

The 5 best places for LATE NIGHT FOOD

66 MARTINO

Vlaanderenstraat 125
Central Ghent ①
+32 (0)9 225 01 04

Students are deeply fond of this late-night snack bar where you can pick up a steak and frites or an omelette with a glass of wine when everywhere else is closed. The interior was recently redecorated in a sober modern style, but the big photographs on the wall show how it used to look. An authentic Ghent institution open from 6 pm until 1 am.

67 DE ROBOT

Bijlokehof 1
Bijloke Quarter ③
+32 (0)9 335 60 14
www.derobot.be

This is a relaxed cafe on a corner opposite the old Bijloke hospital. The blue formica tables, tiled floor and potted plants give it a retro look, while the collection of toy robots adds a quirky touch. Students and teachers come here from the art school across the road to eat plain food like hamburgers and lasagne while mellow 1950s music plays in the background. Open most nights until 1 am.

68 AU BOEUF QUI RIT

Steendam 13
St-Jacobs Quarter ④
+32 (0)9 233 72 27

Marianne runs a simple French-style bistro crammed with old family photographs, mirrors and umbrellas. Edith Piaf plays in the background as the owner cooks steaks and lamb chops on a wood fire. She serves them with plain baked potatoes and a salad. It's not sophisticated cooking, yet still you might fall in love with the relaxed French charm. Open until 2 am.



The 5 most WELCOMING HIPSTER COFFEE BARS

101 MADAM BAKSTER

Brabantdam 142
Central Ghent ①
www.madambakster.be

Enterprising local cook Laura Verhulst opened a new coffee bar in early 2017 where she sells healthy organic cakes based on her own recipes. Located on the edge of the red light district, it's a bright modern place decorated with pale wood furniture, bare light bulbs and plants hanging from the ceiling.

102 CLOUDS IN MY COFFEE

Dendermondse-
steenweg 104
Dampoort ⑧
+32 (0)9 336 84 34
www.clouds9000.com

Dutch designer Maurice Mentjens created this relaxed coffee bar with bare brick walls, mat black tables and old school chairs. It's located next to a co-housing project in a neighbourhood of Turkish bakeries and cheap clothing stores. The owner also hosts a B&B in a former chapel.

103 OR

Sint-Pietersnieuw-
straat 126-A
University Quarter ⑥
+32 (0)9 223 65 00
orcoffee.be

This specialised coffee bar transformed the Ghent coffee scene when it opened in 2009. Popular with local students and creatives, OR moved in early 2018 into a renovated art deco building next to Backstay youth hostel. The coffee is made by skilled baristas using coffee from its own roaster.

104 GUST

Annonciadenstraat 4
Central Ghent ①
+32 (0)474 41 65 95
www.gustgent.be

A perfect little cafe with designer lamps, round wooden tables and mellow background music. The friendly owner serves American pancakes for brunch, homemade food at lunchtime and really good coffee in delicate china cups.

105 LABATH

Oude Houtlei 1
Central Ghent ①
+32 (0)9 225 28 25
www.cafelabath.be

Students from the Sint-Lucas art academy fill this bright, buzzing coffee bar on weekday mornings. It is a relaxed place with big windows, white wooden chairs and lazy background jazz. The cakes they serve here come from Julie's House.



102 CLOUDS IN MY COFFEE

The 5 best SMALL AND UNUSUAL SHOPS

166 **FALLEN ANGELS**

Jan Breydelstraat 29
Central Ghent ①
+32 (0)9 223 94 15
the-fallen-angels.com

Isabelle Steel runs this dark, nostalgic shop filled with eccentric objects picked up in strange places. She named it after a batch of abandoned angels she picked up when she opened the shop in 1980. As well as angels, the shop is crammed with tin toys, old school equipment and china dolls with sad glass eyes.

167 **VITS-STAELENS**

Bij Sint-Jacobs 14
St-Jacobs Quarter ④
+32 (0)9 223 14 69

This is a strange old grocery store on a street corner facing the Sint-Jacobskerk. It is filled with the exotic smell of herbs and spices sold in little cellophane bags. Here you can find everything you need to flavour a vegetarian curry, along with tea, pasta and dried fruits.

168 **PRIEM**

Zuivelbrugstraat 1
Patershol ②
+32 (0)9 223 25 37

This old wallpaper shop has barely changed since it opened back in 1928. Run by two elderly sisters, it is crammed with more than 10,000 rolls of rare vintage wallpaper dating from the 1950s to the 1980s. They stock every style imaginable, from bold striped wallpaper to vintage floral designs.

169 **BURKELBLOEM**

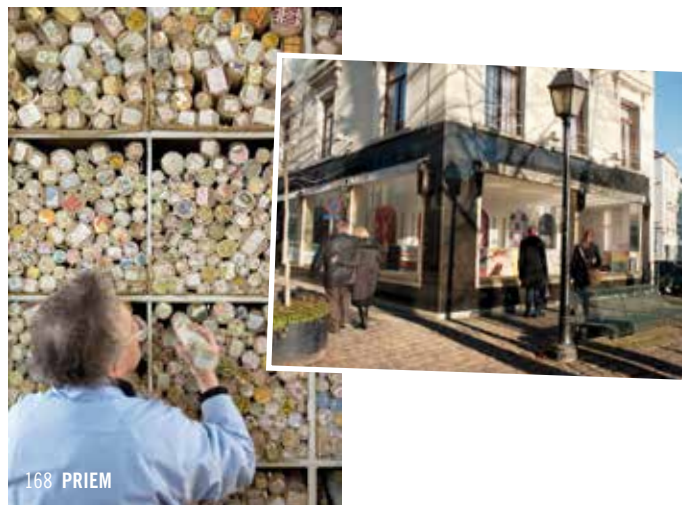
Dampoortstraat 92
Dampoort ⑧
+32 (0)9 223 47 37

This crowded little shop on the road leading to Dampoort station is filled with a glorious jumble of old objects. You squeeze between bird cages, faded postcards, decorated tin boxes and gold-rimmed coffee cups salvaged from bankrupt French hotels.

170 **BLANCO** – BIKE LUXURY –

Bennesteeg 19-21
Central Ghent ①
+32 (0)497 62 10 02
blancobikeluxury.be

Thomas Wittouck constructs solid modern bikes in a garage in downtown Ghent. He likes simple bikes that get you across town rather than expensive flashy models. He also does bike repairs and offers useful advice on cycling in Ghent.



The 5 best shops for **ACCESSORIES**

- 231 **ELS ROBBERECHTS**
Meelstraat 34
Patershol ②
+32 (0)498 10 31 97
www.elsrobberechts.be
- Ghent hat designer Els Robberechts moved in 2016 to a new workshop in the Patershol district. Here she creates unique hats for her private clients, as well as organising hat-making workshops. Call before you visit to make an appointment.
- 232 **PAARL**
Nieuwland 1
St-Jacobs Quarter ④
+32 (0)9 324 63 89
paarl.be
- Ghent designer Pearl-Lisa De Buck creates unique handbags in a work space next to the River Leie in the old industrial quarter. She uses unusual materials like rubber and ostrich leather to make exclusive bags in vivid colours.
- 233 **M.A.R.T.H.A.**
Onderbergen 19
Central Ghent ①
+32 (0)9 330 66 40
- Clarice Bressinck studied fashion in Ghent before opening this appealing little shop. She sells solid necklaces, long woollen scarves and bags made from recycled fabrics. Her prices are more affordable than you might expect.

- 234 **E JUWEELEER**
Kortrijksepoort-
straat 65
Bijloke Quarter ③
+32 (0)9 335 55 26
www.ejuweelier.be

Elise Geers is a jewellery designer with her own shop on the fashionable Kortrijksepoortstraat. She creates unique handmade necklaces and wedding rings, as well as selling work by other designers.

- 235 **TOUCHÉ**
Kalandestraat 1
Central Ghent ①
+32 (0)9 233 14 22
www.touche-gent.be

Sofie Taillieu sells fashionable shoes by Italian, Spanish and Danish designers. Her shop occupies a strange modern brick building with curved walls and round windows. The store stocks labels that you don't find easily, along with bags and gloves to complete the look.



The 5 most CURIOUS BUILDINGS

276 WINTER CIRCUS

Sint-Pieters-
nieuwstraat 9
University Quarter ⑥

Many people have never been inside the huge circus hidden behind the shops on Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat. The top of the dome can just be seen from the street corner outside No. 108. The circus was built in 1893 and reconstructed after a fire in 1920. It once staged huge circus shows for audiences of 3,400, but the vast circular space now lies empty and abandoned. The city now has plans to develop the building as a concert hall.

277 MASONS' GUILD HOUSE

Cataloniëstraat 1
Central Ghent ①

The Masons' Guild House was built in a flamboyant Gothic style opposite the Sint-Niklaaskerk to show off the stone carving skills of the city's masons. It eventually disappeared behind a later building. People thought it had been demolished and so in 1913 a replica was constructed at Graslei 8. The original was later found during building work and six modern dancing figures were added at the top.

278 VENETIAN FAÇADES

Lammerstraat 1
University Quarter ⑥

Not many people notice the curious white façade in the Lammerstraat built in Venetian Gothic style. It was constructed in 1851 to provide a single façade for six shops. Nothing has survived at street level, but the upper two floors have retained the strange Venetian windows and Byzantine details.

279 HET PIANOHUIS

Stoppelstraat 35
Bijloke Quarter ③

This curious corner house was built in 2007 as a guest house for pianists. The architect designed the oddly shaped windows to suggest the shape of a grand piano.

280 BELGACOM BUILDING

Keizer Karelstraat
Central Ghent ①

The Belgacom building was once voted the ugliest building in Ghent. You may agree with the verdict when you see the grey concrete block built for the national telecom company in the 1970s. It was once threatened with demolition, but the building is now due to be converted into an upmarket hotel and restaurant.



The 5 best places to find STREET ART BY ROA

361 THE STORK

Hagelandkaai 39
Dampoort ⑧

The mysterious street artist ROA has painted beautiful works featuring wild animals in London, New York and Paris. But he started out in his home town of Ghent, where several works have survived. One of the most spectacular is a stork on the side wall of a student house near Dampoort station. The bird is painted with one leg raised so that it looks as if it is stepping over a street sign.

362 THE RAVEN

Ketelvest 73
Central Ghent ①

Stand on the bridge over the Ketelvaart canal and you will spot a black raven painted by ROA on a blank wall behind Panos bakery. Here, as always, the artist obtained permission from the building's owner before he started to paint the wall.

363 OLD MALMAR FACTORY

Bijgaardepark
Nijverheidstraat
Dampoort ⑧

ROA painted some 50 animals on the walls of an abandoned metalworking factory in the Bijgaardepark. The factory is soon to be demolished, but the city has decided to preserve some of the walls decorated with ROA's animals. They will be incorporated into a new cohousing project.

364 FOUR RABBITS

Tempelhof 28
Central Ghent ①

ROA is fond of locations in quiet side streets where no one ever goes. In one hidden corner of Ghent, he has painted four sleeping rabbits on a blank white wall. In London, he painted a huge rabbit on the wall of a recording studio in Hackney. The local council tried to paint it over, but a Facebook campaign saved the work.

365 THE SLEEPING BUFFALO

Kapelaanstraat
Dampoort ⑧

'Ghent is a mellow city where pretty much everything is possible,' ROA once said in an interview. His sleeping animals seem to embody this mellow mood perfectly. This slumbering buffalo is painted on a blank wall belonging to a Turkish wholesale food store in a quiet street near the Sint-Baafs Abbey.





STUDIOMIE

20 PLACES TO SLEEP

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The 5 most authentic FESTIVALS

421 GENTSE FEESTEN

www.gentsefeesten.be

It started out in 1969 as a small festival with a few local bands on a makeshift stage. Now the Gentse Feesten is the biggest street festival in Europe, attracting more than two million revellers. People come for the music, the beer, but most of all for the wild atmosphere that lasts ten days and nights, beginning on the Friday before the 21 July Belgian national holiday.

422 ODEGAND

www.odegand.be

A magical festival of classical music is held in the late summer in various venues along the canals. Small ensembles and soloists perform for 45 minutes in unexpected locations. The audiences move around by canal boat, sampling an eclectic programme of classical, jazz, fado and techno. The festival ends with a free waterfront concert on the Graslei.

423 PRINSENHOF- FEESTEN

www.prinsenhof-gent.be

This friendly street festival takes place over one weekend in September in the Prinsenhof neighbourhood, where a 15th-century palace once stood. Its attractions include a flea market, a procession through the old quarter, jazz bands and endless street food.

424 GHENT SIX DAYS

[Citadelpark](#) ⑤

www.lottozesdaagse.be

This tough cycling race has been held every winter since 1922 in the Kuipke velodrome in the Citadelpark. Cycling fans flock here on damp November nights to cheer on professional cyclists who complete thousands of laps over six days. By the end, the air is thick with the smell of beer, hamburgers and damp sweat.

425 GHENT LIGHT FESTIVAL

www.lichtfestivalgent.be

Ghent organises a light festival every three years in the depths of winter. Skilled artists and designers create extraordinary light effects including entire buildings made out of coloured light bulbs.