



# Belgium & Luxembourg

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## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ De Stove (p126)
- ➔ De Ruyffelaer (p128)
- ➔ L'Ogenblik (p112)
- ➔ In 't Nieuwe Museum (p126)

## Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Hôtel Le Dixseptième (p110)
- ➔ Hôtel Simoncini (p131)
- ➔ Auberge Aal Veinen (p134)
- ➔ B&B Dieltiens (p126)

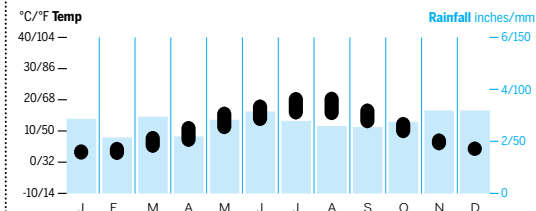
## Why Go?

Stereotypes of comic books, chips and sublime chocolates are just the start in eccentric little Belgium; its self-deprecating people have quietly spent centuries producing some of Europe's finest art and architecture. Bilingual Brussels is the dynamic yet personable EU capital, but also sports what's arguably the world's most beautiful city square. Flat, Flemish Flanders has many other alluring medieval cities, all easily linked by regular train hops. In hilly, French-speaking Wallonia, the attractions are contrastingly rural – castle villages, outdoor activities and extensive cave systems.

Independent Luxembourg, the EU's richest country, is compact and hilly with its own wealth of castle villages. The grand duchy's capital city is famed for banking but also sports a fairytale Unesco-listed historic old town. And from the brilliant beers of Belgium to the sparkling wines of Luxembourg's Moselle Valley, there's plenty to lubricate some of Europe's best dining. Welcome to the good life.

## When to Go

### Brussels



**Pre-Easter week-ends** Belgium hosts many of Europe's weirdest carnivals, not just at Mardi Gras.

**Feb & Mar** Both countries symbolically burn the spirit of winter on the first weekend after Carnival.

**Jul & Aug** Countless festivals, hotels packed at the coast but cheaper in Brussels and Luxembourg City.

# Belgium & Luxembourg Highlights

1 Come on weekdays off-season to appreciate the picture-perfect canal scenes of medieval **Bruges** (p123), without the tourist overload.

2 Be wooed by underappreciated **Ghent** (p119), one of Europe's greatest all-round discoveries.

3 Savour the 'world's most beautiful square', then seek out the remarkable cafes, chocolate shops and art nouveau survivors in **Brussels** (p106).

4 Follow fashion to hip yet historic **Antwerp** (p115).

5 Spend the weekend in Unesco-listed **Luxembourg City** (p130) then head out to the grand duchy's evocative castle villages.

6 Ponder the heartbreaking futility of WWI in Flanders' fields around meticulously rebuilt **Ypres** (p127).

7 Explore the caves and castles of rural **Wallonia** (p129).

