



Tour Information



2020: Van Eyck Year in Ghent





Travel

Passports

Please ensure your 10-year British Passport is not out of date and is valid for a full six months beyond the duration of your visit. EU, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino or Switzerland valid national identification cards are also acceptable for travel to Belgium.

Visas

British and EU passport holders are not required to have a visa.

For all other passport holders please check the visa requirements with the appropriate embassy.

Belgian embassy: 17 Grosvenor Crescent, London SW1X 7EE. Tel: (0)20 7470 3700. London@diplobel.fed.be

For visa information: Tel: 0871 376 0023, or visit www.vfs-be-uk.com

Open Mon-Fri 0900-1200.



Tickets

You will be issued with return train tickets.

Please take care not to lose your tickets and please check that the details on your tickets are accurate. Your ticket is non-transferable and non-refundable. No refund can be given for non-used portions.

Standard Premier on Eurostar tickets is indicated by two asterisks in the class type section in the top right-hand corner. A light meal will be served to passengers travelling Standard Premier on Eurostar. Standard class Eurostar tickets do not include any food or drink on board, although there is a buffet car serving drinks and snacks.

TGV tickets do not include any food or drink on board, although a buffet car is available.

Train Seats

On all legs of the journey you have reserved seat and carriage numbers which are shown clearly on your ticket.



Baggage

As with most trains, passengers are responsible for carrying baggage onto and off the train. Baggage can be stored on overhead shelves or at the entrance to the carriages. Trolleys are available at St Pancras and Lille, but bags do need to be carried on to the platform. Porters are sometimes but not always available at St Pancras.

Travel Editions recommends a luggage delivery service called **thebaggageman**, where your suitcase can be picked up from your home before departure and delivered straight to your hotel; therefore removing the worry about carrying your cases onto and off the trains.

For further information:

<http://www.thebaggageman.com>

Labels

Please use the luggage labels provided. It is useful to have your home address located inside your suitcase should the label go astray.

Transfers

On arrival in Brussels transfer to a local train to Ghent. Coach transfer to hotel (approx. 10 minutes)

Special Requests

If you haven't already, please notify Travel Editions of any special requests as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements.



Accommodation

Gravensteen Hotel, Ghent

Hotel Gravensteen is a three-star hotel in Ghent's historical centre. The hotel overlooks the Gravensteen, Ghent's main attraction and an excellent piece of medieval heritage and was formerly a 19th century mansion and has an impressive entrance hall. Facilities include bar and restaurant. All the comfortable bedrooms include en-suite facilities, air-conditioning, Wi-fi, TV, safe, mini-bar, hairdryer and tea and coffee making facilities.

For more information, please visit the hotel's website:

<https://www.gravensteen.be/en/>



Food

Belgium's food specialities extend far beyond just beer, chocolate, chips and waffles. This small country has rich local resources with fish and mussels harvested from the North Sea, pheasant, rabbit and venison from the forested hills of the Ardennes, and excellent beef and lamb from the Flemish polders.

Traditional dishes include *moules frites*, *stoemp* (mashed potato with leeks and carrots), *witloof en oven* (endives wrapped in ham and covered in cheese sauce), *waterzooi* (fish or chicken and vegetable broth), *paling in't groen* (eel cooked in a sauce of spinach, herbs and white wine), *lapin aux pruneaux* (rabbit cooked with prunes and beer), *Faisan à la brabançonne* (pheasant cooked in butter with Brussel sprouts and endives), and *filet américain* (or *steak tartare*, raw mincemeat mixed with egg, onion and capers).

You will find plenty of places to enjoy a meal or snack, ranging from the Michelin-Starred to the humble *fritkot* (chip stand).

Watch out for restaurants offering a lunchtime special set menu – *dagschotel* or *plat du jour* – they offer great value for money. Usually, a discretionary service charge is added to your bill in restaurants and bars, and no further tipping is required,

although if service is considered excellent, it is customary to round up the bill.



Drink

Over 400 beers are brewed in Belgium – ranging from the mass-produced lagers like Stella Artois to the local, artisanal microbreweries. You will find everything from brown ales, amber ales, white beers, Flemish reds, Indian pale ales, to stouts and Lambic beers. *Trappist* beers, such as *Chimay*, *Achel*, *Orval*, *Rochefort*, *Westmalle* and *Westyleteren*, are brewed in Trappist monasteries, with monks taking an active part in the production process and the profits supporting the monastery. *Bières d'Abbaye*, the best known being *Leffe* and *Grimbergen*, however, are commercially brewed, just using the name and recipe of former monastic breweries. Try a *Hoegaarden* for a white beer, *Lambics* and *Guezes* for oak-aged beers, a *Duvel* for a blonde ale, a local *Cantillon* (microbrewed in Brussels), or if you prefer something sweeter, the cherry-flavoured *Kriek*.

The local spirit is *Jenever*, similar to gin, originally flavoured with juniper berries.

Meals included in the price of your holiday are:

Breakfast – daily

Dinner – with wine is included on one night at a local restaurant. A buffet dinner is included at the Museum of Fine Arts in Ghent.



Destination

Ghent

Despite being one of Belgium's oldest cities, Ghent remains small enough to feel cosy but big enough to be a vibrant, relevant centre for trade and culture. There's a wealth of medieval and classical architecture here, contrasted by large post-industrial areas undergoing urban renewal that give Ghent a gritty-but-good industrial feel. In the centre, tourists remain surprisingly thin on the ground, but Ghent's large student and youth population means there's always people about, enjoying the city's fabulous canal-side architecture, abundance of quirky bars and good-value restaurants, and some of Belgium's best museums. 2020 is being hailed by the city of Ghent as the year of Van Eyck with a special exhibition at the MSK Museum that pulls together more than half of the artist's surviving output (only 20 works remain throughout the world) in a unique exhibition that we will see in a special evening with limited participants. Join Clare Ford-Wille to look at his and other Flemish masters' legacy in Ghent, Bruges and Brussels.

Details of places of interest included in your tour:

Bruges

If you set out to design a fairy-tale medieval town, it would be hard to improve on central Bruges (Brugge in Dutch), one of Europe's best-preserved cities. Picturesque cobbled lanes and dreamy canals link photogenic market squares lined with soaring towers, historical churches and lane after lane of old whitewashed alms-houses. The best times to visit are in spring, when daffodils carpet the tranquil courtyard of the historic begijnhof retreat.

For more information about Bruges, please visit: <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/belgium/flanders/bruges>

Groeninge Museum

The Groeninge Museum provides a varied overview of the history of Belgian visual art, with the top-class paintings by the world-renowned Flemish primitives as a highlight. In this museum you can see, amongst other masterpieces, Madonna with Canon Joris Van der Paele by Jan van Eyck and the Moreel Triptych by Hans Memling. It is one of the most beautiful collections in the world, containing many landmark works from the history of European art. You can also marvel at gems from Renaissance

and Baroque masters, Bruges neo-classical canvasses from the 18th and 19th centuries and masterpieces by the Flemish expressionists.

For more information about the museum, please visit: <https://www.visitbruges.be/en/groeningemuseum-groeninge-museum>

Sint Janshospitaal

The Sint-Janshospitaal (St John's Hospital) is one of the oldest hospital buildings in Europe. The earliest traces date from the middle of the 12th century. Paintings, sculptures, furniture items, silverwork, and tin items testify to centuries of care for the sick and care for souls in this place. The medieval hospital wards and the accompanying chapel house lots of paintings on panels and on canvases, wooden and stone sculptures, furniture and medical instruments. You also come face to face with the work of Hans Memling, one of the Flemish primitives. The museum possesses six top class works from his hand. Four of them were created especially for this location and have therefore been at home here since the late 15th century. The renowned Shrine of St. Ursula is one of Memling's most important masterpieces and most certainly a public favourite.

For more information about Sint Janshospitaal, please visit: <https://www.museabrugge.be/en/visit-our-museums/our-museums-and-monuments/sint-janshospitaal>

Onze-Lieve-Vrouwkerk

It took two centuries (13th-15th) to build the church. Among the many art treasures of the Onze-Lieve-Vrouwkerk is a beautiful Carrara marble Madonna and Child sculpture by Michelangelo. This statue, made in 1504, was the only one of Michelangelo's works to leave Italy in his lifetime and is today one of the few that can be seen outside Italy. It was bought by a Bruges merchant, Jan van Mouskroen, and donated to the church in 1506. The church also contains a painting of the Crucifixion of Christ by Anthony van Dyck and a rococo extravaganza of a pulpit, designed by Bruges artist Jan Antoon Garemijn.

For more information about Onze-Lieve-Vrouwkerk, please visit: <https://www.visitbruges.be/en/onze-lieve-vrouwekerk-church-of-our-lady>

Grote Markt

The Markt ("Market Square") of Bruges is located in the heart of the city and covers an area of about 1 hectare. Some historical highlights around the square include the 12th-century belfry and the West Flanders Provincial Court (originally the Waterhall, which in 1787 was demolished and replaced by a classicist building that from 1850 served as provincial court and after a fire in 1878 was rebuilt in a neo-Gothic style in 1887. In the center of the market stands the statue of Jan Breydel and Pieter de Coninck. In 1995 the market was completely renovated. Parking in the square was removed and the area became mostly traffic-free.

For more information about the Grote Markt, please visit:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Markt_\(Bruges\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Markt_(Bruges))

St Baafskathedraal - St Bavo's Cathedral

When Charles V was baptised there in 1500, the metamorphosis from a closed Romanesque church to a spacious Gothic one was fully underway. However, despite substantial financial support from the emperor, the cathedral still remained unfinished 58 years later. As a result, the funeral service for the deceased sovereign could not take place there. All that remains of the original Romanesque church is the crypt. St. Bavo's Cathedral houses an impressive number of art treasures: the baroque high altar in white, black and red flamed marble, the rococo pulpit in oak, gilded wood and marble, a major work by Rubens, the 'Calvary Triptych', attributed to Joos van Wassenhove, alias Justus van Gent, tombs of the Ghent bishops, and much more. However, one work stands out head and shoulders above the rest: the world-famous Adoration of the Mystic Lamb painted by Hubert and Jan van Eyck around 1432.

For more information about the cathedral, please visit:

<https://sintbaafskathedraal.be/en/index.html>

Museum of Fine Arts - MSK

In 2020, the Museum of Fine Arts Ghent (MSK) pays tribute to the Flemish Master Jan van Eyck with the exhibition 'Van Eyck. An Optical Revolution' (01.02-30.04.2020). The MSK has revealed a new series of artworks that are traveling to the exhibition, with 9 artworks by Van Eyck, several pieces from his studio and some 100 international masterpieces from the late-Middle Ages, it is now officially the biggest exhibition on the Flemish Master ever put on. As a painter of the Burgundian duke Philip the Good (1396-1467), and working for the flamboyant court

and the wealthy inhabitants of cities such as Bruges and Ghent, Jan van Eyck (ca. 1390-1441) towered above his contemporaries. With his unprecedented technique, scientific knowledge and unparalleled powers of observation, Van Eyck lifted oil painting to previously unknown heights and determined the course of Western painting. It is this vision, this 'optical revolution', that the MSK brings to the forefront in the exhibition which opens on 1 February 2020. In it, the museum will place Van Eyck next to his greatest contemporaries. Central within the exhibition are the eight restored exterior panels of the Adoration of the Mystic Lamb, a highly exceptional loan from St Bavo's Cathedral in Ghent. Never before were all eight exterior panels brought together in an exhibition outside the cathedral, and never before have they interacted with other works by Van Eyck or his contemporaries. Moreover, the panels shall never again leave the cathedral after 2020, making the exhibition in the MSK both the first and last chance to view the panels up close and in a broader context.

For more information about the museum, please visit:

<https://www.mskgent.be/en>

Brussels

The cityscape swings from majestic to quirky to rundown and back again. Art deco facades face off against 1960s concrete developments, and regal 19th-century mansions contrast with the shimmering glass of the EU's Gotham City. This whole maelstrom swirls out from Brussels' medieval core, where the Grand Place is surely one of the world's most beautiful squares. But Brussels' greatest architectural expression came at the turn of the 19th century with art nouveau, and its master builder is Horta. Sometimes it seems as if every building in the city is being converted into a contemporary art gallery, from townhouses to skating rinks to the vast canal-side Citroën garage being remodelled to showcase conceptual art.

For more information about Brussels, please visit:

<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/belgium/brussels>

Musées Royaux des Beaux Arts

The Museum of Fine Arts in Brussels is made up of 6 smaller museums, all specialising in different fields. We will visit the Musée Fin-de-Siècle Museum that is dedicated to the 1900s, when Brussels, the capital of Europe, was a unique artistic crossroads and the capital of Art Nouveau. This sanctuary of cultural history hosts paintings, drawings, watercolours, prints, sculptures, photographs, films, models and decorative objets d'art. The works reflect the multitude of artistic disciplines between 1868, date

of the founding of the Société libre des Beaux-Arts, and 1914. Famous visual artists like Constantin Meunier, James Ensor, Henri Evenepoel, Fernand Khnopff, Léon Spilliaert and Georges Minne testify to the effervescent activity of this period, reflected also in all other creative fields: literature, opera, music, architecture, photography and poetry (Maurice Maeterlinck, Emile Verhaeren, Octave Maus, Victor Horta, Henry Van de Velde, Maurice Kufferath, Guillaume Lekeu and others). We will then visit the Old Masters Museum, which houses a remarkable collection of Old Masters, witnessing to a rich and creative past, and covers the period running from the 15th to the 18th centuries. Here you will find paintings of exceptional value by the Flemish Primitives, along with many artists from the fertile periods of the Flemish Renaissance and Baroque: Memling, Bosch, Bruegel, Rubens, Van Dyck, Jordaens and others...

For more information about the museum, please visit:

<https://www.fine-arts-museum.be/en>

Your lecturer / guide

Clare has lectured in most areas of art history for over thirty-five years. She still teaches at the University of London, where she obtained her degree at Birkbeck, but also lectures regularly for Morley College, the City Literary Institute, the Victoria and Albert Museum and Branches of The Art Society throughout Britain, Europe, Australia and New Zealand. Every year since 1978 Clare has led art study tours to places of artistic importance throughout Europe and the USA, including Amsterdam, Padova and Vicenza.

Clare will give a lecture on the first night of your trip.

Tour manager

Your tour manager will be on hand throughout the tour to ensure that everything operated according to plan. If you have any problems or questions please see him or her immediately – it is often possible to resolve complaints or problems very quickly on the spot, and do everything to help you enjoy your holiday.



The Basics

Climate – The weather in Belgium at this time of year is likely to be pleasant, but there is the chance of the odd shower. Our best advice is to come prepared.

Time – GMT +2 hours (Summer time Apr-Oct); GMT + 1 (Standard time Nov-Mar).

Language – French & Flemish.

Religion – Roman Catholic.

National holidays – New Year's day (01 Jan); Easter Monday; Labour day (01 May); Ascension day; Whit Sunday; Whit Monday; Independence day (21 Jul); Assumption of Mary (15 Aug); All Saints' day (01 Nov); Armistice day (11 Nov); Christmas day (25 Dec); Boxing day (26 Dec).

Currency – Euro. €1 = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of €2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

Banks – Cashpoints compatible with international banking networks are located in all towns and cities, as well as airports, major train stations and other spots. They usually offer an attractive exchange rate. Those banks that still exchange foreign currencies into local money will always charge a transaction fee, so withdrawing money from an ATM usually represents the most logical means of obtaining euros.

Credit cards – American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted across the country. If you're eating at a restaurant, check prior to the meal that your card will be an acceptable form of payment. Even in cities, it's advisable to carry a supply of cash with you at all times. Varying amounts of commission can be charged.

Electricity – 220 volt, two-pin continental plug.

Drinking water – Tap water is safe to drink. (Although you'll find a huge amount of bottled water for sale too)

Shops and museums – Shops are open Mon-Sat 1000-1800/1900. Department stores often remain open longer, up to 2100 on Friday. Outside main areas, some shops may close at lunchtime. Please note that most museums are closed on Mondays.

Clothes & shoes – You may like to bring a warm sweater for cool evenings. Light rain wear for the occasional storm and good grip/flat walking shoes are recommended.

Camera – bring plenty of memory cards/film and any spare camera batteries as these are not always available. Please check with your guide before photographing people.

Bath plugs – The hotel has plugs for basins, but it is useful to carry a 'universal' one with you.

Telephones/mobiles – You should be able to use your mobile phone, depending on your operator and contract.

Tipping – To keep our tours affordable, we do not increase the tour price by adding in tips. However, in the tourism industry, there is a certain level of expectation that when receiving a good service, one does award with a tip. Tour Managers, Representatives, Guides and Drivers appreciate a tip at the end of their involvement with the tour, but this is entirely at your discretion. We believe in allowing you to tip according to your level of satisfaction with their services, but for your guidance about £2-3 per person per day for the tour manager is the norm. We would like to reiterate that tipping is an entirely optional payment and this information is given purely to answer any questions you may have about it.



Health

Doctor/Dentist/Chemist

Please talk to your tour manager if you are feeling unwell and they will organise for you to see a doctor.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.



Hospital

Your tour manager/hotel reception will arrange hospital transport.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.

General Health Advice

We suggest you take a good supply of your own individual medicines with you and always keep some in your hand luggage in case you get delayed or your luggage goes astray. General-purpose supplies for bites, stings, or scratches, and your usual medication for headaches, or stomach upsets are always recommended. Oral re-hydration sachets are excellent for topping up salt and glucose levels.

Visit the NHS Fit For Travel website for more generally information specific to the country you are visiting – www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

Inoculations

You should check with your own doctor and take their advice as to which inoculations are required for the country you are visiting, as only they know your medical history and recommendations are liable to change at short notice.



Insurance

To be covered under your Travel Insurance Policy, if you become ill, it is essential that you contact a local doctor and also telephone the emergency number of your insurance company. You will **NOT** be covered for any claim unless this procedure is carried out. Your insurance company will then decide on the best course of medical attention.

European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

The EHIC replaced the old E111 in 2006. Valid in all EEA countries, the card lets you get state healthcare at a reduced cost or sometimes for free. It will cover you for treatment that is needed to allow you to continue your stay until your planned return. It also covers the treatment of pre-existing medical conditions.

Please note that the EHIC is not an alternative to travel insurance. It will not cover any private medical healthcare or costs such as being flown back to the UK, or lost or stolen property. Therefore, it is important to have both an EHIC and a valid private travel insurance policy. It is also important to note that each country's healthcare system is slightly different, so the EHIC might not cover everything that would be generally free on the NHS.

We strongly recommend that you take out an appropriate travel insurance policy when you travel abroad.

For more information about the EHIC please visit:

<https://www.ehic.org.uk>



Emergencies

Should an emergency arise, please call our offices on:

00 44 20 7251 0045

Outside office hours (Mon-Fri 0900-1700), telephone our emergency staff on:

00 44 7841 023807

PLEASE USE THESE NUMBERS ONLY IN THE EVENT OF A GENUINE EMERGENCY.

If you find that you are in need of consular assistance during your holiday:

British consulate Brussels

Avenue des Nerviens 9-31

1040 Brussels

Belgium

Tel: +32 2 287 62 11

consularsection.brussels@fco.gov.uk

Open by appointment only. Consular emergency service is in operation every day, 24/7, on +32 2 287 62 11.

Travel Editions

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