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Travel Information for Belgium

A. Transportation Information

Brussels: Name and airport code: Brussels Airport (BRU) Web: www.brusselsairport.be. The Brussels Airport is well-connected by international flights with the most common connecting hubs being London, Frankfurt, and Amsterdam. Check the airport website for carriers. The airport is 14km northeast of Brussels and is well-connected by bus, train, and shuttle to the city center.

To and From the Airport

By Taxi: Licensed taxis displaying a blue and yellow emblem are available outside the arrivals hall of the airport. Cost of the trip from the airport to the city center is approximately €50 (status 2017).

By Train: The airport train station is located in the basement level (Level -1) and has daily connections to the Brussels North, Brussels Central, and Brussels Midi stations. Check their website for time schedules; enter BRUXELLES NAT AIRPORT as your departure station. www.belgianrail.be

By Bus: The airport bus station is located on level 0 which is one level below arrivals. The express Airport Line of MIVB/STIB company provides a 30-minute connection between the airport and the European district of Brussels. See www.stib.be. The De Lijn bus company offers many regional transfers www.delijn.be. The Airport Express provides daily direct service between the airport and Antwerp. See www.airportexpress.be

By Hotel Shuttle: Area hotel shuttles pick up at level 0, platform E.

Other Types of Transportation

Metro (Brussels): The Brussels metro system entrances are marked by blue and white “M” signs with the station name listed underneath. It is part of the MIVB/STIB system and allows interchangeable use of the metro, bus, and tram. Tickets need to be validated at the orange boxes located on the bus and tram, and at the metro stations. Single trip, 1 day and 3 day passes are available for purchase at staffed windows or at kiosks. Announcements are made in French, Dutch, and English.

Taxis: Taxis can easily be found outside airports and train stations. It is good practice to ask for an approximate fare before the ride and pay meter start. Keep in mind that the cost may vary depending on traffic in the city. You can check the meter to see if the tip-“extra” is being included in the fare.

Bike Rental (Brussels): The Brussels Villo easy-to-use system has stations approximately every 450 meters and allows self-service bike rental 24 hours a day.

Rental Car: If you decide to rent a car, we suggest arranging this from the U.S. - it's cheaper. Be sure to find out the exact address of the location to pick up your rental car, (preferably at your arrival airport). It's best to make these arrangements in advance.

Belgium Train Information: Eurail Passes may be purchased for travel in Belgium. The Belgium national rail system (NMBS/SNCB) connects all the major Belgium tourism cities and international

destinations. Check the Belgium railway website for types of trains, services, and schedules at www.b-europe.com/Belgium. Expect travel times of:

Brussels/Bruges:	1 hour
Brussels/Antwerp:	1 hour 30 minutes
Brussels/Amsterdam:	2 hours 35 minutes

B. Language

Welcome to Belgium: Welkom in België (Dutch), Bienvenue en Belgique (French)

There are two official languages used in the Kingdom of Belgium: Dutch (Flemish community) and French (Wallonian Community). English is widely understood and spoken.

C. How to Dial Telephone Numbers

The International Access Code (IAC) for the US and Canada is 011 and for Belgium it's 00
The Country Code (CC) for Belgium is 32 and for the US and Canada it's 1
Area Codes in Belgium can be various digits in length

To call Belgium from the US or Canada, dial IAC + CC + Local Number.

Example: The local telephone number for the Museum of Belgian Brewers is (0)- 25114987. The number could also be listed as +32 (0)-25114987. In both cases, you would dial 011-32-25114987.

To call the US or Canada from Belgium, dial IAC + CC + Local Number.

Example: The local telephone number of the ExperiencePlus! headquarters in Colorado is 970-484-8489. You would dial 00-1-970-484-8489.

To call Belgium from another European country, dial IAC + CC + Local Number.

Example: The local telephone number for the Museum of Belgian Brewers is (0)- 25114987. The number could also be listed as +32 (0)-25114987. In both cases, you would dial 00-32-25114987.

To call Belgium from within Belgium, dial the Local Number

Example: The local telephone number for the Museum of Belgian Brewers is (0)- 25114987. The number could also be listed as +32 (0)-25114987. In both cases, you would dial 0-25114987. Unlike the US there is no need to differentiate local and long distance by dialing a 1.

D. Eating and Drinking

While somewhat influenced by the French and Flemish, Belgian cuisine stands on its own and will vary somewhat by region of the country. Vegetable dishes prepared with local asparagus and endive (witloof) is customary. Endive is almost always served as a hot dish, but either hot or cold it has a tangy distinct flavor and is high in nutritional value. Seafood dishes are prevalent throughout the country, with mussels (moules) prepared in a variety of recipes (often with a local beer) taking top honors. Eat them like a local and use a discarded shell to scoop out the remainder of your mussels. Cray-fish served in a white-wine butter cream sauce is also readily available, as are herring, North Sea shrimp, fish, and chicken dishes. Other regional favorites are ham, an herbed blended sausage, and tomatoes aux crebettes (tomatoes stuffed with sweet North Sea shrimp in a mayonnaise sauce). Stoemp, a dish from Brussels is mashed potatoes mixed with vegetables served with sausage. Belgium has a large selection of local cheeses. Try a classic Belgian dessert of dame blanche, vanilla ice cream topped with whipped cream and chocolate fudge sauce and cherries.

Frites, Belgium's most popular street food is fried potatoes served in paper cones with homemade mayonnaise, béarnaise or a curry sauce and can easily be found sold from street vendors and in most restaurants. Also popular is the Belgian waffle (Liege style waffle) baked with bits of crunchy sugar prepared either as plain, vanilla, or cinnamon flavor. In Belgium, waffles are considered a snack or dessert food and not a breakfast item. During winter months, street vendors provide roasted chestnuts.

Belgium is famous for its love affair with chocolate—preservative free and made only with the purest cocoa

butter. While Godiva brand is common internationally, in Belgium one will find hundreds of top-notch chocolate producers. Stop by local chocolateries to find your favorite handmade praline (filled chocolate or the more common chocolate mixed with ground nuts or toffee), sea shell shape chocolate, or a plethora of filled candies in either milk or dark chocolate.

Beer lovers unite! Belgium is known for its superior quality beer production and easily boasts more than 400 different brews, many with their distinct personalized beer glass. Beer production in Belgium dates back to the Middle Ages with current brews available in the white beer (wheat/barley beer), lambic (wheat beer), brown beer, red beer, golden (pilsner lagers), champagne beers, and pale and strong ale styles. Belgium is home to the famous rich dark Trappist ales, and the similar Abbey beers. The Trappist designation certifies that the brewery is an actual monastery, monks play a role in the production of the beer, and profits from sales are directed to the monastery and social programs. Belgium is home to six of eleven monasteries that meet these qualifications.

E. Hotel Recommendations

Brussels

[Carrefour de l'Europe Hotel](http://www.carrefourhotel.be/) (www.carrefourhotel.be/)

Rue Marché aux Herbes 110

[The Dominican](http://www.thedominican.be/) (www.thedominican.be/)

Leopoldstraat Rue Leopold 9

[Suite Home Stephanie](http://www.suitehome.be/en/stephanie/home.cfm) (apart-hotel) (www.suitehome.be/en/stephanie/home.cfm)

Chaussee de Charleroi 51B

Saint-Gilles, Brussels

[Brussels Welcome Hotel](http://www.hotelwelcome.com/) (small boutique hotel located at the city center) (www.hotelwelcome.com/)

Quai au bois a bruler 23

[The Residence Les Ecrins](http://www.lesecrins.com/) (www.lesecrins.com/)

Rue du Rouleau 15

Tournai

[Hotel d'Alcantara](http://www.hotelalcantara.be/) (www.hotelalcantara.be)

2, rue des Bouchers St-Jacques

Waterloo

[Hotel Le Côté Vert](http://www.cotevert.be/) (www.cotevert.be/)

Chaussée de Bruxelles 200 G

F. Reading and Movie List

Literature on Belgium

- *Flax in Flanders Throughout the Centuries* by Bert Dewilde. History of the Flemish people and their pride in producing the world's finest linen.
- *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929), an internationally acclaimed novel by Erich Maria Remarque. The story is narrated by the main character, 19-year old Paul Bäumer, who enlists in the German army during World War I and demonstrates how the innocence of youth is lost for soldiers during war time as Paul reflects that all he knows is war and he is ruined for peacetime.
- *Niccolò Rising* by Dorothy Dunnett; a historical novel set in 15th century Bruges, that follows Nicholas vander Poeles as he rises to power from the start as a dye apprentice. Part of the First Book of the House of Niccolo series.
- *The Professor* by Charlotte Bronte, a story of William Crimsworth who leaves his trade as a clerk in Yorkshire to accept a position as professor at an all-girl's schools in Belgium.
- *The Rape of Belgium: The Untold Story of World War 1* by Larry Zuckerman, a vivid account of the 50 months following Germany's 1914 invasion of neutral Belgium.
- *A Belgian Cookbook* by Juliette Elkon Hamelcourt

- *Let's Go Dutch*, a cookbook by Johanna Bates
- Any of the numerous Belgium beer guides such as *All Belgian Beers* by Hilde Deweer, *Good Beer Guide Belgium* or *100 Belgian Beers to Try Before you Die* by Tim Webb, and *Brew Like a Monk: Trappist, Abbey,* and *Strong Belgian Ales and How to Brew Them* by Stan Hieronymus.

Movies About or Set in Belgium

- *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930), is an English language adaptation of the internationally acclaimed novel of the same name by Erich Maria Remarque.
- *Joyeux Noel* (2005), a movie inspired by a real-life event that depicts an unauthorized truce of the front line soldiers of World War I on Christmas Eve 1914. Watch this inspirational film to see how the truce negotiated by the French, German and Scottish leaders unfolds.
- *If It's Tuesday, This Must be Belgium* (1969). A romantic comedy of a British tour guide taking groups on a whirl-wind tour of Europe. Starring Ian McShane and Suzanne Pleshette plus many cameo appearances.
- *Whitey* (1980). A remake of the original 1934 movie titled *De Witte* is a movie about a young Flemish boy with a yearning for reading and his social and educational struggles coming from a life of poverty.
- *Man Bites Dog* (1992). A very dark comedy of a serial killer played by Benoît Poelvoorde. The story depicts a crew of filmmakers recording the killer's crimes for a documentary until they find themselves actually participants in the string of violence.
- *Daens* (1992). Nominated for Best Foreign Language Film in 1994, it depicts the life of Father Adolf Daens, a Catholic priest who faces disciplinary actions from Rome as he champions the cause for improved working conditions for textile factory workers in the 1890's.
- *Le Huitième Jour (The Eighth Day)* (1996). A Cannes best actor award winner about the unlikely friendship between a businessman and an institutional man with Down Syndrome.
- *Camping Cosmos* (1996). A look at the challenge that the Minister of Culture faces when he aims to add culture to the lifestyle of vacationers at a caravan park campsite along the Belgian coast who prefer such low- brow activities as soccer, boxing, and beauty contests.
- *Rosetta* (1999) directed by the Belgian filmmaking brothers Jean Pierre and Luc Dardenne. First-time actress and Cannes Film Festival award winner Amilie Dequenne plays a teenage girl that accepts low paying jobs to escape her alcoholic mother and miserable living conditions in small town Belgium. While acclaimed, the film has been faulted for its hand held camera technique.
- *Toto le Heros (Toto the Hero)* (1991). Using a combination of flashbacks and dreams, the film threads the past and future as an elderly man called Toto wonders how the events of his life may have turned out differently starting with the fire that broke out in the hospital nursery when he was a newborn. Nominated for numerous awards.
- *Everybody's Famous!* (2000). Nominated for the Best Foreign Language Film, is an entertaining and clever story of a father who enacts a plan to derail the career of a beautiful singing star so that his daughter's singing career stands a better chance at stardom.
- *Steve + Sky* (2004). A casual interest between a young drug runner and a club dancer that turns into a love affair.
- *L'Enfant* (2005). A Dardenne brothers' movie about a young couple with financial struggles. After the father sells their newborn to the black market he regrets his callous decision and undertakes a life transformation to get the child back.
- *BenX* (2007). Winner of numerous awards this is a story about an autistic teen who retreats into the world of on-line gaming as a way to avoid bullying at school and adapt to his problems at hand.
- *Small Gods* (2007). After being injured in a car crash in which her son is killed, Elena is kidnapped by a stranger who takes her on a bizarre journey.
- *In Bruges* (2008). After their hit goes bad and an innocent bystander is killed, two hit men (Colin Farrell and Brendan Gleeson) are instructed by their boss (Ralph Fiennes) to lay low in the beautiful city of Bruges, Belgium.
- *Loft* (2008). A thriller about 5 businessmen who share an upscale loft to meet with their respective mistresses. Their friendships take a spin when the body of a woman is found on the premises of the loft of which only they hold the keys.
- *Mr. Nobody* (2009). A science fiction movie set in 2092 in which one hundred eighteen year old Nemo Nobody recounts his life to a reporter.
- *Luke and Lucy and the Texas Rangers* (2009). An animated movie based on the Belgian comic book characters Luke and Lucy.

- *Oxygen* (2010). The story of a young man with cystic fibrosis, a romance with a girl he meets in the hospital, and a friend who also has the disease but lives as an enthusiastic optimist.
- *Bullhead* (2011). A drama about a 30-year old beef cattle farmer who considers an unscrupulous deal, recommended by his veterinarian, with a supplier of cattle growth hormone.

G. Other Travel Resources

If you'd like to explore more transportation options, we find that <https://www.rome2rio.com/> is a helpful resource.