

Belgium Profile

Summer 2008 edition



Belgian Tourist Office
Brussels • Wallonia

The South of Belgium
BRUSSELS & WALLONIA
Latin Europe in a nutshell

Celebrating city symbol – 50 years on



Celebrations are underway to mark the 50th anniversary of one of Belgium's most famous landmarks, the Atomium in Brussels.

Created to coincide with the city's hosting of the 1958 World International Exhibition (Expo 58), the first world fair to be held since the end of the Second World War, it attracted huge crowds.

Staged on a massive site in the Heysel area of the city, during the six months it was open, it drew more than 41 million visitors including a record 715,000 on a single day.

The 100-metre-high Atomium was based on the model of a metal crystalline molecule enlarged 165 billion times. Between 2004-06 it was completely renovated and now looks as good as new.

In a bid to recapture the spirit of 50 years ago more than 30 commemorative events are being held between now and the end of October. The line-up includes two weekends of children's events in September, firework displays, a food festival, a jazz and folk festival and a Rock Around the Atomium concert. There will be screenings of films associated with 1958 and an exhibition recalling what else was going on in the world that same year.

An exhibition space directly opposite the Atomium, the Pavilion of Temporary Happiness, has been created out of 40,000 empty beer crates while in the Atomium itself, "From Utopia to Reality" features photographs, posters and archive film footage as well as a large number of collectibles bearing the Expo 58 logo.

And if before October 19, you happen to be visiting the Atomium on the day of your 50th birthday, you will be offered free entry.

www.atomium.be



© Sabam 2008 www.atomium.be (C)AVB-ASB



Lively Liège on track for a facelift

A major building programme is underway in Liège after Wallonia's regional government approved development of the Guillemins neighbourhood which surrounds the city's landmark railway station.

Plans are underway to transform a three-acre site into an attractive complex of shops, offices, luxury flats and public spaces which it's hoped will help bring new business to the city and increase Liège's appeal as a tourist destination.

Benefiting from its strategic location just 40 minutes from Brussels and on major rail routes to Paris and Cologne, the Walloon government sees the new railway station as a springboard for revitalising the wider region.

The first phase of the ultra-modern railway station was opened last year and, according to SNCB (Belgian Railways), the whole project will be completed by the end of this year.

Designed by Santiago Calatrava, the Catalan architect who also created the plans for the Olympic Sports Complex in Athens and the Milwaukee Art Museum, the new station has been built on the site of the 13th century Guillemins Convent.

When fully-functional it will be able to handle 40,000 passengers a day. One of the many special features of the station is that for passengers arriving by car, there is direct access from the underground car parks to the station platforms.

Known as "The Fiery city", Liège was the cradle of Belgium's industrial revolution and is the largest centre in Wallonia. An important religious centre, it boasts an impressive collection of historic churches including St Bartholomew's Church which houses a priceless brass baptismal font from the 12th century.

Popular museums include The Museum of Walloon Art with 2,500 paintings and several hundred sculptures dating from the 16th century to the present day. Across the river in the bohemian Outremeuse district, there are dozens of lively cafes, bars and restaurants.

Sunday is a particularly good day to visit Liège when it hosts Belgium's oldest and largest outdoor market, the Marché de la Batte, along the banks of the River Meuse.



On the beach – Brussels style!

It may not be the first destination that springs to mind when planning a beach holiday.

But peak season visitors to Brussels this summer will find they can combine a traditional city break with many of the pleasures of the seaside including beach volleyball, pétanque and Frisbee-throwing.

Thousands of tonnes of fine sand are being imported to create a man-made beach - Bruxelles les Bains – which will stretch for one kilometre alongside a canal in the centre of the city.

It will be open every day (except Mondays) from July 18-August 17 from 11.00-22.00 and will be dotted with coconut palms, olive trees and mini-waterfalls. Free deckchairs are available as is free entertainment for both adults and children.

Admission to the beach is also free while a wide variety of stalls will be selling food and drink representing cuisines from all over the world.

The only major difference between Brussels and other beach destinations is that swimming in the canal is not permitted!

www.bruxelleslesbains.be

BRUXELLES LES BAINS
BRUSSEL BAD



A bed of blooming begonias

For three days and four nights during the weekend of 15th to 17th of August Brussels' most famous square, the Grand' Place, will yet again be the magnificent setting for a spectacular carpet of flowers.

This colourful yet short-lived biennial creation, which is made up of more than 700,000

begonias, is admired every two years by thousands of visitors who flock to take films and photographs of the elaborate masterpiece from the many taverns surrounding the square or from the balcony of the stunning Hotel de Ville (Town Hall) - the square's sole surviving building from medieval times.

Although preparations for the carpet of flowers begin a year in advance, a team of more than 100 experienced gardeners and horticulturalists take just under four hours to piece together the giant floral jigsaw, the theme of which this year will be inspired from 18th century French tapestry patterns.

The carpet of flowers will also come alive every evening with a new and original music and light show, whilst a prestigious exhibition in the public halls of the Hotel de Ville will feature ten carpets with a floral theme of rare design and colour.

www.flowercarpet.be



Cirque comes to Brussels

The world-famous Cirque du Soleil will be in Brussels in the autumn for a month-long run of its stunning show, Quidam.

It combines acrobatic activity, extravagant design and inspirational music - weaving them into a seamless drama.

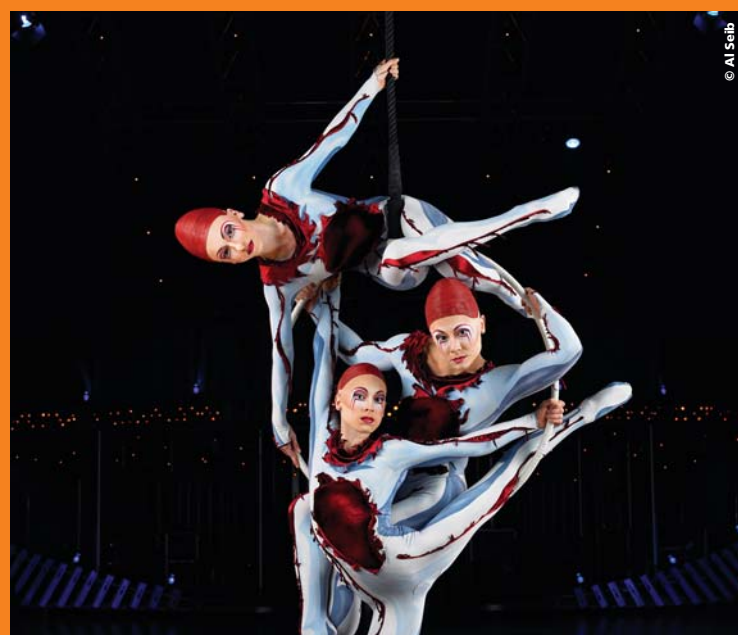
The audience is made to feel even closer to the performance by there being no curtains; having a backdrop of continuous live music - and the performers changing the props. A massive 120-foot long overhead conveyor is used to allow artists, sets, props and special effects to swing, slip, glide and plummet into view.

First produced in 1996 and directed by Franco Dragone who grew up in the South of Belgium and still regards it as his home, Quidam (pronounced Key-Dem) is derived from the Latin word for a nameless passer-by. The 2.5-hour show is based loosely around the story of a young girl and the fantasy world that children often create. The performers are the manifestations of her daydreams.

The Quebec-based entertainment empire, Cirque du Soleil (Circus of the Sun) was founded in 1984 by two former street performers. Originally intended to be a one-year project, the company is currently staging more than a dozen shows around the world and employs 3,500 staff from at least 40 countries.

The Brussels production runs from October 31-November 30, 2008 and is being held in a 2,600-capacity "Big Top" at the Brussels Kart Expo northwest of the city. Standard tickets for Quidam cost from €39 -€74 while VIP Tapis Rouge tickets are priced at €178 and include access to a pre-show open bar, a souvenir programme and gift.

Ticket information on +32(0)2200 6476 or www.cirquedusoleil.com



Eton choir aims to strike the right chord

An elite British school choir is to perform at one of Belgium's most prestigious music festivals.

The Rodolfus Choir from Eton will be taking part in the Nuit des Choeurs festival over the weekend of August 29 & 30.

The choir comprises singers aged 25 or under chosen from past and present students attending the annual Eton College Choral Courses - a six-week programme held each summer for prospective choral scholars.

Since its formation in 1984 the choir has toured in France, Italy and Austria and at many English festivals and is well-known for its diverse and imaginative choice of music.

The Nuit des Choeurs festival is normally held in the grounds of the 12th century Villers Abbey which has been described as one of the most beautiful architectural sites in Europe. But because the abbey is currently undergoing extensive renovation, the venue for this year's festival has been switched to the Castle of Bois Seigneur-Isaac which lies between Waterloo and Nivelles.

Owned by the Snoy family since 1810, the white-painted castle is among the most handsome in the province of Walloon Brabant, renowned for its formal French gardens and a 17-acre park containing more than 50 trees which are several centuries old.

The father of the present owner was one of the signatories to the 1957 Treaty of Rome which paved the way for the formation of the European Economic Community.

The castle is normally only open to the public on three Sundays during the summer and as part of an annual heritage weekend held each September.

www.nuitdeschoeurs.be



Air boost to Brussels

Low-cost carrier Flybe has introduced an Exeter-Brussels service using a 78-seater Dash 8 aircraft.

Flights operate daily (except Saturdays) departing Exeter Airport at 17.30, arriving in Brussels at 19.55. The return service leaves Brussels at 20.25, arriving Exeter at 20.50.

Flybe's chief commercial officer, Mike Rutter, said the new route was part of the carrier's vision to cement its position as Europe's largest regional carrier. "We're building Flybe into a bigger and stronger airline with a long-term commitment to offer sustainable, reliable and convenient travel to our passengers."



Meanwhile, bmi regional has increased capacity on its route between East Midlands Airport and Brussels by replacing the Embraer 135 aircraft with the slightly larger 145 model.

"It's in response to increased demand," said bmi regional's commercial director Peter Kenworthy. "The route is of particular importance to business travellers from the Midlands and this year we will be maintaining three flights a day throughout the summer."

This will mean an extra 2,000 seats being available in July and August - while in previous years, service was reduced to two flights a day.

The services depart East Midlands Airport at 06.45, 14.05 and 17.30 with return flights from Brussels leaving at 09.30, 16.50 and 20.20.



Smirking with the Smurfs



The Belgian Comic Strip Centre in Brussels is organising a special exhibition to celebrate the 50th birthday of the cartoon characters, The Smurfs.

Originally known in the original French as Les Schtroumpfs, they were created by the Belgian cartoonist Pierre Culliford - known as Peyo - and made their debut in a comic strip for the magazine Le Journal de Spirou in October 1958.

The story lines tended to be simple tales of bold adventure. And almost all the characters looked essentially alike with sky blue-coloured skin and white trousers.

It was not until the 1980s that much of the English-speaking world became acquainted with The Smurfs through an animated television series from Hanna-Barbera Productions which presented 272 half-hour episodes.

Peyo's son Thierry Culliford said the appeal of The Smurfs was timeless. "They live in the Middle Ages so their clothing and look never changes. After 50 years the characters are still as popular as ever with children."

There are plans afoot however to bring The Smurfs into the modern age with a computer-generated, 3D-style movie. But production has been postponed until 2010.

www.cbbd.be



"Toots" to top the bill at Dinant Jazz Fest



One of the world's great jazz harmonica players, 86-year-old Toots Thielemans, will be appearing at the Dinant Jazz Nights Festival in July.

Situated just an hour's drive from Brussels in the heart of Wallonia, the three-day event is being held over the weekend of Friday July 18-Sunday July 20 on the eve of Belgium's National Day holiday.

The Brussels-born Thielemans will be performing with his quintet on the Sunday under a Big Tent in the leafy surroundings of Dinant's Saint-Norbert Park.

Thielemans started his career as a guitar player, emigrating to the United States in 1952 where he became a member of Charlie Parker's All-Stars. He has also played and recorded with the likes of Ella Fitzgerald, the George Shearing Quintet, Quincy Jones, Paul Simon and Billy Joel; and in 1962 he recorded Bluesette which became a worldwide hit.

Another veteran booked to appear at the festival is the Grammy Award-winning singer/songwriter Milton Nascimento, regarded as one of the great icons of the Brazilian music scene. Other artistes include French singer/guitarist Stéphane Sanseverino and the Belmondo Brothers.

Now in its 11th year, one of the traditions of the Dinant festival is that a musician is always invited to take on the role of musical director. This year's chosen candidate is the renowned Belgian pianist Eric Legnini.

Over the summer Dinant will also be hosting a series of jazz cruises; and each Sunday during July and August, Saxophone Sunday jazz concerts will be held at different locations around the town in celebration of being the birthplace of Adolphe Sax (1814-1894), the inventor of the saxophone.

Somewhat more frivolously, Dinant will be organising its annual cucumber pie-eating competition over the weekend of July 26-27; while on August 15 the town gets all scrubbed up for its International Bathtub Regatta.

www.dinantjazznights.org



Go to www.belgiumthelaceto.be for continuous updates on what's happening in Brussels and Wallonia. Belgian Tourist Office - Brussels & Wallonia, 217 Marsh Wall, London E14 9FJ. Tel: 020 7531 0390. Fax: 020 7531 0393. Email: info@belgiumthelaceto.be

Military machines on the move

The Royal Army and Military History Museum in Brussels has acquired five new aircraft including one of the earliest military helicopters, a Bristol Sycamore.

It follows lengthy negotiations with the Helicopter Museum in Weston-Super-Mare which received a Belgian Alouette II helicopter in return.

The museum has also taken delivery of a replica of the Voisin-Farman aircraft flown by Baron de Carters in November 1908 in what's reputed to be the first flight ever made over Belgian soil.

Meanwhile the Port de Hal Museum in Brussels which has exhibits dedicated to the history and traditions of the city is reopening after a major facelift.

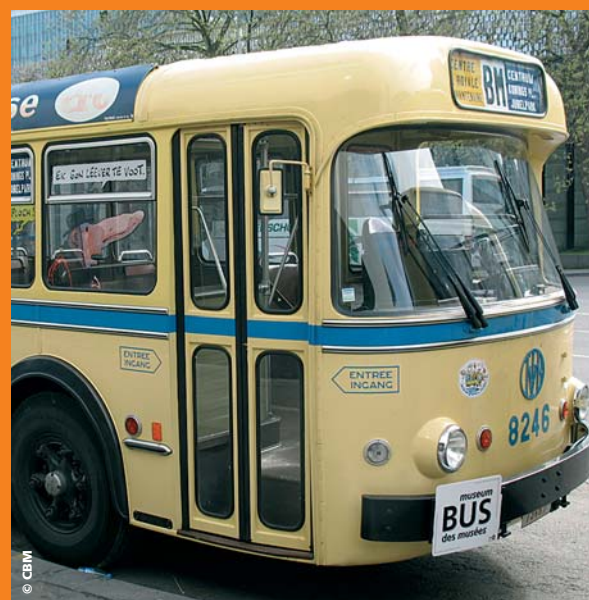
Housed within the last surviving gate from the days when Brussels was a walled city, the 600-year-old building was also once used as a prison.

Part of the Royal Museums of Art and History, the Porte de Hal Museum is easily accessible just moments away from the Porte de Hal metro station.

More information on www.klm-mra.be and www.mrah.be



© KLM-MRA



Buses for the brainy

Hop-on, hop-off buses linking 20 Brussels museums have been reintroduced after a successful pilot scheme.

Distinctive, creamy-yellow "Old Timer" buses dating from 1956-1985 are operating continuous services on Saturday and Sunday afternoons from 13.30 to 17.30 throughout the summer season up until the last weekend of October.

Museums on the route include the Royal Museum of Army and Military History, the Costume & Lace Museum, the Musical Instruments Museum, the Museum of Natural Sciences and Autoworld Brussels.

The buses are normally housed at the city's Tram Museum and the Museum Bus scheme is being run by volunteers who have all either worked as bus drivers or are Tram Museum members.

Passengers can get on and off as many times as they like for a flat fare of €3 for adults and €1.50 for children under 12. Tickets can be purchased on board while the service is free for holders of the Brussels Card which offers complimentary admission to 25 museums plus free public transport throughout the city.

www.brussel museums.be



Museums talk the language of their visitors



It can be very disappointing to visit a museum where captions for exhibits are all in a foreign language.

Now seven of the most popular museums in Brussels including the Museum of the City of Brussels, the BELVUE Museum, the Center for Fine Arts (BOZAR) and the Belgian Centre for Comic Strip Art are offering commentaries in a wide variety of languages including English, Russian, Chinese and Greek.

Designed more to provide a personal viewpoint rather than a detailed tour, the impromptu comments have been recorded by a selection of artists, musicians and celebrities as well as less famous museum visitors.

The comments are easily downloaded on to a mobile phone or mp3 player – or on to a computer to provide a preview as to what a particular museum has to offer.

The initiative from the Brussels Museums Council was first introduced to coincide with a special late night opening event on March 1 which attracted 12,000 visitors and was followed by a party at BOZAR which ran until 03.00.

www.museumtalks.be



Artistic trio depict a beautiful era

The work of three artists has been brought together under the banner of a Belle Epoque Summer season which is being held at the Ixelles Museum in Brussels until August 31.

The best-known of the featured artists is Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901) who started painting when he was ten and became the archetypal bohemian painter - capturing the spirit of the "beautiful era" in Paris in the last decade of the 19th Century.

His works portrayed day-to-day life at the Moulin Rouge cabaret and at theatres, cafes, circuses, dance halls, racetracks and, most famously, brothels where he was a regular patron and fond of painting portraits of prostitutes.

The Ixelles Museum is displaying its impressive collection of 33 Toulouse-Lautrec posters including his first poster, *Moulin Rouge – La Goulue – (The Glutton)* painted in 1891. In the first print run, some 3,000 copies were produced and pasted all around the city. Visitors can also see his last poster, *La Gitane – (The Gypsy)* which has only recently been acquired by the Museum and is showing in Belgium for the first time.

Alexandre Charpentier (1856-1909) played an important rôle in the emergence of Art Nouveau. This is the first time such a large retrospective has been dedicated to him - in an exhibition entitled "Naturalism and Art Nouveau."



Alexandre Charpentier, Rosalie, 1901 Collection particulière. © Patrice Schmidt Paris, Musée d'Orsay

Charpentier experimented with a wide range of materials and techniques including plaster, marble, gold, pewter, stoneware, stained glass, and engraving. He was also an excellent portrait artist and painted over 500 prominent people of the time.

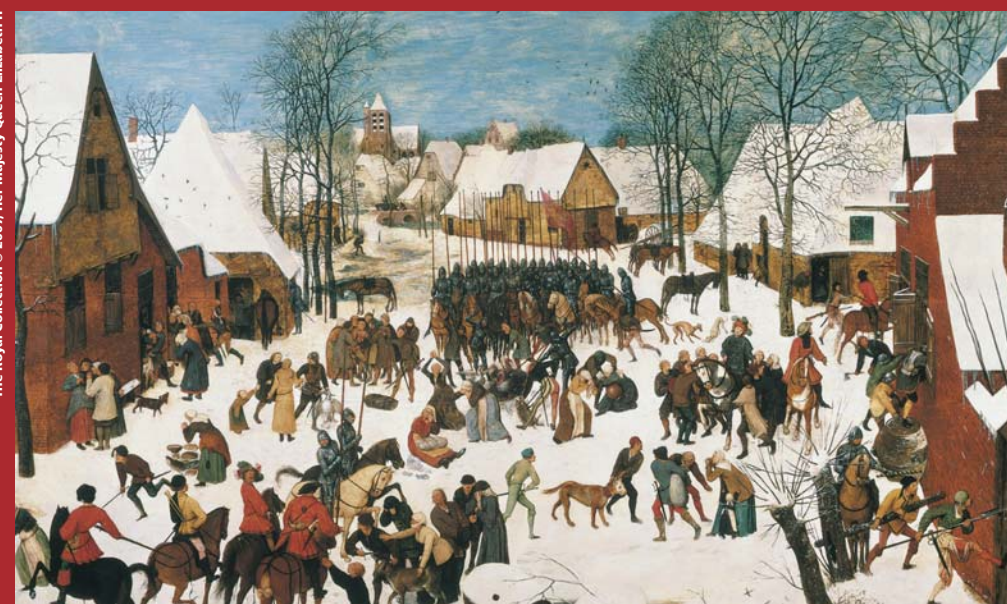
Octave Maus (1856-1919) was a Brussels-born art critic, writer and lawyer who starting his working life dealing with the legal problems of artists and writers alongside fellow lawyer and writer Edmond Picard.

In 1881 the two men co-founded a weekly avant-garde periodical; and three years later Maus was elected the secretary of Les XX, a society set up by a group of Belgian artists, designers and sculptors dissatisfied with the policies and attitude of the art world's ruling body. They held an annual exhibition of their work.

www.belleepoquesummer.be



Pieter Bruegel the Elder, The Massacre of the Innocents, oil on panel, 109.2 x 158.1 cm The Royal Collection © 2007, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II



Van Dyck and Reubens in Royal roadshow

An exhibition of 50 paintings lent by the Queen is the major event of the summer season at the Royal Museums of Fine Arts in Brussels.

A testament to the strong ties between the British and Belgian royal families, Paintings from the British Royal Collection focuses on works by Belgian and Dutch painters including Jan Gossaert, Anthony Van Dyck and Peter Paul Reubens.

Some of the works will be displayed alongside relevant masterpieces belonging to the Fine Arts Museum such as two biblical works by Pieter Bruegel the Elder. For the first time, *The Massacre of the Innocents* which is part of the British Royal Collection takes its place beside *The Numbering at Bethlehem* – one of the permanent works belonging to the Fine Arts Museum.

The exhibition runs until September 21.

The Royal Collection is the property of the British sovereign but held in trust for the monarch's successors and for the nation. It contains well over 7,000 paintings, 40,000 watercolours and drawings and about 150,000 Old Master prints as well as tapestries, furniture, ceramics and books. The collection is dispersed among several locations including Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle, Hampton Court Palace and Holyroodhouse.

www.fine-arts-museum.be



Calendar of events for the last six months of 2008

The South of Belgium
BRUSSELS & WALLONIA
Latin Europe in a nutshell

Sporting Events

Bikes, cars, cars, cars, rollers ...and running

- 30 May-26 Sept *Roller Parade, Brussels & Wallonia* Free 20 km roller parades throughout the streets of Namur (Thursdays), Brussels (Fridays) and Mons (Saturdays)
- 2-3 August *Proximus 24 Hours of Spa, (Province of Liege)* This 24-hour Endurance race solely for GT cars takes place on the Spa-Francorchamps racing track and is one of the major motor sporting events of the Belgian calendar.
- 5-7 Sept *Belgian Formula 1 Grand Prix, Spa Francorchamps (Province of Liege)* No introduction needed. The exciting F1 on one of the favourite and most beautiful tracks in the world!
- 5 October *ING Brussels Marathon, Brussels 42 Kms*, taking in the best sites in Brussels, starting at the Cinquantenaire and finishing at the Grand Place. Also a half marathon (21Kms), mini marathon (3Kms) and kid's run (1Km).
- 17-19 October *Superbiker, Jules Tacheney Circuit, Mettet (Province of Namur)* The largest SuperMoto event in the world with Superbiker and Starbiker events and a Freestyle show. Noisy and crazy!

Music Festivals & Cultural Events

Brussels & Wallonia are awash with events and festivals from jazz, world, and classical music festivals, to celebrations of Southern Belgium's rich cultural heritage

- 25 June-27 July *Musical Month in St Hubert (Province of Luxembourg)* 51st "Juillet Musical" with jazz and classical music concerts in and around St Hubert. One of the most important summer festivals in the Province of Luxembourg.
- 29 June-29 Aug *Durbuy Music Festival (Province of Luxembourg)* With eight evening performances of classical music concerts and recitals in the Church of Durbuy, officially the smallest town in the world. Performers include winners of the prestigious Queen Elizabeth Music Competition held yearly in Brussels.
- 30 June-29 Aug *Midis- Minimes festival, Brussels* Series of luncheon concerts in Brussels' Minimes Church and at the Royal conservatory with world music on Mondays, ancient and medieval music on Tuesdays, 18th century music on Wednesdays, contemporary music on Thursdays and 19th century music on Fridays.
- 12 & 13 July *Brosella Folk & Jazz Festival, Brussels* Free annual jazz and folk festival held in the open-air Théâtre de Verdure at the footsteps of the atomium, one of the greenest places in Brussels, with 20 concerts and plenty of activities for children. This year's line up will include renaissance man of English folk Chris Wood.
- 17-20 July *The 20th Dour Festival (Province of Hainaut)* One of Europe's best alternative music events. More than 200 independent and new bands from over 20 countries perform on open-air stages and marquees in front of 150,000 people from 12am until 5am the next day.
- 18-20 July *Dinant Jazz festival, (Province of Namur)* 11th year for this increasingly popular event held annually in the pretty town of Dinant, birthplace of the inventor of the saxophone. This year will feature Belgian jazz legend Toots Thielemans and his quartet as well as Grammy Award-winner Milton Nascimento, icon of the Brazilian music scene.
- 12 July-13 Sep *32nd Summer Festival of the Meuse, across Wallonia* The Summer Festival of the Meuse highlights the architectural riches and the variety of landscapes and places of the valley of the Meuse with a festival of over 20 classical concerts held in as many spectacular abbeys, chateaux and churches.
- 21-31 August *Brussels Summer festival (formerly the Brussels Eu'ritmix Festival)* 150 concerts, theatre productions, street artists, film screenings and shows for kids held in the city's most attractive squares and in bars across town. Mainly free. Some events require a token fee.
- 23-24 August *Fiesta Latina, Brussels* Prepare to move those hips as the trendy Place du Châtelain celebrates with some of Belgium's best Latin bands, sunny food and more than a couple of Caipirinhas and mojitos. Kids can learn the congas or timbales and there is free brunch on Sunday.
- 29-30 August *8th Nuit des Choeurs Festival, Villers-la-Ville (Province of Walloon Brabant)* Series of prom concerts featuring international choir groups. This year's line-up includes The Rodolfus Choir from Eton, the Bolshoi Soloist Ensemble, the Temptations, The New Age Voices singing songs by ERA and the Mystery of the Bulgarian Voices. Normally held in the stunning floodlit ruins of the Cistercian Abbaye of Villers-la-Ville it is taking place this year at the Castle of Bois Seigneur-Isaac, one of the most handsome in the region.
- 20 Sept-8 Dec *Audi Jazz Festival, various venues in Brussels and Wallonia* One of the best jazz festivals in Europe with numerous jazz, blues, world music, avant-garde and hip hop concerts held in various Belgian cities.

Street Parties, Carnival & Folklore

Belgium is well known for its colourful carnivals and street parades, most of which are based on ancient festivals. Great fun for participants and spectators alike!

- 20 July *The Sabath of the "Macralles" & the Blueberry Festival, Vielsam (Eastern Cantons)* One of the most authentic folkloric events in the Ardennes with toothless witches with noses like nutcrackers, magic spells and a cauldron of blueberry brew! Watch out or you may be turned into a witch! There is also a craft market and fireworks.
- 12-16 August *Celebrations for the 15th of August in Outremeuse, Liege (Province of Liege)* Three days of processions and festivities, including flea markets, folkloric dancing, and opportunities to taste the famous Peket gin and delicious "bouquettes" pancakes typical of this lively part of Liege.
- 15 August *26th International Bathtub Regatta, Dinant (Province of Namur)* Surely the wackiest and most entertaining boat race on earth with over 250 participants in a flotilla of original vessels made out of at least one bathtub racing down the river Meuse. Strictly no deliberate sinking of opponents allowed!
- 23-24 August *International Festival of Street Artists, Chassepierre (Province of Namur)* 35th edition of this bubbly and colourful event, with all manner of street entertainment, theatre, music and puppetry with participants this year from Belgium, France, Switzerland, Holland, Austria, India and Turkey.
- 23-24 August *Ducasse, Ath (Province of Hainaut)* Thousands of people take part in this ceremony dating back to the 15th century. A folkloric procession of giants and 20th century style floats takes place over two days, culminating in a hot air balloon festival on Sunday. The Giants from Ath have been recognized as oral and intangible heritage of humanity by the UNESCO.

5-7 September

Beer Week end, Brussels Annual event organised by the Confederation of Belgian Brewers and the Chevalerie du Fourquet des Brasseurs. Over 50 Belgian breweries present their best beers and a procession of historic brewery carts and beer wagons takes place through the streets of Brussels. Entrance is free and prices very reasonable.

14 September

Festival of the Pumpkin, and of curious and forgotten vegetables, Noduzwez (Province of Walloon Brabant) Unusual festival in this province of Walloon Brabant with a prize awarded for the largest and most beautifully decorated pumpkin. Other attractions include a crafts fair, tastings of all things pumpkin-related and the sale of rare vegetable seeds.

Markets and Fairs

From antiques to Christmas shopping

- 18-21 July *Ciney Antiques (Province of Namur)* Every year the traditional antiques fair of Ciney attracts dozens of exhibitors and thousands of visitors.
- 23-24 August *Temploux Market (Province of Hainaut)* 31st edition of the largest flea market in Belgium, with over 2,000 exhibitors of antiques and secondhand items set up in the streets of the village of Temploux. A veritable feast for bargain hunters who are free to nose around at any time of day or night!
- 11-12 October *49th Ciney Antique and Flea market (Province of Namur)* One of the largest antique fairs and flea markets in Belgium with over 400 exhibitors from Belgium, France, the UK, Germany and Holland displaying their wares in two massive halls as well as on outside stalls. Parking available for 4,500 cars. First day for trade only.
- 28 Nov-28 Dec *Christmas markets in Brussels and Wallonia* A yuletide atmosphere with illuminations, giant Christmas trees, ice rinks, carousels, funfairs and hundreds of Christmas stalls selling all sorts of Christmas goodies and providing many opportunities for tastings of delicious local specialities.

Exhibitions and Special Events

Must-dos and unique exhibitions and events in Brussels and Wallonia

- 16 May-21 Sept *Paintings from the British Royal Collection: Bruegel to Rubens, Brussels* The Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium are hosting an exhibition of some fifty paintings from the collection of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.
- 10 June-16 Nov *Smurf for All, All for Smurf, Comic Strip Museum, Brussels* Celebrating fifty years of the Smurfs, the Belgian Comic Strip Centre will invite visitors to consider Peyo's work from a new and original angle: it is because of their individual weaknesses that the Smurfs discover their strength!
- 1 & 3 July *Ommegang Pageant, Brussels* Historical evocation of the festival held in 1549 for Charles the Fifth, his son Don Philip, infant of Spain and Duke of Brabant, and his sisters, Eleanor of Austria, Queen of France and Mary of Hungary.
- 23 July - 14 Sept *Opening of the Royal Palace Brussels* After the national holiday, the Royal Palace opens every year for approximately two months. Commissioned by Leopold II and completed in 1865, it contains priceless collections and decorative art from every continent. Daily 10:30-16:30, except Mondays. Free entry.
- 25 July-30 Aug *Drive in Movies, every Friday and Saturday evening, Brussels* 12 of the best films of 2008 in their original version (with French and Dutch subtitles) on a giant screen. Can accommodate up to 300 cars of a maximum height of 1.85 m.
- 2 August *Nuit des Livres, Redu (Province of Luxembourg)* 24th anniversary of this all-night literary event in the historic book town of Redu, the first in Continental Europe. Attracts around 300,000 book worms a year! With concerts, exhibitions, street artists and fireworks.
- 15-17 August *Flower Carpet, Grand Place, Brussels* horticulture to be admired from the taverns surrounding the Grand-Place or from the balcony of the Town Hall which overlooks it directly. The theme this year is inspired from French design of the 18th century.
- 13-14 September *Heritage Days in Wallonia* The 20th edition of this important cultural event will be focusing on the richness and diversity of Military heritage. About 480 activities are being organised with numerous events all weekend long.
- 25 Sep-18 Dec *Brussels Museum Nights* Seventh year of late Thursday openings of Brussels's museums for avid culture vultures. A sociable atmosphere is the order of the day with guided tours, drinks and concerts.
- 11 October *Tintin Collector's Fair, Brussels* During the Comic Strip Festival taking place in Brussels, a Tintin collector's fair will be held at the Hotel de Ville at Saint Gilles.
- 24-26 October *Designers Trail, Brussels* The Belgian capital turns into one massive fashion show every two years with established brands, fashion houses and promising new Belgian talent taking part in some 50 exhibitions and installations.
- 27-29 November *Sablons Nights, Brussels* Delightful three-night festival, organised by the 'Sablon, Quartier des Arts et du Commerce' Association, when shops stay open until 11:30 pm. Explore one of the most beautiful districts in Brussels in horse-drawn carriages provided for free, and embark on a magical discovery of the Sablon antiques and shopping quarter sampling wines and champagnes generously offered by the many shops and boutiques.

Religious and Military Processions and Events

From military marches to reconstructions of the battle of Waterloo

- 20 July *"Tour de la Madeleine", Jumet (Province of Hainaut)* 22 km military march and procession with 2000 marchers and pilgrims and 150 horses.
- 14 September *Historic Grand Procession, Tournai (Province of Hainaut)* Historical Procession in one of the oldest towns of the Western world, and former home of Henri VIII, in honour of the Virgin Mary who delivered the city from the plague in 1092. The main treasures of the Cathedral are carried through the town, escorted by fraternities and groups in ancient costumes, and by musicians and choirs. A High Mass is celebrated in the cathedral at 10 am on the day.
- 5 October *Tour Saint-Gertrude, Nivelles (Province of Walloon Brabant)* This religious procession attended by over one thousand pilgrims in honour of St Gertrude, patron saint of the town of Nivelles, where she founded a monastery.
- 26 October *Militaria Military Fair, Ciney (Province of Namur)* The largest of its kind in Europe with 400 stands of exhibitors of collector's and sports weapons, parts, decorations, uniforms and books. Amateurs can find parts for old military vehicles as well as ancient weapons and detection devices.



Belgian Tourist Office
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All dates subject to change.

For further information please contact the Belgian Tourist Office – Brussels & Wallonia on
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