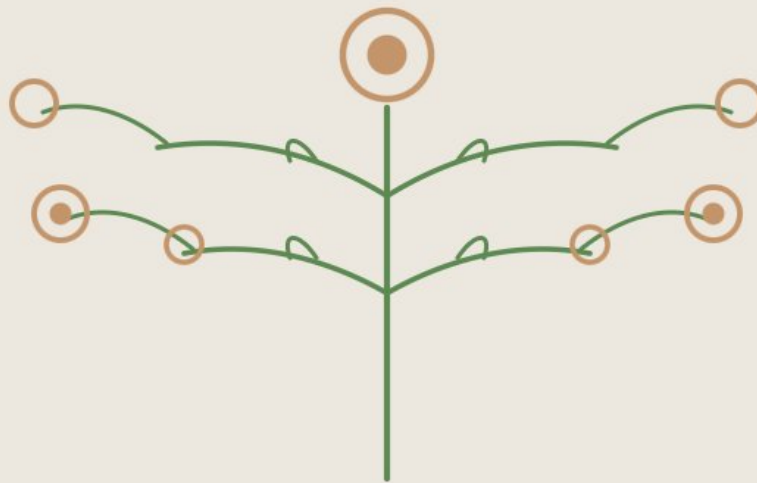




48 HOURS IN

Brussels

BLOOM WHERE YOU WANDER

WELCOME

Welcome to Brussels.

Brussels is the capital of Belgium and de facto capital of the European Union, but its identity runs deeper than bureaucracy and diplomacy. The Grand-Place — one of the most beautiful squares in Europe — anchors the medieval Lower Town. The Marolles flea market spreads across the Vossenplein every morning. The Sablon is the city's antiques and chocolate district. To the south, Ixelles and Flagey offer the Brussels that residents actually inhabit: covered markets, neighbourhood bistros, and lakes ringed by Art Nouveau buildings.

The city rewards the traveller who moves between its registers: the guildhall grandeur of the Grand-Place and the covered arcades of the Galeries Royales on one side; the fish market quarter of Sainte-Catherine and the inventive kitchens of Dansaert on the other; the wide boulevards of the EU Quarter softening into the residential streets of Ixelles in the afternoon. This guide gives you 48 hours built around how Brussels actually works.

How to Use This Guide

- Read through once before you arrive — understand the layout of the Lower Town and Upper Town.
- Day 1 covers the Grand-Place, Galeries Royales, Sablon, and Marolles — the medieval core and the antiques quarter.
- Day 2 moves to the Atomium, the Royal Museums, and Ixelles — the cultural and residential city.
- The STIB/MIVB 48h card covers metro, trams, and buses — buy it on arrival at any metro station.
- Brussels is expensive in tourist traps and remarkably good value one street away. This guide stays off the main drag.

ESSENTIAL QUICK FACTS

- Currency** Euro (EUR). Cards accepted everywhere. ATMs better than exchange desks.
- Languages** French and Dutch (Flemish) official. English widely understood in tourist areas.
- Transport** STIB/MIVB network: metro, tram, bus. 48h card ~€16 at any metro station.
- Weather** Maritime climate. Mild but frequently rainy. A light waterproof is non-negotiable.
- Time Zone** CET (UTC+1) winter · CEST (UTC+2) summer.
- Emergency** 112 all emergencies. Tourist police: +32 2 548 52 00.
- Tipping** Not expected. Round up to the nearest euro. 10% for outstanding service.
- Cost note** Coffee €2.50–4. Lunch €15–30pp. Dinner €35–65pp.

DAY ONE

Day One

Grand-Place · Galeries Royales · Sablon · Marolles

Start in the Lower Town at the Grand-Place — among the finest civic squares in Europe — walk the covered Galeries, visit the Manneken Pis, then climb through the Marolles to the Sablon's chocolatiers and Gothic church. Day One stays in the historic core and the antiques quarter. Compact, walkable, and dense with eight centuries of accumulated civic life.

MORNING 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

9:00 AM

Grand-Place

The central square of Brussels: a UNESCO World Heritage Site (1998) surrounded by the Gothic Town Hall (1402) and Baroque guild houses with gilded facades. Victor Hugo called it 'the most beautiful square in the world' — and the morning light on the guild house gold justifies the superlative. The square is at its best before 9:30am, before the tour groups and the waffle sellers fill it completely.

INSIDER TIP

Come before 9:30am for the low light on the gilded facades and the square to yourself. The Town Hall tower is open for guided visits — book at visit.brussels. Do not eat at the restaurants on the Grand-Place itself: walk one block in any direction for better food at a third of the price.

10:30 AM

Galeries Royales Saint-Hubert

200 metres north of the Grand-Place: Europe's first covered shopping arcade, opened in 1847. Three connected galleries in iron and glass — Galerie du Roi, Galerie de la Reine, Galerie des Princes — with chocolate shops, a working cinema (Arenberg), and the original Neuhaus praline shop. The arcade was the prototype for the grand European gallery: the Vittorio Emanuele II in Milan and the GUM in Moscow both followed this model.

INSIDER TIP

Neuhaus invented the Belgian praline here in 1912. Mary chocolate shop at the entrance is one of Brussels' finest and older. Walk through the full length of the Galeries — it takes ten minutes — and exit onto Rue des Bouchers to double back toward the Grand-Place.

11:30 AM

Manneken Pis & the Lower Town streets

The famous 17th-century bronze fountain is five minutes southwest of the Grand-Place. The statue itself is small; the streets surrounding it are the more interesting discovery. The pedestrian grid between the Grand-Place and the Bourse has the best concentration of Brussels' surviving pre-19th-century street-level architecture.

INSIDER TIP

The Musée de la Ville de Bruxelles inside the Gothic Maison du Roi on the Grand-Place displays the original Manneken Pis alongside more than 1,000 of his ceremonial costumes. It is better than it sounds and costs only €8. The statue wears a themed costume on scheduled dates — check the calendar at mannekenpis.brussels.

AFTERNOON 1:00 PM – 7:00 PM

1:00 PM

Lunch: Aux Armes de Bruxelles or Café de la Presse

Aux Armes de Bruxelles on Rue des Bouchers: a Bruxellois institution since 1921, serving moules-frites, waterzooi, and croquettes de crevettes grises in a classic brasserie room. This is not the tourist-trap version of the street — it has survived a century on quality. Or Café de la Presse on Place Fontainas for a straightforward Belgian bistro lunch — steak-frites and croquettes — at reasonable mid-city prices.

INSIDER TIP

Croquettes de crevettes grises — crisp béchamel shells filled with North Sea grey shrimp — are Brussels' defining snack and appear on nearly every traditional menu. Aux Armes de Bruxelles does the definitive version. Moules-frites marinière is the baseline for the mussels — order it as the benchmark before experimenting.

2:30 PM

Sablon & Notre-Dame du Sablon

Walk south through the Marolles up to the Sablon. Place du Grand Sablon is Brussels' most elegant square: antique dealers, high-end chocolate shops, and the flamboyant Gothic Notre-Dame du Sablon (15th century) with its exceptional stained glass. Place du Petit Sablon opposite has a formal garden and 48 bronze statues representing the medieval trade guilds — the finest public garden in the city centre.

INSIDER TIP

Pierre Marcolini on the Grand Sablon is one of the world's great chocolatiers — not cheap, but worth buying four pieces to eat in the square. Wittamer has been making patisserie here since 1910. The weekend antiques market (Sat–Sun, 9am–6pm) is the Sablon at its most animated; midweek the square is quieter and more relaxed for solo wandering.

4:30 PM

Marolles & Jeu de Balle flea market

Walk down from the Sablon into the Marolles — Brussels' oldest working-class neighbourhood, now gentrifying carefully. The Vossenplein (Place du Jeu de Balle) flea market runs daily 6am–2pm: vintage clothing, old books, Congolese textiles, furniture. Even in the afternoon the best stalls remain. Rue Haute and Rue Blaes have the best concentration of independent antiques and vintage shops in Brussels.

INSIDER TIP

The flea market is best before 9am when dealers are trading among themselves. The Marolles is the birthplace of Brusseleir — the city's bilingual French-Dutch dialect, nearly extinct. Walk Rue Haute toward the Porte de Hal for the best surviving pre-gentrification street in Brussels. The Porte de Hal itself (the only remaining medieval city gate) is worth five minutes at the base.

EVENING 7:30 PM – LATE

7:30 PM

Dinner: In 't Spinnekopke or Sainte-Catherine fish quarter

In 't Spinnekopke in the Dansaert quarter: Brussels' oldest remaining brown café (est. 1762), serving traditional Bruxellois cuisine cooked with Belgian beer. The stoofvlees (beef carbonnade braised in Orval Trappist) is the thing to order; the rabbit in kriek (cherry beer) is the other. Or the Sainte-Catherine quarter around Place Sainte-Catherine for Brussels' best seafood restaurants — the city's historic fish market district.

INSIDER TIP

In 't Spinnekopke has been operating since 1762 and is one of the few authentic brown cafés left in Brussels. Reservations recommended on weekends at spinnekopke.be. The Belgian beer list is serious — the house gueuze is the aperitif; the Orval in the stoofvlees is also on the drinks menu and should be ordered alongside the food.

DAY TWO

Day Two

Atomium · Royal Museums · Ixelles · Flagey

The second day moves to the city's cultural landmarks and its residential south. The Atomium is Brussels' defining 20th-century monument. The Royal Museums of Fine Arts house the world's finest Magritte collection. Ixelles is the Brussels its residents actually inhabit — lakes, Art Nouveau streets, and the best café-to-tourist ratio in the city.

MORNING 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

9:00 AM

Atomium

Take Metro Line 6 from the centre to Heysel: the Atomium is a 102-metre steel structure in the shape of an iron atom, built for the 1958 World's Fair and still operating as a museum and cultural icon. Nine interconnected spheres, connected by tubes containing escalators and stairs. The top sphere has a panoramic view over Brussels and the Brabant plateau — on clear days, Ghent is visible to the northwest. The interior contains exhibitions on the 1958 Expo, post-war design, and the building itself.

INSIDER TIP

Book online at atomium.be — weekends sell out. The building is most photographed from the south approach on Avenue du Parc Royal. Mini-Europe directly adjacent is worth one hour: 336 scale models of European monuments at 1:25 scale, built with serious precision. Given Brussels is the EU capital, the context is genuinely interesting.

11:30 AM

Basilique de Koekelberg (optional)

A 15-minute walk or one tram stop from the Atomium: the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, the fifth-largest church in the world by interior volume, begun in 1905 and still completing interior work. The Art Deco facade and the panoramic terrace at the base of the dome are the main reasons to visit — the terrace has one of the broadest views over Brussels from any fixed point.

INSIDER TIP

The Basilique is dramatically undervisited — almost no tourists and free to enter. The panoramic terrace (small fee) is 52 metres high and faces south over the entire city. Return to the Atomium by tram and take Metro Line 6 back toward the centre.

AFTERNOON 1:00 PM – 7:00 PM

1:00 PM

Lunch in Ixelles or the Châtelain quarter

Take the metro south toward Ixelles. The Châtelain neighbourhood around Place du Châtelain has Brussels' best restaurant-to-tourist ratio: café tables on the pavement, a street market on Wednesday afternoons, and a dozen serious kitchens within a five-minute walk. Or La Buvette on Avenue Louis Schmidt for the finest wine bar lunch in the city — a short seasonal menu and a natural wine list that changes weekly.

INSIDER TIP

The Wednesday afternoon market at Place du Châtelain (2pm–7pm) is one of Brussels' most pleasant street markets — cheese, charcuterie, and produce. The neighbourhood's main streets, Rue de la Longue Haie and Rue de l'Aqueduc, have the best concentration of independent restaurants in Brussels outside the centre.

2:30 PM

Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts

The Royal Museums of Fine Arts occupy an interconnected complex on Rue de la Régence: the Museum of Ancient Art (van Eyck, Bruegel the Elder, Rubens — Bruegel's *The Fall of Icarus* is here), the Magritte Museum (the definitive surrealist collection: 250 works in chronological order covering his full career), the Modern Art Museum, and the Fin-de-Siècle Museum. The Magritte alone justifies three hours. Book online.

INSIDER TIP

*The Magritte Museum is the finest surrealist collection in the world — not a biographical curiosity but 250 works organised chronologically. *The Son of Man* is here. The Ancient Art collection contains Bruegel's *Census at Bethlehem* and *The Fall of Icarus* — both among his most important surviving works. Book online at fine-arts-museum.be. The combined ticket covers all five buildings.*

5:00 PM

Ixelles & the Étangs d'Ixelles

Walk south from the Museums through the Sablon and into Ixelles. The Étangs d'Ixelles (Ponds of Ixelles) are two connected lakes in a wooded valley below the Avenue de la Toison d'Or — known almost entirely to local residents. The promenade around the upper pond takes 20 minutes. The route from the upper pond through the residential streets toward Place Flagey is the best urban walk in Brussels.

INSIDER TIP

The Étangs d'Ixelles are Brussels' best-kept open secret. No tourist infrastructure, no signage, just residential Brussels in its most relaxed register. Place Flagey itself — the square fronting the Art Deco Flagey building — is the most pleasant late-afternoon stop in the city: the square has café terraces, a small market on weekends, and a consistently local crowd.

EVENING 7:30 PM – LATE

7:30 PM

Final Dinner: La Paix or Chalet de la Forêt

La Paix on Rue Ropsy Chaudron in Anderlecht: an Art Nouveau brasserie with a largely intact 1920s interior, a local crowd, and a menu that has not needed to change in thirty years. The waterzooi (Brussels version — chicken, not fish) is the correct choice. Or Chalet de la Forêt at the edge of the Bois de la Cambre: Brussels' finest restaurant for the full occasion, seasonal Belgian kitchen, terrace over the forest.

INSIDER TIP

La Paix is the working definition of what a French-Belgian brasserie should be. Reserve at brasseriela paix.be. The address is in Anderlecht — 20 minutes by tram from the centre — but it is worth the journey for the most satisfying traditional dinner in Brussels. Chalet de la Forêt requires booking well ahead at chaletdelaforet.be — and is the occasion choice for the final night.

Where to Eat

The No-Tourist-Trap Food Guide

BREAKFAST & COFFEE

Coffeelab

€3–6

Rue de Flandre, Sainte-Catherine

Speciality coffee roastery in the market quarter. The best flat white in central Brussels. Small, precise, no tourist overlay.

Charli

€3–7

Rue de la Longue Haie, Ixelles

Specialty coffee and pastry in the Châtelain neighbourhood. The benchmark for the Ixelles morning. Consistently local crowd.

À La Mort Subite

€3–8

Rue Montagne aux Herbes Potagères

Art Nouveau café since 1928. The most beautiful bar in Brussels. Gueuze and lambic on draught at all hours. Not a tourist trap — a Brussels institution.

LUNCH

Aux Armes de Bruxelles

€18–32

Rue des Bouchers 13

Bruxellois institution since 1921. Moules-frites, waterzooi, croquettes de crevettes grises. The definitive version of all three. Lunch only without reservation.

La Buvette

€16–28

Avenue Louis Schmidt, Etterbeek

The finest wine bar lunch in Brussels. Short seasonal menu, natural wine list changing weekly. Quiet room, local crowd. No tourist infrastructure.

Le Clan des Belges

€18–30

Place du Grand Sablon

Belgian cuisine on the most elegant square in the city. The vol-au-vent financière is the dish. Weekend antiques market outside.

DINNER

In 't Spinnepopke

€25–45

Place du Jardin aux Fleurs

Bruxellois cuisine in Brussels' oldest brown café (est. 1762). Stoofvlees braised in Orval Trappist. Rabbit in krik. Reserve ahead at spinnepopke.be.

La Paix

€30–50

Rue Ropsy Chaudron, Anderlecht

Art Nouveau brasserie. The most satisfying traditional dinner in Brussels. Waterzooi, sole meunière, chicons au gratin. Reserve at brasserielaix.be.

Chalet de la Forêt

€85–130

Drive de Lorraine, Uccle

Brussels' finest tasting menu restaurant. Seasonal Belgian kitchen, terrace over the Bois de la Cambre. Reserve weeks ahead at chaletdelaforet.be.

BARS & BELGIAN BEER

Delirium Café

€4–9

Impasse de la Fidélité

3,000+ Belgian beers. Genuinely worth the pilgrimage for the breadth of the list. Crowded evenings — go at 6pm before the groups arrive.

Moeder Lambic Fontainas

€5–10

Place Fontainas

The finest lambic and gueuze selection in Brussels. Quiet counter service, serious rotating list. The reference bar for Belgian fermentation.

À La Mort Subite

€3–8

Rue Montagne aux Herbes Potagères

Art Nouveau interior unchanged since 1928. House gueuze and krik on draught. The most beautiful bar in Brussels — also among the most fairly priced.

Brasserie Cantillon

Brewery

Rue Gheu 56, Anderlecht

One of the last operating lambic breweries in Brussels — a working museum. The gueuze and krik are produced entirely by spontaneous fermentation. Tours and tasting from €7.

CHOCOLATE — WHERE TO BUY

Pierre Marcolini

€€€

Place du Grand Sablon 39

One of the world's great chocolatiers. Buy four pieces of the single-origin dark selection. Do not buy a box — taste before committing.

Wittamer

€€

Place du Grand Sablon 12

Pâtisserie and chocolate on the Sablon since 1910. The best croissant in Brussels and the most reliable pralines. Also exceptional for a sit-down pastry.

Neuhaus

€€

Galerie de la Reine 25

The inventors of the Belgian praline (1912), still operating in its original Galeries Royales location. The caprice is the signature piece. Classic rather than innovative.

A note on eating in Brussels: The Grand-Place restaurants are nearly uniformly overpriced and mediocre. One block in any direction changes everything. Belgian beer is not an accessory to the meal — it is the meal's equal. Order a gueuze with shellfish, a saison with cheese, a Trappist with carbonnade. Ask the waiter what they'd drink with the dish.

Navigating Brussels

Brussels' STIB/MIVB network covers the city comprehensively with metro, tram, and bus on a single ticket. The 48h card is the correct choice for this itinerary — buy it at any metro station on arrival or at Brussels Airport.

Metro & Tram Lines You Will Actually Use

- Metro 1 / 5** Gare de l'Ouest Stockel / Herrmann-Debroux. The east-west axis through the city centre. Covers Gare Centrale, Arts-Loi (EU Quarter), and Schuman.
- Metro 2 / 6** Simonis Elisabeth / Roi Baudouin. The ring line connecting the Atomium area (Heysel/Laeken) to Gare du Midi. Use Line 6 to Atomium.
- Tram 92** Schaerbeek Uccle. Runs along the Rue Royale spine through the Upper Town, passing the Sablon and Palais de Justice. Essential for Day 1.
- Tram 81** Sainte-Croix Montgomery. Crosses the Upper Town near the Sablon. Connects to the EU Quarter.
- Tram 44** Montgomery Tervuren. 40-minute tram through the Sonian Forest to the Royal Museum for Central Africa. Worth the day trip.
- Bus 71** Flagey Gare du Nord via centre. The Ixelles artery. Connects Place Flagey to the city centre in 20 minutes.

Practical Tips

- The 48h STIB/MIVB card (~€16) covers all metro, tram, and bus. Buy at any metro station or Brussels Airport.
- Validate your card on boarding every time. Plain-clothes inspectors operate on all lines; fines are €150.
- Metro runs approximately 5:30am–midnight on weekdays; until 3am Friday and Saturday nights.
- Brussels Airport (BRU): the Airport Express train runs to Brussels-Midi, Centrale, and Nord in 17–22 minutes. Trains every 15 minutes.
- Taxis: all licensed and metered. Use official ranks or book via Uber/Taxi Verts app. Never take an unmarked vehicle outside Gare du Midi.
- Walking in the centre is feasible but the hills between Lower Town and Upper Town (Sablon) are steep — use the tram.
- Cycling: Villo! bike-share available citywide. The Lower Town is bikeable; the Upper Town has significant gradients.

Contingency

Backup Plans

Brussels in the rain is one of the most comfortable cities in Western Europe. The museum density on Rue de la Régence and around the Cinquanteaire, the covered arcade of the Galeries Royales, and the brown café culture all function better under overcast Belgian skies. This city was made for grey days.

Magritte Museum

250 works in chronological order — the world's definitive surrealist collection. In the Royal Museums complex on Rue de la Régence. Book at fine-arts-museum.be. Three hours minimum; longer if the permanent collection draws you through.

BOZAR — Centre for Fine Arts

Belgium's premier contemporary arts centre in a Victor Horta building (1928). Programme changes quarterly — check bozar.be for what's showing. The building itself is worth seeing regardless; the Art Deco hall is exceptional.

Musée des Instruments de Musique (MIM)

10,000 historical instruments across five floors of an Art Nouveau former department store. The building — Old England, 1899, iron-and-glass facade — is as interesting as the collection. The rooftop café has the best panoramic view in central Brussels.

Belgian Comic Strip Museum (Centre Belge de la Bande Dessinée)

Belgium takes comics seriously as an art form — Tintin, the Smurfs, Lucky Luke all originated here. The museum occupies a Victor Horta Art Nouveau warehouse (1905). More serious and interesting than the premise suggests. Allow two hours.

Autoworld & Cinquanteaire Museum

The vast Cinquanteaire complex in the EU Quarter houses three museums. Autoworld has 350 historic vehicles from 1886 onward. The Art & History Museum has one of the finest Egyptian collections in Europe. Both are significantly undervisited.

Cantillon Brewery

One of the last operating lambic breweries in Brussels — a working museum producing beer by spontaneous fermentation. Guided tour includes tasting; book at cantillon.be. The Anderlecht address is 20 minutes by tram. Worth the journey in any weather.

Musée Horta

Victor Horta's personal home and studio (1901) in Saint-Gilles — the finest surviving Art Nouveau interior in Brussels, possibly in Europe. Every surface is original. Small, precise, extraordinary. Book at hortamuseum.be.

Know Your City

Know Your Neighbourhoods

The districts that matter for your 48 hours in Brussels.

Grand-Place /Îlot Sacré MUNICIPALITY OF BRUSSELS · HISTORIC CORE Safe The UNESCO guildhall square and medieval street grid. The starting point. Crowded by 10am; serene before 9.	Sainte-Catherine /Dansaert MUNICIPALITY · CREATIVE QUARTER Very safe Fish market heritage meets independent design. Best dinner neighbourhood in the centre.
Sablon MUNICIPALITY · ANTIQUES & CULTURE Very safe Grand Sablon square, chocolatiers, Notre-Dame church, antiques market weekends.	Marolles MUNICIPALITY · FLEA MARKET Safe Oldest working neighbourhood. Jeu de Balle flea market daily. Gentrifying without losing character.
Ixelles / Flagey IXELLES · RESIDENTIAL SOUTH Very safe The Étangs lakes, Place Flagey, Châtelain quarter. Where Brussels actually lives.	EU Quarter / Schuman ETTERBEEK / IXELLES · INSTITUTIONS Very safe European Commission, Parliament, Cinquantenaire. Quiet after 6pm — use it for afternoon museums.
Molenbeek (inner) MOLENBEEK · WEST BANK Use care at night Unfairly maligned; improving rapidly. Rue de Birmingham has emerging restaurants. Standard awareness after 10pm.	Uccle / Forest SOUTHERN COMMUNES Very safe Bois de la Cambre at the edge, Chalet de la Forêt, Musée Horta in adjacent Saint-Gilles.

Essential Tips

What Nobody Tells You About Brussels

Brussels is bilingual

Street signs in French and Dutch. Locals may respond in either — don't be surprised. English is widely understood in all tourist areas.

The Grand-Place restaurants

Tourist traps, almost without exception. Walk one block in any direction for better food at half the price. This rule applies to all streets immediately adjacent to the square.

Belgian beer is the meal

Trappist ales, lambics, gueuzes, and krieks are among the most complex beers in the world. Order a gueuze with shellfish, a saison with cheese. Ask the waiter.

Chocolate: buy from chocolatiers

Pierre Marcolini, Wittamer, Neuhaus — not from tourist kiosks near the Grand-Place. The kiosk pralines are not the same product.

Sunday closures are real

Much of Brussels closes on Sundays. The Galeries Royales remain open; museums generally stay open. Plan grocery needs for Saturday.

The Upper Town gradient

The Sablon and the Palais de Justice are significantly uphill from the Grand-Place. Wear shoes that work on cobblestones and inclines. Use Tram 92 to climb if needed.

Weather changes fast

Brussels' weather is famously changeable — warm morning, afternoon rain, clear evening is common. A light waterproof in your bag is non-negotiable, not optional.

STIB/MIVB card on arrival

Buy the 48h card at Brussels Airport before entering the city — it includes the Airport Express train into the centre as the first journey.

Connections

Rail & Onward Connections

Brussels has two main stations for long-distance travel: Brussels-Midi/Zuid (Gare du Midi) serves all Eurostar, Thalys, and TGV international services. Brussels-Centrale and Brussels-Nord also serve many intercity trains. The Belgian rail network (SNCB/NMBS) is efficient, punctual, and connects to every European high-speed network.

By Train

ROUTE	TIME	SERVICE	NOTES
Brussels Bruges	1h 00min	IC direct	Hourly — day trip viable
Brussels Ghent	32 min	IC direct	Twice hourly — day trip from Brussels
Brussels Antwerp	38 min	IC direct	Twice hourly
Brussels Liège	1h 05min	IC direct	Hourly
Brussels Amsterdam	1h 50min	Thalys direct	Several daily — book at thalys.com
Brussels Paris	1h 22min	Eurostar/Thalys direct	Up to 11 daily — book early at eurostar.com
Brussels London	2h 01min	Eurostar direct via Channel Tunnel	Up to 10 daily — book weeks ahead
Brussels Cologne	1h 46min	Thalys/ICE direct	Several daily
Brussels Frankfurt	3h 00min	ICE via Cologne	Daily
Brussels Luxembourg	3h 00min	IC direct	Hourly
Brussels Lille	38 min	TGV direct	Several daily — gateway to northern France
Brussels Strasbourg	2h 20min	TGV via Lille or direct	Several daily

By Air

Brussels Airport (BRU) at Zaventem is 12km northeast of the city centre. The Airport Express train (every 15 minutes) takes 17 minutes to Brussels-Nord, 22 minutes to Brussels-Centrale, 27 minutes to Brussels-Midi. Included in the STIB 48h card if purchased at the airport. Brussels South Charleroi Airport (CRL) serves Ryanair and other low-cost carriers — 60km south of the city; bus to Midi takes 75 minutes.

BOOKING NOTE: Eurostar between Brussels and London must be booked at eurostar.com — prices rise sharply close to travel. Thalys to Amsterdam and Paris books at thalys.com or sncb.be. All Belgian domestic trains book at sncb.be (SNCB/NMBS). Advance booking is cheaper and secures a seat assignment; same-day tickets are available but more expensive.

Brussels awaits.

*You have the plan. You know the guild house facades
in the morning light, which chocolatier on the Sablon,
and where to find the beer that changes the way you think
about beer. The Grand-Place is five minutes from anywhere.
The rest is just showing up.*

BEFORE YOU LEAVE: FINAL CHECKLIST

Screenshot Day 1 and Day 2 itineraries for offline use
Buy STIB 48h card at airport, Brussels-Centrale, or any metro station
Book Atomium tickets at atomium.be — weekends sell out
Book Magritte Museum at fine-arts-museum.be — book online
Reserve In 't Spinnepkopke or La Paix for dinner — weekends fill
Download Google Maps Brussels offline before you land
Check Sablon antiques market hours (Sat–Sun 9am–6pm)

Your interactive map is one scan away.

All locations from this guide, colour-coded by day, open on your phone.



goingsolo.life/maps/brussels

GoingSolo.Life

TRAVEL ALONE. LIVE FULLY.