

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN TRAVELLING TO BELGIUM

## SEASONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- July to August – Summer
- September to October – Autumn
- November to March – Winter
- April to June – Spring

In spring and autumn the weather is stunning and the countryside beautiful.

High Season in Belgium is during the summer months of July and August. The weather is quite warm but crowds will be bigger.

Winter months November to February make up low season, however there are some amazing carnivals to enjoy, especially during Christmas and Lent Seasons.

## WHAT TO PACK

As you plan what to wear in Europe, keep in mind that the trick is to pack and wear layers. We suggest layering like this: tank top or t-shirt, long sleeve shirt, jersey and then jacket. Always pack something to protect yourself against rain showers.

## RETAIL HOURS

Monday to Saturday 10h00 to 18h00 or 19h00, although Department Stores often stay open longer – up to 21h00 on a Friday. Outside the main areas, some shops might close at lunchtime.

## MONEY MATTERS

Belgium is a member of the European Union with the **Euro** being the official currency.

**Currency:** Euro (EUR). EUR1 = 100 Cents.

**Credit Cards** are widely available and ATM's are very prevalent.

## DRINKING WATER

- It is safe to drink tap water in Belgium.

## TIPPING / PORTERAGE

- Personnel receive living wages and tipping is not required for taxis, restaurants, hairdressers or bars, though it won't be refused and some locals round up a bill. If service was quite exceptional, you could show appreciation (up to 10%).

## TRAVEL RESPONSIBILITY

- Learn a few words of the local language so you know what's considered polite in terms of eating, greeting and local values.

- Appropriate behaviours by travellers helps ensure local communities continue to be hospital and friendly.
- Respect other people's cultures and avoid imposing your beliefs.
- Adhere to the hotel's water or energy conservation policies.
- Buy locally made crafts and support local skills.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

- The Kingdom of Belgium has 3 official languages – Dutch, French & German. English is widely spoken.
- South African passport holders require a **Schengen Visa**.
- Belgium is on Central European time. They are 1 hour behind S.A during their winter months (November to March) and are on the same time as S.A during their summer months (last Sunday in March to the Last Saturday in October)
- For Belgium there are two associated plug types, types C and F. Plug type C is the plug which has two round pins and plug type F is the plug which has two round pins with two earth clips on the side.
- Belgium operates on a 230V supply voltage and 50Hz.

## WHAT THINGS COST

- Meal Inexpensive Restaurant : Euro 10 to Euro 20
- Meal for 2 people, Midrange Restaurant 3 Course: Euro 45 to Euro 80
- McMeal at McDonalds (or Equivalent) : Euro 4.50 to Euro 6
- Domestic Beer (0.5 Lt Draught) : Euro 3 to Euro 5
- Imported Beer (0.33 Lt Bottle) : Euro 2.40 to Euro 4
- Cappuccino (Regular) : Euro 2 to Euro 3
- Coke/Pepsi (0.33 Lt Bottle) : Euro 1.50 to Euro 3
- Water (0.33 Lt Bottle) : Euro 1 to Euro 2.50

## OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- A lot of public restrooms will charge you a small fee to use them, so just keep some change on hand to pay the fee.
- Lock valuables away while travelling and always be vigilant of your belongings. Never leave them unattended.
- Always be aware of pick pockets irrespective of where you are in the world.