

The 5 best restaurants to EAT LIKE A BELGIAN

6 **AU REPOS DE
LA MONTAGNE**
**Montagne de
Saint-Job 39**
Uccle ⑤
+32 (0)2 375 30 53

A steep lane leads from Place Saint-Job to one of the most nostalgic restaurants in Brussels. Located in a rural corner of Uccle, this former cafe is furnished with a tiled floor, wooden tables and old paintings. Locals come here for the friendly buzz and the chef's classic Belgian cooking.

7 **LES BRASSINS**
Rue Keyenveld 36
Ixelles ⑤
+32 (0)2 512 69 99
lesbrassins.com

Located in the street where Audrey Hepburn was born, this is one of the best traditional brasseries in Brussels. Locals and Europeans find their way to this dingy back street to enjoy the hearty Belgian cooking, with specialities to sustain you through a cold winter night like *stoemp saucisse* (sausage and mashed potato) and *lapin à la kriek* (rabbit in beer sauce). The beer list includes some rare bottles.

8 **TOUCAN BRASSERIE**
Avenue Louis
Lepoutre 1
Ixelles ⑤
+32 (0)2 345 30 17
toucanbrasserie.com

Here is a noisy, crowded French-style brasserie with friendly young staff and tasty cooking. You come here to eat familiar brasserie cooking like *croquettes aux crevettes grises* (North Sea shrimp croquettes) and *jambonneau* (a hefty knuckle of ham). The sister restaurant Toucan sur Mer up the road serves huge plates of seafood in a setting that evokes the French Atlantic coast.

9 **LE WINE BAR SABLON
DES MAROLLES**
Rue Haute 198
Marolles ③
+32 (0)496 82 01 05
winebarsablon.be

This beautiful restaurant decorated with 19th-century oil paintings is much more than just a wine bar. Located in a 17th-century house in the heart of the Marolles, it is one of the city's finest bistros. The chef creates inventive dishes based on traditional Belgian and French recipes. The wine list ranges from French classics to new organic wines.

10 **FIN DE SIÈCLE**
Rue des Chartreux 9
Dansaert Quarter ②
+32 (0)2 512 51 23

No name. No menu. And definitely no credit cards. This is a very basic restaurant in the heart of Brussels. You have to wait by the old cash register until seats come free. Then you are squeezed into a space at a long wooden table. The kitchen cooks hearty Belgian dishes like beef stewed in Chimay beer or grilled lamb served with baked potatoes and salad. We love this place.



60 PLACES FOR A DRINK

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The 5 hippest CONCEPT STORES

161 HUNTING AND COLLECTING

Rue des Chartreux 17
Dansaert Quarter ②
+32 (0)2 512 74 77
huntingandcollecting.com

Niels Radtke and Aude Gribomont opened one of the most inspiring shops in Brussels in early 2010. As the name says, they hunt and collect an eclectic and edgy assortment of clothes, books and objects. They also exhibit art in the basement, publish a magazine and hold the occasional event.

162 MARDI

Rue du Page 15
Ixelles ⑤
mardi-editions.com

Young Brussels designer Marie Smits has created an ecological label based on timeless fashion and ethical principles. She sells her clothes in a stylish art nouveau concept store along with jewellery, accessories and books.

163 TICH

Rue de Namur 25
Sablon ③
+32 (0)2 503 83 30

This smart concept store near the Royal Palace combines a coffee shop, a vegan restaurant, a gift store and a grocery corner. It's a bright, spacious place with a window counter, comfortable armchairs and wooden steps strewn with cushions. You can drop in to pick up a coffee made with almond milk, or a bag of quinoa, or even a poster of a *New Yorker* cover.

164 MR-EGO

Rue des Pierres 29
Central Brussels ①
+32 (0)2 502 47 87
mr-ego.be

A fun place to hunt for quirky clothes by brands like Pharmacy Industry and Etnies. It's also a good place to check posters and fliers for upcoming concerts.

165 URBAN THERAPY

Rue de Flandre 84
Dansaert Quarter ②
+32 (0)2 319 44 42
urbantherapy.store

Rue Blaes 96-B
Marolles ③

Anis and Céline have created an intriguing concept store that resembles a cabinet of curiosities. The owners have roamed the world to find inspiring products, including an impressive collection of terrariums from Paris. They have added unique personal touches, like a little glass of mint tea as you wander around the store, terrarium workshops and Sunday brunch with a performance by an opera singer.



The 5 finest ART NOUVEAU BUILDINGS *open to the public*

236 HORTA MUSEUM

Rue Américaine 25
Saint-Gilles ⑥
+32 (0)2 543 04 90
hortamuseum.be

Victor Horta's private home and studio in Saint-Gilles commune was turned into a museum in 1961. Horta designed everything from the door handles to the astonishing attic.



237 OLD ENGLAND

Montagne
de la Cour 2
Central Brussels ①
+32 (0)2 545 01 30
mim.be

This flamboyant art nouveau department store was designed by Paul Saintenoy using glass and wrought iron. It is now occupied by the Museum of Musical Instruments.

238 LA MAISON AUTRIQUE

Chaussée de
Haecht 266
Schaerbeek ⑨
+32 (0)2 215 66 00
autrique.be

One of the most inspiring buildings in Brussels, the Maison Autrique was built by Victor Horta in 1893 and restored by the comic book illustrator François Schuitem in 2004. Schuitem imaginatively added details that hint at the lives of the people who once lived here, some of them pure fantasy, like the attic crammed with the imagined collection of the eccentric inventor Axel Wappendorf.

239 MAISON CAUCHIE

Rue des Francs 5
Etterbeek ④
+32 (0)2 733 86 84
cauchie.be

A remarkable art nouveau house built by architect and decorator Paul Cauchie. The architect added the delicate sgraffito murals on the façade to advertise his skills as a decorator. Open every Saturday and the first Sunday of the month.

240 COMIC STRIP MUSEUM

Rue des Sables 20
Central Brussels ①
+32 (0)2 219 19 80
cbbd.be

The comic strip museum occupies a former department store built by Victor Horta. The museum has a small exhibition on the ground floor devoted to the many demolished Horta buildings.

The 5 best HIDDEN PARKS

301 **PARC D'EGMONT**

**Rue aux Laines 1,
Boulevard de
Waterloo 31 and 38
Sablon** ③

Here is one of the loveliest parks in the city, though many people do not even know it exists. The park has a few benches, a statue of Peter Pan and a former orangerie where you can take afternoon tea.

302 **JARDIN BOTANIQUE JEAN MASSART**

**Chaussée de
Wavre 1850
Suburbs
+32 (0)2 775 75 75
gardens.brussels**

For more than a century, the Jean Massart botanical garden was almost unknown. Founded by the botanist Jean Massart in 1922, this secluded garden mainly served to educate university students about plants and trees. But this tiny green space on the edge of the city has been lovingly restored, and is now open to the public. You can now admire the collection of rare plants, enter the greenhouses and sit out under the trees at a summer cafe.

303 **PARC TENBOSCH**

**Chaussée de
Vleurgat
Square
Henri Michaux
Ixelles** ⑤

It's all too easy to walk straight past this tiny Ixelles park hidden behind the Indian embassy. But go down the little lane and you will discover a pond with turtles, a playground and a sandpit hidden behind a circular hedge.

304 **PARC TOURNAY- SOLVAY**

**Chaussée de la Hulpe
Watermael-Boitsfort**

This is a romantic landscaped park on the forest's edge where the industrialist Ernest Solvay built a country house in 1878. The park is a romantic spot to wander, with elegant iron bridges, a pond and a secret rose garden. Abandoned in the 1980s, the neo-Renaissance château was recently renovated by Brussels architects Maz.

305 **PARC FAIDER**

**Rue Faider 86
Ixelles** ⑤

Almost no one knows about this park. It is hidden behind a town house, reached through the coach gate. Locals bring their children, sit with a book, eat a sandwich. It is one of the small pleasures of this city.



The 5 best places to find STREET ART

361 FARM PROD

Corner of Rue
des Capucins and
Rue des Tanneurs
Marolles ③
farmprod-collective.be

Street artist Piotr Szlachta of the Farm Prod collective has created a striking interpretation of Pieter Bruegel's *Landscape with the Flight into Egypt*. Located down a quiet side street in the Marolles, it gives the story a modern twist by referring to the migrant crisis. Created in 2019, it forms part of a street art trail to mark the 450th anniversary of Pieter Bruegel's death.

362 BONOM

Chaussée de
Wavre 268
Ixelles ⑤
bonom.be

Street artist Bonom paints mysterious animal skeletons in unexpected locations across the city. Some disappear within hours, but others survive. His most impressive work involves several dinosaur skeletons painted on the steps leading up to the Museum of Natural Science.

363 JEF AÉROSOL

Rue du Chêne 7
Central Brussels ①
jefaerosol.com

French street artist Jef Aérosol sprayed stencil graffiti portraits of famous rock singers such as John Lennon and Bob Dylan on the grey façade of a downtown record shop. He has also sprayed stencils of a crouching boy in various locations, including Rue des Chartreux.

364 GROUND UP

Avenue Louise 480
Ixelles ⑤

Street artists Koolhaas, Mino1 and Alvari were commissioned in 2020 to design three giant murals to cover the service tower of a 1972 skyscraper. The artists created the abstract artworks on vinyl stickers that were then attached to the building by a team of professional climbers. The landmark mural can be spotted at the south end of Avenue Louise.

365 ISAAC CORDAL STREET ART

Impasse de la
Tête de Boeuf /
Petite Rue
des Bouchers 2 /
Impasse de la Fidélité
Central Brussels ①
parcoursstreetart.brussels

Look carefully and you might spot one of the tiny men placed in odd spots by Spanish street artist Isaac Cordal. The 12 miniature cement figures include a man in a suit balanced on a ledge next to Delirium Café, a naked man standing on a lamp post in a downtown alley and a business man standing on an electricity cable in the heart of the old town. The figures can be tracked down using an app.



The 5 best SMALL HOTELS

401 **JARDIN
SECRET HOTEL**
Rue du Berger 22
Ixelles ⑤
+32 (0)2 510 83 49
jardinsecrethotel.be

Located in a narrow Ixelles street, this secret boutique hotel's entrance is through a plant shop next to the Hôtel Berger. Your room, once you find it, is decorated in a cool, modern style, with indoor plants, ferns and cacti. It overlooks an urban garden with a heated swimming pool, which adds to the romance. Some people may find the concept a bit too weird, but it is definitely original and not too expensive.

402 **THE SCOTT**
Place Loix 1
Saint-Gilles ⑥
+32 (0)2 541 48 98
thescotthotel.be

This modern design hotel on a quiet square is perfect for exploring the restaurants and bars of Saint-Gilles. The interior was recently redesigned by Michel Penneman in a hip contemporary style inspired by the fiction of F. Scott Fitzgerald. The eccentric art, old books and burlesque details aim to recreate the mood of the 1920s. Some of the guest rooms have balconies with interesting views.

403 **HOTEL A LA
GRANDE CLOCHE**
Place Rouppe 10
Central Brussels ①
+32 (0)2 899 20 22
hotelgrandecloche.com

The oldest hotel in Brussels, La Grande Cloche occupies a 19th-century building on an elegant square. It was restored in 2019 to create a cool, quirky hotel with smart lighting, vintage chairs and odd Brussels details.

404 **MADE IN LOUISE**
Rue Veydt 40
Louise Quarter ⑤
+32 (0)2 537 40 33
madeinlouise.com

This family-run 18th-century townhouse hotel is located in a quiet back street near Avenue Louise. It has been one of our favourite addresses in Brussels for many years, but is now even more desirable following a major renovation in 2012. The bright white lobby, the stylish little bar and the billiard room add immensely to its appeal. Yet it remains a very friendly hotel.

405 **9HOTEL CENTRAL**
Rue des Colonies 10
Central Brussels ①
+32 (0)2 504 99 10
9-hotel-central-brussels.com

This is a cool hotel in a tall town house just beside Gare Centrale. Designed by the Barcelona architects Castel Veciana, it has a relaxed lounge with Nordic elements like wood stools and bare light bulbs and a quiet breakfast room with rows of tables that can be used for co-working or hosting a meeting.

The 5 best GUIDED TOURS

436 BRUSSELS GUEUZE MUSEUM

Rue Gheude 56
Anderlecht ⑦
+32 (0)2 521 49 28
cantillon.be

The last surviving Gueuze brewery in Brussels is hidden away in a back street near Gare du Midi. Occupying an industrial building from 1900, it employs natural fermentation to brew a distinctive, sour beer. You can wander around the building, inspect the fermentation tanks in the attic, and sample a free glass of Cantillon before you leave.

437 ARAU ART NOUVEAU BUS TOUR

Boulevard
Adolphe Max 55
Central Brussels ①
+32 (0)2 219 33 45
arau.org

The urban action group Arau has been running tours of Brussels architecture since 1969. The most popular is a three-hour bus tour that looks at art nouveau buildings from the period 1893-1914.

438 PRO VELO

Rue de Dublin 19
Ixelles ⑤
+32 (0)2 502 73 55
provelo.org

Here is a slow and convivial way to discover the city's secret places. The cycling action group Pro Velo organises three-hour bike tours of the city. Tours focus on themes like art nouveau architecture, lost cinemas and Magritte. The Pro Velo shop also stocks maps and guides to plan your own bike ride.

