

Title:

10 Must-Dos When In Brussels

Word Count:

412

Summary:

At the hub of European politics - Brussels is the cosmopolitan capital of bureaucracy. But when freed from the shackles of red tape, this compact capital of Belgium is a fascinating fusion of profound historical curiosity and contemporary living.

1. The Grand-Place

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Article Body:

At the hub of European politics - Brussels is the cosmopolitan capital of bureaucracy. But when freed from the shackles of red tape, this compact capital of Belgium is a fascinating fusion of profound historical curiosity and contemporary living.

1. The Grand-Place

Brussels' central square is the focal point of activity for locals and tourists alike. The heaving markets are bursting with souvenir-seeking bargain hunters. Look out for the town hall (Hotel de Ville), a magnificent example of 15th century architecture.

2. Manneken Pis

This sacred 17th century bronze statue of the small boy urinating is a Brussels landmark. Several legends exist as to the origins of this statue. One says it depicts a young boy urinating on a burning charge destined to blow up the city walls when under siege from a foreign army, thus saving the city from invasion. Whatever the truth, he is undeniable cute and has over 500 outfits, one for every occasion.

3. St Nicholas Church

Constructed in the 11th century, this fine example of medieval architecture is the oldest church in Brussels. If you are lucky, you may even catch one of the occasional services given in English.

4. Royales Galeries Sint-Hubert

Europe's oldest glass arcade was designed by JP Cluysenaer and built in 1847. Home to fashionable boutiques and cool cafes, it was renovated and reopened in 2000. The arcade is worth visiting if only to experience the magnificent architecture.

5. Belgian Chocolate

No visit to Brussels is complete without experiencing the world famous Belgian chocolate. It has a quality all of its own and is the obvious choice for gifts to take back home.

6. Avenue Louise

If you crave a shopping fix then the Avenue Louise is the place to be. Designer shops aplenty provide ample opportunity to flex your spending power. Popular purchases include diamonds and antiques.

7. Waterzooi

This local Belgian speciality is a kind of fish stew and very popular with the locals. Other appetising native dishes include mussels, waffles, and sweetbreads.

8. Pistes de Lancement

If you are travelling with children, be sure to catch this clown festival during March. The Saint-Gilles region is awash with circus acts entertaining children and adults alike.

9. Flower Carpet

Throughout August, the Grand' Place is subjected to a sea of colour as thousands of flowers are laid out in stunning patterns.

10. Christmas Market

The festive period is a flurry of activity as traditional Christmas stalls suddenly emerge. The effervescent displays keep you entertained between purchases as jugglers and musicians perform amongst the festive shoppers.