri, noon-10:30pm Sat & Sun. € €

If you find the cafés and restaurants on Place du Grand Sablon too formal, then this is the perfect antidote. Tucked away at the end of a nearby quiet alley, it has an extensive and secluded outdoor seating area where you can sip home-made ginger beer or tamarind juice into the early hours, or enjoy chicken yassa (made with onions and lime), spicy mutton chops or chicken in peanut sauce. Given the location, the prices are very low.

Kasbah

Rue Antoine Dansaert 20. Map 1 C2. ((02) 502 4026. ★ 🛭 AE, MC, V. noon-3pm 6:30pm-midnight daily. V T⊕ Y 🚍 🕏 € € €

The authentic ambiance in this stylish Moroccan restaurant is the perfect setting for the North African food on offer. Located in a 19thcentury town house near to the Bourse, the Kasbah's menu includes such classic dishes as lamb tajines, merguez sausages and grilled couscous. There is also a good selection of Moroccan wines to choose from.

Ile de Gorée

Rue Saint-Boniface 28. Map 2 E5. ((02) 513 5293. noon-11:30pm, Tue-Sat, 3-11:30pm Sun. X Œ €€

One of the legacies of Belgium's colonial past is an abundance of Congolese, Senegalese and Rwandan bars and eateries in the capital. This upmarket restaurant boasts traditional music, decor and cuisine, including smoked chicken wings, generous portions of couscous and spicy lamb. The service is leisurely and relaxed.

Medina

Avenue de la Couronne 2

((02) 640 4328. 🖨 AE, DC, MC, V. noon-2:30pm, 6-11pm Tue-Sun. **V 🕏 €**€

Moorish arches, high ceilings and blue-and-white tiles give this popular Moroccan restaurant in Ixelles a bright, airy feel. Lift the funnelled clay tajine lid that arrives over your food and the aroma of lemons, onions and fruit floods out, adding considerably to the appeal of the couscous and tajines that are the menu's mainstays. Other specialities include pigeonstuffed pastries and orange and cinnamon salad. A belly-dancer performs at the weekend, much to the delight of local patrons and their families.

Les Jardins de Bagatelle

Rue du Berger 17. Map 2 E5. ((02) 512 1276. AE, DC, MC, V. noon-2pm, 7-11:30pm Tue-Sat. Sat lunch. 🛣 🖼 🍽 🕯 🗐 🗐 🗐 🗐

A turn-of-the-century Ixelles townhouse houses one of the capital's most eclectic restaurants, where the leopard-skin chairs and tropical plants are offset by stately English porcelain. Equally lively, the kitchen bursts with flavours from across the globe. African and French influences predominate, with Congolese chicken, Louisanastyle prawns or salmon tartare with a creamy lemon sauce.

ASIAN AND PACIFIC RIM

Brussels has an enormous number of both Chinese and Vietnamese restaurants, ranging from drop-in snack bars to veritable miniature palaces. The Chaussée de Boondael student area in Ixelles has the best choice, with over 20 good restaurants. Lighter and more pungent than Chinese cuisine, Vietnamese food is simpler and more homely than Thai. Its emphasis on spicy soups and pancakes can be a diversion in a city of such rich food. Brussels' Chinese restaurants may not be entirely exceptional, but the city's Thai restaurants, especially the more expensive ones, are of high quality. Those keen on low-priced Indian food may be disappointed, but, again, the more lavish dining locations are excellent.

Hông Hoa

Rue du Pont de la Carpe 10. Map 1 C2. ((02) 502 8714.

noon−11pm daily. 🛣 🎁 📵

There are only eight tables in this cosy, crimson-walled restaurant near the Halles St-Géry. Service is fast and friendly and the food includes pancakes stuffed with pork and prawns, diced beef with onions and crispy duck with fresh slices of ginger.

La Cantonnaise

Rue Tenbosch 110. ((02) 344 7042. 11:30am–3pm, 7–11pm Mon–Fri; 5–11pm Sat & Sun. ★ 🛣 🍽 📵

The owner of this deceptively plain little restaurant off Chaussée de Waterloo once ran a more formal establishment, but realized that, by reducing the number of tables and dishes on offer, he could slash his prices without compromising on quality. The result is a restaurant and take-away offering some of the capital's tastiest Chinese food: freshly cooked dim sum and spicy beef and pork dishes are prepared following recipes by the owner's mother, who is a professional cook.

Le Pacifique

Boulevard du General Jacques 115. 🚺 (02) 640 5259. ★ 💋 MC, V. noon-3pm, 6:30-11pm Wed-Mon. 🖁 🍽 €

Le Pacifique is an unpretentious, hospitable Vietnamese restaurant in the bustling Chaussée de Boondael area of Ixelles, near the university. The prices are geared to the student market, but the cooking is subtle and makes considerable use of fresh herbs. Try clear, spicy soup with scampi and lemon, chicken and beansprout salad with mint or the restaurant's signature dish, pork-and-scampi stuffed pancakes.

Poussières d'Etoiles

Chaussée de Boondael 437. ((02) 640 7158. noon-2:30pm, 6:30pm-11:30 daily. 🖈 👃 🗊 🞵 🕯 €

Despite the kitschy decor - starry skylights, twinkling twigs and fluffy, feather-fringed lanterns - this newish Vietnamese restaurant near the university is a welcome addition to the city's low-cost culinary scene, attracting a trendy but laidback crowd. The range of dishes is unusually small, with the emphasis on quality produce rather than diversity: fragrant seafood stew with ginger and lime, caramelized langoustines and chicken with mushrooms and tangy ginger. Portions are on the delicate side.

La Citronnelle

Chaussée de Wavre 1377. ((02) 672 9843. AE, DC, MC, V. noon-2:30pm, 6:30-10:30pm ___ Tue – Fri & Sun; 6:30 – 10:30 pm Sat. **⊞** | (**9** | (**0** €)

This Vietnamese restaurant in Auderghem oozes charm whether you sit in the plant-filled interior or the pretty garden. Traditional music plays in the background, and the delicate dishes include crispy duck with ginger, grilled scampi with lemongrass and braised beef.

La Maison de Thailande

Rue Middelbourg 22. ((02) 672 2657. ★ 🛭 AE, DC, MC, V. noon-2pm, 7-10pm Tue-Fri. Tue lunch. ॄ 😝 🖼 €€

Lauded for its refined, delicious Thai cuisine, this restaurant in leafy Watermael-Boitsfort is run by a Thailand-obsessed Belgian photographer and his Thai wife. The "discovery menu" offers five starters and four main courses, offering a surprising array of delicate dishes, including fish and duck recipes.

La Porte des Indes

Avenue Louise 455. Map 2 D5. (02) 647 8651. ★ 🛭 AE, DC, MC, V. noon-2:30pm, 7-10:30pm daily. Sun lunch. ¶⊕¶ ▼ € €

Brussels is something of a wilderness for curry-lovers, but this upmarket Indian eatery provides considerable consolation. Lavishly decorated with antiques collected by owner Karl Steppe, who also runs the Blue Elephant, La Porte des Indes serves delicate traditional cuisine from the Pondicherr region. Both exotic and traditional dishes are on offer, including Parsee fish with mint and coriander wrapped in banana leaf parcels and beef Pondicherry-style. Choose the "Brass Plate" menu if you want to sample several dishes. Traditional drinks, including Indian beers, are also on offer as well as the ubiquitous sweet and sour lassi and various native lager beers.

Blue Elephant

Chaussée de Waterloo 1120. (102) 374 4962. ★ 🖾 AE, DC, MC, V. 🚺 noon-2:30pm, 7-10:30pm Sun-Fri;

This high-dining experience at the Bois de la Cambre end of Chaussée de Waterloo shares an owner with the famous British restaurant of the same name; both are run by the Belgian nomad and antiques collector Karl Steppe. Thai paraphernalia and exotic plants fill the dining room without cluttering it, and the subtly spicy food has the same admirable clarity, combining sweet, hot, sour and bitter tastes without blurring them. The lunch menu, at around 13, is wonderful.

MEDITERRANEAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN

Like most European cities, Brussels has some authentic Mediterranean restaurants dotted about town. Considering the size of the city's Turkish population, Turkish restaurants have yet to make their mark, but the number of good Lebanese

establishments is growing. Many specialize in meze and Lebanese kebabs, a quick way to eat well. Greek restaurants have also had a loyal following for decades.

L'Ouzerie

Chaussée d'Ixelles 235. Map 2 E5. (02) 646 4449. AE, MC, V. 7pm-midnight Mon-Sat (1am Fri & Sat). V 👃 🌘

This informal eatery stands out for the quality of its dishes and service. The decor is refreshingly simple, as is the menu, which avoids clichéd moussaka or grilled lamb, focusing instead on such traditional dishes as spinach and cheese stuffed pastries, grilled peppers and aubergine salad. L'Ouzerie can get crowded, so is worth booking in advance.

L'Ouzerie du Nouveau Monde

Chaussée de Boondael 290. (102) 649 8588. * 🗲 🖾 AE, DC, MC, V. noon-3pm, 6pm-midnight Sun-Fri; 6pm−1am Sat. V 📻 €

Along with L'Ouzerie, this authentic Greco-Cretan restaurant has breathed fresh life into Brussels' Greek restaurant scene, with low prices, delighful food and a warm welcome. The emphasis is on meze starters: grilled pepper salad, char-grilled ribs, stuffed vine leaves, spicy sausages, and Cypriot goat's cheese; around four per person should satisfy most appetites.

Al Barmaki

Rue des Eperonniers 67. Map 2 D3. ((02) 513 0834. MC, V. 7pm-midnight Mon-Sat. **V** 191 €€

A short walk from the Grand Place, this cavernous eatery is probably Brussels' best Lebanese restaurant. Al Barmaki specializes in meze, an assortment of small dishes that include tabouleh (a pungent mint, parsley and Bulgur wheat salad), felafel and hummus, as well as spicy sausages or chicken kebabs.

Sahbaz

Chaussée de Haecht 102–104. ((02) 217 0277. MC, V. 11:30-3pm, 6pm-midnight Mon-Tue, Thu-Sun. V & ♬ €€

Brussels' oldest Turkish restaurant opened in 1980, when a wave of migrants from Turkey arrived in the city. Now quite an institution, a mixed crowd flocks to the little restaurant to sample sheep's head soup, oven-baked lamb, minced meat in aubergine parcels and, for vegetarians, crispy rolls stuffed with sour goat's cheese. Turkishstyle omelettes and vegetable pizzas are also on offer.

SPANISH AND

PORTUGUESE

Both Spanish and Portuguese cuisines adapt well to the Brussels food scene, as Belgium's fresh seafood and emphasis on quality ingredients reflect Mediterranean traditions. The Hapsburg dynasty ruled both Belgium and Spain for generations, and it was their diplomatic movements through the centuries that introduced these new schools of cookery to Brussels.

Casa Manuel

Grand Place 34. Map 2 D3. ((02) 511 4746. AE, DC, MC, V. noon-2:30pm, 6:30-midnight daily. 🖼 👢 🞵 🎁 📵 📵

A great place in the heart of town to escape the crowds, this unshowy restaurant has been serving Spanish and Portuguese specialities since 1960. Eat paella, calamaris, and prawns in garlic as you are serenaded by a guitarist and, occasionally, the tuneful head waiter.

Le Forcado

Chaussée de Charleroi 192. ((02) 537 9220. ★ 🛭 AE, DC,

The fado music, cool 18th-century tiles and Renaissance lanterns lend an authentic atmosphere to Brussels' best Portuguese restaurant. The food includes mushroom gratin with port, salt-cod croquettes, grilled red mullet and marinated pork with clams as well as the national dish, fish stew. For dessert, try the home-made cakes and pastries, many flavoured with cinammon which can also be found on sale at the restaurant's shop just around the corner.

CENTRAL AND

EASTERN EUROPE

Spicy, warming dishes are sometimes welcome in a city renowned for its haute cuisine. From blinis with smoked salmon and caviar to rich goulash and hearty casseroles, the range of Central and Eastern European authentic dishes is a wide one for such a small capital, and for the most part the dishes are very reasonably priced for the high quality on offer.

Kocharata

Avenue Parc 4. (02) 537 4296. noon-1pm, 6pm-midnight Tue-Sun. €€

This simple restaurant, run by an elderly Bulgarian couple whose amiable welcome belies a canny business sense, has turned out substantial and good-value food for 30 years. It is tucked away in the heart of Saint-Gilles and has a loyal and ebullient following among locals and the city's east European community. Specialities include meatballs, kebabs, beetroot soup and a mountain goat's cheese served like a fondue.

Les Ateliers de la Grande Ile

Rue de la Grande Ile 33. (02) 512 8190. 🛭 AE, DC, MC, V.

7:30pm−2am Tue−Sun. **€**)**€**)

This Russian eaterie is popular with large parties whose top priority is having fun without being told to keep the noise down. Copious quantities of speciality vodkas are next on the list, with the food a resolute third. Chicken Kiev is a favourite, not bad considering the speed at which it arrives. Table-thumping and sing-songs are regular here. This is the place to go if you want to let your hair down, but watch out for the hangover-inducing quaffability of the vodkas.

LATIN AMERICAN

This exotic cuisine was brought to Brussels after World War II. Providing a light-hearted and less calorific cuisine to the native Belgian, South American restaurants are known for their warm. relaxed ambience and reasonable prices. Fresh ingredients and fine fillets of meat are priorities in the kitchens. The jazzy atmosphere is often accompanied by live salsa and pre-dinner cocktail menus can be innovative and sometimes seductively powerful.

El Papagayo

Place Rouppe 6. **Map** 1 C4. (02) 514 5083. 4pm-2am Mon-Fri; 6pm−2am Sat & Sun. 🖬 🎁 📵

Across the road from the majestic Comme Chez Soi, this Latino restaurant compensates for its slightly less refined cuisine with a relaxed and intimate atmosphere, perfect for relaxing in after a hard day's sightseeing. There are three floors, each with two or three tiny dining areas. The walls are unpainted brick and the innovative tables are converted iron sewing-machine stands. The South American food includes raw fish with lime, chili con carne, spicy pork stew and a wide range of salads. The cocktail menu is terrific. Unusually for Brussels, freshly made cocktails are on offer; exotic fruit juices and fruit pulp are poured over crushed ice and mixed with a powerful variety of spirits and tequilas, including gold tequila and Mexican brandies.

Cantina Cubana

Rue des Grands-Carmes 6. Map 1 C3. ((02) 502 6540. 💋 MC, V. 🛨 Jun-Sep: 8pm-midnight daily; ___ Oct−May: 7–11:30pm daily. **€**€

In a little street across the way from Manneken Pis, this small Cuban diner has brought a welcome taste of the Caribbean to central Brussels Sway to the sound of traditional guitar in the background while admiring the photographs on the white-washed walls and the daily menu chalked up on a blackboard. The emphasis is on chicken, fish and pork dishes - chicken with coconut sauce, cod with salsa verde, spare ribs and pork with sour black bean sauce - as well as exotic fruit drinks and cocktails. Tropical fruit dishes are on offer for dessert, including mango sorbet and fruit crème brulée. The service is very friendly.

Tierra del Fuego

Rue Berckmans 14. ((02) 537 4272. 🛭 MC, V. 🚺 7–11pm Mon– Fri; 6:30pm–2am Sat–Sun. 📻 🎵

The bar-restaurant of Brussels' Latin-American cultural centre near Place Stéphanie is an accomplished blend of Old and New World cultures, with Spanish-style Moorish touches, offset by embossed ceiling stars and pictures of snow-capped peaks that recall South America's ancient Inca culture. The welljudged cuisine includes guacamole, marinated raw fish, burritos and Argentine beef, while you can relax after dinner with a Cuban cigar and South American coffees.

FISH AND SEAFOOD

The tradition of seafood in Belgium is a long and illustrious one. With more Michelin-starred restaurants in the country than France, the centuries-old refinement of recipes and dishes owes something to the exceptional quality of fresh produce available from the ports. Even today fresh fish and shellfish are delivered to Brussels within two hours of the catch; sole, plaice and cod among the regular deliveries, with baskets of shrimps caught by horseback riders on the coast ferried daily to market. Both French and Flemish schools influence the cooking, which includes historic favourites such as Ostend sole and grilled lobster.

Bij den Boer

Quai aux Briques 60. Map 1 C1 (02) 512 6122. 🛨 💈 AE, DC, MC, V. ☐ noon-2:30pm, 6-10:30pm Mon–Sat. & ★ 🎁

This Flemish-run restaurant is one of the most reasonably priced and authentic brasseries on the Vismarkt, or Old Fish Market. The mirror panels and check tablecloths give it a local, unpretentious feel, but the kitchen offers accomplished versions of classic fish dishes, including monkfish with oysters.

L'Achepot

Place Ste-Catherine 1. Map 1 C2. ((02) 511 6221. 💋 V. noon-3pm, 6:30-10:30pm daily. ⊞ X €€

The best reason to visit this earthy but nonetheless stylish bistro-tavern near the Vismarkt is to try the poisson du jour (fish dish of the day), a cheap, fresh and invariably delicious meal such as whiting in lemon and butter with plain boiled potatoes. The menu also features traditional brasserie fare, including chicken breast with tarragon sauce, goat's cheese parcels and spare ribs.

La Marée

Rue de Flandre 99. Map 1 B1. ((02) 511 0040. 🛨 🥃 AE, DC, MC, V. noon-2pm, 6:30-10pm Wed-Sat; noon-2:30pm Sun. હ €€

Simplicity is the hallmark of this cosily unpretentious fish restaurant located near Place Ste-Catherine. The service is extremely professional and the pared-down, elegant cooking puts many more expensive establishments to shame. Try the fried cod with tartare sauce, skate wings with butter or one of eight varieties of stewed mussel preparations. When in season, plain grilled lobster is a highlight, served with green herb sauce.

La Truite d'Argent

Quai au Bois à Bruler 23. Map 1 C1. ((02) 219 9546. ★ 🛭 AE, DC, MC, V. noon-2:30pm, 7-11:30pm Mon-Fri; 7-11:30pm Sat.

This opulent but intimate restaurant in a 19th-century townhouse is among the best restaurants on the Vismarkt. The fresh, inventive and uncluttered cuisine includes beautifully presented millefeuille of salmon, North Sea bouillabaisse, six different preparations of lobster, a splendidly nostalgic

prawn cocktail and steamed monkfish with spinach. The waiters go out of their way to make you feel special, and the wine list is varied and far from overpriced.

Scheltema

Rue des Dominicains 7. Map 2 D2. ((02) 512 2084. AE, MC. 11:30am-3pm, 6pm-11:30pm Mon-Thu; 11:30am-3pm, 6pm-12:30am Fri & Sat. 🖼 €€€€

This superb Belle Epoque brasserie off Rue des Bouchers in the heart of Brussels is a place for a celebration, with a cheery atmosphere and upmarket fish cuisine. Although the prices reflect the central location and the proliferation of tourists, the food is excellent and generous, with reasonably priced set menus. Dishes include sole and scallops in champagne vinaigrette, and lobster and salmon grilled with orange.

De Matelote

Haarstraat 9, Antwerp. (03) 231 3207. ★ 💈 AE, DC, MC, V.

noon-2pm, 7-10pm Mon-Sat. Mon & Sat lunch, Jul. **⋴⋴** اوا

Located in the old town, the cosy, 12-table De Matelote is reputed to be Antwerp's best fish restaurant. The menu varies daily and depending on the season, but typical dishes include sea scallops cooked with a stock of mushrooms and sorrel and langoustines in a light curry sauce. Reservations essential.

L'Ecailler du Palais Royal

Rue Bodenbroeck 18. Map 2 D4 ((02) 512 8751. ★ 🥃 AE, DC, MC, V. noon-2:30pm, 7-10:30pm Mon-Sat. **₹ ∏ ©©©©©**

Despite its awesome reputation and a star location on Place du Grand Sablon, this unshowy restaurant is the epitome of elegant discretion. It specializes in Frenchinfluenced fish and seafood, with produce whose high quality lends itself to simple preparations: monkfish with herb butter, lobster ravioli and heavenly prawn croquettes. The excellence, however, is reflected in the pricing: even a lunchtime dish of the day will set you back around 25.

Sea Grill

Rue du Fosse-aux-Loups 47. Map 2 D2. 🚺 (02) 227 3120. ★ 🛭 AE, DC, MC, V. ☐ noon-2:30pm, 7-10:30pm Mon-Sat. Sat lunch. & €€€€

When the Swedish hotel group Radisson SAS hired French chef Yves Mattagne to run the restaurant at their new Brussels hotel in 1991, they could never have anticipated his success. Before the end of the century, he had won two Michelin stars and a reputation as the best fish cook in Belgium. Mattagne's classic dishes include sea bass roasted in sea salt, crab with olive oil and thyme, Breton lobster and sumptuous seafood platters, although the daily suggestions are usually also worth careful attention. The decor is modern and functional, but service is superb.

Vegetarian

Because of the Belgian dedication to red meat, Brussels is not a haven for the vegetarian. Healthy establishments, many located in the student district of Chaussée de Boondael, serve wholesome dishes and often sell takeaways and organic supplies.

Dolma

Chaussée d'Ixelles 329. Map 2 E5. (1 (02) 649 8981. AE, DC, MC, V. noon-2pm, 7-9:30pm Mon-Sat. V 7 101€

This eatery near Place Flagey specializes in Tibetan dishes, with a suitably ethnic decor. Its hallmark is the reasonably priced all-you-can-eat vegetarian buffet. Snacks are on sale in the organic shop just next door.

Shanti

Avenue A. Buyl 68. ((02) 649 4096. ★ 🛭 AE, DC, MC, V. 🚺 noon-2pm, 7–10pm Tue-Sat. **V** ¶**③**¶ **⑥⑥**

This Ixelles eatery is one of Brussels' most popular vegetarian restaurants, albeit not against that much competition. The atmosphere is relaxed, with classical music at lunchtime and jazz in the evening. Try fragrant rice, aubergine or tandoori fish.

Tsampa

Rue de Livourne 109. (1 (02) 647 0367. noon-2pm, 7-9:30pm Mon-Sat. V & ■ 🍽 🌘

This plant-filled restaurant has an organic produce shop at the front and an Asian-inspired menu drawing on Thai and Indian cuisine in the rear dining area. Organic wines are served with curries and basmati rice and Tibetan-style ravioli and cheese dishes, such as deep-fried pastries stuffed with sheep's cheese. With a lively crowd composed of students and the city's youth, the restaurant has a cheery, bohemian atmosphere.

Cafés and Bars

WITH A WATERING hole on almost every street offering world-famous quality ales, Brussels fully deserves its reputation as a paradise for beer-lovers. Taverns, cafés and bars all serve a range of at least twenty beers, as well as a handsome variety of continental coffees, herbal teas, fruit juice and spirits. Most establishments stay open from morning to midnight, and often later at weekends.

CLASSIC CAFES

 $\mathbf{A}^{ ext{DRINK}}$ on the Grand Place is an essential part of any visit to Brussels, although costs can be high. Perhaps the best, and one of the best priced, is Le Roy d'Espagne (see p43), a huge two-tiered bar housed in the bakers' guildhouse with prime views from its terrace. The terraces at neighbouring La Brouette offer similar views, as does Le Cygne, where Karl Marx worked on The Communist Manifesto during the early 1840s.

Moments from the Grand Place lies Au Bon Vieux Temps, a quiet bar in a 17thcentury building with the homely feel of an English pub. Le Cirio, near the Bourse, is a quintessential café from the 1900s, beloved by fans of Belle Epoque decor. Close by is A la Mort Subite, one of the capital's most celebrated establishments. Immense wooden tables, peeling mirrors and brusque service add to the appeal. Moving eastward to Place de Brouckère, the Hôtel Métropole contains a fabulous, opulent Belle Epoque bar, The 19th, as well as a heated outdoor terrace.

The Place du Grand Sablon is a favourite area for cafégoers and those who want to catch the feel of the bustling city. The most upmarket spot here is Au Vieux Saint-Martin. Les Salons du Sablon, nearby, is a luxurious tea-room run by top chocolatiers Wittamer. This family-run business uses a century's worth of skill to create delicious confections.

SPECIALIST BEER BARS

BEER BUFFS should head to Chez Moeder Lambic, near the town hall in St-Gilles. A small and chaotic bar with a few tables scattered outside

on the pavement, it serves over 1,000 beers. The choice covers most of Belgium's 400 or so varieties, as well as exotic brews from overseas, many customers cope with the choice by picking a letter from the alphabetized menu.

ART NOUVEAU

A FORMER haunt of Surrealist painter René Magritte, Le **Greenwich** is now the city's premier venue for chess enthusiasts; matches run around the clock. Also celebrated is Les Fleurs en Papier Doré, the meeting point for Belgian Surrealists in the late 1920s and still lively. Café Falstaff, opened in 1903 by the Bourse, has original Horta-designed furniture. South of Place du Grand Sablon, Le Perroquet attracts a young crowd, keen on its filled pittas. The best-known Art Nouveau bar. De Ultieme Hallucinatie, is nearby.

COSMOPOLITAN

RUSSELS HAS A thriving social Becene for the young and fashionable, most of which takes place around Place St-Géry in the Lower Town. Trendy, but not pretentious or stuffy, the clutch of bars here are mostly modernist in design, with some restored historic features. Zebra is a tastefully minimal bare brick and metal bar with a huge terrace that attracts crowds on warm evenings. Opposite Zebra is **Mappa Mundo**, a two-storey oak-panelled drinking spot which offers light meals and a good beer selection. Nearby the cavernous Beurs Café attracts the artistic crowd with its DJ sets and hip sounds. L'Archiduc boasts a breathtaking Art Deco interior and live jazz

performances (see p159).

DIRECTORY

CLASSIC

Le Roy d'Espagne

Grand Place 1. Map 2 D3. (02) 513 0807.

Au Bon Vieux Temps

Rue du Marché aux Herbes 12. Map 2 D3. ((02) 217 2626.

Le Cirio

Rue de la Bourse 18.

Map 1 C2. ((02) 512 1395.

A la Mort Subite

Rue Montagne aux Herbes 7. Map 2 D2. ((02) 513 1318.

Au Vieux Saint-Martin

Place du Grand Sablon 38. Map 2 D4. ((02) 512 6476.

Les Salons du Sablon

Place du Grand Sablon 12. Map 2 D4. ((02) 512 3742.

SPECIALIST BEER BARS

Chez Moeder Lambic

Rue de Savoie 68. (02) 539 1419.

ART NOUVEAU

Le Greenwich Rue des Chartreux 7.

Map 1 C2. ((02) 511 4167.

La Fleurs en Papier Doré Rue des Alexiens 55.

Map 1 C4. ((02) 511 1659.

Café Falstaff

Rue Henri Maus 21.

(02) 511 8789.

Le Perroquet

Rue Watteau 31. Map 2 D4.

(02) 512 9922.

De Ultieme Hallucinatie

Rue Royale 316. Map 2 E2. (02) 217 0614.

COSMOPOLITAN

Zebra

Place St-Géry 33-35.

Map 1 C2. ((02) 511 0901.

Mappa Mundo

Rue Pont de la Carpe 2-6. (02) 514 3555.

Beurs Café

Rue Auguste Orts 28.

(02) 550 0350.

Light Meals and Snacks

BESIDES ITS TRADITIONAL taverns, luxurious patisseries and lively cafés, not to mention the celebrated chip and sticky waffle stands, Brussels is home to a growing number of fashionable quick lunch venues. Several ethnic restaurants also offer hearty, inexpensive snacks.

BREAKFASTS

PRUSSELS WAS the birthplace of Le Pain Quotidien, the designer breakfast phenomenon, which now boasts chic outlets in New York, Munich and Paris. Wholesome breakfasts and lunches, featuring organic yogurt and wholemeal breads, are served around communal wooden tables. Founded in 1829, speculoo biscuit specialist Dandoy is an institution, popular with locals and visitors alike for coffee and homemade waffles. La Maison de Paris has delicious croissants.

TAVERNS

THE TRADITIONAL refreshment of Belgian beer and shrimp or cheese croquettes can be found in the city's historic taverns. Le Paon Royal is an insight into true Brussels style. Plattesteen serves steaks and salads. Nearby Mokafe is an elegant café, perfect for a bowl of pasta or a croque monsieur.

CHIP AND WAFFLE SHOPS

The Warm smell of frites and sweet waffles is part of Brussels life. Maison Antoine, whose clients have included Johnny Hallyday and the Rolling Stones, is the most renowned friterie. Fritland, near the Grand Place, is also something of an institution.

SANDWICHES AND SNACKS

Most taverns and butchers offer straightforward cheese, ham and salami sandwiches, but for tartines (Britishstyle sandwiches) or baguettes (French bread), try the elegant Lunch Company. Belgian action star Jean-Claude van Damme favours the downtown Au Suisse, which has been in the business since 1873 and offers a large choice of fillings, plus its popular double hot-dog. The Flemish Cultural Centre, De Markten, sells filling and wholesome snacks.

TEA ROOMS

Belgium is noted for topquality pastries and cakes, which easily rival its celebrated chocolates. Au Flan Breton has been baking fruit-filled cream pastries for nearly a century. Uptown, Passiflore serves heavenly chocolate concoctions. Ice-cream enthusiasts should head south to Zizi's, a family-run, traditional parlour.

ETHNIC

M IDDLE EASTERN snacks and take-away food are very well priced at Orientalia. Lebanese L'Express is often lauded as the best pitta joint in Brussels. L'Orfeo has a good selection of pittas and fresh salads. Downtown, Chinese restaurant Chaochow City has a bargain lunch room. The Italian bistro Intermezzo serves excellent Italian pasta, with many non-meat sauces.

VEGETARIAN

THE DELICIOUS quiches and salads at Arcadi, near the Galéries Saint-Hubert, are largely vegetarian. For organic vegan fare, Den Teepot is recommended; it offers a good daily dish or soup of the day, and vegan fruit tarts.

DIRECTORY

BREAKFASTS

Dandov

Rue Charles Buls 14–18. (02) 512 6588.

La Maison de Paris Rue de Namur 89. Map 2 E4. (02) 511 1195.

Le Pain Quotidien
Rue Antoine Dansaert 16.
Map 1 B1. (02) 502
2361.

TAVERNS

Mokafe

Galerie du Roi 9. ((02) 511 7870.

Le Paon Royal

Rue du Vieux Marché aux Grains 6. **Map** 1 C2. (02) 513 0868.

Plattesteen

Rue du Marché au Charbon 41. **Map** 1 C3. (02) 512 8203.

CHIP AND WAFFLE SHOPS

Fritland

Rue Maus.

Maison Antoine
Place Jourdan 1. Map 3
B4. (* (02) 230 5456.

SANDWICHES AND SNACKS

Au Suisse

73-75 Blvd Anspach. (02) 512 9589.

Orientalia

129 Ch de Mons. **Map** 1 A3. (02) 520 7575.

The Lunch Company

Rue de Namur 16. **Map** 2 E4. (02) 502 0976.

TEA ROOMS

Au Flan Breton

Chaussée d'Ixelles 54. **Map** 2 E5. **(** *(02) 511 8708.*

Passiflore

Rue du Bailli 97.

(02) 538 4210.

Zizi's

Rue de la Mutualité 57a. (02) 344 7081.

ETHNIC

Chaochow City

Boulevard Anspach 89. Map 1 C3. (02) 512 8283.

De Markten

Rue du Marché aux Grains 5. **(** *(02)* 512 3425.

L'Express

Rue des Chapeliers 8. **Map** 2 D3. (102) 512 8883.

Intermezzo

Rue des Princes 16. (02) 218 0311.

L'Orfeo

Rue Haute 20. **Map** 1 C4. (02) 512 6041.

VEGETARIAN

Arcadi

Rue d'Arenberg 1b. **Map** 2 D2. (* *(02) 511 3343*.

Den Teepot

Rue des Chartreux 66.

Map 1 C2. (02) 511

9402

SHOPPING IN BRUSSELS

Brussels is an ideal place to shop for luxury goods, from its glorious chocolate shops to quirky market finds and cutting-edge fashion. Street

markets are popular year round,

or, if your tastes are more glitzy, head for Avenue Louise and Boulevard de Waterloo, where top designers are represented; for the original creations



Belgian chocolates

of the Antwerp Six and newwave fashions, try Rue Antoine Dansaert. For specialist stores, including home decoration, go to rues Haute and Blaes. Many mainstream stores are located

on Brussels' longest pedestrian shopping street, Rue Neuve. Other pockets of interest lie a short detour from downtown, in Uccle, St-Gilles and Ixelles.



A colourful designer fashion boutique on Rue Neuve

OPENING HOURS

There are no set opening times in Brussels, but most places are open at least between 10am and 5pm.

Mainstream shops in arcades, malls and the Rue Neuve area typically open at 9.30am and close between 6 and 7pm. Late-night shopping runs at some places until 8pm on Friday. Otherwise it depends on where the shop is located and what it is selling.

Mondays and Wednesday or Saturday afternoons are the likeliest times for smaller shops to close (some shut for lunch daily), while many now open for part of Sunday (not supermarkets). For late-night purchases, the White Night chain stays open until 1am. From mid-July to mid-August, many specialist shops, cafés and restaurants close.

How to Pay

Cash is the preferred method of payment, and a surprising number of shops will not accept credit cards, including most supermarkets and many smaller establishments.

At small shops discounts are sometimes given on the more expensive items when they are paid for in cash.

VAT EXEMPTION

NON-EU residents visiting Belgium are entitled to VAT refunds on purchases of over €125 spent in one store. Deducting VAT from the selling price gives a saving of 5.6 to 17.35 per cent. When shopping, look for the "Tax-Free Shopping" logo. After purchase ask for a Global Refund or Tax-Free Shopping Cheque. This will be stamped by customs on your way out of the EU, and refunds made on the spot at the airport. Customs often ask to see goods, so carry them as hand luggage.

SALES

SALES DATES IN Belgium are fixed by law. The summer sales run from July 1 to 31 and the January sales from the first weekday after New Year's Day until the end of the month. Discounts start at 10 per cent and gradually drop, reaching 40–50 per cent in the last week.

DEPARTMENT STORES AND SHOPPING ARCADES

THE MAIN department store in the city is Inno. It is not spectacular by British and American standards. Brussels' equivalent to Harrods toy department is Serneels on Place Louise, in the luxury Wiltshire shopping complex. Traditional men's outfitter Degand has recently started selling luxury gift items.

Rue Neuve contains mainstream stores, including popular Dutch stores – We for clothes and Blokker and Hema for household goods and toys – and French cutprice store Tati. There are three shopping malls at either end of the road: the Anspach and Monnaie Centres at Place de la Monnaie and City 2 at Place Rogier.

Window shopping in the city's numerous boutiques or arcades is a popular Sunday pastime. The best arcade is the recently renovated



Galéries Saint-Hubert historic 19th-century shopping arcade



Browsers enjoying the Place du Jeu de Balle market in the sunshine

Elvis Pompilio's

Galéries Saint-Hubert which dates from 1847 (see p47). It houses several jewellers, and luxury leather bag maker Delvaux, as well as chocolate shops and smart boutiques, including popular women's fashion designer Kaat Tilley.

Less conservative is the Galéries d'Ixelles to the north of the city centre, where a bustling collection of cafés

and tiny ethnic shops thrives in the city's trendy Matonge district. A stone's throw away, Galéries Toison d'Or and the adiacent Galéries Louise are mostly full of chain and adults' high-street European fashion boutiques.

hats and bags Downtown towards the Grand Place is the quaint Galérie Bortier, the place to visit for collectors of antiquarian books and maps.

MARKETS

TRIP TO Brussels must A include the city's fabulous street markets, which offer anything from cheap flowers and food to second-hand bicycles and fine antiques.

Good for unusual fine antiques and a pleasant stroll is the weekend market on Place du Grand Sablon (from 9am, Saturday and Sunday). In the ancient Marolles district, the flea market on the Place du Jeu de Balle (daily, 7am to 1pm) is a colourful, eclectic affair.

Most spectacular is the huge vibrant market around Gare du Midi (Sundays, 6am to 1pm). with its mix of North African and home-grown delicacies.

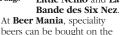
It has a staggering blend of Moroccan and southern European treats, including oils, spices, and exotic herbs.

BEST BUYS AND SPECIALIST SHOPS

OR CHOCOLATE, choose from Pierre Marcolini's edible sculptures and gateaux, or the internationally known fine

chocolatiers Wittamer and Godiva. Their flagship stores are in the Place du Grand Sablon. Fine biscuit specialist Dandov can be found just behind the Grand Place.

Serious collectors of comic-strip memorabilia should visit Little Nemo and La



spot or delivered. Milliner Elvis Pompilio produces hand-made hats at his pilot store. The best of Belgian fashion, including Dries Van Noten and Ann Demeulemeester, is on offer at upmarket store Stijl.

BOOKSHOPS AND MAGAZINES

BRANCH OF English book-A store Waterstone's (see p163) sells English-language magazines, fiction and reference material. Nijinsky (15 Rue de Page) is great for secondhand English-language fiction. French store Fnac at the City 2 mall also has a good Englishlanguage section. For international papers, go to Librairie de Rome, 16 Rue Jean Stas.

DIRECTORY

DEPARTMENT STORES AND SHOPPING ARCADES

Rue Neuve 111. Map 2 D2. Avenue Louise 12. Map 2 D5.

(02) 211 2111.

Galéries d'Ixelles

Chaussée d'Ixelles. Map 2 E5.

Galérie Bortier

Rue de la Madeleine 17-19 Map 2 D3.

BEER

Reer Mania

Chaussée de Wavre 174-178. Map 2 E5.

(02) 512 1788.

CHOCOLATE

Pierre Marcolini

Place du Grand Sablon 39. Map 2 D4.

(02) 514 1206.

Godiya

Grand Place 22. Map 2 D3.

(02) 511 2537.

Wittamer

Place du Grand Sablon 6-12. Map 2 D4.

(02) 512 3742.

Dandoy

Rue au Beurre 31. Map 2 D3.

(02) 511 0326.

FASHION

Elvis Pompilio

Rue Pierres 29. Map 1 C3.

(02) 511 1188.

Stijl

Rue Antoine Dansaert 74. Map 1 B2.

(02) 512 0313.

CARTOONS

Little Nemo

Boulevard Lemonnier 25.

(02) 514 6804.

La Bande des Six Nez

Chaussée de Wavre 179. Map 2 E5.

(02) 513 7258.

ENTERTAINMENT IN BRUSSELS

ITHIN EASY REACH Of London, Paris and Amsterdam, Brussels is an established stop on the international touring circuit, with regular visits from the world's best orchestras, soloists, rock bands and dance troupes. It is also a great place to experience



Ecran Total

Cinema poster

of medieval music, jazz and contemporary dance. Brussels has several cinemas showing a wide range of films, including movies from the US and Europe (many in English). Professional theatre here is mostly performed in French or Flemish. Outside the city's major venues, the

Belgium's thriving cultural scene, which quality of entertainment can vary, but is especially distinguished in the fields jazz and blues bars offer good free gigs.



The 19th-century interior of La Monnaie Opera House

OPERA, CLASSICAL MUSIC AND DANCE

Brussels' opera house, La Monnaie, has a unique claim to fame: on August 25, 1830, an aria in Auber's opera La Muette de Portici provoked the capital's citizens into rioting against their Dutch rulers, setting the country on the road to independence (see pp34-5). Now the house is among Europe's finest venues for opera. Its current artistic director Antonio Pappano will join London's Royal Opera House when his contract runs out in 2003. The season runs from September to June, with tickets starting at €7.50. Most productions are sold out many months in advance.

Designed by Victor Horta in 1928, the Palais des Beaux-**Arts** is the capital's flagship cultural venue, with an exhibition space, a theatre, film archives, a small cinema and Brussels' largest auditorium for classical music (see p60). Following sustained criticism

of the accoustics, the Art Nouveau hall has recently been renovated. The venue is home to the Belgian National Orchestra, which has grown in stature under Russian conductor Yuri Simonov. Again, the season runs from September to June, with tickets costing from €7.50 to €75.

In March, the city hosts a trend-making contemporary classical festival, Ars Musica, with an emphasis on new works and an impressively avant-garde feel. In the holiday season, the Brussels' Summer

Festival offers concerts on the Grand Place as well as informal events in the Town Hall and the Palais des Beaux-Arts (see pp 62-7) nearby. In September and October, the Festival of Flanders is a galaheavy event showcasing top Belgian artists as well as worldfamous singers and conductors. Over the past 15 years

Belgium has won a reputation for being on the cutting edge of contemporary dance. Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker and her company Rosas put on regular performances, as do several other major Belgian companies, at the beautiful Art Deco Kaaitheater or the Halles de Schaerbeek, a 19th-century former market. Although Brussels has no ballet company of its own, it attracts major European touring companies including Jiri Kylian's outstanding Nederlands Dans Theater.

ROCK AND JAZZ

NTWERP MAY be the centre of Belgium's alternative rock scene, but Brussels has several superb venues for rock gigs. Big names such as Aerosmith and Céline Dion



Le Botanique cultural centre in Brussels' Rue Royale

perform at Forest-National, a modern arena southeast of the city centre. The Ancienne Belgique downtown is a medium-sized venue hosting hip or up-and-coming guitar bands, folk, Latin and techno acts; Le Botanique, the French-speaking Community's cultural centre, has a strong if intermittent roster of rock and electronic music, including a marvellous ten-day festival, Les Nuits Botanique, held at the end of September.

The best places to catch good jazz acts are Travers, a cramped, intimate bar frequented by most of the country's top players, and Sounds, a larger venue which places an equal emphasis on blues music. On Saturday and Sunday afternoons, it is worth stopping by L'Archiduc, a refurbished Art Deco bar in the centre of town where you can find jazz musicians in relaxed, informal mood.

CINEMA

NORTH OF THE CITY, by the Heysel exhibition centre, the Kinepolis cinema is a state-of-the-art 28-screen multiplex which rivals US giants for consumer comfort. It screens all the Hollywood blockbusters and major French and British releases; one IMAX screen shows

and adventure films. Parking is free. In the centre of Brussels, the major cinema is UGC/De

a selection of nature

Brouckère, a modern 12-screen complex with a standard programme of mainstream releases. A second, smaller UGC is in Avenue de la Toison d'Or.

The Arenberg/Galeries, in the Galéries Saint-Hubert, is another quality cinema with comfortable auditoriums and an arthouse slant. From late June to September, it hosts "Ecran Total", a festival combining as yet unreleased films from around the world with established classics, often in remastered or "director's" versions. Perhaps the best of

Brussels' cinemas is the Musée du Cinema, part of the Palais des Beaux-Arts complex. Home to one of the world's largest film archives, the museum shows classics, from Chaplin to Tarantino, for just €2. Silent films are accompanied by live piano music.

Tickets for most cinemas are around €6.20. Visit www.cinebel.be to find out which film is playing where.

INFORMATION

THE PRINCIPAL SOURCE OF entertainment information in English is The Bulletin magazine, which has comprehensive listings of forthcoming events in Brussels and the rest of Belgium. The magazine is published weekly and is available at newsstands throughout the country. Costing around €2.50, it has excellent coverage of news, travel ideas and a pot-pourri of information about life in the capital. The magazine's listings section, What's On, is also distributed free to hotels in the capital.

The company that publishes The Bulletin also owns an English-language website

> (www.xpats.com). The portal includes cultural information, news, weather reports and useful links

for expats. The central Tourist Information Office (see p162) offers free maps, as well as information

about arts and Magazines on sale in Brussels entertainment events, and publishes a

calendar of major events. Advisors will assist in the booking of tickets.

French-speakers should try the monthly Kiosque, which offers capsule roundups of major arts events and a regular coupon with a variety of free ticket offers. Two daily papers, Le Soir and La Libre Belgique, publish cultural supplements on Wednesdays, with detailed arts and cinema listings. For Flemish-speakers, Humo or the daily newspaper De Morgen, also offer information on events and exhibitions.

DIRECTORY

HALLS AND THEATRES

Kaaitheater

Square Sainteclette 20.

(02) 210 5959.

La Monnaie

Place de la Monnaie. Map 1 D2.

(07) 023 3939.

Palais des Beaux-Arts

Rue Ravenstein 23. Map 2 E3.

(02) 507 8200.

Halles de Schaerbeek

Rue Royale Sainte-Marie 22.

(02) 218 2107.

MUSIC VENUES

Forest-National

Avenue du Globe 36.

(02) 340 2111.

Ancienne Belgique

Boulevard Anspach 110. Map 1 C3.

(02) 548 2424.

Le Botanique

Rue Royale 236. Map 2 E2.

(02) 218 3732.

Travers

Rue Traversière 5. Map 2 F1.

(02) 218 4086.

Sounds

Rue de la Tulipe 28.

(02) 512 9250.

L'Archiduc

Rue Antoine Dansaert 6.

Map 1 B2.

(02) 512 0652.

CINEMA

Kinepolis

Avenue du Centenaire 1, Brunarck

(02) 474 2600.

UGC/De Brouckère

Place de Brouckère.

Map 1 D2. ((02) 0900 10440.

UGC/Toison d'Or

Avenue de la Toison d'Or. Map 2 E5.

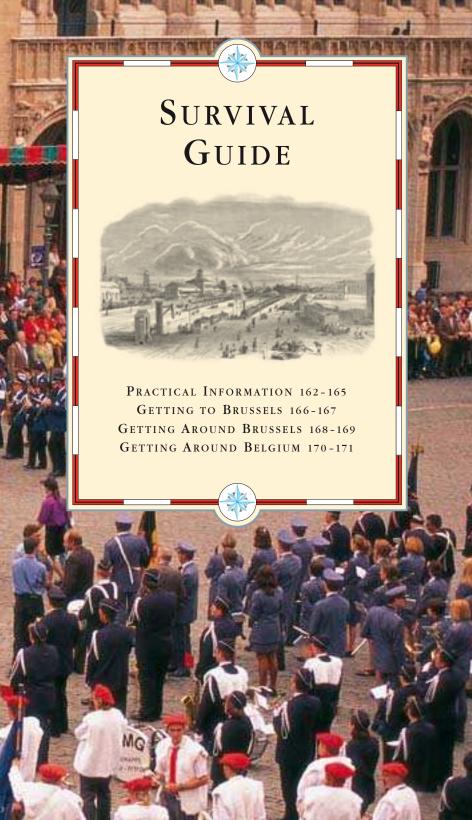
((02) 0900 10440.

Arenberg Galeries

Galérie de la Reine 26.

(02) 0900 27865.





PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Atthough comfortable with its status as a major political and business centre, Brussels has sometimes struggled with its role as a tourist destination. It can be hard to find all but the most obvious sights: the

same goes for inexpensive hotels. Both the Upper and Lower Town can easily be negotiated on foot, which might be a relief to those visitors reluctant to take



Guided tour walking group

on the challenging Belgian drivers and roads. Brussels is a very cosmopolitan city, and its residents, many of whom are foreigners themselves, are usually charming and friendly, with most speaking English. The tourist

office goes out of its way to help travellers enjoy the city and provides help with everything from finding hidden sights to medical and financial information.

CUSTOMS AND IMMIGRATION

 $B^{ ext{ELGIUM}}$ is one of the 11 EU countries to have signed the 1985 Schengen agreement, which means travellers moving from one Schengen country to another are not subject to border controls. If you enter Belgium from France, Luxembourg, Germany or the Netherlands, you will not have to show your passport, although it is wise to carry it in case of trouble. Bear in mind that it is a legal requirement in Belgium to carry ID on the person at all times. Britain does not belong to Schengen, so travellers coming from the UK must present a valid passport and hold proof of onward passage when entering Belgium. This also applies to US, Australian, Canadian and other Commonwealth citizens.

British travellers no longer benefit from duty-free goods on their journey. Travellers from non-EU countries are still entitled to refunds of VAT (21 per cent on most products) if they spend more than £127 in a single transaction.

TOURIST INFORMATION

BRUSSELS IS RARELY crowded, so you should not expect to queue at major attractions and museums unless a special event or show is taking place. If you are planning to do extensive sightseeing, the one-day tram and bus pass (see pp168–9) is a must. Better still, pick up a Brussels Card from the tourist office (see below). Drivers should avoid rush hour (Monday to Friday

from 8am to 9:30am and 5pm to 7pm), although public transport is manageable throughout the day. Many of the city's prestige hotels slash their rates at weekends, when business custom slacks off, so it can be worthwhile timing a short visit around this. Although Brussels' reputation as a rainy city is overplayed, bring a raincoat or waterproof jacket in summer and warm clothing for winter.

The Tourist and Information Office publishes a variety of maps, guides and suggested tours. It offers discount coupons for a number of major attractions at a cost of £15.62, as well as the Brussels Card for £30, which includes a three-day travel pass, free access to 30 museums and a colour guide to the city.

OPENING HOURS

Most shops and businesses are open Mondays to Saturdays from 10am to 6pm, with some local shops closing for an hour during the day.

Supermarkets are usually open from 9am to 8pm. For latenight essentials and alcohol, "night shops" stay open to 1am or 2am. Banking hours usually run on weekdays from 9am to 1pm and 2 to 4pm. Most branches have 24-hour ATMs, and many have Visa or Euro points with Maestro, where foreign cashcards can be used. Many sights are closed on Mondays. Public museums are usually open on Tuesdays to Sundays from 10am to 5pm.

MUSEUM ADMISSION CHARGES

THERE WAS MUCH controversy when the city's major museums, including the Musées des Beaux-Arts and the Musées Royaux d'art et d'histoire introduced a 63.70 admission charge in the mid-1990s, but so far the money seems to have been well spent, with the Cinquantenaire Museum in particular undergoing muchneeded layout improvements. Elsewhere, admission charges



The sculpture court in the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts in summer



Visitors taking a break from sightseeing in a payement café

range from free entry to a daily tariff starting at €5. Reductions for students, children, the unemployed and senior citizens are always given.

TIPPING

SERVICE CHARGE OF 16 per A cent as well as VAT of 21 per cent are included in restaurant bills (this is marked on the menu as "Service et TVA compris"), but most diners round up the bill or add about 10 per cent if the service has been particularly good. Service is also included in taxi fares, although a 10 per cent tip is customary. Some theatre and cinema ushers expect €0.25 per person. You should pay nightclub doormen around €1 if you plan to go back. In hotels, a small tip for the chambermaid and porter should be given personally to them or left in your vacated room, and expect to pay railway porters €1 per bag. Finally, many public toilets - including those in bars, restaurants and even cinemas - have attendants who should be given €0.25.

DISABLED TRAVELLERS

 $\mathbf{B}^{ ext{RUSSELS}}$ is not the easiest city for the disabled traveller, but the authorities are beginning to recognize that there is room for improvement. Most of the more expensive hotels have some rooms designed for people with disabilities, and most metro stations have lifts.

There are designated parking spaces for disabled drivers, and newer trams have wheelchair access. The Tourist Office provides information and advice about facilities within the city.



Façade of the Sterling bookshop

NEWSPAPERS, TV AND RADIO

MOST BRITISH AND American daily newspapers produce international editions. which are on sale at major newsstands. The Financial Times, the International Herald Tribune and the Wall Street Journal are widely available. Librairie de Rome.

Waterstone's or Sterling Books sell English magazines.

Belgium has one of the world's most advanced cable TV networks, with access to more than 40 channels, including BBC 1 and 2, CNN, NBC, MTV and Arte. Belgian channels include RTL and RTBF 1 and 2 (French-speaking) and VTM and Ketnet/Canvas (Flemish-speaking). TV listings are in the English-language magazine The Bulletin. Classical music stations include Musique 3 (91.2 FM) and Studio Brussel (100.6 FM).

DIRECTORY

TOURIST INFORMATION

Tourist and Information Office of Brussels

Grand Place 1, 1000 Brussels. Map 2 D3. ((02) 513 8940. www.bitc.be

Hotel room reservation service. Map 2 D3. ((02) 513 7484.

UK Tourism Flanders

www.visitflanders.com

US Belgian Tourist Office

www.visitbelgium.com

BOOKSHOPS

Librairie de Rome

Rue Jean Stas 16.

Map 2 D5. ((02) 511 7937.

Waterstone's

Boulevard Adolphe Max 71-75. Map 2 D1. ((02) 219 2708.

Sterling Books

Rue du Fossé-aux-Loups 38. Map 2 D2. ((02) 223 6223.

GUIDED TOURS

Arau

Boulevard Adolphe Max 55. Map 1 A2. ((02) 219 3345. Art Nouveau walks a speciality.

La Fonderie

Rue Ransfort 27. ((02) 410 1080. Industrial heritage, chocolate and beer walks

Arcadia

Rue du Métal 38.

(02) 534 3819. Architectural walks.

By water:

Brussels by Water

2B Quai de Péniches. (02) 203 6406. Cruises on the canal.

By cycle: Pro vélo

Rue de Londres 15.

(02) 502 7355. Comic strip tours, Art Nouveau.

By coach: Chatterbus

Rue des Thuyas 12. ((02) 673 1835. 8am-7pm Mon-Sat. Individual and group tours.

Grevlines

Rue de la Colline 8.

(02) 513 7744.

Brussels city tours and excursions.

Personal Security and Health, **Banking and Communications**

 ${f B}^{
m RUSSELS}$ is one of Europe's safest capitals, with street crime against visitors a relatively rare occurrence. The poorer areas west and north of the city centre, including Anderlecht, Molenbeek and parts of Schaerbeek and St-Josse, have quite a bad reputation, but these areas are perfectly safe during the daytime for everyone except those who flaunt their wealth. After dark, it is sensible not to walk around on your own in these areas. Public transport is usually safe at all hours. Banking follows the European system and is straightforward. In addition, there are hundreds of 24-hour cashpoints located around the city.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

 $B^{ ext{ELGIUM HAS A complex}}$ policing system, whose overlapping and often contradictory mandates have been criticized in the past. Calls have been made to simplify the judicial structure, a process that is still slowly taking place. Major crimes and motorway offences are handled by the national gendarmerie. However, visitors are most likely to encounter

and order in each of the capital's 19 administrative districts. All Brussels police officers must speak French and Flemish.

central Brussels is on Rue du Marché au Charbon, close to the Grand Place. If stopped by the police visitors will be asked for identification, so carry your

passport at all times. Belgian law classes as a vagrant anyone carrying less than €15 cash.

Not using road crossings correctly is also illegal here.

SAFETY GUIDELINES

M^{OST} OF Brussels' principal tourist attractions are located in safe areas where few precautions are necessary. When driving, make sure car doors are locked and any valuables are kept out of sight. If you are sightseeing on foot,

limit the amount of cash you carry and never leave bags unattended. Women should wear handbags with the strap across the shoulder and the clasp facing towards the body. Wallets should be kept in a front, not back, pocket. Hotel guests should keep rooms and suitcases locked and avoid leaving cash or valuables

lying around. Rooms often come with a safe; if not, there should be one at reception.

At night, avoid the city's parks, especially at Botanique and Parc Josaphat in Schaerbeek, both of which are favoured haunts of drug-dealers.

LOST PROPERTY

THANCES OF retrieving property are minimal if it was lost in the street. However, it is worth contacting the police station for the commune in which the article disappeared. (If you are not sure where that is, contact the central police station on Rue du Marché au Charbon.) Public transport authority STIB/MIVB operates a lost-and-found service for the metro, trams and buses. Report items lost in a taxi to the police station nearest your point of departure; quote registration details and the taxi licence number.

TRAVEL AND HEALTH INSURANCE

¬RAVELLERS FROM Britain and Treland are entitled to free healthcare under reciprocal agreements within the EU. British citizens need an E111 form from a post office, which should be validated before their trip. Europeans should make it clear that they have state insurance, or they may end up with a large bill. While generous, state healthcare subsidies do not cover all problems and it is worth taking out full travel insurance. This can also cover lost property.

Female police officer the communal police, who are responsible for law

The main police station for

DIRECTORY

CRISIS INFORMATION

Police

(101.

Ambulance and fire services (100.

Central police station

Rue du Marché au Charbon 30, 1000 Brussels. Map 1 C3. ((02) 279 7979.

Medigard Private Doctor Bureau (02) 479 1818.

Medigard Private

Dentist Bureau (02) 426 1026.

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS

Institut Edith Cavell

Rue Edith Cavell 32, 1180

(02) 340 4001.

Hôpital Universitaire Saint Luc

Ave Hippocrate 10, 1200 Brussels. ((02) 764 1602.

Community Help Service

(02) 648 4014.

LOST PROPERTY

Central police station

(02) 517 9611.

STIB/MIVB

Avenue de la Toison d'Or 15, 1050 Brussels. Map 2 D5. ((02) 515 2000.

www.stib.be www.mivb.be

LOST CREDIT CARDS

American Express

((02) 676 2111.

MasterCard

(02) 205 8585.

(02) 205 8585.

MEDICAL MATTERS

WHETHER OR not you have insurance, doctors in Belgium will usually expect you to settle the bill on the spot - and in cash. Arrange to make a payment by bank transfer (most doctors will accept this if you insist).

Pharmacies are generally open Mondays to Saturdays from 8:30am to 6:30pm, with each commune operating a rota system for late-night, Sunday and national holiday cover. All pharmacies display information about where to find a 24-hour chemist.

Assistants at pharmacies may not speak good English, so when receiving a prescription, make sure the doctor goes through the details before you leave the surgery.

EMERGENCIES

FOR EMERGENCIES requiring police assistance, call 101; for medical or fire services, phone 100. Hospitals with emergency departments include Institut Edith Cavell and Hôpital Universitaire Saint-Luc. The Community Help Service's (CHS) 24-hour English-language help line is for expatriates, but it may be able to assist tourists.

CURRENCY

Belgium, together with 11 other countries, has replaced its traditional currency with the euro. Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal and Spain also chose to join the new currency.

The euro came into circulation in Belgium on 1 January 2002. There followed a transition period during which euros and Belgian francs (BF) could be used together, with the franc finally being phased out by mid-2002.

The Euro bank notes have seven denominations. The 5-euro note (grey) is the smallest, followed by the 10-euro note (pink), 20-euro note (blue), 50-euro note (orange), 100-euro note

(green), 200-euro note (vellow) and the 500-euro note (purple). The euro has eight coin denominations: the 1 euro and 2 euros are both silver and gold in colour; the 50-, 20- and 10-cent coins are gold; and the 5-, 2- and 1cent coins are bronze.

BANKING

 ${f M}^{
m OST~BANKS~IN}$ Brussels are open from 9am–1pm and 2-4pm; some open late on Friday until 4:30 or 5pm, and a few on Saturday mornings.

Banks often offer very competitive exchange rates, and most will happily serve nonclients. Many transactions (especially money transfers) are liable to banking fees, so ask in advance what these rates might be. Most banks will be able to cash traveller's cheques with the signatory's passport or other form of photographic identification. Visitors are usually able to exchange foreign currency, again with valid ID. Many bank attendants speak good English.

CREDIT CARDS

MERICAN EXPRESS, Diners A Club, Mastercard and Visa are widely accepted in Brussels, although it is wise to check in advance if booking a hotel or restaurant. Most hotels will accept a credit card booking. The cardholder may be asked for a credit card imprint at check-in.

POST AND COMMUNICATIONS

 ${
m B}^{
m \scriptscriptstyle RUSSELS'}$ PUBLIC payphones are run by former state operator Belgacom. Public phone booths are plentiful but the service information can be difficult to understand; the operator can be contacted by dialling 1380 or directory enquiries in English on 1405. Payphones accept Belgacom phonecards, and both €5 and €10 cards are sold at newsagents, post offices and train stations. Payphones in

metro stations accept cash. When using the postal service, addresses should be written in capital letters. A blue "A prior" sticker should ensure swifter delivery on international mail.



ATM machine in Brussels

AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINES

M^{OST} BANK branches have 24-hour cashpoint facilities. Often you will find that there is one machine located in a lobby reserved for members of the bank, while a second ATM on the wall outside is available to everyone. Most ATMs will accept a wide range of cards including those belonging to the Cirrus, Plus, Maestro and Star systems, as well as those from MasterCard and Visa.

BUREAUX DE CHANGE

FF YOU ARE unable to change If you are unable to money at a bank or to use one of the many cashpoint machines around the city, you may be forced to rely on bureaux de change to obtain euros. These often charge a commission of 3 to 4 per cent and on top of that

may have uncompetitive exchange rates. It is therefore worth comparing prices between different bureaux or looking for an alternative. There is a 24-hour automated exchange machine at Grand Place 7, while in the streets around the square there are several bureaux open until

> 7pm or later. You will also find exchange booths at the city's major stations.

Red Belgian postbox

GETTING TO BRUSSELS

RUSSELS IS WELL suited to both casual and business travellers, with abundant and excellent connections by air, rail and road. The increasing political sig-

nificance of Brussels in its new role as favourably with flying in terms of time. the heart of Europe has led to greater competition between airlines, with many



High-speed Thalys train

discounted fares. The Eurostar and Thalvs high-speed trains link the city with London, Paris, Amsterdam and Germany, and compare

British travellers can use the Channel

Tunnel to bring their car with them.



An aeroplane from Belgian carrier SN Brussels Airlines' fleet

ARRIVING BY AIR

 $S^{\text{ITUATED } 14 \text{ KM } (8^{3}\!/_{\!\!4} \text{ miles})}$ northeast of the city centre, Brussels National Airport is in the Flemish commune of Zaventem (the name by which it is known to most citizens. including taxi drivers). A centre for Belgian carrier SN Brussels Airlines, the airport is also served by major carriers such as British Airways, American Airlines, Air Canada, Delta, Lufthansa and Air France. Among the low-cost operators flying to and from Zaventem are Virgin Express (for London and Europe) and City Bird (for US destinations), A typical journey from London takes 45 minutes. Costs for UK flights range from £60 for a student flight to £270 for a scheduled return flight.

Reaching Brussels from the US can be more expensive than reaching other European cities. Return flights average US \$700 for a charter return from New York. Prices from Canada are comparable.

The best-value flights from Australia and New Zealand include Alitalia, Lauda-air, and KLM, with fares from A\$2,100.

Brussels South-Charleroi Airport has become a second hub, since Ryanair has been operating scheduled flights from various European destinations, including the UK. This is now under review due to a dispute over discounted landing fees. The airport is 55 km (34 miles) from the centre of Brussels and can be reached by train or coach.

AIRPORT FACILITIES

 ${
m B}^{
m RUSSELS}$ NATIONAL Airport has been extensively renovated over the past decade, with a new concourse for intra-EU travel recently completed. Brussels airport features baggage reclaim, customs, car-hire booths, tourist information and ground transport on the lower level. The departure lounge has check-in facilities, ticket and insurance counters and

restaurants, bars and shops, before and after the security checkpoints. In addition, there are special lounges for busi-

ness or first-class SN Brussels Airlines passengers, and a corporate meeting centre. On arrival, passengers will also find ATMs, foreign exchange booths and coin- and cardoperated payphones.

GETTING INTO TOWN

→HE CHEAPEST way of getting from Zaventem to the city centre is the express train from the airport to Gare du Nord, Gare Centrale or Gare du Midi. Tickets (about €2.50) are on sale in the airport complex or, for a small supplementary fee, on the train itself. Three trains run each hour, between 5am and midnight; the journey to Gare Centrale takes 20 minutes.

There is a taxi rank outside the arrivals hall. A one-way fare to the centre of Brussels will cost €30-€35 and should take around 20 minutes (longer at rush hour). If you plan to return by taxi, ask the driver about deals as some companies offer discounts on return fares

An SNCB/NMBS train runs from Charleroi to Gare du Midi. It takes about 45 minutes to/from the station.

ARRIVING BY TRAIN

 $B^{ ext{RUSSELS}}$ is at the heart of Europe's high-speed train networks, connected to London by the Eurostar service and to Paris. Amsterdam and Cologne by the Thalys network. These trains have a top speed of 300 kph (186 mph) and have slashed journey times between northern Europe's major cities, making them a challenge to the supremacy of the airlines.

Eurostar passengers should book their tickets at least a week in advance, especially to take advantage of reduced

SN Brussels Airlines

Logo for SN Brussels Airlines

fares; they should also arrive at the terminal at least 20 minutes before departure to go through check-in and customs before boarding. You may be refused access to the train if you arrive after this, although you can often be transferred to the next service at no extra charge.

Trains run hourly between London's Waterloo station and Brussels via the Channel Tunnel; the journey takes 2 hours 20 minutes, arriving at the Gare du Midi. Return fares start at around £79/€112. The trains are comfortable, with plenty of legroom, and have two buffet cars, one of which is licensed; first-class passengers receive a meal. free drinks and the day's international newspapers.

Many visitors to Brussels arrive from mainland Europe. The high-speed train company Thalys offers a comfortable journey, with Paris accessible in 1 hour 25 minutes, Amsterdam in around two hours and Cologne in under three.



Eurostar train arriving at the Gare du Midi, Brussels

ARRIVING BY SEA

 $\mathbf{B}^{ ext{ELGIUM}}$ can easily be reached from the UK several times daily. Cross-Channel ferries run frequently from Dover to Calais and Dunkirk, Felixstowe to Ostend and Hull to Zeebrugge. Foot passengers do not usually need to book, but those with cars should always reserve a space and arrive promptly.

Visitors with children should be aware that ferry companies have good child discounts, often with children under 14 years old travelling free. Hoverspeed operates a catamaran service, the SeaCat, from Dover to Calais, but no longer direct to Ostend.

ARRIVING BY CAR

THE OPENING of the Channel Tunnel has given drivers from Britain a new option for reaching mainland Europe: Le Shuttle. This is a car train that takes vehicles from the Tunnel entrance near Folkestone to Calais, with the journey taking around 35 minutes. From there, Brussels is a two-hour drive via the A16 motorway, which becomes the E40 when you cross the Franco-Belgian border. Follow signs to Brugge (Bruges), then Brussels. Those planning to ride Le Shuttle should book tickets in advance and try to arrive early. Three trains per hour run between 6:30am and midnight, with one train hourly from midnight to 6:30am. Standard fares start at around £170 return per vehicle, but rise for stavs over five days and at popular times.

PASSPORTS AND ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

VISITORS FROM Britain will find that a passport is the only documentation required for a stay of up to 90 days. For a visit of the same length, European nationals should be prepared to produce their identity card. Travellers from the US and Canada need a full passport. All visitors should, if asked, be able to produce enough money, or proof of access to money, on arrival to pay for their entire stav as well as a return ticket to their home country.



The Hoverspeed catamaran SeaCat crossing the Channel

DIRECTORY

BRUSSELS NATIONAL AIRPORT INFORMATION

(www.brusselsairport.be)

Flight Information

(02) 0900 70000.

Disabled Travellers and

Special Needs

(02) 723 6381. Airport Police

(02) 753 7000.

Customs

(02) 753 4850. **AIRLINES**

SN Brussels Airlines

((020) 8780 1444 (UK). w www.flysn.com

Air Canada

((0871) 220 1111 (UK).

Air France

((0845) 084 5111 (UK).

American Airlines

((0845) 778 9789 (UK).

(1 800) 433 7300 (US). www.americanair.com

British Airways

((0845) 773 3377 (UK).

www.britishairways.com

City Bird

(212) 947 1408 (US).

((0800) 414 767 (UK).

(404) 765 5000 (US).

Lufthansa

((0845) 773 7747 (UK).

Ryanair

(08701) 569 569 (UK).

Swissair

((020) 7434 7300 (UK).

Virgin Express

((020) 7744 0004 (UK).

TRAIN AND BOAT INFORMATION

Belgian & International Railway Info

www.b-rail.be

Brussels Transport

((02) 515 2000.

www.stib.be

Eurostar

((0870) 518 6186 (UK).

Eurotunnel

((0990) 518 6186 (UK).

Hoverspeed

((0870) 240 8070 (UK).

Thalys (07) 066 7788 (Belgium).

Getting around Brussels



Metro station street sign

ALTHOUGH ITS public transport system is clean, modern and efficient, Brussels is a city best explored on foot. Most of the key attractions for first-time visitors are within a short walk of the Grand Place, and the Art Nouveau archi-

tecture in Ixelles and Saint-Gilles is also best enjoyed on a leisurely stroll. For those anxious to see the main sights in limited time, the tram and metro network covers most of the city at speed, while buses are useful for reaching more out-of-the-way areas. Although expensive, taxis are recommended for late-night journeys. Cycling can be hazardous for the inexperienced.

PLANNING YOUR JOURNEY

If you are seeing Brussels by car, avoid its major roads during rush hours, which run on weekdays from 8–9:30am and 5–7pm as well as Wednesday lunchtimes during the school year, when there is a half day. Tram and bus services run frequently at peak time and are usually not too crowded. However, the small size of Brussels means that walking is usually a viable option.

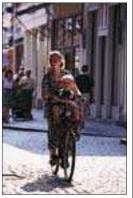
WALKING IN BRUSSELS

THE SHORT distance between sights and the interest in every corner make central Brussels easy to negotiate on foot. Outside the city centre, walking is the only way to appreciate the concentration of Art Nouveau buildings on and around Square Ambiorix, around the district of Ixelles and near St-Gilles Town Hall.

Drivers in Brussels have a bad reputation, and it is important to be alert to traffic while crossing roads. Until 1996, motorists were not obliged to stop at pedestrian crossings: the laws came into effect on April 1 of that year and many drivers still treat them as a seasonal pleasantry. At traffic lights, motorists turning right or left may ignore the walkers' priority. It is essential to be careful even in residential areas.

Blue or white street signs are placed on the walls of buildings at one corner of a street, and can be somewhat hard to locate. Street names

are always in French first, then Flemish, with the name in capital letters and the street type in small letters to the top left and bottom right corners (for example, Rue STEVIN straat).



Mother and child seeing Brussels' historic architecture by bicycle

CYCLING

Compared to the cyclistfriendly cities of Flanders, Brussels can be a frustrating place for pushbike-riders. Carfree zones are few, but the number of cycle lanes is on the increase. However, on a trip to the suburbs or the Fôret de Soignes, bicycles are the best option and can be cheaply hired from most railway stations (non-Belgians must leave a small deposit).

TRAVELLING BY BUS, TRAM AND METRO

The authority governing Brussels' public transport is the bilingual STIB/MIVB, which runs buses, trams and metro services in the capital. Tickets are valid on all three services, which run between 5:30am and 12:30am on weekdays with shorter hours on Sundays and public holidays.

A single ticket, which allows the passenger an unlimited number of changes within one hour (excluding the Nato-Brussels Airport line 12), costs €1.40. You can also buy a tenticket card at €9.20 or a oneday pass costing €3.70. The five-ticket card, for €6, is not competitively priced but it can be convenient for avoiding repeated queues. There are also combined "STIB/MIVB + Taxi" tickets, a single ticket that offers a reduction on taxi rides.

Single tickets can be bought on buses and trams, and should be stamped in the orange machines next to the exits; you must restamp your ticket if the journey involves a change. On the metro, tickets must be bought and stamped before you reach the platform. Metro ticket offices and most private newsagents sell 10-ticket cards and one-day passes.



Bus at a stop in Brussels city centre



A city tram travelling down Rue Royale towards the city centre

Most stops have clear, comprehensible maps of the city's public transport system, with metros in orange, trams in blue and buses in red (see endpaper), and timetables mark all the stops on each route. Metro stations in the

city centre have electronic displays showing where each train is in the system. Those unfamiliar with the tram system will notice the lack of onboard information: there is no indication of what the upcoming stop is, of which many are request stops.

Request stops can be made by pressing the vellow buttons by each of the vehicle's exits. Ask the driver to call the relevant stop. Smoking is banned, as is playing music, although dogs are allowed on trams and buses.

A few bus services in the capital are run by the Walloon transport group (TEC) or the Flemish operator De Lijn. These services have lettered rather than numbered codes (for instance, the 60 bus is run by STIB/MIVB, the W by De Lijn), but most tickets are valid on all the services.

BRUSSELS BY CAR

T MAY BE A small city, but T MAY BE A SHIRIN CA,,
Brussels has been known to reduce motorists to tears. The seemingly perverse oneway system in many sections of the city centre can swiftly confuse newcomers, while the network of tunnels that

bisect the city are notoriously difficult to navigate even for city-dwellers. Belgian drivers, too, have been the butt of jokes from their fellow Europeans for decades. Nonetheless the city's systems are not difficult to learn, and a car is handy for planning day trips around the rest of Belgium.

Most international rental agencies have branches here, many at the National Airport in Zaventem or at the Gare du Midi, where the Eurostar and train services arrive.

Like the rest of mainland Europe, Belgium drives on the right, and the "priorité à droite" rule - which means that the driver coming from the right at junctions has absolute priority to pull out unless otherwise indicated is enforced with sometimes startling regularity. Always watch for vehicles coming

from the right, no matter how small the road: some drivers have been known to take their priority even though it means a crash, secure in the knowledge that they are legally correct. Verve and confidence are helpful when driving in a city where

many motorists take a flexible approach to road rules. Essential safety precautions, however, should be adhered to at all times. Safety belts are obligatory in all seats, and children under 12 years old are not allowed in the front when other seats are free

One-day

travel pass



Cars and taxis threading their way through the main streets

DIRECTORY

USEFUL NUMBERS

STIB/MIVB

Avenue de la Toison d'Or 15 1050 Brussels. Map 2 D5. (02) 515 2000. w www.stib.be

CCN-Service Regional des Taxis et Limousines Rue du Progrès 80, 1035 Brussels.

(02) 204 2111.

Drink-driving is illegal (the limit in Belgium is currently 0.5g/l). Speed limits are 50 kph (30 mph) in built-up areas, 120 kph (75 mph) on motorways and dual carriageways and 90 kph (55 mph) on all other roads. Always give way to trams, who will ring their bells should a car be in the way. Street parking, usually by meter, is becoming increasingly difficult in the city centre.

TAKING A TAXI

 $B^{\hbox{\scriptsize RUSSELS'}}$ Taxis are among Europe's more expensive, but most journeys are short and cabs are the city's only 24-hour transport service. Service is generally efficient, with most drivers speaking at least a little English, although some people may be surprised at many drivers' lack of familiarity with sections of the city. All taxis have a rooftop sign which is illuminated when the vehicle is vacant. Most cars are either black or white, with Mercedes the make of choice for most companies. It is advisable to find a taxi rank or order a cab by phone, although occasionally drivers will stop if hailed on the street. Passengers ride in the back seat, with the fare meter on the dashboard or just behind the gear-stick. Fares should be posted inside the vehicle. Tips are included in the price, but an extra tip is usually expected.

To make a complaint, write to the CCN-Service Regional des Taxis et Limousines, Rue du Progrès 80, 1035 Brussels. Give the taxi's registration number, its make and colour when making the complaint.

Getting around Belgium

As you might expect from a country that is small, modern and predominantly flat, Belgium is an extremely easy place in which to travel. The toll-free motorways compare favourably with any in France, train travel is swift and competitively priced and there are good bus services in those areas not covered by the railway network. Public transport is clean and efficient and the range of touring tickets allows a great deal of freedom and the ability to see the whole country inexpensively. In the level Flemish countryside to the north, hiking and cycling are highly pleasant ways to get around.



Cyclists on a tour of the scenery of Durbuy in the Ardennes

TRAVELLING BY CAR

FTER THE RATHER enervating A traffic in Brussels, driving in the rest of Belgium comes a something of a relief. The motorways are fast, reasonably well maintained and tollfree, while major roads are also excellent. Drivers in cities outside the capital tend to be more relaxed, although the trend in Flanders for carfree city centres can make navigation demanding. The only difficulty most drivers encounter is an occasional absence of clear signs for motorway exits and junctions, which can necessitate taking extra care when approaching junctions (in Flanders, many drivers are confused by signs for "Uitrit". It means exit).

The road rules detailed in the Getting Around Brussels section (see p169) hold good for the rest of the country, with speed limits at 50 kph (30 mph) in built-up areas, 120 kph (75 mph) on motorways and dual carriageways and 90 kph (55 mph) on other national roads.

If you break down, three motoring organizations should be able to provide assistance: Touring Club de Belgique, Royal Automobile Club de Belgique and Vlaamse Automobilistenbond in Flanders. It is worth getting breakdown coverage before you leave, and you must have a valid driving licence (from the EU, US, Australia or Canada) or an International Driving Licence on your

person. It is also essential to have comprehensive insurance and/or a Green card, and visitors are expected to carry a first-aid kit and a warning triangle at all times.

All the major rental agencies operate in Belgium, although renting a car can be an expensive business. To rent a vehicle, you must be 21 or over, with a year's driving experience, and have a credit card. A week's rental with unlimited mileage will cost €370 or more but might be reduced on the regular special deals at the big firms. Local agencies may also be cheaper, but be sure to check the terms and conditions. Bicvcle hire is available in most Flemish towns with a modest deposit of €15.

TRAVELLING BY TRAIN

BELGIUM'S TRAIN network is a more than adequate means of getting to and from major towns and cities. From Brussels, there are direct links to Antwerp, Ghent, Bruges, Ostend, Liège, Mons, Namur and the Ardennes, and even journeys involving a change rarely take more than two hours in total.

Run by **Belgian National Railways** (Société Nationale
Chemins de Fer Belges/
Belgische Spoorwegen), the
system is clean, modern and
efficient, although the quality
of rolling stock varies somewhat: older carriages have a
slightly drab feel, but new

FRENCH/FLEMISH PLACE NAMES

One of the most confusing aspects of travel in Belgium is the variation between French and Flemish spellings of town names. On road signs in Brussels, both names are given, while in Flanders only the Flemish and in Wallonia only the French are shown. The following list gives main towns:

French	Flemish	French	Flemish
Anvers	Antwerpen	Malines	Mechelen
Ath	Aat	Mons	Bergen
Bruges	Brugge	Namur	Namen
Bruxelles	Brussel	Ostende	Oostende
Courtrai	Kortrijk	Saint-Trond	Sint-Truiden
Gand	Gent	Tongrès	Tongeren
Liège	Luik	Tournai	Doornik
Louvain	Leuven	Ypres	Ieper



Train travelling through Belgium on a spring evening

models are spacious, very comfortable, and, typically Belgian, offer fine meals and light refreshments. Fares for standard

second-class tickets are calculated by distance, with 100 km (63 miles) costing around €9.40; first-class fares v set you back around 50 per cent more. Because distance is the determining factor in price, return Train and motor tickets generally offer tour logos no saving and are valid only until midnight. Children aged under six travel free, with a maximum of four children allowed per adult, and those aged between six and 11 receive a 50 per cent discount. Several special tariffs are available, including discounts for young adults aged under 26, with weekend

tickets and day returns

reducing the price by up to 40 per cent. The more people travelling, the larger the discount; family members may be eligible for discounts of up to 60 per cent.

A variety of rail passes are on offer for extensive travel. The Belgian Tourrail pass (approximately 668) allows unlimited travel on any five days within one month of purchase, while the Carte de reduction à prix fixe (at approximately £16) offers 50 per cent off all first-and second-class tickets for one month.

TRAVELLING BY BUS

W HILE SLOWER and less comfortable for travelling between major cities, buses come into their own in the more remote

or rural areas of the rest of Belgium, as well as in city suburbs. In Flanders, buses are run by the **De Lijn** group; in Wallonia, the network is operated by **TEC**. Fares are calculated according to distance, and are bought from the driver. Bus stops and terminals are generally close to

railway stations. Buses have priority on public roads, so journeys are often swift.

SPECIALIST TOURS

TOURING CAN BE be a journey full of cultural variety in both Brussels and the rest of the country. In the capital, the Tourist Information Centre



A coach full of passengers travelling on a main bus route in Belgium

DIRECTORY

TRAINS AND BUSES

SNCB/BS (Belgian National Railways)

(02) 528 2828. w www.b-rail.be

TEC ((010) 235353.

De Lijn

((02) 526 2820.

MOTORING ORGANIZATIONS

Police Road Information www.policefederale.be

Touring Club de Belgique

Rue de la Loi 44, 1040 Brussels. Map 3 A2. (10900) 526 2820.

Royal Automobile Club de Belgique

Rue d'Arlon 53, 1040 Brussels. **Map** 3 A3. **(** *(02) 287 0911.*

Vlaamse Automobilistenbond

Pastoor Coplaan 100, Zwijndrecht. ((03) 253 6130.

CAR RENTAL

Avis (02) 730 6211.
Budget (02) 646 5130.
Europcar (02) 348 9212.
Hertz (02) 513 2886.

(see p162) runs a series of over 40 walking and car day tours that cover all the capital and its 19 districts with topics as diverse as "Humanist Brussels" and "Industrial Belgium". The focus is largely on the city's exceptional range of art and architecture, but many diverse themes are covered.

In each major regional city, detailed, multi-lingual private tours are available in the historic town centre; contact the town's main tourist booth for full information.

Away from cities, Belgium also offers hiking and cycling excursions, ranging from one-day adventures to five-day hikes. The Ardennes is a popular destination for hikers, who can appreciate the area's flora and fauna as well as its dramatic history. Tours can be arranged through the Rambler's Association (08 422 3397).

BRUSSELS STREET FINDER

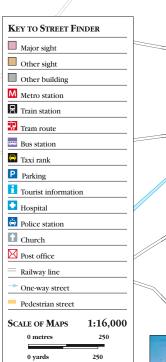
he page grid superimposed on the area by area grid below shows which parts of Brussels are covered in this *Street Finder*. The central Upper and Lower Town areas are marked in the colours that are also the thumbtab colours throughout the book. The map references for all sights, hotels, restaurants, shopping and entertainment

venues described in this guide refer to the maps in this section. A street index follows on pp178–81. The key, set out below, indicates the scales of the maps and shows what other features are marked on them, including transport terminals, emergency services and information centres. All the major sights are clearly marked so they are easy to locate. The map on the inside back

cover shows public transport routes.

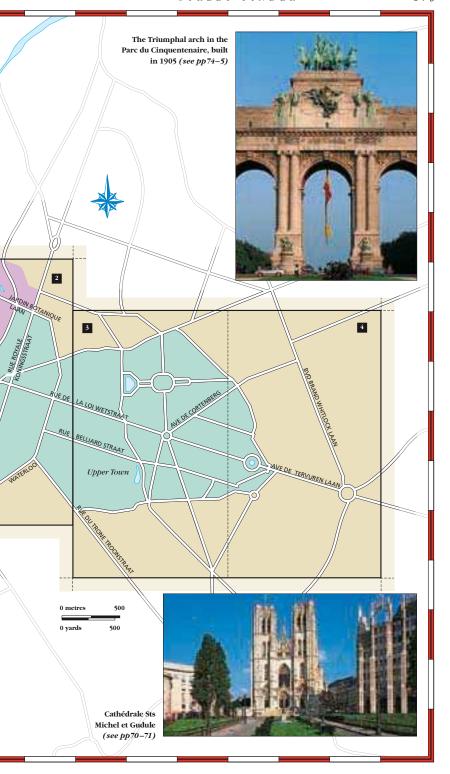
Lower Town

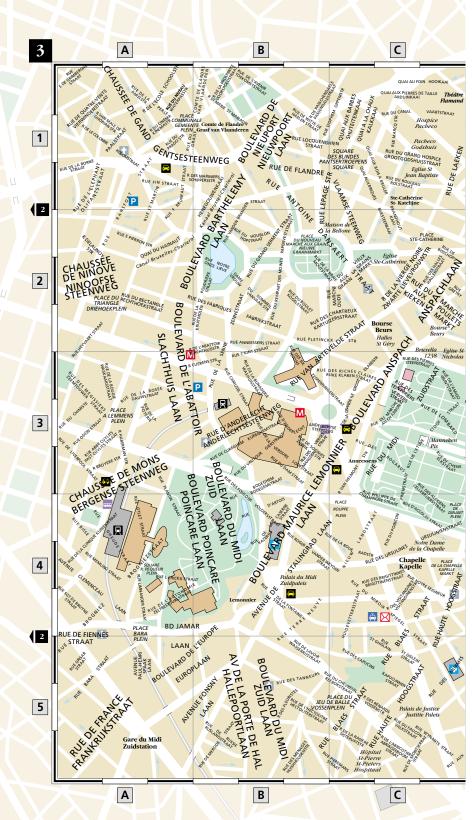
Nymph in Parc de Bruxelles

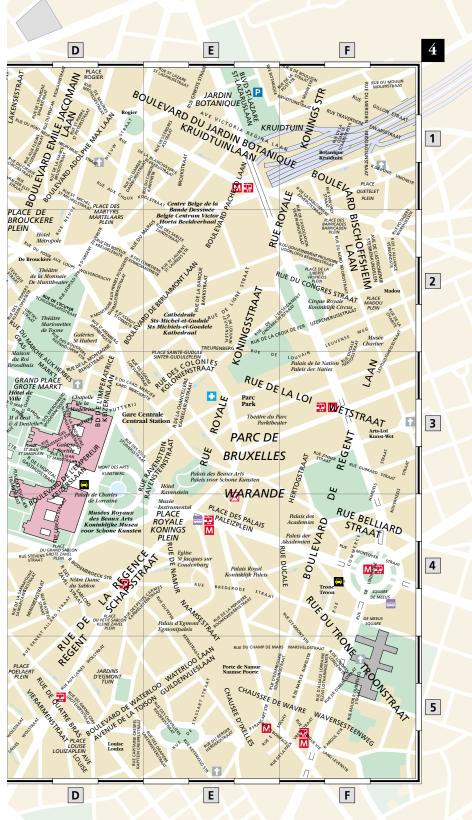




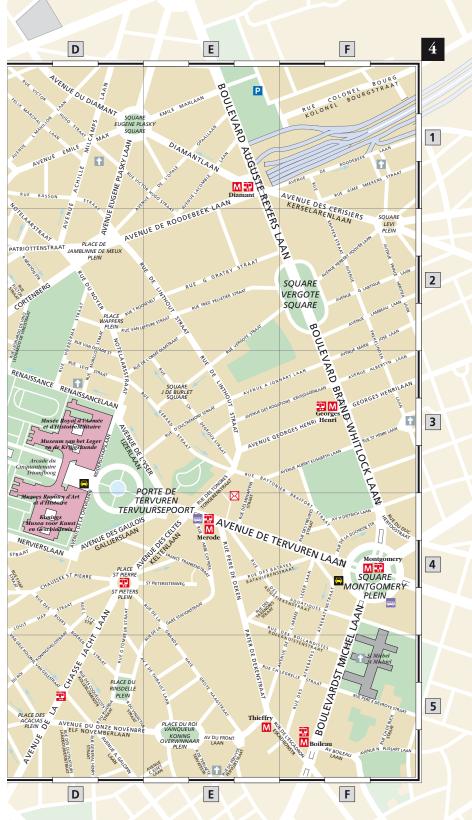
Façade of La Maison des Ducs de Brabant, Grand Place (see pp42–3)











Street Finder Index

All entries are listed in French,		Barthélémy, Blvd	4 700	Cardinal, Rue du	2.74	D	
with the Flemish variant following in Italics where		Barthelemylaan Beffroi, Rue du	1 B2	Kardinalstraat Caserne, Rue de la	3 B1	Dailly, Place	
applicable.		Belfortstraat	3 C1	Kazernestraat	1 B4	Dailly Plein	3 C1
A		Belliard, Rue		Celtes, Ave des		Dam, Rue du Damstraat	1 B3
A		Belliardstraat cont	2 F4 3 B3	Keltenlaan Cendres, Rue des	4 E4	Damier, Rue du	
A Gautier, Rue	2.05	Berceau, Rue de	э вэ	Asstraat	2 E1	Dambordstraat Dekens, Rue	2 D1
A Gautierstraat A Lynen, Rue	3 C5	Prieelstraat	3 A2	Cerisiers, Ave des		Dekensstraat	3 C4
A Lynenstraat	3 A1	Berger, Rue du		Kerselarenlaan	4 F1	Delaunoy, Rue	
Abattoir, Blvd de l'		Herdersstraat Berlaimont, Blvd	2 E5	Ch de Groux, Rue Ch de Grouxstraat	4 E3	Delaunoystraat Deux Eglises, Rue des	1 A2
Slachthuislaan Abattoir, Rue de l'	1 A3	de Berlaimontlaan	2 E2	Champ de Mars, Rue du	TLJ	Tweekerkenstraat	3 A2
Slachthuisstraat	1 B3	Bischoffsheim, Blvd		Marsveldstraat	2 E5	Diamant, Ave du	6 D1
Abbé Cuylits, Rue		Bischoffsheimlaan	2 F2	Chancellerie, Rue de la	2.52	Diamantlaan Dinant, Place de	4 D1
Past Cuylitsstraat	1 A3	Bisse, Rue Bissestraat	1 A4	Kanselarijkstraat Chapeliers, Rue du	2 E3 1 C3	Dinantplein	1 C4
Abricotier, Rue de l' Abrikozeboomstraat	1 C1	Blaes, Rue		Chapelle, Place de la	105	Drapiers, Rue des Lakenweverstraat	2 E5
Accolay, Rue d'		Blaestraat	1 C5	Kappellemarkt	1 C4	Dublin, Rue de	21.)
Accolaystraat	1 C4	Blanchisserie, Rue de la	2.771	Charlemagne, Blvd Karel de Grotelaan	2 D2	Dublinstraat	2 F5
Adolphe Max, Blvd Adolphe Maxlaan	2 D1	Blekerijstraat Bodeghem, Rue	2 E1	Charles Martel, Rue	3 B2	Ducale, Rue Hertogstraat	2 F3
Alexiens, Rue des		Bodegemstraat	1 B3	Karel Martelstraat	3 B2	Duquesnoy, Rue des	
Cellebroersstraat	1 C4	Bodenbroeck, Rue		Charles Quint, Rue		Duquesnoystraat	2 D3
Alliance, Rue de l'	2 F2	Bodenbroeckstraat	2 D4	Keizer Karelstraat Chartreux, Rue des	3 C3	T	
Verbondstraat Alsace Lorraine,	2 12	Bogards, Rue des Boogardenstraat	1 C3	Kartuizersstraat	1 C2	E	
Rue d'Elzas		Bois à Bruler, Quai aux		Chasse, Ave de la		E de Thibault, Ave E de Thibaultlaan	4 E5
Lotharingenstraat	2 F5	Brandboutkaai	1 C1	Jachtlaan	4 D5	E Pierron, Rue	11.
Ambiorix, Square Amigo, Rue de l'	3 B2	Boiteux, Rue des Kreupelenstraat	2 D2	Chaux, Quai à la Kalkkaai	1 C1	E Pierronstraat	1 A2
Vruntstraat	1 C3	Borne, Rue de la	2 02	Chêne, Rue de	1 (1	E Solvay, Rue E Solvaystraat	2 E5
Anderlecht, Rue d'	-	Paalstraat	1 A1	Elkstraat	1 C3	Eburons, Rue des	- 25
Anderlechtsesteenweg	1 B3	Botanique, Rue		Chevalerie, Ave de la		Eburonsstraat	3 B2
Anneessens, Rue Anneessensstraat	1 B2	Kruidtuinstraat	2 E1	Ridderschapslaan Chevaliers, Rue des	4 D4	Ecole, Rue de l' Schoolstraat	1 A1
Anoul, Rue	1 52	Bouchers, Rue des Beenbouwerstraat	2 D2	Riddersstraat	2 E5	Ecuyer, Rue de l'	
Anoulstraat	2 F5	Bougie, Rue de la		Chevreuil, Rue du		Schildknaapsstraat	2 D2
Anspach, Blvd	1.62	Waskaarsstraat	1 A3	Reebokstraat	1 C5	Edimbourg, Rue d' Edinburgstraat	2 E5
Anspachlaan Antoine Dansaert,	1 C3	Boulet, Rue du Kogelstraat	1 B2	Chimiste, Rue du Scheikundigestraat	1 A3	Egmont, Rue d'	
Rue Antoine		Brabançonne, Ave de la	1 D2	Choux, Rue aux	111,5	Egmontstraat Elephant, Rue de l'	2 F4
Dansaertstraat	1 B2	Brabanconnelaan	3 C1	Koolstraat	2 D1	Olifantstraat	1 A1
Archimède, Rue Archimedestraat	3 B2	Braemt, Rue		Cible, Rue de l'		Emile Jacqmain, Blvd	
Arenberg, Rue d'	3 62	Braemtstraat Braie, Rue de la	3 A1	Scheitschifstraat Cinéma, Rue du	3 B1	Emile Jacqmainlaan Emile Max, Ave	2 D1
Arenbergstraat	2 D2	Moutstraat	1 B2	Kinemastraat	1 A1	Emile Maxlaan	4 D1
Argent, Rue d'	2.02	Brand Whitlock, Blvd		Cirque Royale		Empereur, Blvd de l'	2.02
Zilverstraat Arlon, Rue d'	2 D2	Brand Whitlocklaan	4 F3	Koninklijk Circus	2 F2	Keizerslaan Enseignment, Rue de l'	2 D3
Aarlenstraat	3 A3	Bréderode, Rue Brederode straat	2 E4	Cirque, Rue du Circusstraat	2 D1	Onderrichtsstraat	2 E2
Artichaut, Rue de l'		Breydel, Rue	2 1.4	Clemenceau, Ave		Epargne, Rue de l'	2 D1
Artisjokstraat Artois, Rue d'	3 A2	Breydelstraat	3 B3	Clemenceaulaan	1 A4	Spaarstraat Eperonniers, Rue des	2 101
Artoisstraat	1 B4	Brigittinnes, Rue des		Clinique, Rue de la Kliniekstraat	1 A4	Spoormakersstraat	2 D3
Assaut, Rue d'		Brigittinenstraat Briques, Quai aux	1 C4	Clocher, Rue du	1 A4	Ernest Allard, Rue Ernest Allardstraat	2 D5
Stormstraat	2 D2	Baksteenkaai	1 C1	Kloktorenstraat	3 C4	Escadron, Rue de l'	20)
Association, Rue de l' Verenigingstraat	2 F2	Brochet, Rue du		Clovis, Blvd de		Eskadronstraat	4 F5
Astronomie, Ave de l'	-11	Snoekstraat	3 B5	Clovislaan Colonel van Gele, Rue	3 B1	Escalier, Rue de l' Trapstraat	2 D3
Sterrenkundelaan	2 F2	Brogniez, Rue Brogniezstraat	1 A4	Kolonel Van Gelestraat	3 C4	Etang, Rue de l'	
Auderghem, Ave d' Oudergemselaan	3 C4	Brouckère, Place de		Colonies, Rue des		Vijverstraat Etterbeek, Chaussée d'	3 B5
Auguste Revers,	304	Brouckereplein	1 D2	Kolonienstraat	2 E3	Etterbeeksesteenweg	3 B3
Boulevard		Broyère, Rue Broyerestraat	1 A3	Comédiens, Rue des Komediantenstraat	2 D2	Etuve, Rue de l'	
Auguste Reyerslaan	4 E1	Buanderie, Rue de la	1 13	Comète, Rue de la		Stoofstraat Eugène Plasky, Ave	1 C3
Autonomie, Rue de l' Zelfbestuursstraat	1 A4	Washuisstraat	1 B3	Staarsterstraat	2 F1	Eugene Plaskylaan	4 D1
Avenir, Rue de l'				Commune, Rue de la	2 4 1	Eugène Plasky, Square	4 D1
Toekomststraat	1 B1	C		Gemeentestraat Comte de Flandre, R du	3 A1	Europe, Blvd de l' Europlaan	1 A5
		Calvin, Rue		Graaf Van		Eveque, Rue de l'	
В		Calvijnstraat	3 C1	laanderenstraat	1 B1	Bisschopsstraat	2 D2
Banque, Rue de la	2.72	Camusel, Rue Camuselstraat	1 B3	Confédéres, Rue des Eedgenotenstraat	3 C1	TC	
Bankstraat Place Bara	2 E2	Camuseistraat Canal, Rue du	1 103	Congrès, Rue du	3 (1	F Brunfaut Bug	
Baraplein	1 A4	Vaartstraat	1 C1	Congresstraat	2 F2	F Brunfaut, Rue F Brunfautstraat	1 A1
Bara, Rue		Canon, Rue du	2.54	Cornet, Rue de	2.64	Fabriques, Rue des	
Barastraat	1 A5	Kanonstraat Capitaine Crespel, Rue	2 E1	Hoornstraat Croix de Fer, Rue de la	3 C4	Fabriekstraat Faucon, Rue du	1 B2
Barbes, Quai aux Shuteitenkaai	1 C1	Kapitein Crespelstraat	2 D5	Ijzerenkruisstraat	2 F2	Valkstraat	1 C5
Baron Lambert, Rue		Capucins, Rue des		Cuerens, Rue		Ferme, Rue de la	/
Baron Lambertstraat	3 C5	Kapucijnnenstaat	1 C5	Cuerensstraat	1 B3	Hoevestraat	3 A1
Barricades, Place des Barricadenplein	2 F2	Card Mercier, Rue du Kard Mercierstraat	2 D3	Cureghem, Rue de Kureghemstraat	1 B3	Fetis, Rue Fetisstraat	3 C5
				0			,

Fiance, Rue de la		Grand Hospice, Rue du		Knapen, Rue		Marguerite, Square	
Bruidsstraat	2 D1		1 C1	Knapenstraat	4 F2	Margereta Square	3 C2
Fiennes, Rue de	1 45	Grand Place Grote Markt	2 D3			Marie José, Ave	4 F2
Fiennesstraat Fin, Rue	1 A5	Grand Sablon, Place du	2 05	L		Marie Joselaan Marie-Louise, Square	4 F2
Finstraat	1	Grote Zavelplein	2 D4	L Crickx, Rue		Maria-Louiza Square	3 B2
Flandre, Rue de	•	Grand Serment, Rue du		L Crickxstraat	1 A4	Mariniers, Rue des	<i>V</i>
Vlaamsesteenweg	1 B1	Grand Sermentstraat	1 B2	L Mahillon, Ave		Schippersstraat	1 B1
Fleuristes, Rue des		Grande Haie, Rue de la	4 85	L Mabillonlaan	4 D1	Marteau, Rue du	
Bloemistenstraat	1 B5	Grote Haagstraat Grande Ile, Rue de la	4 E5	L Titz, Rue	151	Hamerstraat	3 A2
Fleurs, Rue aux	2.01	Groot Eilandstraat	1 C3	L Titzstraat	4 D4	Martyrs, Place des	2 D2
Bloemenstraat Foin, Quai au	2 D1	Gravelines, Rue des		Lacomble, Ave Lacomblelaan	4 E1	Maurice Lemonnier, Blvd Maurice	
Hooikaai	1 C1	Grevelingenstraat	3 B1	Laeken, Rue de	111	Lemonnierlaan	1 B4
Fonsny, Ave		Gray, Rue	2.04	Lakensestraat	1 C1	Meeus, Square de	
Fonsnylaan	1 B5	Graystraat	3 B5	Laines, Rue aux		de Meeus Square	2 F4
Fontaine, Rue de la		Gretry, Rue Gretrystraat	2 D2	Wolstraat	2 D5	Megissiers, Rue des	
Fontainestraat	1 B4	Grimberghe, Rue E de		Lavoir, Rue de		Zeemtouwerstraat	1 A3
Fosse aux Loups, R du	2.02	E de Grimberghestraat	1 A1	Wasserrijstraat Le Colonne, Rue de	1 B5	Memling, Rue Memlingstraat	1 A4
Wolvengracht Foulons, Rue des	2 D2	Grisar, Rue		Kolomstraat	1 A1	Ménages, Rue des	IAT
Voldersstraat	1 B4	Grisarstraat	1 A5	Lebeau, Rue	1 /11	Huisbhoudenstraat	1 B5
Francart, Rue	121	Guildes, Rue des Gildenstraat	3 A1	Lebeaustraat	2 D4	Menapiens, Rue des	
Francartstr	2 F5	Guimard, Rue	JAI	Lemmens, Place à	1 A3	Menapiensstraat	4 E4
France, Rue de		Guimardstraat	2 F3	Leonardo de Vinci, R		Meridien, Rue du	
Frankrijkstraat	1 A5		-	Leonardo de		Middaglijnstraat	2 F1
Francs, Rue des		ш		Vincistraat	4 D2	Merode, Rue de	1 D5
Frankenstraat	4 E4	H		Léopold, Rue	2.02	Merodestraat Michel Ange, Ave	1 B5
Franklin, Rue Franklinstraat	3 C2	Haberman, Rue Habermanstraat	1 42	Leopoldstraat	2 D2	Michel Angelolaan	3 C2
Fred Pelletier, Rue	3 62	Haerne, Rue de	1 A3	Lepage, Rue Lepagestraat	1 B1	Midi, Blvd du	<i></i>
Fred Pelletierstraat	4 E2	Haernestraat	3 B5	Liberté, Place de la	3 F2	Zuidlaan	1 B4
Fripiers, Rue des		Hainaut, Quai du		Ligne, Rue de	J	Midi, Rue du	
Kleerkopersstraat	2 D2	Henegouwenkaai	1 A2	Lignestraat	2 E2	Zuidstraat	1 C3
Froissart, Rue		Halles, Rue des		Limnander, Rue		Minimes, Rue des	1.05
Froissartstraat	3 B4	Hallenstraat	1 C2	Limnanderstraat	1 A4	Minimenstraat Miroir, Rue du	1 C5
Front, Ave du	/ ==	Haute, Rue Hoogstraat	1 C4	Linthout, Rue de		Spiegelstraat	1 C4
Frontlaan Fulton, Rue	4 E5	Hectolitre, Rue de l'	101	Linthoutstraat 4 E2		Mons, Chaussée de	
Fultonstraat	4 D2	Hectoliterstraat	1 B5	Liverpool, Rue de	1 A3	Bergensesteenweg	1 A3
Tunonstraat	4 D2	Heyvaert, Rue		Liverpoolstraat Livingstone, Ave	1 A5	Mont des Arts	
•		Heyvaertstraat	1 A2	Livingstonelaan	3 B1	Kunstberg	2 D3
G		Hôpital, Rue de l'		Locquenghien, Rue	321	Montagne aux Herbes	
G Capiaumont, Rue		Gasthuisstraat	2 D3	Locquenghienstraat	1 B1	Potagères, Rue	2.02
G Capiaumontstraat	3 B5	Houblon, Rue du Hopstraat	1 B2	Loi, Rue de la		Warmoesbergstraat	2 D2
G de Boullion, Rue		Hydraulique, Rue	1 152	Wetstraat	2 F3	Montagne, Rue de la Bergstraat	2 D3
G de Boullionstraat	2 F1	Waterkrachtstraat	3 A2	cont	3 A2	Montgomery, Square	2 03
G Gratry, Rue G Gratrystraat	4 E2		-	Lombard, Rue de		Montgomery Plein	4 F4
G Lartigue, Ave	4 1.2	I		Lombardstraat Louise, Ave	1 C3	Montserrat, Rue de	
G Lartiguelaan	4 F2	_		Louizalaan	2 D5	Montserratstraat	1 C5
G Petre, Ave		Impératrice, Blvd de l' Keizerinlaan	2 D3	Louise, Place		Musin, Rue	2.74
G Petrelaan	3 B2	Industrie, Rue de l'	203	Louizaplein	2 D5	Musinstraat	2 F1
G Tombeur, Rue		Nijverheidsstraat	2 F4	Louvain, Chaussée de	-		
G Tombeurstraat	4 D5	Ixelles, Chaussée d'		Leuvensesteenweg	3 A1	N	
Gand, Chaussée de		Elsenesteenweg	2 E5	Louvain, Place de		Namur, Rue de	
Gentsesteenweg Gare, Rue de la	1 A1			Leuvenseplein	2 E2	Naamsestraat	2 E4
Stationstraat	4 E4	I		Louvain, Rue de	2 F3	Natation, Rue de la	
Gaulois, Ave des	11.1	J de Lalaing, Rue		Leuvenseweg Loxum, Rue de	2 13	Zwemkunststraat	3 B5
Gallierslaan	4 D4	J de Lalaingstraat	3 A3	Loksumstraat	2 D3	Nerviens, Ave des	/ 0/
Général Henry, Rue		J F Kennedy, Ave		Luxembourg, Place du	- 23	Nervierslaan Neuve, Rue	4 C4
General Henrystraat	4 D5	J F Kennedylaan	3 C3	Luxemburg Plein	3 B2	Nieuwstraat	2 D2
Général Leman, Rue		J W Wilson, Rue	2.04	The state of the s		Nieuport, Blvd de	
General Lemanstraat	3 C4	J W Wilsonstraat Jamar, Blvd	3 B1	M		Nieuwpoortlaan	1 B1
Georges Henri, Ave	4 F2	Jamarlaan	1 A4			Ninove, Chaussée de	
Georges Henrilaan	4 F3	Jamblinne de Meux, Pl	1111	Madeleine, Rue de la	2 D2	Ninoofsesteenweg	1 A2
Gérard, Rue Gerardstraat	4 E3	Jamblinne de		Magdalenasteenweg Maelbeek, Ave du	2 D3	Niveau, Rue du	
Gheude, Rue	11.5	Meux Plain	4 D2	Maalbeeklaan	3 B4	Waterpasstraat	1 A1
Gheudestraat	1 A4	Jardin Botanique,		Major R Dubreucq, Rue	321	Nord, Rue du	2 172
Gillon, Rue		Blvd du	2.74	Majoor R		Noordstraat Notre Seigneur, Rue	2 F2
Gillonstraat	2 F1	Kruidtuinlaan	2 E1	Dubreucqstraat	2 F5	Onsheerstraat	1 C4
Gineste, Rue		Jardins Felix Hap Tuin Jeu de Balle, Place du	3 C5 1 C5	Malines, Rue de		Nouveau Marché aux	
Ginestestraat	2 E1	Jonniaux, Rue	10)	Mechelsestraat	2 D1	Grains, Place du	
Godecharle, Rue	2.11	Jonniauxstraat	3 C4	Marais, Rue du	2.52	Nieuw Graanmarkt	1 B2
Godecharlestraat	3 A4	Joseph II, Rue		Broekstraat	2 E2	Noyer, Rue du	
Goffart, Rue	2 4 -	Jozef II Straat	3 A2	Marché au Charbon, R du	1.62	Notelaarsstraat	4 D2
Goffartstraat Gouvernement	3 A5	Jourdan, Place	2.0/	Kolenmarkt Marché aux Fromages,	1 C3	Noyer, Rue du	2.01
Provisoire, Rue du		Jourdan Plein	3 B4	Rue du	2 D3	Notelaarstraat	3 C1
Voorlopig		Joyeuse Entrée, Ave de la Blijde Inkomstlaan	3 C3	Marché aux Herbes, R du	223	_	
Bewindstraat	2 F2	эндис ткотышин	303	Grasmarkt	2 D3	0	
Grand Cerf, Rue du		17		Marché aux Poulets, R du		Odon, Rue	
Grotebertstraat	2 D5	K		Kiekenmarkt	1 C2	Odonstraat	1 A3
Grand Duc, Rue	2.05	Keyenveld, Rue	2.55	Marcq, Rue	1.61	Onze Novembre, Ave du	4
Groothertogstraat	3 C5	Keyenveldstraat	2 E5	Marcqstraat	1 C1	Elf Novemberlaan	4 D5

Ophem, Rue d'		Prince Heritier, Ave		Sgt de Bruyne, Rue		U	
Oppemstraat	1 C1	Prince Heritierlaan	4 F2	Sgt de Bruynestraat	1 A4		
Orient, Rue de l'		Prosperité, Rue de la		Six Jetons, Rue des		Unie, Rue de l'	
Morgenlandstraat	3 B5	Voorspoedstraat	1 B1	Zespenningenstraat	1 B3	Unionstraat	2 F1
Otlet, Rue		Putterie, Rue des		Soignies, Rue de		Ursulines, Rue des	
Otletstraat	1 A4	Putterij	2 D3	Zinnikstraat	1 B3	Ursulinienstraat	1 C4
Oultremont, Rue d'				Sols, Rue des			
Oultremontstraat	4 E3	\mathbf{O}		Stuiversstraat	2 D3	\mathbf{V}	
		Q		Spa, Rue de		V	
D		Quatre Bras, Rue de		Spastraat	3 A2	Van Artevelde, Rue	1 D2
P		Vierarmenstraat	2 D5	St Alphonse, Rue		Van Arteveldestraat	1 B3
Pacheco, Blvd		Quatre Vents,		St Alfonsstraat	3 A1	Van Bemmel, Rue	2 4 1
Pachecolaan	2 E2	Vierwindenstraat	1 A1	St Boniface, Rue		Van Bemmelstraat	3 A1
Pacification, Rue de la		Quetelet, Place	2 F1	St Bonifacestraat	2 E5	Van der Elst, Rue	2.04
Pacificatiestraat	3 A1			St Ghislain, Rue		Van der Elststraat	2 D1
Palais, Place des		R		St Ghisleinstraat	1 C5	Van Helmont, Rue	4.00
Paleizplein	2 E4			St Jean, Rue		Van Helmontstraat	1 C3
Palmerston, Ave		R Pequeur, Square	1 A4	St Jansstraat	2 D3	Van Maerlant, Rue	
Palmerstonlaan	3 B2	R Schuman, Rond Point	3 B3	St Josse, Rue		Van Maerlantstraat	3 B3
Parc de Bruxelles		R Schuman Plein		St Jooststraat	3 A1	Van Male de Ghorian,	
Warande	2 E3	Ransfort, Rue		St Josse, Place	-	Rue Van Male de	
Parc du Cinquantenaire	-	Ransfortstraat	1 A2	St Joost Plein	3 A1	Ghorianstraat	1 A1
Jubelpark	3 C3	Rasière, Rue de la		St Laurent, Rue		Van Orly, Rue	
Parc Léopold	3 A4	Sistervatstraat	1 C5	St Laurensstraat	2 E2	Van Orlystraat	2 F1
Parlement Européen	3 A4	Rasson, Rue		St Lazare, Rue		Van Volsem, Rue	
Passchendaele, Rue de	J	Rassonstraat	4 D1	St Lazarusstraat	2 E1	Van Volsemstraat	3 A5
Passendalestraat	1 B1	Ravenstein, Rue		St Marie, Rue		Vandenbranden, Rue	
Patriotes, Rue des		Ravensteinstraat	2 E3	St Mariastraat	1 B1	Vandenbrandenstraat	1 B2
Patriottenstraat	3 C2	Rectangle, Rue du		St Martin, Rue		Vandenbroeck, Rue	
Paul-Henri Spaak,	302	Rechtboekstraat	1 A2	St Maartenstraat	1 A2	Vandenbroeckstraat	3 A5
AvePaul-Henri		Régence, Rue de la		St Michel, Blvd	1112	Vautier, Rue	
Spaaklaan	1 A5	Regent Schapsstraat	2 D4	St Michellaan	4 F5	Vautierstraat	3 A4
Pavie, Rue de	11.	Regent, Blvd de		St Michel, Rue	417	Vautour, Rue du	
Paviastraat	3 B1	Regentlaan	2 F3	St Michielstraat	2 D1	Gierstraat	1 B3
Pélican, Rue du	3 151	Rembrandt, Rue	-13	St Pierre, Place	2 101	Verbist, Rue	
Pelikaanstraat	2 D1	Rembrandtstraat	3 C2		4 D4	Verbiststraat	3 B1
	2 1/1	Rempart des Moines, R	3 62	St Pieters Plein St Pierre, Rue	4 D4	Verdure, Rue de la	
Pepin, Rue du	2 E4	du Papenveststraat	1 B2	St Pietersstraat	2 D1	Loofstraat	1 B3
Kernstraat	2 1.4	Renaissance, Ave de	1 102	St Quentin, Rue	2 101	Vergote, Square	4 F2
Pepinière, Rue de la Boomkwekerijstraat	2.54	la Renaissancelaan	4 D3	St Quentinstraat	3 B2	Verviers, Rue de	
	2 E4	Renards. Rue des	4 05	St Lazare, Blvd	3 B2	Verviersstraat	3 A2
Père de Deken, Rue	4 17 4		1.05	St Lazare, Bive	2 E1	Viaduc, Rue du	
Pater de Dekenstraat	4 E4	Vossenstraat	1 C5		2 E1	Viaductstraat	3 A5
Père E Devroye, Rue	/ m=	Riches Claires, Rue des	4.00	Stalingrad, Ave de Stalingradlaan	1.04	Victor Hugo, Rue	
Pere E Devroyestraat	4 F5	Rijke Klarenstraat	1 C3		1 B4	Victor Hugostraat	4 D1
Perle, Rue de la		Rinsdelle, Place du	/	Stassart, Rue de	2.55	Victoria Regina, Ave	
Parelstraat	1 A1	Rinsdelle Plein	4 D5	Stassartstraat	2 E5	Victoria Reginalaan	2 E1
Petit Sablon, Place du	/	Rogations, Ave des		Ste Catherine, Place	1 C2	Vierge Noire, Rue	
Kleine Zavelplein	2 D4	Kruisdagenlaan	4 E3	Stevens, Rue	/	de la Zwarte	
Petits Carmes, Rue des		Roger van der Weyden,		Stevensstraat	2 D4	Lievevrouwstraat	1 C2
Karmelietenstraat	2 D4	Rue Roger van der		Stevin, Rue		Vierges, Rue des	
Philippe le Bon, Rue		Weydenstraat	1 B4	Stevinstraat	3 A2	Maagdenstraat	1 B3
Philippe le Bonstraat	3 A2	Rogier, Place	2 D1			Vieux Marché aux Grains,	
Philippe de Champagne,		Roodebeek, Ave de		Т		Rue du	,
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late

exit

toilet

entrance

occupied

free (vacant)

free (no charge)

Phrase Book

TIPS FOR PRONOUNCING FRENCH

French-speaking Belgians, or Walloons, have a throaty, deep accent noticeably different from French spoken in France. Despite this, there are few changes in the vocabulary used in spoken and written language. Consonants at the end of words are mostly silent

and not pronounced. Cb is pronounced sb; tb is t; w is v; and r is rolled gutturally. C is pronunced s.

IN EMERGENCY

Yes

No

Please

Hello

Thank you

Excuse me

Good night

Goodbye

morning

afternoon

evening

vesterday

tomorrow

today

here

there

What?

When?

Why?

How?

vou.

Where?

How are you?

Very well, thank

How do you do?

See you soon

Where is/are...?

How far is it to ...?

Which way to ...?

Could you speak

Do vou speak

Fnolish

slowly?

I'm sorry.

That's fine

USEFUL PHRASES

Heln! Au secours! Stop! Arrêtez! Appelez un Call a doctor! medecin Appelez la police Call the police! Call the fire Appelez les brigade! pompiers Where is the Ou est le téléphone le plus proche Ou est l'hôpital le nearest telephone? Where is the nearest hospital? plus proche

COMMUNICATION ESSENTIALS

Oui

Non

Merci

Bonjour

Au revoir

Le matin

Le soir

Demain

Là bas

Quand?

Pourquoi?

Comment?

Très bien, merci.

Comment ca va?

A bientôt.

Ca va bien.

Où est/sont...?

kilomètres d'ici à...?

direction pour...?

Parlez-vous Anglais?

Vous puissez parlez

plus lentement?

Combien de

Ouelle est la

I don't understand Ie ne comprends

pas.

Hier

Ici

Où?

Bonne nuit

L'apres-midi

Aujourd'hui

Quel/quelle?

S'il vous plait

Excusez-moi

oh sek**oor** aret-ay apuh-lav uñ medsañ apuh-lay lah pol-ees apuh-lay leh poñpeeyay oo ay luh tehlehfon luh ploo prosh oo ay l'opeetal luh ploo **prosh**

wee

noñ

mer-see

boñzhoor

boñ-swar

matañ

swah

eeyehr

duh**mañ**

ee-see

lah bah

kel. kel

poor-kwah

kom-moñ

byañ-toh

Sah vah byañ

kom-byañ duh

keelo-metr d'ee-

deer-ek-syoñ poor

par-lay voo oñg-lay

voo pwee-say par-

exkoo-zay mwah

lay ploos lontuh-

zhuh nuh kom

proñ pah

ooh av/soñ

see ah

kel av lah

treh byañ, mer-see

kom-moñ sah vah

koñ

Comment allez vous? kom-moñ talav voo

oh ruh-vwar

l'apreh-meedee

oh-zhoor-dwee

seel voo play

exkoo-zav mwah

MAKING A TELEPHONE CALL

tard

l'entrée

la sortie

toilette

occupé

gratuit

libre

I would like to place a longdistance telephone call I'd like to call collect

interurbain Je voudrais faire

Ie voudrais faire un

zhuh voo-dreh un communication faire oon komoonikah. syoñ peh-sehveh

tar

l'on-tray

twah-let

o-koo-pay

grah-twee

oorbañ

zhuh voo-dreh

faire uñ añter-

zhuh vav ess-av-

eh ploo tar

es-keh zhuh puh

les-sav uñ meh-

par-lay uñ puh

sazh

poo-vay voo

ploo for

komoonikah

sor-tee

leebr

Je vais essayer I will try again plus tard later Can I leave a Est-ce que ie peux laisser un message? message?

Could you speak Pouvez-vous parler up a little please? un peu plus fort?

Local call Communication local

Est-ce que vous

Est-ce que vous

acceptez les

A quelle heure

A quelle heure

pas cher, bon

marché

la taille

blanc

rouge

iaune

noir

Celni-ci

Celui-là

cher

vous êtes ouvert

vous êtes fermé

de crédit

acceptez les cartes

chèques de voyage

SHOPPING

How much does this cost? I would like Do vou have..

I'm just looking Do you take credit cards?

Do you take travellers cheques? What time do you open? What time do vou close? This one That one expensive cheap

size, clothes white black red vellow green

syoñ low-kal C'est combien? say kom-byañ

Ie vondrais zhuh voo-drav Est-ce que vous es-kuh voo zavay avez... Ie regarde zhuh ruhgar suhlseulement moñ

> es-kuh voo zaksept-ay leh kart duh kreh-dee es-kuh voo zaksept-ay lay shek duh vwayazh ah kel urr voo zet oo-ver ah kel urr voo zet fer-may suhl-wee see subl-wee lah shehr pah shehr, boñ mar-shay tve bloñ nwahr roozh zhownh vehr blub

le maga-zañ

lee-brehree

boo-shehree

shok-oh-lah-tyeh

natee-sree

boñk

booloñ-zhuree

vert bleu blue Types of Shops

shop le magasin la boulangerie bakery bank la banque bookshop la librairie la boucherie butcher cake shop la pâtisserie chocolate shop la chocolatier chip stop/stand la friterie chemist la pharmacie delicatessen la charcuterie department store le grand magasin fishmonger la poissonerie greengrocer le marchand des légumes hairdresser le coiffeur market le marché le magasin de

journaux/tabac post office le bureau de poste le supermarché l'agence de voyage

free-tuh-ree farmah-see shah-koo-tuh-ree groñ maga-zañ pwasson-ree mar-**shoñ** duh lavgoom kwafuhr marsh av maga-zañ duh zhoor-no/ta-bak boo-roh duh pohst soo-pehr-marshay azhons duh vwayazh

USEFUL WORDS

small hot cold good bad enough well open closed left right straight on near far

up

down

early

grand groñ petit puh-tee chand chow froid frwah hon boñ manyais moh-veh assez assav bien hvañ oo-ver ouvert fermé fer-meh gauche gohsh droite drawh tout droit too drwah près preh loin lwañ en haut oñ oh en has oñ hah tôt toh

newsagent

supermarket travel agent

SIGHTSEEING

art gallery le galérie d'art bus station la gare routière

galer-ree dart gahr roo-tee-yehr

cathedral church closed on public	la cathédrale l'église fermeture jour	katay- dral ayg leez fehrmeh-tur zhoor	60 70 80	soixante soixante-dix quatre-vingt	swahsoñt swahsoñt-dees katr-vañ
holidays	ferié le jardin	fehree-ay zhah- dañ	90	quatre-vingt-dix/	katr vañ dees/
garden ibrarv	la bibliothèque	beeb leeo -tek	100	nonante cent	nonan soñ
nuseum	le musée	moo-zay	1000	mille	meel
ailway station	la gare (SNCF)	gahr (es-en-say-ef)	1,000,000	million	miyoñ
ourist office	les informations	layz uñ-for-mah-	Т		
own hall	l'hôtel de ville	syoñ	Тіме		
rain	le train	oh tel duh vil trañ	What is the time? one minute	Quelle heure? une minute	kel uhr oon mee- noot
STAYING IN A	HOTEL		one hour half an hour	une heure une demi-heure	oon uhr oon duh-mee uh
Do you have a	est-ce que vous avez	es-kuh voo zavay	half past one	une heure et demi	uhr ay duh-mee
vacant room?	une chambre?	oon shambr	a day	un jour	zhuhr
double room with double bed	la chambre à deux	la shambr uh duh per- son uh-vek	a week	une semaine un mois	suh-mehn
double bed	personnes, avec un grand lit	uñ groñ lee	a month a year	un mois une année	mwah annay
win room	la chambre à	la shambr ah duh	Monday	lundi	luñ- dee
	deux lits	lee	Tuesday	mardi	mah-dee
single room	la chambre à une	la shambr ah oon	Wednesday	mercredi	mehrkruh-dee
	personne	pehr-son	Thursday	jeudi	zhuh-dee
oom with a bath	la chambre avec	shambr ah-vek sal	Friday	vendredi	voñdruh-dee
howen	salle de bain	duh bañ doosh	Saturday	samedi	sam-dee
shower have a	une douche J'ai fait une	doosh zhay fay oon ray-	Sunday	dimanche	dee-moñsh
reservation	reservation	znay iay oon ray- zehrva- syoñ	BELGIAN BEE	R AND FOOD	
reservation	. Coci vanoli	zem va syon			
EATING OUT			fish	poisson bar/loup de mer	pwah-ssoñ bah/loo duh mare
Have you got a	Avez vous une	avay-voo oon	bass herring	bar/loup de mer hareng	ah-roñ
table?	table libre?	tahbl leebr	lobster	homard	oh-ma
would like to	Je voudrais réserver	zhuh voo-dray	monkfish	lotte	lot
reserve a table.	une table.	rayzehr-vay oon	mussel	moule	mool
		tahbl	oyster	huitre	weetr
The bill, please.	L'addition, s'il	l'adee- syoñ , seel	pike	brochet	brosh-ay
am a vegetarian.	vous plait. Je suis végétarien.	voo play zhuh swee vezhay-	salmon scallop	saumon coquille	soh-moñ kok-eel sañ jak
	Monsieur.	tehryañ gah-sohn/		Saint-Jacques	
waitress/waiter	Monsieur, Mademoiselle	gan-sonn/ mad-uh-mwah-zel	sea bream	dorade/daurade	doh-rad
nenu	le menu	men-oo	prawn skate	crevette raie	kreh-vet rav
over charge	le couvert	luh koo- vehr	trout	truite	trweet
wine list	la carte des vins	lah kart -deh vañ	tuna	thon	toñ
glass	verre	vehr			
oottle	la bouteille	boo-tay	MEAT		
nife	le couteau	koo-toh	meat	viande	vee-yand
ork	la fourchette	for-shet	beef	boeuf	buhf
spoon oreakfast	la cuillère	kwee-yehr	chicken	poulet	poo-lay
oreakiasi	le petit déjeuner	puh-tee day-zhuh- nay	duck	canard	kan ar
unch	le déjeuner	day- zhuh-nay	lamb	agneau	ah yoh
linner	le dîner	dee-nay	pheasant	faisant	feh-zoñ
nain course	le grand plat	groñ plah	pork veal	porc veau	por
starter	l'hors d'oeuvres	or duhvr	veai venison	veau cerf/chevreuil	voh surf/shev-roy
lessert	la dessert	duh-zehrt	· CHISOH	Col I/ CHC/I Culi	July Shev-10y
lish of the day	le plat du jour	plah doo joor	VEGETABLES		
oar	le bar	bah	vegetables	légumes	lay-goom
rafe	le café	ka-fay	asparagus	asperges	ahs-pehrj
are nedium	saignant	say-nyoñ	Belgian endive	chicon	shee-koñ
well done	à point bien cuit	ah pwañ byañ kwee	/chicory		
Numbers		.,	Brussels sprouts	choux de bruxelles	shoo duh broocksell
)	zero	zeh-roh	garlic	ail	eye
, I	un	uñ, oon	green beans haricot beans	haricots verts	arrykoh vehr
2	deux	duh	potatoes	pommes de terre	arrykoh pom-duh tehr
3	trois	trwah	spinach	epinard	aypeenar
í	quatre	katr	truffle	truffe	troof
5	cinq	sañk			
5	six	sees	DESSERTS		
7	sept	set	pancake	crêpe	crayp
3	huit neuf	weet	waffle	gauffre	gohfr
10	neur dix	nerf dees	fruit	fruits	frwee
10	onze	oñz			
12	douze	dooz	Drinks		
13	treize	trehz	coffee	café	kah-fay
14	quatorze	katorz	white coffee	café au lait	kah- fay oh lay
	quinze	kañz	milky coffee	caffe latte	kah- fay lat-uh
15	seize	sehz	hot chocolate	chocolat chaud	shok-oh-lah shoh
16	dix-sept	dees-set	tea	thé	tay
16 17		dees-zweet	water	l'eau l'eau minérale	oh
16 17 18	dix-huit				
16 17 18 19	dix-huit dix-neuf	dees-znerf	mineral water		l'oh meenay-ral
16 17 18 19 20	dix-huit dix-neuf vingt	dees- znerf vañ	lemonade	limonade	lee-moh-nad
16 17 18 19 20 21	dix-huit dix-neuf vingt vingt-et-un	dees- znerf vañ vañ ay uhn		limonade jus d'orange	lee-moh-nad zhoo doh-ronj
16 17 18 19 20	dix-huit dix-neuf vingt	dees- znerf vañ	lemonade orange juice	limonade	lee-moh-nad

laat in-ghang

ouht-ohano

ghraah-tiss

vhav-sav

bub-zett

vraiy

TIPS FOR PRONOUNCING FLEMISH

Flemish is a dialect of Dutch, with most of the language remaining the same, bar some regional differences. The language is pronounced in largely the same way as English, although many vowels, particularly double vowels, are pronounced as long sounds. J is the equivalent of the English y, v is pronounced f, and w is v.

IN EMERGENCY

Help! Help! help stop Stop! Stop! Call a doctor! Haal een dokter! Haal uhn dok-tur Call the police! Roep de politie! Roop duh poe-leetsee Call the fire Roep de Roop duh brahntbrigade! brandweer! vheer Where is the Waar ist de Vhaar iss duh dichtshiiziinde dikst-baiy-zaiynnearest telephone? duh-tay-luh-foan telefoon? Where is the Waar ist het Vhaar iss het nearest hospital? dichtsbiiziinde dikst-baiv-zaivnziekenhuis duh zee-kuh-hows

COMMUNICATION ESSENTIALS

vaa No nav Please Alstublieft ahls-tew-bleeft Thank you Dank u or dhank-ew pahr-don Excuse me Pardon Hello Redankt he dunk Goodbye Dag dahoh Slaap lekker slap **lek**-kah Good night morning Morgen mor-ghugh Middag mid-dahgh afternoon Avond av-vohnd evening vesterday Gisteren ghis-tern today Vandaag van-daagh tomorrow Morgen mor-ghugh here Hier heer there Daar daar What? Wat? vhat When? Wanneer? vhan-eer Why? Waarom? vhaar-om Where? Waar? vhaar How? Hoe hoo

Hoe gaat het

Hoe maakt u het?

Waar is/zijn...?

Hoe ver is het

Hoe kom ik naar...?

Spreekt u engels?

Ik snap het niet

Kunt u langzamer

ermee?

dank u

Tot ziens

naar...?

praten?

Prima

Heel goed.

USEFUL PHRASES

How are you? Very well, thank you How do you do? See you soon That's fine Where is/are...? How far is it to ...? How do I get to ...? Do you speak English?

I don't understand Could you speak slowly?

I'm sorry

near

far

up

down

early

USEFUL WORDS big groot small klein hot warm cold kond goed good slecht bad enough genoeg well goed open open gesloten closed left. links rechts right straight on

rechtdoor dightbij ver weg omhoog naar beneden vroeg

Hoo ghaat het er-may Hayl ghoot, dhank ew Hoo maakt ew het Tot zeens Pree-mah vhaar iss/zayn Hoo vehr iss het nar

Hoo kom ik nar Spraykt uw eng-uhls Ik snahn het neet Kuhnt ew lahng-zarmerpraat-tuh

sorry ghroat

klaivn

vharm khowt ghoot slekht ghuh-noohkh ghoot open ghuh-slow-tuh links rekhts rehkht dohr dikht baiy vehr vhekh om-hoakh

naar buh nav-duh

vrookh

late laat entrance ingang exit uitgang toilet wc bezet ocupied free (vacant) vrij free (no charge) gratis

MAKING A TELEPHONE CALL

I'd like to place a long-distance telephone call I'd like to call collect I will try again later

a message? Could you speak up a little please? Local call

Can I leave

boodschap doorgeven? praten? Lokaal gesprek

Ik wil graag ik vhil ghraakh inter-loh-kaal tayinterlokal telefoneren luh-foh-neh-ruh Ik wil "collect call" bellen Ik probeer het later nog wel eens

Kunt u een Wilt u vat harder

ik vhil "collect call" bel-luh ik pro-beer het laater nokh vhel avns kuhnt ew uhn boat-skhaho dohr-ghay-vuh vhilt ew vhat hahrder praat-ew low-kaahl ghuh-

hoo-vayl kost dit

ik vhil ghraakh

ik kaiyk alleyn

navmt ew credit

navmt ew raivs-

hoo laat ghaat ew

hoo laat ghaat ew

cards aan?

sheks aan

opuh

dikht

day-zuh

ghoot-koap

dee

dewr

maat

vhit zyhahrt

roat

ohavl

ghroon

blah-ew

sprek

havft ew

ay-vuh

SHOPPING

Hoeveel kost dit? How much does this cost? I would like Ik wil graag... Do you have ...? Heeft u...? I'm just looking Ik kijk alleen even Do you take Noomt 11 credit

credit cards? cards aan? Do vou take Neemt 11 travellers' reischeques aan? cheanes What time do Hoe laat gaat vou open? u open? What time do Hoe laat gaat you close? n dicht? This one Deze That one Die expensive dımı cheap goedkoop maat

size white wit black 7wart red rood vellow geel groen oreen . blauw blue

Types of Shops

antique shop antiekwinkel bakery hakker bank bank bookshop hoekwinkel butcher slager banketbakkerij cake shop

chip stop/stand patatzaak chemist/drugstore apotheek delicatessen delicatessen department store warenhuis fishmonger viswinkel groenteboer greengrocer hairdresser kapper market markt krantenwinkel newsagent post office postkantoor supermarket supermarkt tobacconist sigarenwinkel

travel agent

SIGHTSEEING

gallerie busstation art gallery bus station bus ticket strippenkaart cathedral kathedraal church kerk closed on public op feestdagen holidays gesloten day return dagretour garden tuin library hibliotheek museum museum

ahn-teek-vhin-kul hah-ker hahnk book-vhin-kul slaakh-er bahnk-et-bahk-eraiv pah-taht-zak ah-poe-**taivk** daylee-kah-tes-suh vhaah-uh-houws viss-vhin-kul ghroon-tuh-boor kah-per mahrkt krahn-tuh-vhin-kul pohst-kahn-tor sew-per-mahrkt

see-ghaa-ruh-

raiys-bew-roa

vhin-kul

ghaller-ee buhs-stah-shown strip-puh-kaart kah-tuh-**draal** kehrk op fayst-daa-ghuh ghuh-slow-tuh dahgh-ruh-tour touwn bee-bee-vo-tavk mew-zav-um

railway station	station	stah-shown	100	honderd	hohn-durt
return ticket	retourtje	ruh-tour-tyuh	1000	duizend	douw-zuhnt
single journey	enkeltje	eng-kuhl-tyuh	1,000,000	miljoen	mill-yoon
tourist information	dienst voor tourisme	deenst vor tor-ism	Тіме		
town hall	stadhuis	staht-houws			
train	trein	traiyn	one minute one hour	een minuut een uur	uhn meen- ewt uhn ewr
			half an hour	een half uur	een hahlf uhr
STAYING IN A	HOTEL		half past one	half twee	hahlf twee
Do you have a	Zijn er nog	zaiyn er nokh	a day	een dag	uhn dahgh
vacant room?	kamers vrij?	kaa-mers vray	a week	een week	uhn vhayk
			a month a year	een maand een jaar	uhn maant uhn jaar
double room with double bed	een twees persoons- kamer met een	uhn tvhay per- soans -ka-mer	Monday	maandag	maan-dahgh
double bed	twee persoonsbed	met uhn tvhay	Tuesday	dinsdag	dins-dahgh
	twee persoonsbed	per-soans beht	Wednesday	woensdag	vhoons-dahgh
twin room	een kamer met een	uhn kaa-mer met	Thursday	donderdag	donder-dahgh
	lits-jumeaux	uhn lee-zjoo- moh	Friday	vrijdag	vraiy-dahgh
single room	eenpersoons-kamer	ayn-per-soans	Saturday Sunday	zaterdag zondag	zaater-dahgh zon-dahgh
room with a	kaamer met bad/	kaa-mer kaa-mer met	•	-	zon-dangn
bath/shower	douche	baht/doosh	BELGIAN BEE	R AND FOOD	
have a	Ik heb gereserveerd	ik hehp ghuh-ray-	FISH		
reservation	g	sehr-veert	fish	vis	fiss
_			bass	zeebars	see-buhr
EATING OUT			herring	haring	haa-ring
Have you got	Is er een tafel vrij?	iss ehr uhn tah-	lobster	kreeft	krayft
table?	ŕ	fuhl vraiy	monkfish	lotte/zeeduivel	lot/seafuhdul
would like to	Ik wil een tafel	ik vhil uhn tah-fel	mussel	mossel	moss-uhl
reserve a table	reserveren	ray sehr-veer-uh	oyster	oester	ouhs-tuh
The bill, please	Mag ik afrekenen	muhk ik ahf -ray- kuh-nuh	pike prawn	snoek garnaal	snook gar-nall
I am a vegetarian	Ik ben vegetariër	ik ben fay-ghuh-	salmon	zalm	sahlm
ani a vegetarian	ik ben vegetarier	taahr-ee-er	scallop	Sint-Jacoboester/	sind-yakob-ouhs
waitress/waiter	serveerster/ober	sehr-veer-ster/oh-		Jacobsschelp	tuh/yakob-scuhl
		ber	sea bream	dorade/zeebrasem	doh-rard
menu	de kaart	duh kaahrt	skate	rog	rog
cover charge	het couvert	het koo-vehr	trout	forel	foh-ruhl
wine list glass	de wijnkaart het glass	duh vhaiyn -kart het ghlahss	tuna	tonijn	tuhn-een
bottle	de fles	duh fless	MEAT		
knife	het mes	het mess	meat	vlees	flayss
fork	de vork	duh fork	beef	rundvlees	ruhnt-flayss
spoon	de lepel	duh lay-pul	chicken	kip	kip
oreakfast	het ontbijt	het ont-baiyt	duck	eend	aynt
unch linner	de lunch het diner	duh lernsh het dee- nay	lamb	lamsvlees	lahms-flayss
main course	het hoofdgerecht	het hoaft -ghuh-	pheasant	fazant	fay-zanh
nam course	net nooragereem	rekht	pork veal	varkensvlees kalfsvlees	vahr-kuhns-flays
starter,	het voorgerecht	het vhor -ghuh-	venison	ree (bok)	karfs-flayss ray
first course		rekht	vemoon	ree (box)	1117
dessert	het nagerecht	het naa-ghuh-rekht	VEGETABLES		
dish of the day bar	het dagmenu het cafe	het dahg-munh-ew	vegetables	groenten	ghroon-tuh
café	het cale het eetcafe	het kaa-fay het ayt-kaa-fay	asparagus	asperges	as-puhj
rare	rare	'rare'	Belgian endive/	witloof	vit-lurf
medium	medium	'medium'	chicory		
well done	doorbakken	door- bah -kuh	Brussels sprouts	spruitjes	spruhr-tyuhs
			garlic green beans	knoflook princesbonen	knoff-loak prins-ess-buh-nun
Numbers			haricot beans	snijbonen	snee-buh-nun
1	een	ayn	potatoes	aardappels	aard-uppuhls
2	twee	tvhav	spinach	spinazie	spin-a-jee
3	drie	dree	truffle	truffel	truh-fuhl
í	vier	feer	Dreepres		
5	vijf	faiyf	DESSERTS		
6	zes	zess	fruit	fruit/vruchten	vroot/vrooh-tuh
7 3	zeven acht	zay-vuh ahkht	pancake	pannekoek	pah-nuh-kook
9	negen	nay-guh	waffle	wafel	vaff-uhl
10	tien	teen	DRINKS		
11	elf	elf	beer	bier	beeh
12	twaalf	tvhaalf	coffee	koffie	coffee
13	dertien	dehr-teen	fresh orange juice	verse jus	vehr-suh zjhew
14	veertien	feer-teen faivf-teen	hot chocolate	chocola	sho-koh-laa
15 16	vijftien zestien	zess-teen	mineral water	mineraalwater	meener-aahl-
17	zeventien	zayvuh-teen		41	vhaater
18	achtien	ahkh-teen	tea water	thee water	tay vhaa -ter
19	negentien	nay-ghuh-tien	water	wijn	vhaiyn
20	twintig	tvhin-tukh			
21	eenentwintig	aynuh-tvhin-tukh			
30 (0	dertig	dehr-tukh feer-tukh			
40 50	veertig vijftig	faiyf-tukh			
60	zestig	zess-tukh			
70	zeventig	zay-vuh-tukh			
	tachtig	tahkh-tukh			
80	ucing	talikii-tukii			





PK EYEWITNESS TRAVEL GUIDES

Systematic information on more than **400 sights, shops, restaurants, hotels** and **entertainment venues**

KEY TO MAIN SYMBOLS

₩	Historic building	只	Train Station	\cap	Audio tours available
血	Museum, gallery	TO	Festival	Ō	Photography allowed
û	Church, cathedral, chapel	Mr.	Population	ø	No Photography allowed
₾	Castle, fortress	(Telephone number	£	Wheelchair access (phone to check details
*	Park, gardens		Open	#1	Restaurant
Ü	Tram route		Closed	₽	Café
 -	Bus route	<i>‰</i>	Admission charge	Ŷ	Shop
M	Metro Station	Ø	Guided tours available	i	Tourist information point

M	Wello Station		available	Ĭ	information point
SY	MBOLS FOR	НО	TELS AND	REST	aurants
	All rooms with bath	Ō	Business facilities	Y	Bar
1	Single-rate rooms available	'∀'	Gym/fitness facilities	月	Live music
#	Rooms for more than two people	≋	Swimming pool in hotel	\star	Highly recommended
7	No-smoking rooms available	P	Hotel parking available		Credit cards accepted
<u>24</u>	24-hour room service	χ̈́	Caters for children	€	Price category
TV	Television in all rooms		Garden or grounds	9 1	Fixed-price menu
7	Minibar in room	V	Vegetarian dishes available	@	Email address
	Air conditioning in all rooms	Y	Good wine list	W	Website
$\boldsymbol{\pi}$	Pets allowed in bedrooms	î.Îi	Outdoor eating		
	ADDITION	NAL	SYMBOLS	FOR	MAPS
	Airport	Ä	Police station	٨	Cloakroom
	Bus terminus	Ŧ	Church	$\dot{\mathcal{T}}$	Men's toilets
M	Metro station	P	Parking	*	Women's toilets
Ü	Tram stop	₽	Taxi rank	∱ ∱	Men's and women's toilets
\boxtimes	Post office	\uparrow_{ψ}	Lift		
100	Hospital	io	Escalator		

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