

Belgium Profile

Summer 2007 edition



Belgian Tourist Office
Brussels • Wallonia

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

Group decision: Belgium is the best



The Belgian Tourist Office - Brussels & Wallonia has scooped a prestigious travel award for the second time in five years.

The award, voted on by the readers of Group Travel Organiser magazine, goes to the UK-based national or regional tourist office considered to be the most friendly and helpful to those arranging group tours.

Françoise Scheepers, UK director of the Belgian Tourist Office, Brussels & Wallonia, said: "We're delighted to win this award once again. Hopefully it is also a reflection of the warm and friendly welcome that awaits every visitor who goes to Belgium."

"I would like to thank all the group travel organisers who voted for us; as well as our partners in the group travel sector operating in Belgium; and, of course, my team at the tourist office in London."

The award coincides with new figures showing that the number of UK visitors to the south of Belgium and the French-speaking region of Wallonia increased by nine per cent last year.

Regional cities popular with groups include Liege, Dinant, Namur and Tournai while Brussels continues to attract the largest number of UK visitors.

Group travel organisers are exploiting a number of niche markets in the South of Belgium including castles and gardens, military tourism, Christmas markets, beer trails and religious heritage.

Group Travel organisers can visit the trade section at www.belgiumtheplaceto.be for inspiring itinerary ideas and a copy of the latest Business Booster.



Brussels more than passes value test

Brussels has stepped up its campaign to appeal more to younger visitors by introducing a 24-hour travel pass for just five euros a day.

Aimed at 18-25-year-olds, the MannekenPass offers unlimited journeys on the city's public transport system. It also comes with a free beer voucher, a map of the city, a list of recommended bars, cafes and places to stay - plus emergency contact numbers.

The MannekenPass can be bought at selected locations in Brussels including the Brussels International tourist office in the Grand Place; and the Guapa juice bar at Brussels Central railway station. Further information is available online at www.mannekenpass.eu

Also offering amazing value is the new Brussels Card which now covers 24 and 48 hour visits in addition to the original 72. It too offers unlimited travel on public transport as well as free access to 25 museums including the Royal Museums of Fine Arts and the Museum of the City of Brussels. Discounts are offered at more than 30 shops, restaurants and tourist attractions.

Prices start at €20 for a 24-hour pass; €28 for a 48-hour pass; and €33 for 72 hours. The Brussels Card can be bought in a variety of hotels and museums and online at a 1 Euro discount on www.brusselscard.be.



Eurostar move will boost Belgian breaks



City breaks to Belgium look set to become even more popular from November with Eurostar introducing faster services to coincide with the opening of its new terminal at London St Pancras.

Journey times from London to Brussels will be cut from 2 hours 15 minutes to just 1 hour 51 minutes. It follows the completion of a dedicated high-speed rail line which will whisk passengers from central London to the Channel Tunnel at speeds of up to 186 mph.

The new line will officially start operating on November 14; the same day that Eurostar switches its services from London Waterloo where it has operated for the last 13 years to a stunning new international terminal at St Pancras.

The plan is for a seamless transition with the last train departing from Waterloo on the evening of November 13 and then all services operating out of St Pancras from the following morning.

Fares are being pegged at current levels; with the lowest-priced return from London to Brussels starting at £59.

A new Eurostar station is also being opened in Kent. Ebbsfleet International, just off junction 2 of the M25 near the Dartford Crossing and Bluewater Shopping Centre, will offer five services a day to Brussels.

Françoise Scheepers, UK director of the Belgian Tourist Office - Brussels & Wallonia, said: "This is a very exciting development which will help make the region even more accessible; not only to those living in London but a much wider catchment area."

www.eurostar.com



Belgian Grand Prix is back on track

Formula 1 racing sensation Lewis Hamilton is expected to be on the starting grid for the 2007 Belgian Grand Prix which is taking place over the weekend of September 14-16.

The race will also mark Belgium's return to the Grand Prix circuit after a one-year absence during which it has benefited from a substantial refit.

One of the grandstands has been upgraded and there are new VIP lounges providing corporate guests with impressive views over the home straight. Pit and paddock facilities have also been improved to give race teams much more space.

The overhaul has been spearheaded by Wallonia's regional government, the owners of the Spa-Francorchamps course, which is investing nearly £27 million in structural changes, management and promotion.

The Spa-Francorchamps circuit dates from the early 1920s when local tourist chiefs were looking for a new way to promote the region and decided that the public roads linking the towns of Francorchamps, Malmedy and Stavelot could be used occasionally as a race track.

The first "race" in 1921 attracted just one entrant. By the time of the first Grand Prix event in 1925, there were seven competitors.

Today's 4.3-mile circuit was introduced in 1979 and has been a near-regular fixture on the Formula 1 racing calendar ever since. Spa-Francorchamps, which is famous for its unpredictable weather, is acknowledged as one of the most challenging circuits in the world and is consequently a great favourite among racing drivers and fans alike.

www.spa-francorchamps.be

Theme park ride reaches dizzy new heights



A breathtaking new ride is making its debut at Belgium's biggest theme park.

The aptly-named Vertigo has become the star attraction at Walibi Belgium which reopened at the end of March after an extensive facelift.

Vertigo is best-described as a cross between a rollercoaster and supersonic chair lift. Passengers board four-seater cable cars or "gondolas" which are suspended from a 55-metre-high steel cable.

The ascent to the starting point is made using a vertical lift which springs the gondolas high into the air in just 13 seconds. Passengers

embark on a 95-second journey, gliding their way along a twisting, multi-levelled 722-metre track at speeds of up to 37 miles an hour.

With only a lap-bracket for protection, it's not surprising most passengers feel butterflies in their stomachs - but also a flying sensation and a great sense of euphoria.

Situated at Wavre midway between Brussels and Namur, Walibi Belgium offers more than 50 high-quality rides including 15 which have been custom-built for younger children.

Easily accessible by both road and rail, there are frequent 50-minute train services from Brussels Midi; while the Walibi Bierges station is just 150 metres from the entrance to the theme park.

The park offers good value for money with all-day tickets for adults costing €31 (£20) while three to 11-year-olds and senior citizens pay €27 (£18.)

www.walibi.be



Brussels Airlines off to a flying start



Newly-formed carrier Brussels Airlines has introduced two new products to coincide with its launch. This follows the merger between SN Brussels Airlines and Virgin Express.

There are now two types of ticket: B.flex which is aimed at business passengers wishing to save as much time as possible and seeking tickets which offer maximum flexibility and a generous luggage allowance.

B.light offers guaranteed low-cost fares from €49 (£33) including taxes. But passengers pay for any in-flight drinks and snacks.

Discount car rental rates are also being offered to Brussels Airlines' passengers after the carrier signed an exclusive four-year contract with Hertz.

The most generous reductions are available to those passengers reserving rental vehicles on-line or who book far in advance. But even passengers who simply get off the aircraft and head straight for the Hertz rental desk without a reservation will still qualify for a discount.

Brussels Airlines offers flights to Brussels Zaventem, Belgium's main international gateway, from six UK airports: Heathrow, Gatwick, Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol & Newcastle.

It also operates to nearly 50 destinations in continental Europe; and has flights from Brussels to New York, Chicago, Nairobi and Dubai. www.brusselsairlines.com

Meanwhile Bmi Regional has introduced flights to Brussels Zaventem from Aberdeen using the 37-seat Embraer 135 aircraft.

Services operate daily, except Saturdays, departing Aberdeen at 12.15, arriving Brussels at 15.00. The return flight leaves at 15.30, arriving Aberdeen, 16.10.

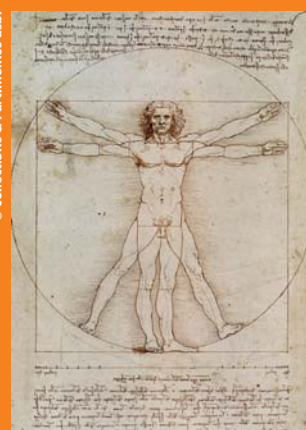
Stewart Adams, Managing Director of Bmi regional, said: We are delighted to be introducing links between our home city and Brussels, both important European financial and commercial centres.

We are experiencing strong demand from the business market, but are also looking forward to welcoming both inbound and outbound leisure passengers. We expect this to be an extremely popular addition to our route network.

Bmi Regional also has flights to Brussels from Edinburgh, Leeds/Bradford and East Midlands while its parent company, Bmi operates services from Heathrow. www.flybmi.com



A Stroke of genius as Brussels mounts double art attack



Brussels is gearing up to stage two major exhibitions as part of celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome which paved the way for the European Community.

Leonardo da Vinci, the European Genius which runs from August 18, 2007 to March 15, 2008 brings together original documents, notebooks and scale models of some of Da Vinci's inventions.

Also on display will be the only known self-portrait of da Vinci, which he produced in red chalk; his Codex on the Flight of Birds; and a controversial painting only recently attributed to the artist of a red-draped, semi-nude Mary Magdalene.

The exhibition is being held at the National Basilica of Koekelberg in Brussels, the world's fifth largest church and the biggest Art Deco building in the world.

Da Vinci (1452-1519) was selected as the subject for the exhibition as he was considered the personality which best symbolises European ideals. He was a remarkable man: not only an exceptional painter but also an architect, inventor, mathematician and philosopher.

As an engineer, he was vastly ahead of his time conceptualising many modern-day machines including the helicopter, tank and pocket calculator. www.expo-davinci.eu

One of the highlights of the four-month Europalia.europa festival which starts on October 3 is a stunning art exhibition.

The Grand Atelier: Pathways of Art in Europe at the Centre for Fine Arts in Brussels will run from October 5, 2007-January 20, 2008 and include works by Titian, Van Dyck, Albert Dürer and Nicolas Poussin.

In all there will be nearly 350 great works on display from the fifth to the 18th centuries on loan from more than 100 European collections.

Europalia takes its name from a contraction of "Europe" and "Opalia" - the Roman festival which celebrated a rich harvest. It will embrace no fewer than nine exhibitions, 25 concerts, 44 theatrical productions and 19 conferences and debates and aims to celebrate the diverse cultures of the 27 member states of the European Union. www.europalia.be



New hotels are designed to impress



What is claimed to be the first luxury boutique hotel in Brussels has opened conveniently close to the Eurostar terminal at Brussels Midi station.

The 60-room, five-star Be Manos Hotel features contemporary décor and furnishings. Even standard rooms have their own lounge area and stoned bathroom, king-size bed, high-speed Internet access and LCD television screen.

Public facilities include two conference rooms, a cosy cocktail bar and third-floor terrace bar. A trendy restaurant features Belgian speciality dishes and health-conscious cuisine.

The Be Manos also offers personalised face and body treatments, massages and use of a sauna. Rates at the Be Manos start at 275 (£186) for a single room and 315 (£213) for a double. www.bemanos.com

Another deluxe, designer hotel is due to open in October 2007. Built on the site of a former Dominican abbey dating back to the 15th century that was once home to French painter Jacques-Louis David from 1816 to 1825, the Dominican Hotel will be centrally located close to the Grand Place, immediately behind the capital's national opera house, the Theatre de La Monnaie.

Owned by The Carlton Hotel Collection and the first member of design hotels™ to open in Belgium, the Dominican will feature 150 stylish guestrooms, including executive rooms and suites, each individually designed and constructed around a central courtyard.

The Dominican will also have a gym, steam bath and sauna. www.thedominican.be



Restoring Reubens' reputation as one of the greats

Peter Paul Reubens, widely recognised as Europe's greatest baroque artist and one of the most influential painters of all time will be the subject of an extraordinary exhibition which opens in Brussels in September.

Reubens: A Genius At Work is being held at the Museum of Ancient Art (part of the Royal Museums of Fine Arts) from September 14, 2007-January 27, 2008.

Focusing on the most productive period of Reubens' life from 1614-1640, it will feature more than 100 of his paintings and drawings including many on loan from other galleries including the Louvre in Paris and New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. Also appearing will be selected works by some of Reubens' contemporaries.

The Brussels museum already owned more than 50 works by Reubens but acknowledges that these had not been systematically studied for several decades. Museum staff have spent four years preparing for this exhibition, and in the process have made a number of surprising discoveries as to the precise way in which Reubens produced his masterpieces.

He was the leading proponent of an exuberant Baroque style that emphasized movement, colour and sensuality. His work included portraits, landscapes and paintings which depicted both mythological and allegorical figures.

www.fine-arts-museum.be



Ryanair revives Stansted-Brussels Charleroi route



Ryanair has reintroduced flights from Stansted to Brussels South Charleroi Airport.

Since June 1 it has been operating 16 flights a week including three services a day on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays departing at 06.40, 15.55 and 19.25.

There are two services a day on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays and one flight a day on Saturdays.

With a flight time of just over 1 hour, the many flight options provide plenty of opportunities for business trips, long weekends, cultural visits or longer holidays to the Belgian capital, as well as to the South of Belgium and its increasingly popular attractions.

The managing director of Brussels South Charleroi Airport, Marcel Buelens, said: "We are very pleased with Ryanair's decision."

Ryanair has also announced it could base as many as 11 aircraft at the airport when a new second terminal opens later this year. www.ryanair.com



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

Tintin set for next big adventure



Legendary film producer Steven Spielberg is joining forces with The Lord of the Rings director Peter Jackson to bring Tintin to the big screen in a trilogy of blockbuster Hollywood movies.

The comic book hero will also be the star attraction at a new museum celebrating the life and work of his creator, Georges Remi, better known as Hergé.

The first of the Tintin films is due for release in 2010 and will use groundbreaking motion-capture technology to combine performances by live actors with computer imagery and digital animation.

Spielberg is said to be a longstanding fan of the Tintin books which have been translated into over 70 languages or dialects and sold 220 million copies.

The museum will be located in a park in the university town of Louvain-la-Neuve 22 miles southeast of Brussels. Building work got underway in May when the first stone of the £10 million complex was laid by Fanny Rodwell, formerly married to Hergé, and now chairwoman of the non profit making Studios Hergé.

Born in Brussels in 1907, Georges Remi began signing his early drawings with the pseudonym Hergé (the French pronunciation of his initials in reverse order.)

After being given responsibility to produce the weekly youth supplement for a Belgian Catholic newspaper, Hergé introduced Tintin to readers in January 1929 in a comic strip entitled Tintin in the Land of the Soviets. This ran until May 1930, chronicling the adventures of Tintin and his canine companion Snowy as they journeyed through the Soviet Union.

In all Hergé produced 23 Tintin adventures and was working on his 24th - Tintin and Alph-Art - at the time of his death in 1983.

The previous year, to coincide with his 75th birthday, Belgium's Astronomical Society named a recently-discovered planet after him located between Mars and Jupiter. www.tintin.com



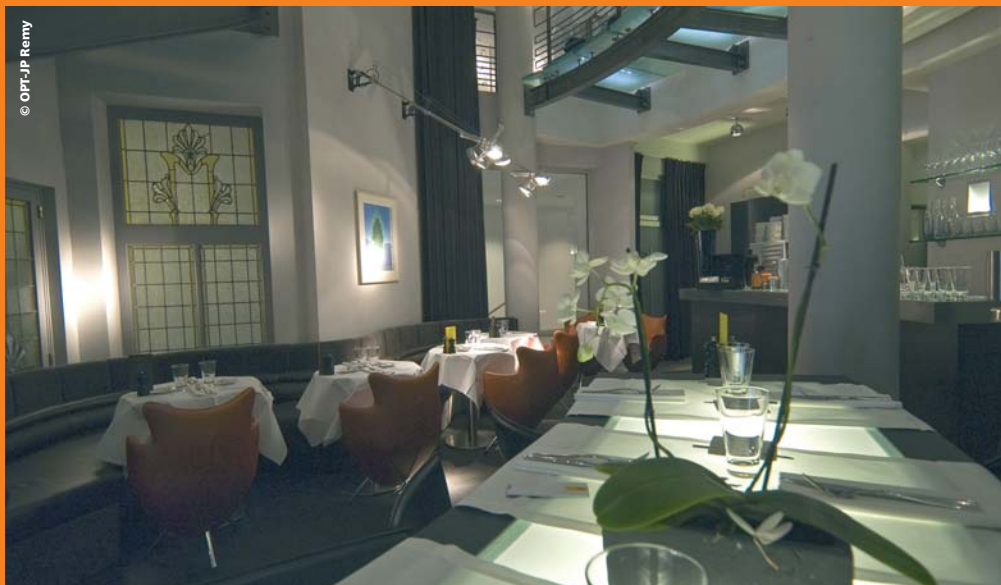
Food for thought

The Royal Museums of Fine Arts in Brussels, the most visited group of museums in Belgium, has recognised the importance of providing visitors with high-quality catering.

Under the innovative branding of MuseumFood (www.museumfood.be), three new facilities have been introduced: a museum café offering lunches and delicious light snacks which transforms into a tearoom in the afternoon; a museum shop which also serves as a coffee lounge; and an informal brasserie featuring Belgian speciality dishes.

Top Belgian 3* Michelin chef Peter Goossens was recruited to advise on menus and also trained the kitchen staff. Furnishings and décor are by celebrated interior designer Antoine Pinto, a former chef once listed by the German Bessen Guide as one of the hundred best cooks in Central Europe, and whose previous projects include around 30 restaurants - the trendy Belga Queen Brasserie in Brussels being one - and a number of hotels.

www.museumfood.be



Hotel offers the full Spa Treatment

A spa centre is due to open before the end of the year at a former manor house now converted into a luxury, five-star hotel.

The Manoir de Lébioles is situated near the town of Spa, a 90-minute drive from Brussels and close to the magnificent forests of the Ardennes.

The hotel's spa centre will include a heated swimming pool, Jacuzzi, sauna, hammam and fitness room and offer a comprehensive range of health and beauty treatments.

The hotel provides 16 individually-designed suites, each measuring up to 230 square metres. There is also a gourmet restaurant presided over by head chef Olivier Tucki, previously of the Radisson SAS Balmoral Hotel in Spa, who aims to establish it as one of the best in Belgium.

Tucki, who started his career at the Connaught Hotel in London, also spent several months at one of Brussels' most prestigious establishments, the 2* Michelin Sea Grill restaurant at the Radisson SAS Hotel in Brussels.

The Manoir de Lébioles has sometimes been dubbed Belgium's Versailles. It was the inspiration of a former diplomat and government minister Georges Neyt who oversaw the construction of the building between 1905-10. For many years it served as a family home before being sold and transformed into a hotel in 1980.

After being closed for several years and falling into disrepair, an intensive restoration programme saw it re-emerge as a luxury five-star hotel.

The town of Spa in Liège province is the original spa town, known for its hot springs and as a place to "take the waters" since the 14th century. It is also home to the famous Spa brand of mineral water which has been bottled since the end of the 16th century.

www.manoirdelebioles.com



Magritte Museum will be a big draw

Forty years after his death, a new wing is to be opened at the Royal Museums of Fine Arts in Brussels honouring the celebrated Belgian surrealist painter René Magritte.

Scheduled to open in 2008, it will be the largest collection of Magritte paintings anywhere in the world, featuring 150 of his works.

Magritte is best known for his extraordinary juxtapositions showing familiar objects in unusual contexts; such as an open umbrella on top of which is balanced a glass of water.

Born in Lessines 18 miles southwest of Brussels in 1898, Magritte worked in a wallpaper factory and as a poster and advertisement designer before becoming a full-time artist in 1926.

There is already a small Magritte museum in the Jette neighbourhood of Brussels in the house where he lived from

1930-54. It contains more than 400 original documents but very few of his paintings and drawings.

In the new museum his works will be spread across five floors at the neo-classical Altenloh Building at the Royal Museums of Fine Arts. Works will include The Return, The White Page and The Portrait of Paul Nougé.

The new wing is being developed in association with the Houston-based Menil Foundation, one of the most important privately-assembled art collections in the world with around 15,000 works including a sizeable selection by Magritte.

More information on the works of René Magritte is available on www.magritte.be



Royal Windsor's Rooms are all the fashion



The Royal Windsor Hotel in Brussels has unveiled the last of its rooms to be styled and furnished by renowned Belgian fashion designers.

The idea of Fashion Rooms was first suggested more than a decade ago when the 266-room, five-star hotel situated in the heart of Brussels was about to embark on a major refurbishment programme.

It was noted that a dozen rooms were unusually-shaped and the hotel decided to approach top names in the Belgium fashion industry and invite them to each design a room in their own personal style.

The two latest creations are by Xavier Delcour and Christian Wijnants. Delcour is a celebrated designer of menswear who has combined his flair for fashion with meticulous attention to detail in interior design to create a suite which resembles a chic, townhouse-style apartment with Art Deco furnishings and a black, white and silver colour scheme.

Christian Wijnants wanted to create a sense of space and has used minimalist wood furniture with simple lines to create a light and airy feel. The bar, safe and wardrobe are incorporated into the walls and not a single door knob or handle is visible throughout the whole room.

The Royal Windsor, situated just off the Grand Place, is part of Warwick International Hotels which has a second property in Brussels, the 99-room Warwick Barsey on the Avenue Louise in the heart of the city's fashionable shopping area.

www.royalwindsorbrussels.com



Calendar of events for the last six months of 2007

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

Sporting Events

Bikes, Formula 1, rollers ...and running

- Various evenings Until 28 Sept *Roller Parade, Brussels & Wallonia* Free 20 km roller parades throughout the streets of Namur (Thursdays), Brussels (Fridays), and Mons (Saturdays).
- 14-16 Sept *Belgian Formula 1 Grand Prix, Spa Francorchamps (Province of Liege)* Spa is back on the F1 calendar this year after extensive refurbishment at what is without any doubt one the drivers' favourite racing tracks.
- 12-14 October *Superbiker, Jules Tacheny Circuit, Mettet (Province of Namur)* The largest SuperMoto event in the world with Superbiker and Starbiker events and a Freestyle show. Noisy and crazy!
- 14 October *ING Brussels Marathon* 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).

Music Festivals and 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

- 23-25 August *7th Nuit des Choeurs Festival, Villers la Ville (Province of Walloon Brabant)*. Series of prom concerts in the stunning floodlit ruins of the 12th century Cistercian Villers Abbaye featuring international choir groups. This year's line-up includes leading exponents of early European sacred music Oxford Voices, the Vienna Boy's Choir, and the American gospel Golden Gate Quartet.
- Until 14 September *Summer Festival of the Meuse, Wallonia* 31st edition and 30th anniversary celebration of this festival in a series of 26 classical concerts held in as many spectacular abbeys, chateaux and churches with special commemorations this year of the music of Scarlatti, Elgar, Stamitz, Buxtehude, Glinka, Grieg, and Sibelius.
- 21-30 September *Dinant Jazz Nights (Province of Namur)* 10th year for this increasingly popular festival held annually in the pretty town of Dinant, birthplace of the inventor of the saxophone. This year's special edition will take place over 2 weekends. The first in Ciney will see a guest appearance by Toots Thielemans joining Brazilian pianist and singer Eliane Elias, and the second in Dinant will feature two of Cuba's most famous musicians, Omara Portuondo and Gonzalo Rubalcaba, performing together for the first time ever.
- 1 October - 31 December *Audi Jazz Festival, various venues in Brussels and Wallonia* The 2007 program is still to be finalised, but if previous editions are anything to go by, this will yet again be one the best Jazz festivals in Europe this year.

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!

- 24-26 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.
- 16 September *Festival of the Pumpkin, and of curious and forgotten vegetables, Noduwex (Province of Walloon Brabant)* Unusual festival 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.
- 29 November - 1 December *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 commemorations of the battle of Waterloo

- 8-9 September *Heritage Days in Wallonia* The 19th edition of this important cultural event will focus on the richness and diversity of Military Heritage in the South of Belgium, with 480 different activities taking place over the week-end, including commemorations of the Battle of Waterloo, the Battle of the Bulge and WWI.
- 9-10 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.
- 30 September *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.
- 29 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.

Markets and Fairs

From antiques to Christmas shopping

- 25-26 August *Temploux Market (Province of Hainaut)* 30th edition of the largest flea market in Belgium, with over 1,500 exhibitors of antiques and second hand items. First day reserved for collectors and buyers of comic strip only. Lasts through all of Saturday night and culminates on Sunday with the Coxa Nostar, a meeting of Aircooled VWs. A veritable feast for bargain hunters who are free to nose around at any time of day or night!
- 14-16 September *International antiquarian Book Fair, Brussels* The 23rd edition of the International Antiquarian Book Fair has become one of the most important events for book lovers. During three days, around one hundred specialists from Belgium and abroad present and offer for sale a large choice of antiquarian books, illuminated books, antique cards and unique editions.
- 13-14 October *47th Ciney Antiques and Flea market (Province of Namur)* Large antique and flea market 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.
- 3-11 November *Antica Namur, Palais des Expositions (Province of Namur)* 31st edition of this prestigious antiques fair featuring over 155 top Belgian and foreign antique dealers of furniture, objets d'arts, paintings, silver, glass and porcelain. Attracts some 30,000 visitors. Experts comment some of the exhibits and issue certificates of authenticity in the case of certain sales.
- 1 December - 1 January 08 *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

- 18 August - 15 March 08 *Leonardo Da Vinci, The European Genius, Brussels* Unique exhibition at the Koekelberg Basilica covering an area of 3000 m² with original documents, scale models, notebooks as well as several of Leonardo's inventions and some works on show for the first time. It will be structured around five themes: Leonardo's life, his paintings, his writings, his machines and Europe's achievements in the footsteps of the great master.
- 21 August - 16 September *Cavalia, Tour & Taxis, Brussels* After more than a month of sold-out performances in March and April, Canadian troupe Cavalia returns to Brussels to present its exceptional show, created by Normand Latourelle, one of the founders of the Cirque du Soleil. This breathtaking spectacle with 50 horses from all four corners of the globe, half of which are stallions, brings together the equestrian arts with dance, astonishing acrobatics, live music, projections of giant images and virtual scenery.
- 31 August - 2 Sep 2007 *Brussels Beer weekend, Brussels Grand' Place* 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.
- Until 1 September *Drive in Movies, every Friday and Saturday evenings, Esplanade du Cinquantenaire, Brussels* 12 of the best films of 2007 feature in their original version (with French and Dutch subtitles) on a giant screen for up to 300 cars of a maximum height of 1.85 m. Discounted tickets for "old timers".
- Until 9 September *Ingenium: Photography and engineering 1846-2006, Bozar, Brussels* Comprising 345 historical and contemporary photographic works by a total of 164 photographers, the exhibition illustrates the diversity of man's technical and industrial inventiveness.
- Until 16 September *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.
- Until 21 October *Europeans Look at Europeans, Brussels* A portrait of the inhabitants of Europe in comic strip form. Drawing on European comic strip creativity since 1957, the exhibition answers a series of questions: how do we see each other? How do Czech, Dutch or French cartoonists see the Poles, the Belgians, the Brits and their neighbours? An original and humorous portrait of the Europeans.
- Until 19 November *The Royal Greenhouses of Laeken in Pictures, Brussels on Stage (Galeries St Hubert)* Exhibition of photographs by Olivier Polet on the exceptional universe of the Art Nouveau Royal Greenhouses of Laeken, highlighting the architectural and botanical themes of glass and steel.
- Until 23 December *Vienna - Brussels: Architecture & Decoration, Brussels* Exhibition tracing the determining influence of Viennese art on the young Belgian architects of the beginning of the 20th Century.
- 14 September 07 - 27 January 08 *Rubens, A Genius at Work, Brussels* A real blockbuster exhibition at Belgium's Fine Arts Museums displaying a unique collection of some 50 original works from the studio of Rubens, as well as paintings produced with contemporaries such as Brueghel the Elder, Van Dyck and De Vos. The aim of the exhibition is to demonstrate the creative process behind the paintings and give visitors a better understanding of the way Rubens and his team prepared their masterpieces.
- 27 September - 20 December *Brussels Museum Nights* Sixth year of late Thursday openings of Brussels's museums for avid culture veterans. A sociable atmosphere is the order of the day with guided tours, drinks and concerts.
- 29 September *White Night, the Seven Sins of the Capital, Brussels* Burn candles at both ends at this all night celebration of contemporary creativeness in all its forms from visual arts, to screenings, music, theatre, circus and innovative performances in locations usually closed to the public or abandoned.
- 3 October 07 - 3 February 08 *Europalia Europa, Various venues, Brussels* One of the major cultural events of the year, combining visual arts, music, theatre and dance, with the participation of the European Union's 27 member states. It will show what binds the European culture, as well as what makes every country unique. The theme is 2007, year of Europe in Brussels.
- 1-28 November *Hors Pistes, the European Circus Festival, Brussels* To celebrate 50 years of the Treaty of Rome, the Hors Pistes festival offers a wide range of circus creations from all over Europe, including aerial acrobatics, juggling, Chinese pole, tightrope or seesaw. Unusual artistic feats for all the family, with the emphasis on contemporary circus.



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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