

Title:

Hasselt Tourist Information

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Summary:

Hasselt is the capital city of the province of Limburg. Though it may not have the charm of other cities in Belgium, it has a hospitable aura to it. The affable town with a population of about 77,000 people is reputed for its nightlife, shops and its pedestrian center. So famous is the friendly nature of its citizens, then quite aptly two years ago, Hasselt acquired the status as 'most sociable city of Flanders.'

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Keywords:

Hasselt Tourist Information, Hasselt Hotels, Hasselt Museums, Hasselt Art Galleries

Article Body:

Hasselt is the capital city of the province of Limburg. Though it may not have the charm of other cities in Belgium, it has a hospitable aura to it. The affable town with a population of about 77,000 people is reputed for its nightlife, shops and its pedestrian center. So famous is the friendly nature of its citizens, then quite aptly two years ago, Hasselt acquired the status as 'most sociable city of Flanders.'

Hasselt came into existence in the 7th century on the Heelbeek, a tributary of the river of Demer. The name Hasselt comes from Hasaluth, which means hazelwood. The city of Hasselt is reputed to be home for interesting buildings like St. Quentin's Cathedral, the abbey of Hercekenrode in Kuringen and Refugehuis. In fact, the Refugehuis is the oldest building in the city. The city is also famous for numerous museums like the National Genever Museum, the Stellingwerff-Waerdenhof Museum etc.

The Demerstraat and the Koning Albertstraat are two of the famous shop streets in the city. The shops Hoogstraat and Kapelstraat are household names; however the items that they sell are premium priced. With the opening of the modern shopping complex three years ago, Hasselt has become all the more popular. In fact many regard the city as an example city for good manners, good facilities

and etiquette.

Places of interest:

The Japanese Garden is one of the most beautiful sights in Hasselt. It is located in the Kaparmolen Park in the north-east part of the city. It is open from April to October at designated timings. The Japanese people from Itami, which is Hasselt's sister city designed the garden as per the 17th century model. The Japanese Garden is the biggest Japanese garden in Europe and has about 250 Japanese cherry trees. Various events in relation to the Japanese culture takes place in the Japanese garden.

The most important church of Hasselt is the Saint Quintinus Cathedral. It was in this place that the first settlements in the Hasselt area were formed. The church, and especially the tower, reveals the different building stages of the town. The lower part of it shows the remnants of the Romanesque church that stood during the 12th century.

In the Kapelstraat, in proximity to the Market Square is the Church of Our Lady. On the same spot a chapel was built in the 14th century by the members of the Our Lady Virga Jesse fraternity. The statue of the Virga Jesse, a Madonna statue belonging to the 14th century is a popular tourist attraction. Some other interesting sights are the Baroque Altar and the tombs of the abbesses of the Abbey of Herkenrode.

Things to do:

Among all things you can do when you are in Hasselt is visit its museums.

Hasselt has a museum called the National Genever Museum, dedicated to the popular local drink, jenever. In the museum, the visitors can learn about the history and the distillation of their favorite alcoholic drink.

The Fashion Museum gives a nice overview of the evolution of fashion. You can partake in the theme expositions which are feature here regularly.

The Stellingwerff-Waerdenhof Museum is home to rare historical artifacts and documents about the history of the evolution of Hasselt, Limburg and the County of Loon. What you get to see here are ceramic objects, church treasures, paintings and other articles of historic importance.

There are a lot of places and boutiques to shop from in Hasselt. The shopping street is lined with ordinary fashion shops. The street is broad and there is

less traffic. After shopping, you can relax your tired feet by sitting on the benches along the pedestrian sidewalks.

The 'Fruitmarkt' reveals the first statue of many to follow. The first statue which meets you when you enter the town is the equestrian one made by Marc Cox as a tribute to Arnold IV, who was the Count of Loon. Arnold IV was the person who confirmed the rights of a "city" to Hasselt in a Charter of Liberty.

The Grote Markt (Market Square) is the biggest open space in the city. You can have a gala time here, as this place is a hum-drum of business. A center of all commercial activities, it is also a place to wine and dine to your heart's content.

Food and Drink:

The famous flavored alcoholic beverage, spiced with juniper berries called 'Jenever' is very much loved in Hasselt. In fact there are quite a few factories and industries dedicated to the production and distribution of jenever. The cuisines are a mix of French and Flemish. Like most parts of Belgium, people in Hasselt are fond of mussels complimented with mayonnaise and French fries. By the way, did you know that the famous "French fries" are actually Belgian? History has it that American, English and Canadian troops discovered them when they arrived at the Flanders coast during the First World War. During those times, the Belgian Army spoke French and gave the term "French fries." Belgian or French, the world loves French fries and Hasselt is no exception.

Other than jenever, the all time favorite Beer and French wines also score high with most people. People favour the dark double lager beer and the white beer. There are some people who go for the lambic beer which is fermented drink with a fruity flavor.

Non-vegetarian food like sea food, chicken, paling in't groen (eel with vegetables and herbs) are generally eaten voraciously here. The hotels deal in traditional Flemish dish, Mediterranean food and French cuisine. There are some hotels which also serve ethnic and continental food. Biscuits and Waffles served with chocolate and icing sugar are also served to sweeten the tastebuds.

Hotel and Accommodation:

Parkhotel NV
Ibis Hasselt Centrum
Express By Holiday Inn Hasselt
Holiday Inn Hasselt

Entertainment:

The Ethias Arena and Grenslandhallen in Hasselt are popular event centers. Both are known to be a foundation to stage an array of events lining from classic to the contemporary. The infrastructure of the auditoriums and the seating capacity has to be seen to be believed. Both the entertainment venues are equipped with high quality acoustic sound. With an ultra chic infrastructure and fibre optic network, you can be assured to get the best in terms of visual appeal and sound.

Concerts, theatrical events, shows, fairs, exhibitions, parties, dances, skits, sporting events are all played in Ethias Arena and Grenslandhallen. Not only are they entertaining to the common public, but they also form a profitable avenue for business people to showcase and exhibit their products and services through seminars, meetings and exhibitions.

Shopping is another form of indulging and pampering oneself. In fact, more than 175,000 tourists come to the city each week to shop and it goes without saying the Hasselt is one of the biggest shopping cities in Belgium.

Kiewit in Hasselt is the venue for the annual Pukkelpop festival, which is Europe's biggest alternative music festival with more than hundred concerts being played at the end of August. Rimpelrock, a musical festival for the elderly people (over 50 years of age) are also played here.