

Reading and Movies

We do carry a portable library on tour, but you may also be interested in the following books. Be sure to check out the blog portion of our website at www.experienceplus.com/blog for additional suggestions and to read reviews.

Guidebooks

We recommend any of the standard, current guidebooks such as Fodor's, Frommer's, Lonely Planet, Rick Steves or Rough Guides.

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 That We Have Enjoyed

- *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.

Literature on Cycling

- *The Cyclist's Training Bible* by Joe Friel.
- *Miles from Nowhere* by Barbara Savage. One of the best-written bicycle adventure stories available.
- *Bicycling Magazine* regularly carries articles on training and technique. Visit your local library on a Sunday afternoon and peruse their collection.
- *Effective Cycling* by John Foresters. Tells you everything you could possibly need to know and more, including safety, maintenance, technique and the physiology of cycling.

