

Belgium Profile

WTM 2008 edition



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

The beginning and the end for Mons in new WWI book

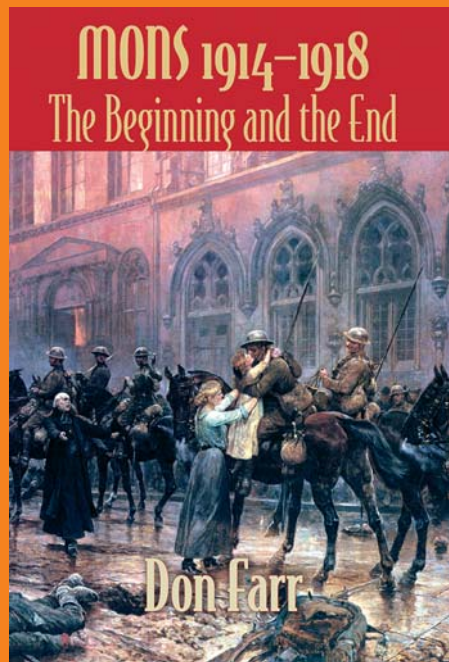
The year 2008 sees the 90th anniversary of the liberation of the town of Mons in Belgium. It was close to this small southern Belgian town that the shooting war began for the British Expeditionary Force in August 1914. It was also close to the same town that it ended for them over fifteen hundred days later.

To mark this milestone, a new book by Don Farr "Mons 1914-1918: The Beginning and the End" describes the arrival of the BEF in Mons in 1914, the Battle of Mons itself, the Retreat from Mons, the Battle of Le Cateau, and the background to the Angels of Mons stories. It also describes events on the Western Front through to the German spring offensives of 1918.

Although Mons only briefly played host to the BEF in August 1914, the town nevertheless acquired a special place in the hearts and minds of the BEF and of the British people.

During more than four years of German occupation the people of Mons suffered privation, near starvation, deportations and executions. These are described, drawing heavily on unpublished local sources. The Allied 100 Days Campaign is then outlined culminating in the liberation of the town. A last chapter brings the story of Mons and of the main wartime players up to date. Finally two appendices describe the military and political developments which brought the BEF to Mons on that fateful weekend in August 1914.

A former diplomat, Don Farr published the first of his books on WWI, 'The Silent General,' a biography of General Sir Henry Horne, in 2007. Published by Helion & Company "Mons 1914-1918: The Beginning and the End" is available in major bookshops from 19 November priced £19.95.



Grand museum opening for Liège

The Grand Curtius Museum in Liège will open its doors in March 2009 after almost a decade of extensive renovation. This new museum complex will house the impressive collections of four of Liège's most loved museums: the Museum of Decorative Arts (formerly the Curtius Museum), the Museum of Weapons, the Museum of Religious Art and of Mosan Art, and the Glass Museum.

The total collection on show at the Grand Curtius will number some 5,500 items including treasures of Mosan craftsmanship, one of the greatest collections of historic small-arms in Europe, an exceptional glass collection totaling some 10,000 pieces and a large collection of religious paintings, many dating back to the 15th century.

The Museum will open with an exhibition dedicated to Belgian surrealist Paul Delvaux, born nearby in Antheit in the Province of Liège. Trains and trams had always been of particular interest to the artist and "De Demain à Delvaux" (From Tomorrow to Delvaux) will bring together art and travel in the city of Liège, with works on loan from museums and galleries around the world and from private collectors. It will also feature some previously unseen works.

Next year also sees the completion of Liège's new Guillemins mainline railway station, spectacularly designed by award-winning architect Santiago Calatrava. www.liege.be



Brand new look for Belgium the place to be

The Belgian Tourist Office-Brussels and Wallonia will be launching the latest version of its website www.belgiumtheplaceto.be on 10 November.

The new look and feel website will feature better navigation, even more content, tips and news on the French-speaking areas of Brussels and Wallonia, regularly updated profiles and interviews of Belgian personalities, an updated Gay Brussels section and a new Gay Liège guide, a choice of musical backgrounds from a selection of tracks by up-and-coming Belgian artists, a "hot deal" section with special offers by Belgian and UK-based operators, as well as new pictures and stunning slide shows, also set to scores by Belgian musicians.

The site which was built with the Disability and Discrimination Act in mind will continue to provide the same easy access to key tourist attractions and towns, a listing of accommodation options by city including boutique hotels and charming B&Bs, a selection of restaurants, an updated calendar of events and details of the main tour operators with useful links.

It will also continue to feature downloadable brochures and maps, weather information, a distance calculator tool, access to a live European rail booking engine and to press and trade areas with image libraries and downloadable versions of the Belgium Profile newsletter and the Business Booster trade publication. www.belgiumtheplaceto.be



A destination full of characters in 2009!



René Magritte, Hergé, Paul Delvaux, Tintin and Snowy and an assortment of other Belgian characters and personalities will be taking centre stage in 2009 as the comic strip is celebrated throughout the year in Brussels and Wallonia with a series of unique events and the destination sees the opening of three new major museums.

A museum celebrating the life and work of George Rémi, aka Hergé, and creator of the legendary Tintin, will be opening 22 kms southeast of Brussels in the university town of Louvain-la Neuve on 22 May 2009 to coincide with the birthday of the author. The Hergé Museum will contain not only the author's comic trip creations but his paintings, sculpture, photography and film.

The Magritte Museum in Brussels opening in June 2009 will be dedicated to the surrealist from Wallonia who became one of the most famous artists in the world. It will hold the largest collection in the world of works by René Magritte and will include, as well as his most famous paintings, photographs, drawings, gouaches, posters, correspondence and films made by him and his friends, as well as a number of unique works on loan from major private collectors.

In Liège, after almost a decade of work, the Grand Curtius Museum will open in March 2009 with an exhibition dedicated to another Belgian surrealist, Paul Delvaux who was born in Antheit in the Province of Liège (see separate story).

2009 has also been designated Year of the Comic Strip across French-Speaking Belgium with a multitude of events dedicated to the ninth art celebrating some of Belgium's most popular Belgian comic strip heroes including Tintin, The Smurfs, Spirou and Lucky Luke.

More information on www.belgiumtheplaceto.be



A Christmas card from Brussels

This year the Brussels Card goes festive during the Christmas season offering extra special discounts during Brussels's famous Winter Wonders Christmas market.

As well as the usual discounts and benefits- admission to 26 museums in and around Brussels, free admission to all exhibitions at the BOZAR Fine Arts Museum, unrestricted use of public transports in Brussels on the MIVB and STIB networks, a free map of the city, a 25% discount on several attractions, cultural institutions, shops, bars and restaurants, and a 33% discount to visit the Atomium- the special Christmas edition of the Brussels card will offer additional benefits.

These will include a 25% discount on any "Winter Wonders" merchandising, a 50% discount on an adult admission ticket to the skating rink (includes skate rental), a free hot drink in the new winter wonders organic brasserie when buying another beverage, and child prices for adults on the big wheel.

Winter Wonders is Belgium's largest Christmas market with 240 chalets and a 100m ice rink. This year's guest of honour will be Wallonia, the southern region of Belgium.

Valid between 28 November 2008 and 28 December 2008, the special edition Brussels Card will cost 18 euros for 24 hours, 26 euros for 48 hours and 30 euros for the 72 hour version. www.brusselsinternational.be



New design B&B in heart of Brussels



A delightful new B&B, the Chambres d'Hôtes du Vaudeville, has recently opened in the heart of Brussels, in one of its best locations, the magnificent Galeries de la Reine, also one of the most beautiful shopping arcades in Europe.

Its four beautifully decorated double guest

rooms are designed each on a different theme relating to the life of the stunning galleries by Belgian designer and artist Philippe Guilemin. While the "Diva" room has been decorated to look like the home of an opera singer, another uses an artist's model, Madam LouLou, as inspiration and hosts portraits given to her by some of the artists who would have painted her. The third room is a throwback to the colonial era, and the fourth is based on the life of a collector of modern art.

Prices start at 115 Euros per night. Each room has a private modern en-suite bathroom or shower room and is equipped TV and W-IFI.

Guests can dine at the lively adjacent Restaurant Vaudeville at a discount.

www.cafeduvaudeville.be



GPS tour to retrace steps taken by British Army in Battle of the Bulge



A new circular audio tour retracing the route taken by the British Army during the Battle of the Bulge in 1944-45 will soon be available to download for free over the internet from the website of the Tourist Federation of Belgian Luxembourg.

The GPS tour for use with Garmin navigators will cover a circuit of approximately 150kms and include a commentary, covering sites such as Dinant and the Celles salient and taking visitors as far as La Roche-en-Ardenne where the British and American armies linked up.

Starting in the UK, it will also include travel to Belgium and overnight stay in Dinant, the Battle of the Bulge circuit with overnight stay in La Roche-en-Ardenne, and return to the UK.

www.ftlb.be



Eurostar to strengthen links with Brussels



Eurostar is re-introducing links between Ashford and Brussels with a new daily direct service from Ashford International to Brussels-Midi starting 14 December 2008. Services had been dropped following the launch of Eurostar operations on High Speed 1 and at Ebbsfleet International in November last year.

Eurostar is also to introduce an 11th weekday service to Brussels from St Pancras International in December as a result of higher than expected traveller numbers on the London-Brussels route which has shown an increase of 30% since the introduction of the High Speed 1 timetable.

The new direct service from Ashford will enable business travellers to reach Brussels before 09:00 local time during weekdays, and commuters will also now be able to return to Brussels on a Sunday.

Richard Brown, Chief Executive of Eurostar, said: "I am delighted at the big increase in travellers on our London-Brussels route. Although we think the direct Ashford-Brussels service will be loss-making initially, we are prepared to take a risk and see if it is possible to build up sufficient demand to make it commercially viable. There have been calls for a direct service between Ashford and Brussels - now we hope travellers will show they value it and will use it."

From December 2009 the launch of Southeastern's high-speed commuter services on High Speed 1 will enable Eurostar to offer a big increase in connecting services between Ashford International and Brussels. www.eurostar.com



New English guidebook for southernmost part of Belgium



A new guidebook to the "Pays d'Arlon", one of the most unspoilt parts of French-speaking Southern Belgium, has just been published with an English-language section by the Maison du Tourisme du Pays d'Arlon.

The region, also known as the Belgian Lorraine, is located between France and the Duchy of Luxembourg in the Belgian Province of Luxembourg.

At its heart, the ancient town of Arlon, one of Belgium's oldest, which began life as a Celtic settlement and was later colonised and developed by the Romans, possesses a rich collection of Gallo-Roman artefacts, as well the ruins of ancient fortifications, thermal baths, an early paleochristian basilica, and Roman roads.

Twinned with Market Drayton, the town is also famous for its aromatic local aperitif the Maitrank, made from dry white wine and the herb Asperula Odorata, celebrated every May in one of the most important events in Arlon, and for its huge flea Market held every month in the town's elegant shopping streets.



The surrounding countryside offers ample opportunity for walking, cycling, mountain-biking, fishing and even cross-country skiing, and also possesses a number of charming villages such as Nobressart, one of Wallonia's Most Beautiful Villages, or the Apple Festival village of Rachecourt.

The region is easily accessible from the UK via Eurostar from London to Brussels with only one platform change onto an hourly, comfortable, direct, intercity train to Arlon and its splendid neo-classical station.

The comprehensive guidebook, which includes a list of the main attractions as well as information on accommodation, camping sites, walking tours, woods, forests and natural parks is also available to download from www.belgiumthelaceto.be. www.arlon-tourisme.be



Uptown location for new Sofitel design hotel

A former classic Victorian 4 star property, the Sofitel Brussels Toison d'Or, has been transformed into a contemporary 5 star luxury 169 room property near one of Brussels most prestigious shopping streets and its selection of luxury boutiques, the Avenue Louise.

Fully refurbished in 2008 and renamed the Sofitel Brussels Le Louise, this stylish new hotel is ideally located on the vibrant Avenue de la Toison d'Or only a short distance away from the Eurostar terminal, and in close proximity to the antique stores of the Place du Sablon, which leads on to the famous Grand Place. The renowned museums of the Rue Royale, the Art Nouveau quarter and Victor Horta's house are also nearby.

All rooms are tastefully furnished and equipped with Sofitel's 'MyBed' for a good night's sleep. Amenities include bath and shower, TV, mini-bar, high-speed and broadband Internet access. Nine suites with garden view also offer contemporary luxury.

The Crystal Lounge bar-restaurant created by famous restaurant designer Antoine Pinto offers a modern Mediterranean menu, as well as traditional Belgian specialities and an exclusive range of edible cocktails at the bar. The restaurant also has two private dining rooms able to accommodate groups of between 8 and 25 people.

Other facilities include one of the largest hotel terraces in Brussels, a fitness centre, lounge/library, four meeting rooms and nearby parking.

Prices start at 430 Euros for a classic room.

The Sofitel Brussels Airport has also changed its name to the Pullman Brussels Airport. A boutique hotel with 125 rooms, leisure center, bar, restaurant and garden it is ideally located to discover Brussels and surrounding areas such as Waterloo, and also offers free coach parking. www.sofitel.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, Press: 020 7531 0392. Email: info@belgiumthelaceto.be

Belgian Tourist Office – Brussels & Wallonia Stand EM450

A number of Belgian professionals will be on our stand to help you discover more about the many attractions and products that Brussels and the South of Belgium have to offer.

TOURIST OFFICES



ARDENNE ATTRACTIONS

Our Tourist Board promotes the Belgian Ardennes and its towns and villages as holiday destinations to the foreign press and tour operators. It is a paradise for nature and sport lovers. Its hilly courses offer hikers pleasant challenges and vestiges of the Battle of the Bulge await historians at heart.

Rue de l'Eglise 6980 La Roche-en-Ardenne
Tel : +32 02 84 22 09 49 Fax: +32 84 22 09 42
E-mail: info@ardenne-attractions.be
Internet: www.ardenne-attractions.be
Your contact at WTM: Mr. Olivier Lefèvre, Mr. Frédéric ROUSSEAU



BRUSSELS GUIDED TOURS

Brussels guided tours organise themed tours

including Art Nouveau (Modern Style), cultural heritage, folklore, strip cartoons, gastronomy, open spaces... The tours are available in many languages and are proposed by bus, bike or on foot. Every other year the public is invited to discover the Art Nouveau architectural heritage of Brussels.

Rue Royale, 2-4 1000 BRUXELLES
Tel : +32 02/563 61 51 Fax: +32 02/563 61 61
E-mail: voiretdirebruxelles@belgacom.net
Internet: www.voiretdirebruxelles.be
Your contact at WTM: Ms Isabelle PAELINCK, Ms Laurence DELETAILLE



BRUSSELS INTERNATIONAL - Tourism & Congress (BI-TC)

Brussels today, cosmopolitan and passionate about good food, reflects the art of enjoying life that varies with the passing of the seasons: springtime is populated with comic strip heroes; summertime comes in the form of music; autumn is devoted to Art Nouveau and "winter wonders" includes an entertaining gourmet trail.

Rue Royale, 2-4 1000 BRUSSELS
Tel : +32 2 513 89 40 Fax: +32 2 513 83 20
E-mail: tourism@brusselsinternational.be
Internet: www.brusselsinternational.be
Your contact at WTM: Ms Anousjka SCHMIDT



LIEGE REGION TOURIST BOARD

Liège Province (Belgium) offers a wide range of opportunities of the most different kinds to its visitors, including groups. Its museums, cathedrals and castles, its gastronomy and spas, its well preserved nature deserve an overnight stay in some boutique hotel or charming accommodation.

Bldv de la Sauvenière, 77 4000 LIEGE
Tel: +32 4 237 95 26 Fax: +32 4 237 95 78
E-mail: jacqueline.depierreux@prov-liege.be
Internet: www.prov-liege.be/tourisme
Your contact at WTM: Mrs Geraldine SKIVÉE



TOURIST BOARD FOR THE BELGIAN ARDENNES

The Belgian Province of Luxembourg is a paradise for nature and sports lovers with hilly courses offering golfers pleasant challenges and vestiges of the Battle of the Bulge dotted all over the province. Find out about the archaeology museum in Arlon, with the largest collection of Gallo-Roman sculptures in Belgium, or the monument between Foy and Bizory dedicated to the men of the 506th Regiment or the new galleries of the famous caves of Hotton.

Quai de l'Ourthe, 9 6980 LA ROCHE-EN-ARDENNE
Tel: +32 84 41 10 11 Fax: +32 84 41 24 39
E-mail: info@ftlb.be Internet: www.ftlb.be
Your contacts at WTM: Mr. Frédéric ROUSSEAU – Mr. Michael BAERT



MONS REGION TOURIST OFFICE

Mons, the capital city of the Hainaut province, presents a rich mixture of history and culture, folklore and gastronomy. Its past covers many centuries which have endowed it with a distinctive charm due the twists and turns of its ancient streets, filled with architectural treasures.

Grand-Place, 22 7000 MONS
Tel: +32 65 33 55 80 Fax: +32 65 35 63 36
E-mail: michel.vasko@ville.mons.be Internet: www.monsregion.be
Your contacts at WTM: Mr. Michel VASKO- Ms Laurence LERINCKX



TOURIST OFFICE OF TOURNAI

Organises guided visits, city breaks, theme programmes for (school)groups and individuals to Tournai, the oldest city of Belgium, the only Belgian town ever held by the

British, proud to possess two buildings listed on the UNESCO World Heritage list: cathedral and Belfry

Vieux Marché-aux-Poteries, 14 7500 TOURNAI
Tel: +32 69 22 20 45 Fax: +32 69 21 62 21
E-mail: tourisme@tournai.be Internet: www.tournai.be
Your contacts at WTM: Mr. Olivier ROUPIN

HOTELS AND ACCOMMODATION



ACCOR HOTELS BENELUX

Accor Hotels Benelux are representing Sofitel, Novotel, Mercure and Ibis in Belgium, where they have a large choice of 3 and 4 star hotels in the main cities and towns including Brussels, Liège, Mons, Namur, Waterloo, Tournai, Charleroi, Wavre and Dinant.

Avenue Herman Debroux, 54 1060 BRUSSELS
Tel: +32 2 718 07 22 Fax: +32 2 718 07 55
E-mail: michel.verhoest@accor.com Internet: www.accorhotels.com
Your contact at WTM: Mr Michel Verhoest, Johan VAN DER HOEK



IBIS HOTEL DINANT

ibis hotel Dinant is situated in the Belgian Ardennes (south of Belgium). We are part of a franchised network and we are also representing 12 others Accor franchised hotels situated all over Belgium.

Rempart d'albeau, 16 5500 DINANT
Tel: +32 8 221 15 00 Fax: +32 8 221 15 79
E-mail: H3150@accor.com Internet: www.ibishotel.com
Your contact at WTM: Mr. Denis MARCHAL, Mr. Patrick VAN EX



RADISSON SAS ROYAL HOTEL

The Radisson SAS Royal Hotel, is an impressive 5* property located in the very heart of

Brussels a 4min.walk to the Grand'Place, the main restaurants & shopping streets. Offering 281 Design rooms (in 5 distinctive styles), a splendid Atrium, a 2 star Michelin Restaurant, a bar and a professional fitness.

Rue du Fossé-aux-Loups, 47 1000 BRUXELLES
Tel: +32 2 227 31 31 Fax: +32 2 219 62 62
E-mail: sales.brussels@radissonsas.com Internet: www.radissonsas.com
Your contact at WTM: Ms Sandra OTERO FERNANDEZ

YOUTH HOSTELS BRUSSELS & WALLONIA



The Brussels and Wallonia Youth Hostels offer comfort and quality at friendly prices in Brussels, Liège, Namur, Mons, Tournai, Malmédy, Bouillon, Champlon, and Tilff, as well as a large selection of fun activity programmes ranging from city breaks to paragliding. All hostels observe a non smoking policy.

Rue de la Sablonnière, 28 1000 Brussels
Tel: +32 2 219 56 76 Fax: +32 2 219 14 51
E-mail: cra@laj.be Internet: www.laj.be
Your contacts at WTM: Ms. Caroline RAEDEMAEKER

MAJOR TOURIST ATTRACTIONS



CAVES OF HAN-SUR-LESSE

The Caves of Han-sur-Lesse are a major tourist attraction of Southern Belgium. The huge caves are visited by old tram, then with a walking guided tour and an exit by boat on the subterranean river. Next to the Caves, a beautiful wildlife Reserve hosts the major European species of wild animals.

Rue J. Lamotte, 2 5580 HAN-SUR-LESSE BELGIUM
Tel: +32 084/37 72 13 Fax: +32 084/37 77 12
E-mail: info@grotte-de-han.be Internet: www.grotte-de-han.be
Your contact at WTM: Mr Albert JORIS



EURO SPACE CENTER

The Euro Space Center offers a multi-sensorial exhibition and guided tours on everything to do with the fascinating world of space. It offers groups of children and/or adults the possibility to attend astronaut training and space-classes as well as Family Space Weekends and multi-media exhibitions. Full board accommodation is also available with half day space activities and half day tourist visits in the area.

Rue Devant les Hêtres, 1 6890 TRANSINNE BELGIUM
Tel: +32 6 165 01 33 Fax: +32 6 165 64 61
E-mail: btob@eurospacecenter.be Internet: www.eurospacecenter.be
Your contact at WTM: Ms Catherine VUIDAR

INCOMING AGENCIES



INTERNATIONAL HAINAUT TOURISM

International Hainaut Tourism is a dynamic Incoming Tour Operator that specialises in cultural travel for groups in Belgium and Europe. Our

professional team offers a large choice of services: all kinds of transfers and shuttles; hotels and restaurants; entertainment; luxurious motor coaches; multilingual guided tours and tailor-made programs.

Place Albert 1er, 34 6031 Monceau-sur-Sambre BELGIUM
Tel: +32 7 186 66 60 Fax: +32 7 186 66 69
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...AND YOU WILL MEET US TOO!



BELGIAN TOURIST OFFICE BRUSSELS-WALLONIA

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Chez LEON

Sponsor of the Belgian Bar at WTM



Calendar of events for the first six months of 2009

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

Sporting Events

On your bikes... mostly!

- 16-17 February *Legend Boucles de Spa (Province of Liege)* The top event of the winter season, this major classic car rally not to be missed.
- 22 April *La Flèche Wallonne, Wallonia* Major professional bicycle race, the first of the two Belgian Ardennes classics, starting at Charleroi, in the Province of Hainaut, and ending in Huy, in the Province of Liege. Both the men's (199.5km) and the women's (97 km) races finish atop the notorious Mur de Huy.
- 25 & 26 April *7th ING Ardennes Bleu Classic car rally, Spa (Province of Liège)* Drivers and spectators alike enjoy a charming tour all over the Ardennes and the Hautes Fagnes.
- 26 April *Liège-Bastogne-Liège International bicycle race, Wallonia* The "best one-day race in cycling", the L-B-L is the second of the two Belgian Ardennes Classics and the oldest Classic on the cycling calendar. Attracts a star-studded line-up every year.
- 1 June *Imperial Laps at Waterloo (Province of Walloon Brabant)* Several thousand professional and amateur cyclists take part every year in this classical bicycle race. Different laps with various degrees in difficulty take you through the battlefield.
- 21 June *44th Flèche Ardennaise, Wallonia* 170 Km bicycle race in the Ardennes, taking in the same roads as the Liège-Bastogne-Liège classic.

Music Festivals and Cultural Events

From Horror movies to love films, classical music to jazz and much more

- 15-24 January *Gay & Lesbian Film Festival, Brussels and Wallonia* 23rd edition for this cultural festival featuring film, music, painting photography and sculpture.
- 13-20 February *25th International Festival of Love Films of Mons (Province of Hainaut)* FIFA is a yearly festival that takes place around Valentine's Day, with screenings of the latest films on the theme of love and relationships.
- 20-28 February *ANIMA 2009, Festival of cartoons and of animated films, Brussels* 27th edition of this international animation film festival which features more than 100 international films, shorts, ads, 2Ds, 3Ds, children's films and student films. Also includes a national and an international competition, workshops and round tables.
- 7 March *Museum Night Fever, Brussels* Discover another side of some of Brussels' museums and their collections in an unusual evening of music, fashion, guided visits workshops and a huge after show party until 3 am.
- 9-21 April *27th edition of the Brussels International Festival of Fantastic Film* Over 150 films celebrating horror movies, thrillers and science fiction at the leading European and international event of all that is strange. Include the now famous body-painting competition and the pitiless vampire ball.
- 8-9 May *Liège Jazz Festival (Province of Liège)* 19th edition of the prestigious annual gathering of the greats of jazz in the heart of the Belgian Ardennes.
- 16 and 17 May *Django Festival in Liberchies (Province of Hainaut)* Two days of Gypsy culture, Jazz and guitar in a celebration of the great Django Reinhardt and his music in his birthplace village of Liberchies.
- 29-31 May *Brussels Jazz Marathon, Brussels* 14th edition of this weekend of international jazz. Over 100 concerts and 450 musicians at various venues across Brussels, including the Grand Place.
- 18-21 June *25th edition of Fete de la Musique, Brussels and Wallonia* Hundreds of free concerts in Brussels and Wallonia to celebrate the summer Solstice. A very varied programme includes pop, jazz, hip hop, chanson française, funk and a great evening party on Saturday on the Place des Palais in Brussels.
- 26-29 June *20th edition of Couleur Café, Tour & Taxi, Brussels* A highly atmospheric, world music festival set in the magnificent Tour & Taxis site complete with Global Village with craft stalls and stands selling foods from different cultures.

Exhibitions and Special Events

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

- Until 31 March *That's Opera, Tour & Taxis, Brussels* Starting in Brussels, this travelling exhibition organised in celebration of the 200th anniversary of Milan's famous Casa Ricordi takes a look at how an opera is created. The exhibition itself is a stage set, allowing the visitor to access the theatre's workshop where scenery, back drops and the larger props are made, as well as the orchestra pit and even the stage.
- 16 Jan-19 April *Robert Capa Retrospective, Jewish Museum of Brussels* Founder (with Henri Cartier-Bresson) of the famous Magnum agency and regarded as the greatest war photographers of all times, Robert Capa is known across the world for his shots of the landings of the Second World War, of the civil war in Spain and of the liberation of Paris. This exhibition will contain some 150 photographs.
- 21 Feb-31 Dec *Comic Strip Year in Brussels* In 2009 Brussels will be THE capital of comic strip. Discover the many exhibitions and other events that are organised to honour the Ninth Art.
- 13 March-31 May *Steinlen, The Eye of the Street, Ixelles Museum, Brussels* A major figure of European art around 1900, Steinlen was a multitalented designer, engraver, caricaturist, illustrator, poster maker, painter and sculptor. Today, he remains internationally renowned for his posters, his scenes of day to day life in Paris' streets around Montmartre and above all his cats, which became his brand image. A fabulous collection in the museum that also boasts the largest collection of Toulouse-Lautrec posters in the world.
- April- dates TBC *Opening of the Royal Greenhouses of Laeken, Brussels* The royal greenhouses open once yearly for public viewing for a blooming extravaganza of 5,000 plants including giant ferns and exotic trees, some 250 years old. The visit also includes the Queen Elisabeth's workshop and the stables.
- 24-27 April *ArtBrussels, Brussels Expo, Brussels* First launched as a biennale in 1968, this now yearly contemporary art fair for established names and young talent attracts over 30,000 art enthusiasts, including a considerable number of art collectors, critics, journalists, curators and other decision makers.
- 4-30 May *Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition, Brussels* Prestigious international competition for violinists, pianists, composers and vocalists. The 2009 competition is devoted to the violin.
- 30 June & 2 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.
- May (dates TBC) *Feast of the Orange Trees Freyjr Castle (Province of Namur)* Discover and take part in this exhibition on three-hundred-year-old orange trees and sale of exotic, special, rare and strange plants such as orchids, coffee trees, banana trees, carnivorous plants and more.

Military Tourism

From military marches to reconstructions of the battle of Waterloo

- 26 April *Militaria Fair, Ciney (Province of Namur)* One of the largest military fairs in Europe with 400 stands stretching over 3 kms. The wide range of quality militaria on offer includes parts for old military vehicles, detection devices, collector and sports weapons, medals, uniforms and books.
- 16-18 May *Military March at Saint Roch, Thuin (Province of Hainaut)* One of the oldest between l'Entre Sambre et Meuse with around 2,000 marchers in uniforms from the 17th to the 19th century.
- 1 June *Sainte Rolende March, Gerpennes (Province of Hainaut)* One of the most important military marches of the region in honour of Ste Rolende, whose remains are carried through neighbouring villages along a 35km itinerary. Starts at 2 am to the sounds of fifes and drumming and lasts until the evening.
- 20-21 June *11th Bivouac at Waterloo (Province of Walloon Brabant)* Yearly Reconstruction of a Napoleonic bivouac and of the battle of Plancenoit with over 1,000 participants in uniform from Germany France the UK, Italy, Holland, Russia the Czech republic and Belgium
- 24-27 June *43rd European March of Memory and Friendship, Houffalize (Province of Luxembourg)* Military personnel and civilians of all nationalities can take part in this 4 day yearly march at the end of June in the beautiful region of the Belgian Ardennes. Seventeen nations now participate and each march covers around 30kms. Alternatively the mini-MESA covers 13 kms.

Markets and Fairs

Something for everyone in various markets old and new

- 23 Jan-1 Feb *54th Belgium Antiques Fair, Brussels* One of the top antique fairs in Europe with 90 exhibitors attracting over 20,000 international dealers and collectors
- 5-9 March *39th edition of Brussels Book Fair, Tour & Taxis, Brussels* With over 1100 publishers and more than 700 authors . a number of debates, conferences and workshops also feature
- 20-29 March *Eurantica, Brussels* Over 200 antique dealers from all over Europe will be present once again to show their rarest items to an ever-growing number of antique lovers.
- 10 April *Grand Marché aux Fleurs, Tournai (Province of Hainaut)* Dating back to 1825, this traditional market sees the participation every year of over one hundred horticulturalists
- 11-13 April *Ciney flea market and Antique fair (Province of Namur)* One of the largest antique fairs of Wallonia with over 100 exhibitors and 1,000 visitors

Street Parties, Carnival & Folklore

Belgium is well known for its colourful carnivals and street parades, most of which are based on ancient festivals. Fun for all involved!

- 22-24 February *Shrovetide celebrations in the Eastern Cantons* Complete with the Carnival Prince and his entourage culminating with a grand procession on the "Monday of the Roses"
- 22-24 February *Carnaval of Binche (Province of Hainaut)* The most famous and one of the best of Wallonia's carnival, with some 900 men in glorious costumes throwing oranges at the crowd. Recognised in 2003 by UNESCO as a masterpiece of the oral and immaterial patrimony of humanity.
- 1 March *52nd Grand Feu de Bouge (Province of Namur)* The country's most spectacular bonfire takes place on the first Sunday of Lent in a celebration that dates back 1000 years. Fireworks at 7:30 pm.
- 21-23 March *507th Carnaval du Laetare, Stavelot (Province of Liège)* Mid-Lent Carnival with hundreds of "Blanc Mousis" (White Brethren) clad in white masks with long red noses, confetti firing canons and a grand procession at 14H00 pm
- 22 March *55th Carnaval of the Bears, Andenne (Province of Namur)* A carnival celebrating the victory of local man Charles Martel over a bear that once terrorised the town. Throwing of stuffed teddy bears from the balcony of the Town Hall at the end of the day
- 13 April *133rd Cavalcade in Herve (Province of Liège)* Yearly on Easter Monday. One of the most sumptuous processions of the province (departs at 14:30 pm) with fireworks
- 16 May *Belgium Gay Pride, Brussels* With walks through Brussels, music, parties and festivities
- 21-24 May *International Festival of Fairground Entertainment, Namur* Gathering of more than 300 entertainers from different corners of the world with their own theatrical and contemporary interpretations of fairground entertainment in the province of Namur
- 23-24 May *Maitrank Festival in Arlon (Province of Luxembourg)* The most southern town of Belgium celebrates the Maitrank, an aperitif made with dry white wine laced with oranges and fine liqueurs with tastings and various festivities.
- June- Sept *Roller Parade in Brussels & Wallonia* Free 20 km roller parades throughout the streets of Namur (Thursdays), Brussels (Fridays) and Mons (Saturdays)
- 1 June *Matrimonial High Tea, Ecaussines (Province of Hainaut)* This event has been held since 1903 in the splendid grounds of the chateau. From 10 am any unmarried person can register their requirements as to the type of person they would like to meet.
- 13-14 June *Days of the 4 processions, Tournai (Province of Hainaut)* Folklore and carnival during these 2 days of procession, one carried out to military music
- 14 June *The Ducasse, Mons (Province of Hainaut)* The Procession of the Golden Carriage and the "Lumecon" Battle in Mons, a re-enactment of the Slaying of the dragon by St Georges in one of the oldest festivals of Wallonia