



IS IT SAFE?

Brussels

SOLO TRAVELER SAFETY GUIDE

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OVERALL SAFETY ASSESSMENT

RATING

Safe. Standard urban awareness recommended.

Brussels is a safe destination for solo travelers. The historic centre, Sablon, Ixelles, and the EU Quarter are comfortable at all hours. The area around Gare du Midi late at night and parts of Molenbeek after dark warrant the same awareness you'd apply in any major Western European city. Brussels is not dangerous — it is a normal European capital with normal urban dynamics.

RATING SCALE

- = Very safe
- = Safe
- = Use caution
- = Avoid at night
- = Avoid

Brussels sits at the intersection of French and Dutch-speaking Belgium — a bilingual city with an unusually complex geography. Most tourist areas and residential neighbourhoods are entirely comfortable for solo travel at any hour. The reputation of certain areas outpaces the reality: Molenbeek, for example, is transforming rapidly and is safe during daylight hours in its western reaches. The main practical risk in Brussels is petty theft in crowded tourist areas — particularly the Grand-Place and the trams running to the Atomium.

NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFETY AT A GLANCE

Very safe Safe Use caution Avoid at night Avoid

AREA	RATING	NOTES
Grand-Place / Îlot Sacré	Very safe	Crowded tourist core. Watch pockets, especially around Galeries and Manneken
Sainte-Catherine / Dansaert	Safe	Creative quarter. Animated and well-lit. Very comfortable at all hours.
Sablon	Use caution	Elegant upper town square. Antiques, chocolate, church. Very safe day and
Marolles	Avoid at night	Character neighbourhood. Gentrifying. Normal awareness. Flea market area is
Ixelles / Flagey	Safe	Residential district. Étangs lakes, Place Flagey. Very safe. Where residents live.
EU Quarter / Schuman	Very safe	Institutional district. Safe at all hours. Quiet after 7pm — well-monitored.
Gare du Midi area	Use caution	Major transit hub. Extra vigilance after 10pm. Use official taxi ranks.
Molenbeek (inner canal)	Avoid at night	Unfairly maligned in general but use standard awareness after dark.
Gare du Nord area	Use caution	Busy transit corridor. Heightened vigilance after 11pm. Stay on lit streets.
Uccle / Forest	Safe	Southern residential communes. Bois de la Cambre edge. Very safe.
Etterbeek / Woluwe	Safe	Residential east. EU institutions nearby. Comfortable and quiet.
Laeken / Atomium	Use caution	Tourist destination. Watch bags near the Atomium and Mini-Europe entrances.

The Marolles and Sainte-Catherine are among Brussels' most welcoming neighbourhoods for solo travelers — relaxed bars, easy solo dining, and a local crowd that ignores tourists in the best sense.

GETTING AROUND SAFELY

MODE	RATING	NOTES
Metro (STIB/MIVB)		Generally safe. Pickpocket risk on crowded lines in centre. Runs until midnight weekdays, 3am Fri/Sat
Trams		Reliable and safe throughout the city. Tram 92 (Sablon route) is the most useful for this guide
Buses		Safe. Bus 71 (Ixelles–Gare du Nord) is essential. Well-monitored.
Taxis / Uber		All licensed and metered. Use official ranks or app booking only. Never unmarked vehicles outside Gare du Midi
Walking (central)		Excellent pedestrian infrastructure. The Lower Town is flat; the Sablon involves a climb
Cycling (Villo!)		City bike-share available. Good infrastructure in lower town. Cobblestones near Grand-Place require care
Night bus		Safe but less frequent. Available after metro closes on weeknights. Check stib.be for routes.

COMMON SCAMS & HOW TO AVOID THEM

Grand-Place tourist restaurants:

The restaurants on and immediately adjacent to the Grand-Place overcharge consistently. Walk one block in any direction. Never sit down without seeing a menu with prices first.

Unofficial taxis at Gare du Midi:

Persistent touts approach arrivals outside the station. Use only licensed taxis from the official rank, or book via Uber or Taxis Verts app. The scam targets international arrivals from the Eurostar.

Fake charity clipboard approach:

Near the Grand-Place and Galeries Royales — politely decline and keep walking. Do not engage.

Pickpockets on crowded trams:

Tram 92 in the tourist section and crowded metro carriages are primary environments. Money belt or front pocket only in crowded transit.

Overpriced chocolate near the Grand-Place:

The tourist kiosks selling Belgian chocolate on the Grand-Place periphery are not the product quality of Pierre Marcolini or Wittamer. Buy from named chocolatiers only.

HEALTH & MEDICAL

- Dial 112 for all emergencies — English widely spoken across all services.
- UZ Brussel (Jette) and Cliniques Universitaires Saint-Luc (Woluwe) offer world-class care.
- Pharmacies (pharmacies / apotheken) are plentiful in the centre; bilingual French/Dutch staff; many speak English.
- Tap water is safe and of good quality throughout the city.
- EU EHIC card accepted. Travel insurance still strongly recommended for non-EU visitors.
- Medical offices: SOS Médecins (24h house calls): +32 2 479 18 18.

SOLO WOMEN TRAVELERS

Brussels is a comfortable city for solo women travelers. The café culture actively accommodates solo diners — women eating or drinking alone attract no negative attention in the central neighbourhoods, Ixelles, and the Sablon. The Dansaert and Sainte-Catherine areas are particularly relaxed and well-lit. The area around Gare du Midi and parts of Molenbeek warrant standard European-city awareness after 10pm — the same approach you would take in any large city. Brussels scores consistently in the upper tier of European cities for female solo traveler safety in published surveys. The Grand-Place and the immediate tourist zone function without issue at all hours; simply avoid engaging with the persistent groups of vendors in that area after dark.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Police (Politie / Police)	101 (non-emergency) / 112 (emergency)
Fire & Medical (Brandweer / Pompiers)	100 / 112
Ambulance	112
US Embassy Brussels	+32 2 811 4000
UK Embassy Brussels	+32 2 287 62 11
Tourist Police Brussels	+32 2 548 52 00
SOS Médecins (24h)	+32 2 479 18 18
Pharmacies of guard (night/weekend)	+32 900 10 500

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