

Title:

Antwerp Tourist Information

Word Count:

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Summary:

Antwerp is the second largest city of Belgium. The capital city of the province of Antwerp, it is also the second largest harbor in Europe after Rotterdam. It is a leading commercial center famous for cutting, trading and polishing of diamonds. Since the last 15 years, Antwerp has been elevated to the status of being one of the leading cities for fashion design in Europe.

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Keywords:

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Article Body:

Antwerp is the second largest city of Belgium. The capital city of the province of Antwerp, it is also the second largest harbor in Europe after Rotterdam. It is a leading commercial center famous for cutting, trading and polishing of diamonds. Since the last 15 years, Antwerp has been elevated to the status of being one of the leading cities for fashion design in Europe.

The name 'Antwerp' has been linked to the word "aanwerp" (alluvial mound), which was the geographical feature in the early settlement period in this place. The earliest records of fortification for this historical place take us to the seventh century BC. In the 10th century, Antwerp became a provincial border for the Roman Empire. By the 14th century, the city of Antwerp was already ranked as being the prime center in Western Europe for trading and finance, thanks to its flourishing wool market and seaport.

The city went through a low phase economically during the Reformation period and the subsequent conflict between the Catholics and the Protestants. The city rose again in the 17th century with painters like Reubens and Van Dyck becoming famous names. It was Napoleon who realized the strategic importance of Antwerp and undertook the modernization of the Antwerp port. As times passed, Antwerp went on to progress and became what it is today—the tenth largest port in the

world.

Places of interest:

The Antwerp's Grote Markt (town square) is the wonder of the 16th century architecture. The Stadhuis (town hall) is a popular Flemish Gothic structure built in the Renaissance fashion. In the middle of the town square lies a statue of the first hero of Antwerp Brabo. He was the man who had killed a giant, who according to a legend used to control river traffic and extract money from people. The roman soldier Brabo cut the giant's hand and threw it into the Schedlt River.

Our Lady's Cathedral is another important landmark. With its Gothic architecture, the 123 meter lofty tower is a sight to behold. The cathedral is home to two of the masterpieces of Reubens, 'The Descent from the Cross' and the 'Elevation of the Cross.'

The Antwerp castle, known as Steen (stone) is called such because castles in the 13th century were built of wood. This was the first castle at that time to be built of stone.

The Meir is another tourist attraction. It is a shopping street and a busiest one at that. The Osterrieth House and the former royal residence of the Belgian kings in Antwerp are two of the important buildings in the Meir. The first stock exchange building in the world was built on Meir. It was gutted down in the middle of the nineteenth century and was reconstructed in Neo-Gothic architecture.

Things to do:

One thing every visitor can look forward to are the fascinating museums and galleries of Antwerp. The city has been organized and maintained well. A tourist finds exploring Antwerp relatively easy compared to other places because places of interest and other pleasant sights in the town are within walking distance.

Take a stroll through the paved lanes and maze like streets of Antwerp. You will be amazed to see the streets lined with royal looking mansions, ancient churches and museums. The city is a pleasant mix of the ancient and the modern with a range of boutiques, restaurants and bars springing up continually. One thing you can do while you tour the city is pay a visit to the Royal Museum of Fine Art (Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten). The museum is divided into two units- one containing the works of the Old Masters and the other for the artists belonging to the 19th century and later. Superior collection of European

painting is available in the museum including the works of Rubens, Van Dyck, Hals, Van Gogh etc. Ruben's the most famous child of Antwerp has his work displayed in the Old Lady's Cathedral as well.

MoMu is the epicenter for Antwerp's mushrooming design trade. If you are an aspirant designer, you can join an academy to learn the latest in fashion and style. MoMu is known the world over for hosting creative exhibitions for their work. As Antwerp is one of the leading centers of fashion, style and designer outfits, you can profit in many ways.

Since Antwerp is well known for diamonds, you can pay a visit to the city's biggest showroom, Diamondland at Appelmansstraat to see craftsmen at work, cutting and polishing the most beautiful object known to man—exquisite diamonds. The Provinciaal Diamantmuseum which has just been shifted near Antwerp's zoo holds fantastic exhibitions showcasing diamonds and informing people about the history and production of diamonds.

Food and Drink:

The citizens of Antwerp swear by Belgian cuisine. The cuisine is somewhat French and Flemish oriented. The hot favorite is mussels accompanied with chips and mayonnaise. Other seafood like herring are also favoured and eaten raw. Drinks consist of good quality French wine. Beer however reigns supreme as the country's favorite drink. In fact Belgium has more than 100 brewers manufacturing more than 400 different beers.

People in Antwerp drink three kinds of beer—lager, white beer and the lambic beer. The lager beer comes as a dark double or triple beer. The white beer is self explanatory while the lambic beer is a naturally fermented strong drink having a fruity flavor. A unique type of soup filled with cream called waterzooi, non vegetarian food like chicken and fish, paling in't groen (eels with vegetables and herbs) and vegetarian food are the other favourites. Antwerp is an inexpensive place for eating out. The food consists of customary Flemish dish with French and Mediterranean cuisine. The cafes open at around 9 am in the morning and work till late at night. T Fornuis is one of the popular restaurants in the city as it has the rich French cuisine in a traditional Flemish milieu. Another notable restaurant is La Rade - haute. Food is served in a mansion-like place, close to the river Ernest Van Dijckkaai.

Hotel and Accommodation:

Radisson SAS Park Lane Hotel
Minotel Colombus

Best Western Classic Hotel Villa Mozart
Miauw Suites
Theater Hotel
New International Youth Hotel
Hotel Scheldezicht
Tourist Hotel
Golden Tulip Hotel Carlton
Tulip Inn Hotel Astoria
Alfa Empire Hotel
Fletcher Hotel-Restaurant Antwerpen
Fletcher Hotel Keyserlei
Plaza Hotel
Hotel Eden
Alfa De Keyser
Hotel Cammerpoorte
Hotel Ibis Antwerpen Centrum
Express by Holiday Inn Antwerp City North
Hotel Florida
Hotel Residence
Docklands Hotel
Arass Suite Hotel
Campanile Antwerpen / Anvers
Hotel Industrie
Hotel Antigone
Corinthia Antwerp Hotel
Prinse
Hyllit Hotel
Hotel Antverpia HR
Crowne Plaza Antwerp
Entertainment:

The meaning of entertainment can be summed up in the fantastic night life Antwerp enjoys and revels in offering its visitors. There are a whole range of zany bars and restaurants which can give any other city in Northern Europe a run for its money. If you are in Belgium and want to get the best night life entertainment, head to Antwerp, no questions asked! The best times to enjoy nightlife are Friday or Saturday nights. The liveliest and the most fashionable city of Belgium, Antwerp has found a unique place on the style map of the world thanks to the work of some brilliant fashion designers.

Belgians love their drink and so it comes across as no surprise that this passion has translated into setting up of many bars and pubs across the city. These bars work any time of the day or night offering choicest of Belgian beer,

cocktails, drinks, and wines. Plus you get to enjoy thumping or mellifluous music (according to the public demand) in these bars. Dan Engel is known as Antwerp's most famous bar facing the Grote Markt. You can stop by the bar at any time of the day or night for a sip of refreshing beer.

Antwerp makes everyone happy, be they adults or kids. The Zoo which is close to the station is the oldest and the largest zoo in Belgium. Children are head over heels in love with the dolphinarium. Other attractions include the lions, giraffes, monkeys and the snake house. Though the zoo is old fashioned, it still remains a craze with children.