

## Bicycle Tours in Belgium: Bicycling Belgium's Best Breweries Plus!

### OVERVIEW

You don't want to miss this unique beer and bicycling opportunity - the only tour of Belgium that mixes excellent bicycling, lodging, food, plus visits to some of the important Belgian breweries. Starting near the capital of Belgium, we'll pedal through West Flanders (the Flemish part of Belgium) and along the French border in the region of Wallonia, the French speaking part. This tour concentrates on three important beer regions: the Lambic region just south of Brussels, famous for its wild yeast fermentation method which results in a sour beer, the breweries around Bruges (or Brugge in Flemish), a mix of Trappist (monk-brewed) breweries as well as historical breweries such as DeCam, and finally, Wallonia where the Chimay and Orval breweries are located. Two night stays at the beginning and middle of this trip means less packing, and more beer and bicycling! You'll also bicycle through important WWI battleground sites. Gentle cycling terrain makes this a great tour for everyone; in fact the only "requirement" is that you enjoy good beer and fun!

If this sounds great but you'd like a shorter tour, check out our [Bicycling Belgium's Best Breweries](#) tour, which features the first 8 days of this itinerary.\*\*\*

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Pedal quiet roads, bicycle paths
- UNESCO World Heritage sites of Bruges and Tournai
- Waterloo, Belgium
- WWI battle and historical sites
- Best breweries in the world
- Flanders Field Museum
- Riding briefly in France
- Lambic beer
- 3 Trappist breweries
- Historic hotels

### TOUR FACTS

<b>Tour Style</b>	■ Classic: Learn more about our Classic tours at <a href="https://www.experienceplus.com/choosing-the-best-tour/styles/classic">https://www.experienceplus.com/choosing-the-best-tour/styles/classic</a>
<b>Includes</b>	11 days, 10 nights accommodation; 10 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 6 dinners; 2 guided brewery visits; "beer bar" in Bruges, 1 tasting; shuttle to and from Brussels
<b>Countries</b>	Belgium
<b>Begin/End</b>	Brussels / Brussels
<b>Arrive/Depart</b>	Brussels Int'l Airport (BRU) / Brussels Int'l Airport (or Luxembourg-Findel Int'l Airport (LUX))
<b>Total Distance</b>	640 km - 48 km (30 miles) optional ride possible
<b>Avg. Daily Distance</b>	Average per riding day 64 km (40 miles) per riding day
<b>Tour Level</b>	▶▶▶▶▶

**Please Note:** We may have small itinerary changes to this trip after you download this PDF document. If you have booked this trip and there are major changes including changes to towns or activities, we'll email you directly. However, you should always be sure to refer to the [Bicycle Paths](#) for the most up-to-date trip information including arrival and departure tips before you depart for your trip:

<https://www.experienceplus.com/bike-tours/belgium/bicycling-belgiums-breweries-plus>

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**DATES & PRICES**

**DAILY RIDE SUMMARY**

Day	Distance/Gain	Terrain	Day Level	Notes
1	0km / 0m (0mi / 0ft)			
2	0km / 0m (0mi / 0ft)			
3	0km / 0m (0mi / 0ft)			
4	0km / 0m (0mi / 0ft)			
5	0km / 0m (0mi / 0ft)			
6	0km / 0m (0mi / 0ft)			
7	0km / 0m (0mi / 0ft)			
8	0km / 0m (0mi / 0ft)			
9	0km / 0m (0mi / 0ft)			
10	0km / 0m (0mi / 0ft)			
11	0km / 0m (0mi / 0ft)			

**Bicycle Tours in Belgium: Bicycling Belgium's Best Breweries Plus!****Arrive in Waterloo****DAY 1**

**Highlights** Gothic and Medieval architecture, Belgian waffles

**Meals** Dinner

We start our tour just south of Brussels in the town of Waterloo, famous worldwide for the 1815 defeat of French Emperor Napoleon by an Anglo-Allied army in the "Battle of Waterloo". You might choose to arrive a few days early in Brussels to explore the Belgian capital. Brussels hosts a variety of fascinating architectural sites - from medieval architecture to post-modern European Union buildings. Stroll through town where Belgian waffles and "moules frites", or mussels served with French fries abound and "brasseries" or "salon de thés" are aplenty. Meet this afternoon for a bike fitting and test ride to the Lion Mound, the site of the infamous battle. Welcome drinks and dinner together to celebrate the beginning of our Belgian bike and beer tour! Test ride: 13 km (8 miles). Meals: D Lodging: Hotel Le Coté Vert

**Flanders Cycling****DAY 2**

**Highlights** Lambic beer, DeCam Brewery

**Meals** Breakfast, Dinner

Our ride takes us through Lambic region today as we head West into the upper Ardennes and the heart of Flanders. We'll pass the region known for its Lambic beer and we'll have a chance to visit a small brewery en route to taste some of this unique beer made with natural yeasts. Our destination today is one of the oldest towns in Flanders, Geraardsbergen. Distance: 60 km (37 mi). Meals: B, D Lodging: Hotel Geeraard

**Ride to Oudenaarde****DAY 3**

**Highlights** Cycling through picturesque Flemish towns and countryside, Oudenaarde, Tour de Flanders Region

**Meals** Breakfast

We pedal west today past lush fields along the gentle hills of Flanders - we're pedalling along the hills racers ride during the Tour de Flanders before continuing to our home for the night, Oudenaarde, a small Flemish town known once for its thriving tapestry economy. Today Oudenaarde is home to the museum of the Tour de Flanders that features the heroes of Flemish cycling, including Eddy Merckx. Distance: 43 km (27 miles). Meals: B Lodging: La Pomme d'Or

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### Cycling from Oudenaarde to Bruges

#### DAY 4

**Highlights** UNESCO World Heritage Site of Bruges, Flemish art museums, Flemish "primitives"

**Meals** Breakfast, Dinner

We bike to one of Belgium's most impressive cities today, Bruges (Brugge in Flemish). A quiet bike route takes us through farmland to reach the center of Bruges and our hotel. Settle in and plan to visit Flemish art museums or just stroll along the canals that were once main arteries in the city. The imposing medieval square and City Hall combined with the fantastic architecture characterize this unique city. Bruges' city richness in history and architecture is well displayed in its stepped gable houses, the market square with the belfort, in unique historic neighborhoods such as the "Beguinage", a community of lay women from the 13th Century, or through the almshouses that dot the city's ramparts from the Middle Ages. Distance: 69 km (43 miles). Meals: B, D Lodging: Martin's Relais

### Rest Day - Guided city visit

#### DAY 5

**Highlights** City tour, beer bar visit and tasting

**Meals** Breakfast

Enjoy a guided visit around the city of Bruges mid-morning after which you can decide to visit the chocolate museum, diamond museum or even the Belgian fry museum! Enjoy this fabulous city but be sure to save some energy to join us at Bruges' famous beer bar late this afternoon for samples! And remember if climbing up Bruges' famous belfry isn't enough exercise for you, a Tour Leader would be delighted to pedal to the North Sea and back with you! Distance: Optional Ride 48 km (30 miles). Meals: B Lodging: Martin's Relais

### Bicycling Belgium's Countryside

#### DAY 6

**Highlights** Westvleteren home to the world's highest ranking beers, Ieper and Flanders Field Museum

From Bruges we pedal southwest directly through the West Flanders region, passing by the town of Esen (famous for its "mad brewers" brewery). Serious beer connoisseurs may want to wait for the afternoon guided tour, but we have several miles still ahead of us, so most will pedal on to our quick lunch stop before reaching another important beer stop. Westvleteren is one of only 6 authentic Trappist beers in Belgium (made by Trappist monks, a branch of Cistercian monks) and one of which is continually ranked amongst the top beers in the world. The 16th Century St. Sixtus Abbey is not open to the public, but you can still enjoy the world's highest ranking beers from the In de Vrede café across the street before continuing on to the town of Ieper, home to a

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fascinating museum that starkly documents WWI's impact on the region. Distance: 82 km (52 miles). Meals: B, L Lodging: Hotel Ariane

**Meals** Breakfast, Lunch

**Bicycle Tours in Belgium: Bicycling Belgium's Best Breweries Plus!****Wallonia and French Belgium****DAY 7**

**Highlights** Bicycling into Wallonia, Tournai, Gothic and Romanesque Tournai's cathedral

**Meals** Breakfast, Dinner

We leave the Flemish part of Belgium today to enter Wallonia, the French-speaking part of Belgium. Wallonia or "Wallonie," as the French call it, makes up 55% of the geographic area of Belgium. Once the first industrialized region of all of continental Europe due to important coal and iron reserves, today Wallonia is famous for its Trappist beers (Chimay and Orval are both here) as well as some industry, services, and tourism. We bicycle to the town of Tournai, the oldest city in Belgium. Incredibly rich in the Middle Ages thanks to its textile industry, Tournai still preserves important Romanesque and Gothic churches and private houses which are listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Distance: 65 km (40 miles). Meals: B, D Lodging: Hotel Alcantara

**Pedal near the French-Belgian border to Mons****DAY 8**

**Highlights** Canal ride, WWI battle sites

**Meals** Breakfast

Today you'll head toward the French border and deep into Wallonia as you pedal through the former industrial backbone of Belgium between the Sambre and Meuse river valleys. Now mostly forests and agricultural fields, it is no longer the rich industrial area it was in the 1800s. Our destination is the small town of Mons, significant since Roman times and also the site of important battles in World War I. Distance: 71 km (44 miles). Meals: B Lodging: St. James Hotel

**Bicycle from Mons to Chimay****DAY 9**

**Highlights** Biking through forested hills, Lobbes and oldest Collegial Church, Chimay beer tasting

**Meals** Breakfast, Dinner

We're cycling through hills and forested area on the edge of the Ardenne region of Belgium (the Ardennes Mountains extends east from here across southern Belgium and into Luxembourg and France). Rolling hills bring us to the small town of Chimay, which we'll bypass to head straight to the Chimay Abbey, where our small country inn awaits. The brewery is not a very interesting visit as you can't see the monks brewing, but take a walk around the abbey, see the gardens and then meet back in our hotel for a beer tasting. Distance: 87 km (54 miles). Meals: B, D Lodging: Auberge de Poteaupré

**Bicycle Tours in Belgium: Bicycling Belgium's Best Breweries Plus!****Chimay to Bouillon****DAY 10**

**Highlights** Forested ride, French town of Rocroi, pedalling along the Semois canyon, Bouillon and the ducal stronghold

**Meals** Breakfast, Dinner

We've saved some of the best for last as we pedal between two of the most famous Belgian breweries -- Chimay and Orval (2 of the 6 Trappist breweries, "Trappist" because they are still brewed by monks). One of the most beautiful rides of the trip as we pedal along the Semois river, we'll enter France for a bit as we pedal country lanes through forested hills and small villages (check out the center of Rocroi but don't blink or you'll miss it!). Our lodging for the night is in Bouillon, dominated by the medieval castle built by Godfrey of Bouillon (leader of the first crusade). We'll have a special farewell dinner with our delightful hosts in Bouillon. Distance: 102 km (63 miles). Meals: B, D Lodging: La Ferroniere

**Tour ends, Orval Visit, shuttle to Brussels****DAY 11**

**Highlights** Visit Orval Ruins

**Meals** Breakfast

We'll leave Bouillon this morning to return to Brussels, stopping first to visit the Orval Abbey, ruins and Trappist brewery. We'll plan to be in Brussels early afternoon. Thanks for joining us on this beer and bike adventure! Bon voyage and Goede Reis! Meals: B

**INCLUDED**

**WHAT'S INCLUDED**

When you book a tour with ExperiencePlus! our goal is to ensure your only focus each day is to hop on your bike and explore scenic cycling routes in new destinations. Inclusions may differ depending on which tour style you pick but all ExperiencePlus! tours include what we believe are the most important aspects of a bike tour.

- On all our guided tours, you can expect superb tour leaders who are fun and multilingual, bi-cultural experts, and cycling enthusiasts. They will support you and help you navigate confidently on and off the road.
- High quality bikes selected for the terrain you are cycling on and correct bike fitting to ensure comfortable cycling.
- Thoughtfully designed itineraries and routes that take advantage of stunning cycling destinations and the freedom of bicycle travel. Plus, all the logistics are taken care of.

**PRE-TRIP SUPPORT**

- Bicycle training programs designed specifically for your tour and fitness level.
- Planning tips on what to pack, hotel recommendations and other helpful details from our Travel Planning Pages: <https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/>
- A gift of your choice (cycling jerseys, socks, or a t-shirt) as our way of saying thanks for choosing EP!
- \*Traveler services including assistance booking extra nights at the tour starting and ending hotels. (\*Explorer and Self-guided tour styles excluded)
- See "What's Included" for tour-specific inclusions and be sure to check the "Keep in mind" section under "Tour Summary" online.

**BICYCLES**

For a full list of what's included with your bike see: <https://www.experienceplus.com/what-to-expect/our-bikes/>. If you would like to bring your own pedals and shoes we recommend doing so. On Explorer and Self-guided tours we include a GPS device on all bikes.

**NAVIGATING, DAYSHEETS AND VAN SUPPORT:**

On a guided tour, each day you'll receive a daily briefing with a highlighted route map. On a self-guided tour you'll receive a comprehensive orientation and bike fit on the first or second morning of your trip. About 14 days prior to your tour, we will provide you with access to

RideWithGPS Experiences, our platform to distribute information on each tour day's activities, meals and ride, as well as GPS-routes.

Daily information on the RWGPS Experience includes important phone numbers, hotel information and interesting historical and cultural information. On Classic, Bike and Boat and Expedition tours we also navigate using our signature chalk dust arrows. Our arrows make navigating very easy—you may never need to look at the map. On Explorer tours the terrain and destinations are not always conducive to using chalk arrows so we'll ride as a group or you can navigate on your own with the GPS tracks.

On a guided tour you will have a support van providing water and snack resupply, mechanical assistance, a lift for tired cyclists, and luggage transfers. On some itineraries the van will not be able to follow sections of the route that stray from the road for example onto cycling paths. On a self-guided tour you will have luggage transfers that will transport your bags from one hotel to the other.

**Need More Miles?** On many days it is possible to add miles to the day, just talk to your tour leader about your options or ask when you are planning your self-guided trip.

**Need Fewer Miles?** On a guided tour, the support van is available to offer snacks, encouragement, a lift over the next hill, or to the next hotel. On a self-guided tour we recommend you review the tour level to make sure you can ride the full distance.

**ON A GUIDED TOUR: TIPPING YOUR TOUR LEADERS**

If you feel your tour leader team has demonstrated great expertise and service, common practice within the travel industry is to tip. Tipping is voluntary and greatly appreciated, and gratuity amounts vary widely. Should you decide to leave a tip, as a guideline, we suggest 5-8% of the tour cost per traveler — this is for the entire tour leader team, not each tour leader. You can give the tip to any member of the tour leader team, as they share it evenly. In order to avoid social tensions, we encourage you to tip as individuals and not as a group. If you feel your tour leaders did not quite meet your expectations, please let us know.

\*Tips are included in Expedition pricing and not expected on self-guided tours.

**PHOTOS:**

By reserving space on tour, you agree that ExperiencePlus! may use, re-use and reproduce any images, photos or videos sent to us, or that are taken by our guides or other travelers, in any medium, including but not limited to print, electronic media, or Internet, free of charge and without your right to inspection. If you do not want us to use any images of you, you must inform us or your tour leader in writing at the start of the tour.

## STYLES

### OUR TOUR STYLES

We realize that one size does not fit all and there are as many ways to travel by bike as there are different types of cyclists and travelers.

**Classic Tours:** Dream of traveling through a region by bike? Our unique chalk arrows lead the way as you explore small villages and world-class cities while traveling at your own pace.

- Tour Length: 7-15 days
- Hotels: 3-4 stars.
- Road Type: Pavement, bike paths.
- Multi-night Stays: Occasionally
- Navigation and support: 2-3 tour leaders, van support and chalk arrows
- Price: \$\$\$
- Tour Levels: 1-4.5

**Explorer Tours:** Travel further off the beaten path - we let the destination dictate where we ride, not the road surface.

- Tour Length: 7-8 days
- Hotels: 2-3 stars
- Road Type: 30-50% gravel or hard-packed dirt, the rest pavement.
- Multi-night Stays: Occasionally
- Navigation and support: 2 tour leaders, GPS and van support
- Price: \$\$
- Tour Levels: 1-4

**Bike and Boat Tours:** Spend days cycling and your evenings relaxing on a private boat as you cruise to your next port.

- Tour Length: 7-8 days, some itineraries have land-based extensions available.
- Barge/Boat: 3-4 star, same cabin for the entire boat trip except for land extension.
- Road Type: Pavement
- Navigation and support: 2 tour leaders, van Support and chalk arrows
- Price: \$\$\$
- Tour Levels: 1-4

**Expedition Tours:** Multi-week tours where you spend long days on the bike with the added satisfaction of pedaling across multiple countries.

- Tour Length: 15-40 days
- Hotels: 2-4 stars
- Road Type: Pavement with occasional hard-packed dirt or gravel.
- Multi-night Stays: On rest days
- Navigation and support: 2-3 tour leaders, van Support and chalk arrows
- Price: \$\$\$
- Tour Levels: 4-5

**Self-guided Tours:** perfect for those who have an independent spirit, want the flexibility to choose their own dates, and don't need van support or tour leaders during their trip. Every departure is a private tour!

- Tour Length: 6-8-days
- Hotels: 3-4 stars
- Road Type: Pavement with occasional hard-packed dirt or gravel on bike paths.
- Multi-night Stays: Occasionally
- Navigation and support: GPS routes and luggage transfers
- Price: \$
- Tour Levels: 1-4

**LEVELS**

We know that travelers have different cycling abilities and preferences for the number of miles, elevation gain, and type of terrain they want on a bicycle tour. We have rated each day of our tours on a scale of 1-5. Our Tour Level's are an average of the day rating on tour. We recommend looking at the daily summary on the PDF and Website Itinerary to see details about each day's ride.

**LEVEL 1 - 1.5**

Level 1 - 1.5 days will be mostly flat and the distance will rarely exceed 50 km. Level 1 - 1.5 tours are suitable for beginner cyclists, those traveling by bicycle for the first time, or multi-generational groups with a desire for a nice and easy bike tour with plenty of opportunities to stop and enjoy the scenery.

- **Average daily mileage:** 20 - 50 km. (12-30 miles) Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 0-400 M (0-1200 ft)
- **Terrain:** Mostly flat with occasional gentle climbs at a grade of less than 3%, that are sustained for a maximum of 3km. There might be a steeper but short climb.

**LEVEL 2 - 2.5**

Level 2 - 2.5 days are ideal for riders newer to bicycle touring looking for a bit of a challenge.

- **Average daily mileage:** 30-60 km (18 - 38 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 400 - 600 m (1200 - 2000 ft)
- **Terrain:** Mostly rolling terrain around 3%. Presents multiple 3% to 4% climbs. May present an occasional steeper climb.

**LEVEL 3 - 3.5**

Level 3 - 3.5 days are great for active individuals (who run, bike, swim etc. on a regular basis).

- **Average daily mileage:** 50-70km (30-45 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 600 - 900m (2000 - 2800 ft)
- **Terrain:** Multiple Climbs with grades of 4 - 6%.

**LEVEL 4 - 4.5**

Level 4 - 4.5 days are the best riding days for avid cyclists or very active individuals who are excited to challenge themselves on a bike.

- **Average daily mileage:** 70-90km (45-55 miles) Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 900-1000m (2800-3600 ft)
- **Terrain:** Presents multiple steep climbs (6% to 8% grades), 1 to 3km long. Alternatively, 4 — 6% grades for 6 kilometers or more.

**LEVEL 5 (EXPEDITION)**

Our Expedition tours designed for strong riders looking for the challenge of riding across countries or continents. Long daily mileages mean limited van support so we recommend these tours for riders who feel confident that they can ride every mile.

- **Average daily mileage:** 120 km (75 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 500-2000 m (1600- 6500 ft)
- **Terrain:** Expect and be prepared for any and everything.

**REMEMBER**

A tour level is the average of the days so we recommend you look at the day level on each day of the itinerary to help you better understand what to expect from your tour.

## CHECKLIST

### TO DO ONCE YOU'VE BOOKED!

- Read through your Reservation Confirmation and After you Book Information (link sent to you by e-mail), it has important information to help you plan your trip!
- Check the date on your passport. The expiration date should extend three months past your date of return to your home country.
- Complete the Customer Information Form: <https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/customer-information-form/>
- We recommend you take out travel insurance. Find details at <https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/travel-insurance/>
- Choose a bicycle training program: <https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/bicycle-tour-training/>
- Peruse our country-specific Travel Planning Pages: <https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/>

### 6 TO 3 MONTHS PRIOR TO TOUR START DATE

- Refer to your Tour Packet/Itinerary to see step-by-step arrival and departure information for your tour, meeting place and time, if a reservation on a complimentary ExperiencePlus! Shuttle (if applicable) is required, along with other important information to help you plan your arrival and departure.
- Reserve your flights after you know you have a confirmed tour departure. Please check with our office if you do not know if your trip is confirmed.
- Book your pre and post-tour hotel nights.
- Begin your chosen training program
- Final payment is due 90 days (120 days for Bike & Barge/Boat tours) prior to the tour start. Please refer to your Invoice and the Final Payment Reminder e-mail which we send 10 days prior to the due date for detailed instructions.

### 6 TO 2 WEEKS PRIOR TO TOUR START DATE

- Start reading one of the books or watching one of the movies from our Reading and Movie Lists: <https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/>.
- Plan what you are going to pack and start packing! Refer to the Packing Lists for suggestions, and see luggage limits at <https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/packing/>.
- We'll email you your access code to Digital Daysheets, Hotel Itinerary, Participant Roster, names and contact information of your Tour Leaders, emergency phone numbers, and other important departure information about 2 weeks prior to your tour start date. All this will be provided to you via a feature called Experiences via the RideWithGPS App (tracks available but not necessary for navigation on Classic, Expedition and Bike & Boat tours).

### DAY OF YOUR FLIGHT

Get as much sleep on the plane as you can. Pack one day of cycling gear in your carry-on just in case. See you soon!