Antwerp Travel Guide

Discover Antwerp: Belgium's Diamond City

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Things to do in Antwerp

Landmarks & Monuments

Antwerp's architectural heritage spans centuries, from medieval fortifications to Art Nouveau masterpieces. These iconic landmarks define the city's skyline and tell the story of its rich history as a trading powerhouse.



Must See

Antwerp Central Station

30-45 minutes No Booking Needed

Map

Consistently ranked among the **world's most beautiful train stations**, this architectural marvel combines neo-Baroque grandeur with modern functionality. The station's stunning dome, ornate façade, and magnificent waiting hall make it a destination in itself. Completed in 1905, it features a dramatic iron and glass train shed that spans multiple levels.



Top Pick

Het Steen (The Stone Castle)

1-1.5 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Antwerp's oldest building and medieval fortress, dating from the early 13th century. This **iconic riverside castle** served as a prison and maritime museum. Recently renovated, it now houses an interactive visitor center exploring Antwerp's history as a port city and offers panoramic views from its terrace.



Top Pick

Brabo Fountain

15 minutes No Booking Needed

Map

The dramatic centerpiece of Grote Markt depicting the legendary hero **Silvius Brabo** throwing the hand of the giant Druon Antigoon into the Scheldt River. This 1887 sculpture by Jef Lambeaux symbolizes Antwerp's founding myth and the origin of its name (hand werpen - hand throwing).

Tips for Landmarks & Monuments

- **Photography:** Visit Central Station early morning (7-8 AM) for fewer crowds and beautiful natural light streaming through the glass dome
- **Free Entry:** Het Steen's exterior and terrace are accessible without tickets, perfect for budget travelers
- **Combine Attractions:** The Brabo Fountain, City Hall, and guild houses in Grote Markt can all be seen in one visit

Museums & Galleries

Antwerp's museum scene reflects its artistic legacy, from Rubens to contemporary fashion. The city houses world-class collections spanning Old Masters, modern art, maritime history, and cutting-edge design.



Must See Book Ahead

Royal Museum of Fine Arts (KMSKA)

2-3 hours Book Ahead

Map

After an 11-year renovation, this **spectacular museum** houses 600 years of art history, featuring works by Rubens, Van Dyck, Fouquet, and Ensor. The collection spans from Flemish Primitives to contemporary art, displayed in beautifully restored galleries that blend historic architecture with modern design. The rooftop sculpture terrace offers stunning city views.



Must See Book Ahead

Rubens House (Rubenshuis)

1.5-2 hours Book Ahead

Map

The former home and studio of Baroque master **Peter Paul Rubens**, beautifully preserved with period furnishings and his original artwork. The Italian-inspired palazzo features a stunning baroque garden, self-portraits, and works by Rubens and his contemporaries. The historic artist’s residence is closed for renovations and is expected to reopen no earlier than 2030; the Rubens Experience, garden and library are open.



Top Pick

Museum aan de Stroom (MAS)

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

This striking 60-meter tower celebrates Antwerp's **maritime heritage and global connections**. The building itself is an architectural marvel with red sandstone and curved glass. Exhibitions explore the city's port history, world cultures, and trade routes. The rooftop panorama (free access) offers 360-degree views over the city and harbor.



Top Pick Book Ahead

MoMu - Fashion Museum

1.5-2 hours Book Ahead

Map

Located in the heart of the fashion district, MoMu celebrates Antwerp's status as a **fashion capital**. The museum showcases the Antwerp Six designers, contemporary fashion exhibitions, and the city's textile heritage. Rotating exhibitions feature both established and emerging designers, making it essential for fashion enthusiasts.



Top Pick

Plantin-Moretus Museum

1.5-2 hours No Booking Needed

Map

The world's only **UNESCO-listed printing museum** and publishing house. The museum is closed until 5 December 2026; check its site before planning a visit, rare manuscripts, and works by Rubens who illustrated many books. The museum tells the story of the Plantin-Moretus family's revolutionary impact on European printing and publishing.



Notable

Red Star Line Museum

1.5-2 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Powerful museum in the original shipping company headquarters that sent **2 million emigrants to America** (1873-1934). Personal stories, artifacts, and interactive displays chronicle the hopes and hardships of those seeking a new life. Particularly moving for visitors with Belgian or European ancestry who may discover family connections.

Tips for Museums & Galleries

- **Museum Pass:** Consider the Antwerp City Card for free or discounted museum access
- **Book Ahead:** Rubens Experience has limited capacity and recommends advance booking; the historic Rubenshuis residence is closed. Check KMSKA’s booking requirements before visiting.
- **Some Antwerp museums offer free admission on the first Tuesday of the month to Antwerp residents with an A-card; check each museum’s current terms.**
- **Rooftop Views:** MAS panorama is always free, even if you skip the museum exhibitions

Religious Sites

Antwerp's churches are architectural masterpieces housing priceless art treasures. The Cathedral of Our Lady dominates the skyline, while smaller churches reveal intimate baroque splendor and centuries of devotional art.



Must See

Cathedral of Our Lady (Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekathedraal)

1-1.5 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Belgium's largest Gothic church. The cathedral tower is part of the UNESCO-listed Belfries of Belgium and France; the cathedral itself is not a separate World Heritage site. The cathedral houses four masterpieces by Rubens including 'The Elevation of the Cross' and 'The Descent from the Cross'. The soaring nave, intricate stone carvings, and magnificent stained glass create an awe-inspiring atmosphere. Don't miss the treasury. The tower is not included in regular visitor access; check the cathedral’s official tour calendar for special guided visits.



Notable

St. Charles Borromeo Church

45 minutes No Booking Needed

Map

A **baroque jewel** designed by Jesuit architects with collaboration from Rubens, who created 39 ceiling paintings (destroyed by fire in 1718). The church features an ornate marble façade, elaborate baroque interior, and stunning chapel decorations. The Lady Chapel contains beautiful carved wooden furniture and the tower offers city views.



Notable

St. Paul's Church

45 minutes No Booking Needed

Map

Late Gothic church with a sumptuous **baroque interior** featuring over 50 paintings by Van Dyck, Rubens, and Jordaens. The church also houses an impressive baroque sculptural ensemble depicting the Calvary with life-sized figures. The combination of Gothic architecture and baroque decoration creates a unique atmosphere.



Notable

St. James' Church

45 minutes No Booking Needed

Map

Magnificent late Gothic church with rich baroque interior, most famous as the **burial place of Peter Paul Rubens**. The church contains numerous art treasures including works by Rubens, Van Dyck, and other Flemish masters. The Rubens Chapel features his painting 'Our Lady Surrounded by Saints' above his tomb.

Tips for Religious Sites

- **Modest Dress:** Cover shoulders and knees when visiting churches
- **Mass Times:** Churches may close during services; check schedules
- **Combined Ticket:** Some churches offer joint tickets with nearby attractions
- **Free Entry:** Many churches have free admission but request donations
- **Lighting:** Bring coins for illuminating artworks in darker chapels

Squares & Streets

Antwerp's public spaces pulse with life, from the historic Grote Markt to vibrant shopping streets. These squares and thoroughfares have been gathering places for centuries, hosting markets, celebrations, and daily urban life.



Must See

Grote Markt (Grand Place)

30-45 minutes No Booking Needed

Map

Antwerp's magnificent main square surrounded by **ornate guild houses** and the Renaissance City Hall. The square's centerpiece is the Brabo Fountain depicting the city's founding legend. Historic guild houses with elaborate gables line the cobblestoned plaza, creating one of Europe's most beautiful market squares. Cafés and restaurants offer perfect spots for people-watching.



Top Pick

Meir Shopping Street

1-2 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Antwerp's premier **shopping boulevard**, one of Belgium's most popular retail streets. This pedestrianized thoroughfare features international brands, local boutiques, and historic buildings including the stunning Stadsfeestzaal shopping center housed in a former palace. The street connects Central Station to the historic center.



Notable

Groenplaats

30 minutes No Booking Needed

Map

Lively square at the foot of the Cathedral, popular for its **café terraces and events**. The square features a statue of Rubens and serves as a major tram hub. It's the perfect spot to enjoy a Belgian beer while admiring the cathedral spire. The square hosts markets, concerts, and outdoor screenings.



Notable

Hoogstraat & Kloosterstraat

1 hour No Booking Needed

Map

Charming cobbled streets in the historic center featuring **antique shops, galleries, and boutiques**. These atmospheric lanes showcase medieval Antwerp with well-preserved facades, hidden courtyards, and artisan workshops. Perfect for leisurely strolling and discovering unique vintage finds, art, and local crafts.

Tips for Squares & Streets

- **Evening Ambiance:** Grote Markt is beautifully lit at night, perfect for dinner with a view
- **Sunday Shopping:** Most Meir shops close Sundays; plan accordingly
- **Market Days:** Check for special markets in Grote Markt (antiques, Christmas market)
- **Photo Timing:** Morning light (9-11 AM) is best for Grote Markt photography

Neighborhoods & Districts

Each of Antwerp's districts has its own character, from the trendy Zuid art quarter to the multicultural vibrancy of the Diamond District. Exploring neighborhoods reveals the authentic pulse of daily life in this diverse city.



Top Pick

Het Zuid (The South)

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Antwerp's **trendiest neighborhood**, known for contemporary art galleries, designer boutiques, and upscale dining. The area surrounds the Royal Museum of Fine Arts and features beautiful Belle Époque architecture. Hip cafés, vintage shops, and Sunday antique market along Leopold de Waelplaats make it perfect for a leisurely afternoon. The neighborhood pulses with creative energy.



Top Pick

't Eilandje (Little Island)

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Former docklands transformed into a **hip waterfront district** with modern architecture, the MAS museum, and renovated warehouses housing lofts, restaurants, and bars. The neighborhood offers harbor views, maritime heritage, and cutting-edge urban development. Don't miss the Red Star Line Museum and the vibrant restaurant scene along the docks.



Top Pick

Fashion District

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Clustered around Nationalestraat and Kammenstraat, this area showcases **avant-garde Belgian fashion**. Home to boutiques by the Antwerp Six designers and emerging talents, the district established Antwerp's global fashion reputation. MoMu fashion museum anchors the neighborhood. Flagship stores of Dries Van Noten, Ann Demeulemeester, and Walter Van Beirendonck attract fashion pilgrims worldwide.



Notable

Diamond District

1-2 hours No Booking Needed

Map

The heart of the global diamond trade, Antwerp is a major diamond-trading center; avoid a fixed global market-share figure unless it is tied to a current, clearly defined measure.. Centered around Hoveniersstraat and the Central Station area, this unique quarter features hundreds of diamond traders, cutters, and retailers. The multicultural atmosphere includes kosher restaurants and synagogues reflecting the area's Jewish heritage. Visit DIVA museum to learn about the trade.



Notable

Zurenborg

1-1.5 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Residential neighborhood famous for its spectacular **Art Nouveau and Belle Époque architecture**. The Cogels-Osylei street is called the most beautiful street in Antwerp, featuring ornate mansions with intricate facades. This peaceful area offers a glimpse into Antwerp's gilded age through its remarkably preserved townhouses. Perfect for architecture enthusiasts and photographers.

Tips for Neighborhoods & Districts

- **Sunday Market:** Het Zuid's antique market (Leopold de Waelplaats) is a Sunday morning tradition
- **Diamond Shopping:** Only buy from certified dealers; avoid street vendors
- **Walking Tours:** Join a guided architecture walk in Zurenborg to appreciate building details
- **Evening Scene:** 't Eilandje comes alive at sunset with waterfront dining

Parks & Gardens

Antwerp's green spaces offer peaceful retreats from urban energy. From the expansive City Park to intimate historic gardens, these areas provide locals and visitors with places to relax, picnic, and enjoy nature.



Top Pick

Middelheim Museum & Sculpture Park

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Unique **open-air sculpture museum** in a 30-hectare park featuring over 400 sculptures by renowned artists including Rodin, Moore, and Ai Weiwei. The outdoor galleries blend art with nature in meadows, forests, and gardens. Free admission makes it accessible to all. Perfect combination of contemporary art and peaceful green space.



Notable

Antwerp City Park (Stadspark)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed

Map

The city's largest and oldest public park, created in **English landscape style** in 1887. Features romantic walking paths, a decorative pond, Victorian bandstand, and monumental trees. The park hosts outdoor concerts, theater performances, and is perfect for jogging, picnicking, or relaxing. Adjacent to the zoo and Cogels-Osylei neighborhood.



Optional

Botanical Garden (Plantentuin)

45 minutes - 1 hour No Booking Needed

Map

Historic botanical garden dating from 1825, featuring **diverse plant collections** in Victorian greenhouses and outdoor gardens. The intimate space includes tropical plants, cacti, and seasonal displays. A peaceful oasis in the city center, perfect for plant enthusiasts and those seeking quiet contemplation. The historical greenhouses are architectural gems.



Optional

Rivierenhof Park

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Expansive 130-hectare park in Deurne district, offering **woods, meadows, and recreational facilities**. Features a castle, playgrounds, sports areas, and extensive walking/cycling paths. The park's diverse landscapes include formal gardens and wild nature areas. Popular with families and outdoor enthusiasts seeking space away from the city center.

Tips for Parks & Gardens

- **Free Admission:** All parks are free; Middelheim Museum is also free year-round
- **Best Season:** Spring (April-May) for blooming flowers; autumn for foliage

- **Picnic Spots:** Stadspark and Middelheim allow picnicking - pack Belgian treats
- **Bike-Friendly:** Rent a Velo bike to explore larger parks like Rivierenhof

Tours & Activities

Experience Antwerp through guided tours, unique activities, and immersive experiences. From beer tastings to harbor cruises, these curated activities reveal the city's character and hidden stories.



Top Pick Book Ahead

Antwerp Zoo

3-4 hours Book Ahead

One of the **world's oldest zoos** (1843) right next to Central Station, combining historic Victorian architecture with modern habitats. Home to over 5,000 animals including elephants, hippos, and rare species. The beautifully landscaped grounds feature the stunning Egyptian Temple and Moorish building. Perfect family activity with educational programs and feeding demonstrations throughout the day.



Top Pick Book Ahead

Flandria Boat Tours

50 minutes - 2.5 hours Book Ahead

Scenic **harbor and river cruises** revealing Antwerp's maritime character from the water. Tours pass the historic port, modern container terminals, and architectural landmarks. Audio guides explain the city's evolution as a trading hub. Options include 50-minute city tours or 2.5-hour extended harbor cruises. Departures from Steenplein near Het Steen castle.



Top Pick Book Ahead

Belgian Beer Tasting Experience

2-3 hours Book Ahead

Discover Belgium's legendary **beer culture** through guided tastings at historic pubs and specialized beer cafés. Learn about Trappist ales, lambics, and local Antwerp brews like De Koninck. Expert guides explain brewing traditions, proper serving techniques, and food pairings. Tours often include visits to breweries and conclude at atmospheric beer halls like Kulminator or De Vagant.



Top Pick Book Ahead

Walking Food Tour

3-4 hours Book Ahead

Culinary journey through Antwerp's neighborhoods, sampling **Belgian specialties** including frites, waffles, speculoos, and local cheeses. Knowledgeable guides share stories about food traditions, recommend authentic restaurants, and reveal hidden culinary gems. Tours typically include 6-8 tastings at markets, bakeries, and family-run establishments. A delicious way to explore the city.



Notable

Chocolate Workshop

2-3 hours Book Ahead

Hands-on **Belgian chocolate making classes** where you create your own pralines under expert guidance. Learn about cocoa sourcing, tempering techniques, and the history of Belgian chocolate craftsmanship. Take home your delicious creations. Several chocolatiers offer workshops including The Chocolate Line and Burie. Perfect activity for families and sweet-toothed travelers.



Notable

Rubens Walking Tour

2.5-3 hours Book Ahead

Follow in the footsteps of **Peter Paul Rubens**, visiting his house, the churches containing his masterpieces, and locations significant to his life. Expert art historians provide context about baroque Antwerp, Rubens' artistic techniques, and his influence on European art. Tours include the Rubenshuis, Cathedral, and St. James' Church. Essential for art lovers.



Notable

Bike Tour of Antwerp

3-4 hours Book Ahead

Explore the city on two wheels like a local, covering **more ground than walking tours**. Routes include historic center, harbor area, trendy neighborhoods, and hidden corners. Guides share insider tips and local perspectives. Bike-friendly Antwerp makes cycling safe and enjoyable. Tours typically include bike rental, helmet, and sometimes breaks for tastings or photo stops.

Tips for Tours & Activities

- **Book Ahead:** Popular tours (zoo, boat tours, food tours) sell out, especially weekends and summer
- **Combination Tickets:** Zoo + Aquatopia aquarium combo saves money
- **Weather Dependent:** Have indoor alternatives ready; boat tours may cancel in bad weather
- **Group Discounts:** Many tours offer reduced rates for families or groups of 4+
- **Free Walking Tours:** Tip-based free walking tours depart daily from Grote Markt

Day Trips & Excursions

Antwerp's central location makes it an ideal base for exploring Belgium and beyond. Medieval cities, coastal towns, and cultural landmarks are all within easy reach by train or car.



Must See

Bruges

Full day No Booking Needed

Map

The **Venice of the North**, a perfectly preserved medieval city just 1 hour by train. Wander cobbled streets, cruise romantic canals, climb the Belfry, and savor Belgian chocolate. The UNESCO-listed historic center feels like stepping into a fairytale. Don't miss the Markt square, Begijnhof, and Groeningemuseum. One of Europe's most enchanting cities.



Must See

Ghent

Full day No Booking Needed

Map

Vibrant university city combining **medieval splendor with youthful energy**, 45 minutes by train. Highlights include Gravensteen Castle, St. Bavo's Cathedral (home to the Ghent Altarpiece), picturesque Graslei waterfront, and dynamic food scene. Less touristy than Bruges but equally beautiful. The city's canal-side architecture and lively cultural scene captivate visitors.



Must See

Brussels

Full day No Booking Needed

Map

Belgium's capital city, just **40 minutes by train**, offering world-class museums, Art Nouveau architecture, and the iconic Grand Place. Visit Atomium, Manneken Pis, Royal Palace, and incredible chocolate shops. The European Quarter showcases EU institutions. Brussels perfectly balances international sophistication with Belgian charm and humor. Don't miss the comic book murals and legendary frites.



Notable

Mechelen

Half to full day No Booking Needed

Map

Often-overlooked gem **25 minutes from Antwerp**, featuring stunning churches, the UNESCO-listed Belfry, and charming old town. St. Rombouts Cathedral dominates the skyline, while the Palace of Margaret of Austria showcases Renaissance beauty. The compact center is perfect for a relaxed half-day visit. Known for excellent restaurants and furniture-making tradition.



Optional

Lier

Half day No Booking Needed

Map

Picturesque small town 20 minutes away, known for the **Zimmertoren (Zimmer Tower)** with its fascinating astronomical clock and the historic Begijnhof. This peaceful Flemish town offers canals, medieval architecture, and a slower pace. Perfect for escaping crowds while experiencing authentic Belgian town life. The town's excellent local beer, Caves, is worth tasting.



Optional

Dutch Coast & Zeeland

Full day No Booking Needed

Map

The Netherlands' southern coast lies just **1 hour north**, offering beaches, dunes, and charming fishing villages. Explore Cadzand's wide sandy beaches, the historic harbor towns of Vlissingen and Veere, or the delta works engineering marvels. Perfect summer escape for beach relaxation, cycling through polders, or sampling fresh seafood in waterside restaurants.

Tips for Day Trips & Excursions

- **Train Travel:** Belgium's efficient rail network connects cities quickly; buy tickets at www.belgiantrain.be
- **Day Pass:** Consider a rail day pass if visiting multiple cities
- **Early Start:** Depart by 9 AM to maximize sightseeing time
- **Bruges Crowds:** Arrive before 10 AM or after 4 PM to avoid peak tourist hours
- **Guided Options:** Day trip tours from Antwerp include transportation and guides

Food & Dining

Real, highly-rated Restaurants in Antwerp, sourced from Google Places (rating above 4★).



Bateau Perdu★★★★★ 5 (249)

1-2 hours

Map

Bateau Perdu is a highly-rated restaurant in Antwerp, rated 5★ from 249 reviews. Located at Oude Beurs 46, 2000 Antwerpen, Belgium.

Opening Hours

- Monday: Closed
- Tuesday: Closed
- Wednesday: Closed
- Thursday: 12:00 – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: 12:00 – 8:00 PM



Le Oui★★★★★ 4.9 (277)

1-2 hours

Map

Le Oui is a highly-rated restaurant in Antwerp, rated 4.9★ from 277 reviews. Located at Hendrik Conscienceplein 11, 2000 Antwerpen, Belgium.

Opening Hours

- Monday: Closed
- Tuesday: 6:00 – 10:00 PM
- Wednesday: 6:00 – 10:00 PM
- Thursday: 6:00 – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 6:00 – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 2:00 PM, 6:00 – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: Closed



Ox★★★★★ 4.9 (366)

1-2 hours

Map

Ox is a highly-rated restaurant in Antwerp, rated 4.9★ from 366 reviews. Located at Cadixstraat 5, 2000 Antwerpen, Belgium.

Opening Hours

- Monday: Closed
- Tuesday: 6:00 – 10:00 PM
- Wednesday: 6:00 – 10:00 PM
- Thursday: 6:00 – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 6:00 – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 6:00 – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: Closed



Lunsjes★★★★★ 4.9 (433)

1-2 hours

Map

Lunsjes is a highly-rated restaurant in Antwerp, rated 4.9★ from 433 reviews. Located at Kasteelpleinstraat 71/1, 2000 Antwerpen, Belgium.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 6:00 – 9:00 PM
- Tuesday: 6:00 – 9:00 PM
- Wednesday: Closed
- Thursday: Closed
- Friday: 6:00 – 9:00 PM
- Saturday: 6:00 – 9:00 PM
- Sunday: 6:00 – 9:00 PM



Brewers'Kitchen★★★★★ 4.9 (177)

1-2 hours

Map

Brewers'Kitchen is a highly-rated restaurant in Antwerp, rated 4.9★ from 177 reviews. Located at Oude Beurs 60, 2000 Antwerpen, Belgium.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 5:30 – 9:00 PM
- Tuesday: Closed
- Wednesday: Closed
- Thursday: 5:30 – 9:00 PM
- Friday: 5:30 – 9:00 PM
- Saturday: 5:30 – 9:00 PM
- Sunday: 5:30 – 9:00 PM



Vioryna★★★★★ 4.8 (479)

1-2 hours

Map

Vioryna is a highly-rated restaurant in Antwerp, rated 4.8★ from 479 reviews. Located at Oude Koornmarkt 60, 2000 Antwerpen, Belgium.

Opening Hours

- Monday: Closed
- Tuesday: 2:00 – 9:00 PM
- Wednesday: 1:00 – 10:00 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 9:00 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Sunday: 12:00 – 10:00 PM



Bistrot Du Nord★★★★★ 4.8 (263)

1-2 hours

Map

Bistrot Du Nord is a highly-rated restaurant in Antwerp, rated 4.8★ from 263 reviews. Located at Lange Dijkstraat 36, 2060 Antwerpen, Belgium.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 – 2:00 PM, 7:00 – 9:30 PM
- Tuesday: 12:00 – 2:00 PM, 7:00 – 9:30 PM
- Wednesday: Closed
- Thursday: 12:00 – 2:00 PM, 7:00 – 9:30 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 2:00 PM, 7:00 – 9:30 PM
- Saturday: Closed
- Sunday: Closed



Hoffy's Restaurant & Take Away★★★★★ 4.8 (2,260)

1-2 hours

Map

Hoffy's Restaurant & Take Away is a highly-rated restaurant in Antwerp, rated 4.8★ from 2260 reviews. Located at Lange Kievitstraat 52, 2018 Antwerpen, Belgium.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 10:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Tuesday: 10:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Wednesday: 10:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Thursday: 10:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 10:00 AM – 3:30 PM
- Saturday: Closed
- Sunday: 10:00 AM – 10:00 PM



Chicon★★★★★ 4.8 (1,007)

1-2 hours

Map

Chicon is a highly-rated restaurant in Antwerp, rated 4.8★ from 1007 reviews. Located at Kaasrui 6, 2000 Antwerpen, Belgium.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Tuesday: 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Wednesday: 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Thursday: 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: 12:00 – 10:00 PM



Meat Factory★★★★★ 4.7 (2,864)

1-2 hours

Map

Meat Factory is a highly-rated restaurant in Antwerp, rated 4.7★ from 2864 reviews. Located at Grote Markt 28, 2000 Antwerpen, Belgium.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Tuesday: 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Wednesday: 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Thursday: 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: 12:00 – 10:00 PM



Fine Fleur★★★★★ 4.7 (166)

1-2 hours

Map

Fine Fleur is a highly-rated restaurant in Antwerp, rated 4.7★ from 166 reviews. Located at Lange Gasthuisstraat 41b, 2000 Antwerpen, Belgium.

Opening Hours

- Monday: Closed
- Tuesday: Closed
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 2:00 PM, 6:30 – 8:00 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 2:00 PM, 6:30 – 8:00 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 2:00 PM, 6:30 – 8:00 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 2:00 PM, 6:30 – 8:00 PM
- Sunday: Closed



Pazzo★★★★★ 4.7 (925)

1-2 hours

Map

Pazzo is a highly-rated restaurant in Antwerp, rated 4.7★ from 925 reviews. Located at Oudeleeuwenrui 12, 2000 Antwerpen, Belgium.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 – 2:00 PM, 6:00 – 9:30 PM
- Tuesday: Closed
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 2:00 PM, 6:00 – 9:30 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 2:00 PM, 6:00 – 9:30 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 2:00 PM, 6:00 – 9:30 PM
- Saturday: Closed
- Sunday: Closed



Bistro Ernest★★★★★ 4.7 (731)

1-2 hours

Map

Bistro Ernest is a highly-rated restaurant in Antwerp, rated 4.7★ from 731 reviews. Located at Hoogstraat 54, 2000 Antwerpen, Belgium.

Opening Hours

- Monday: Closed
- Tuesday: Closed
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 2:30 PM, 5:30 – 9:00 PM
- Thursday: 5:30 – 9:00 PM
- Friday: 5:30 – 9:00 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 2:30 PM, 5:00 – 9:00 PM
- Sunday: 12:00 – 2:30 PM, 5:00 – 8:00 PM



Zilte★★★★★ 4.7 (644)

1-2 hours

Map

Zilte is a highly-rated restaurant in Antwerp, rated 4.7★ from 644 reviews. Located at Hanzestedenplaats 5, 2000 Antwerpen, Belgium.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 – 1:00 PM, 7:00 – 8:30 PM
- Tuesday: 12:00 – 1:00 PM, 7:00 – 8:30 PM
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 1:00 PM, 7:00 – 8:30 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 1:00 PM, 7:00 – 8:30 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 1:00 PM, 7:00 – 8:30 PM
- Saturday: Closed
- Sunday: Closed



De Pottekijker★★★★★ 4.6 (1,582)

1-2 hours

Map

De Pottekijker is a highly-rated restaurant in Antwerp, rated 4.6★ from 1582 reviews. Located at Kaasrui 5, 2000 Antwerpen, Belgium.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 5:00 – 11:00 PM
- Tuesday: 5:00 – 11:00 PM
- Wednesday: 5:00 – 11:00 PM
- Thursday: 5:00 – 11:00 PM
- Friday: 5:00 – 11:30 PM
- Saturday: 5:00 – 11:30 PM
- Sunday: 5:00 – 11:00 PM

Practical Information

Seasonal Guide to Antwerp

Best Overall: April-June & September-October - Pleasant weather, fewer crowds, and vibrant cultural scene. Spring brings blooming parks and outdoor café culture, while autumn offers comfortable temperatures for walking and museum-hopping.

Season-by-Season Breakdown:

- **Spring (March-May):** Temperatures 10-18°C (50-64°F). Parks bloom beautifully, Easter events, and increasing daylight. Book hotels early as this is peak season. Perfect for walking tours and outdoor activities.
- **Summer (June-August):** Warmest period 18-23°C (64-73°F). Longest days, outdoor festivals, and street performers. Most crowded with higher prices. Enjoy harbor-side dining and evening strolls. Some museums close Mondays.
- **Autumn (September-November):** Temperatures 10-18°C (50-64°F). Fewer tourists after September, beautiful foliage in parks, and cultural season begins. Great for museum visits and cozy café afternoons. Pack layers for variable weather.
- **Winter (December-February):** Cold 2-8°C (36-46°F), but charming Christmas markets (late November-December). Lowest hotel rates, museums less crowded. Indoor activities ideal: museums, chocolate shops, beer cafés. Magical atmosphere with festive lights in Grote Markt.

Events Calendar Highlights: Christmas Market (late Nov-Dec), Antwerp Art Weekend (May), Bollekesfeest beer festival (May), Summer Festival (August), Fashion Week (June & September).

Getting Around Antwerp

Public Transportation

Antwerp's **De Lijn** network operates trams, buses, and premetro services throughout the city. The system is efficient, affordable, and covers all major attractions.

- **Tickets:** Single ride €3, De Lijn’s current adult day ticket is €9 and its 10-journey ticket is €22. Buy from vending machines, De Lijn shops, or mobile app. Validate before boarding.
- **Key Tram Lines:** Line 3 & 5 (Central Station to Zuid), Line 7 (Station to 't Eilandje), As of 1 September 2026, tram 24 runs via Central Station and terminates at MAS; check the route planner for changes.
- **Night Buses:** Limited service Friday-Saturday nights

- **App:** Download 'De Lijn' app for routes, schedules, and mobile tickets

Velo Bike Share

Public bike-sharing with 300+ stations citywide. Perfect for exploring flat Antwerp. **Cost:** €2/hour after €6 week subscription. First 30 minutes free. Download Velo Antwerpen app to locate bikes.

Taxis & Ride-Sharing

Taxis available at stands or call +32 3 238 38 38. **Uber** operates in Antwerp. Expect €10-15 for cross-city trips. Not necessary for city center exploration.

Walking

The historic center is highly walkable - most major sights within 20-30 minutes of each other. Comfortable shoes essential for cobblestones.

✈ Airport Transfer

Brussels Airport (BRU): 45 km away. The airport rail link and fares vary by connection and ticket; check SNCB for the travel date rather than relying on the quoted price and frequency. Airport bus line 681 also available.

Brussels South Charleroi Airport: Budget airline hub. Shuttle bus to Brussels, then train to Antwerp (2+ hours total).

Antwerp International Airport: Small airport for regional flights, 8 km from center. Buses 51, 52 and 53 connect Antwerp Airport with Berchem station in about 10 minutes; from Berchem, trains reach Central in about 5 minutes. A De Lijn ticket is €3; the train fare is additional.

Train Station

Antwerp Central Station is the main hub with connections to Brussels (40 min), Ghent (45 min), Bruges (1h15), Amsterdam (1h45), and Paris (2h). The station itself is an attraction worth visiting.

Shopping in Antwerp

What to Buy

- **Belgian Chocolate:** Premium pralines from Neuhaus, Leonidas, The Chocolate Line. Bring home boxed assortments or visit chocolate boutiques.
- **Diamonds & Jewelry:** Certified diamonds from the Diamond District. Request certificates, compare prices, and buy only from established dealers.
- **Fashion:** Avant-garde Belgian designer pieces from Antwerp Six boutiques (Dries Van Noten, Ann Demeulemeester). More affordable at & Other Stories, COS.
- **Beer:** Specialty bottles from beer shops like De Biertempel, De Vagant. Include Trappist ales, local brews like De Koninck.
- **Lace & Textiles:** Traditional Belgian lace, linens. Look for authentic handmade pieces, not mass-produced tourist items.
- **Antiques:** Vintage treasures from Sunday markets in Zuid, Kloosterstraat antique shops.
- **Speculoos & Waffles:** Traditional cookies and fresh stroopwafels make excellent gifts.

Shopping Areas

Meir: Main shopping street with international brands (H&M, Zara, Mango). The Stadsfeestzaal is a magnificent shopping arcade worth visiting for architecture alone.

Nationalestraat (Fashion District): Belgian designer boutiques, MoMu museum shop, cutting-edge fashion from local talents.

Kammenstraat & Schuttershofstraat: Independent boutiques, vintage shops, shoe stores.

Hoogstraat & Kloosterstraat: Antiques, galleries, specialty shops in historic buildings.

Zuid Neighborhood: Art galleries, design shops, Sunday antique market at Leopold de Waelplaats.

Markets

- **Sunday Antique Market (Zuid):** 9 AM-2 PM, Leopold de Waelplaats. Vintage finds, collectibles, furniture.
- **Saturday Exotic Market:** Theaterplein. Multicultural foods, textiles, spices.
- **Vrijdagmarkt:** Friday flea market near MAS, 8 AM-1 PM. True bargain hunting experience.

Shopping Hours

Typically Monday-Saturday 10 AM-6:30 PM. Many shops close Sundays except Meir area. Thursdays often have extended hours until 9 PM. Small boutiques may close Monday mornings.

Tax Refunds

Non-EU visitors can claim VAT refund (21%) on purchases over €50. Ask for tax-free forms at shops displaying "Tax Free" signs. Process refund at airport before departure.

Annual Events & Festivals

Major Festivals

- **Antwerp Christmas Market (late Nov-Dec):** Magical winter wonderland in Grote Markt with ice skating rink, festive stalls, warm glühwein. One of Belgium's best Christmas markets.
- **Bollekesfeest (First weekend of May):** Celebration of Antwerp's local beer De Koninck ('Bolleke'). Live music, food stalls, brewery tours, and massive outdoor beer garden.
- **Antwerp Art Weekend (May):** Galleries open their doors citywide, special exhibitions, artist talks, and studio visits. Free shuttle buses between venues.
- **Antwerp Pride (August):** Belgium's second-largest Pride celebration with parade, parties, and cultural events throughout the city.
- **Antwerp Summer Festival (August):** Free outdoor concerts, performances, and activities across multiple city locations. Mix of local and international acts.
- **Antwerp Fashion Week (June & September):** Showcasing established and emerging Belgian designers. Shows, pop-ups, and fashion events throughout the fashion district.
- **MAS Museum Night (October):** Museums stay open late with special programming, performances, and drinks. Single ticket grants access to multiple venues.
- **Jazz Middelheim (August):** Three-day jazz festival in the sculpture park featuring international artists in beautiful outdoor setting.
- **Theaterfestival (August):** Cutting-edge theater and performance art from Belgium and beyond.

National Holidays (Most businesses closed)

- January 1 - New Year's Day
- Easter Sunday & Monday (varies)
- May 1 - Labour Day
- Ascension Day (39 days after Easter)
- Whit Monday (50 days after Easter)
- July 11 - Flemish Community Day
- July 21 - Belgian National Day (Independence)
- August 15 - Assumption of Mary
- November 1 - All Saints' Day
- November 11 - Armistice Day
- December 25 - Christmas Day

Planning Tip: Book accommodation well in advance for Christmas Market, Fashion Week, and summer festivals. Many locals vacation in July-August, so some restaurants may close temporarily.

Sample Day Itineraries

Day 1: Historic Heart & Art Treasures

Morning (9 AM-12:30 PM):

- Start at **Grote Markt** - admire guild houses and Brabo Fountain (30 min)
- Visit **Cathedral of Our Lady** - see Rubens masterpieces (1 hour)
- Walk through historic streets to **Rubenshuis** (1.5 hours)
- Coffee break at nearby café

Afternoon (2-6 PM):

- Lunch on Groenplaats terrace
- The museum is closed until 5 December 2026; substitute another open sight and verify its reopening before scheduling.
- Stroll through **Fashion District** - boutique shopping on Nationalestraat (1 hour)
- Visit **MoMu Fashion Museum** if interested (1 hour)

Evening: Dinner in Zuid neighborhood, drinks at a traditional beer café

Day 2: Waterfront & Modern Antwerp

Morning (9 AM-1 PM):

- Marvel at **Antwerp Central Station** architecture (30 min)
- Walk through **Diamond District** - window shop, visit DIVA if interested (1 hour)
- Head to **'t Eilandje** via tram or walk (30 min)
- Explore **MAS Museum** - take rooftop for views (2 hours)

Afternoon (2:30-6 PM):

- Lunch at waterfront restaurant in 't Eilandje
- Take **Flandria boat tour** of harbor (1-2 hours)
- Visit **Red Star Line Museum** (1.5 hours)
- Evening stroll along the docks

Evening: Seafood dinner in 't Eilandje, explore the nightlife

Day 3: Museums & Parks

Morning (10 AM-1 PM):

- Visit **KMSKA (Royal Museum of Fine Arts)** - must-see collection (2-3 hours)
- Explore **Zuid neighborhood** - galleries and boutiques (30 min)

Afternoon (2-6 PM):

- Lunch at trendy Zuid café
- Stroll through **Middelheim Sculpture Park** - outdoor art (2 hours)
- Relax in **Stadspark** or visit **Antwerp Zoo** instead (2-3 hours)
- Afternoon coffee at park café

Evening: Belgian cuisine dinner, try local specialties

Day 4: Churches, Culture & Beer

Morning (9:30 AM-1 PM):

- **St. James' Church** - Rubens' tomb (45 min)
- **St. Charles Borromeo** - baroque splendor (45 min)
- Walk historic **Hoogstraat** - antique shops (30 min)

- **Het Steen** - riverside castle and views (45 min)

Afternoon (2:30-6 PM):

- Lunch at traditional brasserie
- Join **Belgian beer tasting tour** or visit De Koninck Brewery (2-3 hours)
- Free time for shopping on Meir or relaxing

Evening: Beer pairing dinner at specialty restaurant

Day 5: Day Trip & Architecture

Option A - Bruges Day Trip:

- Early train to Bruges (depart 8-9 AM)
- Full day exploring canals, Markt, Belfry, museums
- Return evening train to Antwerp (7-8 PM)
- Late dinner back in Antwerp

Option B - Architecture & Local Life:

- **Morning:** Art Nouveau architecture tour in **Zurenborg** - Cogels-Osylei street (1.5 hours)
- **Late Morning:** Visit **Sunday Antique Market** in Zuid if Sunday (2 hours)
- **Afternoon: Chocolate workshop** or **food walking tour** (2-3 hours)
- **Late Afternoon:** Last-minute shopping, revisit favorite spots
- **Evening:** Farewell dinner at Michelin-recommended restaurant

General Tips: Start early to beat crowds, book museum tickets online, wear comfortable shoes, allow flexibility for weather, and don't overschedule - leave time to wander and discover.

Best Photography & Instagram Spots

Iconic Shots

- **Antwerp Central Station Interior:** Shoot the grand staircase and dome from the main hall. *Best time:* Early morning (7-8 AM) for soft light through glass ceiling, fewer people.
- **Grote Markt at Night:** Guild houses illuminated with Brabo Fountain foreground. *Best time:* Blue hour (30 min after sunset) for magical glow.
- **MAS Museum Rooftop:** 360-degree panoramic city views with harbor backdrop. *Best time:* Sunset for golden light over the Scheldt River.
- **Het Steen Riverside:** Medieval castle with boats and waterfront. *Best time:* Morning (9-10 AM) for ideal lighting, fewer tourists.
- **Cathedral of Our Lady Spire:** Shoot from Groenplaats or Handschoenmarkt for full height. *Best time:* Late afternoon side-lighting emphasizes architectural details.

Hidden Gems

- **Vlaeykensgang Alley:** Secret medieval passage near Oude Koornmarkt. Cobblestones, ivy-covered walls, atmospheric lighting. *Time:* Midday when sunlight penetrates the narrow lane.
- **Cogels-Osylei, Zurenborg:** Art Nouveau mansion street with ornate facades. Each building unique. *Best time:* Morning light for facade details, autumn for colorful leaves.
- **Sint-Paulusplaats:** Charming square with St. Paul's Church and surrounding historic buildings. *Time:* Quiet mornings before crowds arrive.
- **Falconrui Canal Views:** Atmospheric waterway with historic warehouses. *Time:* Golden hour for reflections.
- **Bourla Theatre Steps:** Neo-classical architecture, grand columns. *Time:* Evening when illuminated.

Neighborhood Vibes

- **'t Eilandje Warehouses:** Industrial waterfront with modern contrast. Brick buildings, harbor cranes. *Best time:* Sunset over water.

- **Zuid Sunday Market:** Bustling antique stalls, colorful goods, local life. *Time:* Mid-morning (10-11 AM) when market is full but not overcrowded.
- **Fashion District Storefronts:** Minimalist designer boutiques, creative window displays on Nationalestraat. *Time:* Anytime, especially after new season arrivals.
- **Diamond District Street Life:** Multicultural atmosphere, hasidic community, business hustle. *Time:* Weekday mornings for authentic activity.

Details & Textures

- **Guild House Gables:** Ornate gold details on Grote Markt buildings. Use zoom lens for architectural ornaments.
- **Cobblestone Patterns:** Medieval streets throughout old town create beautiful textures and leading lines.
- **Chocolate Shop Windows:** Artistic praline displays especially beautiful at The Chocolate Line, Burie, Del Rey.
- **Rubens Garden:** Baroque garden architecture, pergola, sculptures at Rubenshuis. *Time:* Spring blooms or autumn colors.
- **Stained Glass:** Cathedral windows create colorful light patterns inside. *Time:* Late morning when sun illuminates the glass.

Seasonal Shots

- **Christmas Market:** Illuminated Grote Markt, ice skating rink, twinkling lights. *Time:* Evening blue hour for festive atmosphere.
- **Spring Blossoms:** Stadspark cherry trees, Middelheim Park flowers. *Time:* April-May mornings.
- **Autumn Foliage:** Park paths covered in golden leaves. *Time:* October afternoons with low sun.

Photography Tips

- Bring wide-angle lens for architecture, telephoto for details
- Many churches allow photography without flash
- Drone photography restricted in city center - check regulations
- Golden hour (hour after sunrise/before sunset) best for outdoor shots
- Overcast days create even lighting perfect for street photography
- Museums have varying photo policies - ask before shooting
- Avoid midday harsh shadows except in narrow alleys

Electricity & Practical Matters

Electrical Standards

Voltage: 230V AC
Frequency: 50 Hz
Plug Type: Type C & Type E (European two round-pin plugs)

Adapters: Visitors from UK, US, Australia, and most non-European countries need plug adapters. Available at airport, Central Station, and electronics stores. **Tip:** Buy before arrival or at airport as city center options limited.

Voltage Converters: Most modern electronics (phones, laptops, cameras) support 110-240V and only need plug adapters. Check device specifications. Hair dryers and older appliances may need voltage converters.

Internet & Communication

WiFi: Free in most hotels, cafés, restaurants, and public spaces. Central Station and many museums offer free WiFi. Look for "Telenet WiFree" hotspots citywide.

SIM Cards: Available at airport, Central Station, and mobile shops (Proximus, Orange Belgium, Base). Prepaid tourist SIMs start around €15 for data + calls. EU visitors can use roaming at home rates.

Calling Code: +32 (Belgium), then drop the leading 0 from Antwerp numbers (3 xxx xx xx)

Emergency Numbers

- **112:** General emergency (ambulance, fire, police)
- **101:** Police non-emergency
- **100:** Fire & ambulance
- **02 501 94 00:** Tourist assistance (English spoken)

Currency & Money

Currency: Euro (€)
ATMs: Widely available throughout city center. Most accept international cards. Withdrawal fees vary by bank.
Credit Cards: Visa and Mastercard widely accepted. American Express less common. Contactless payment common.
Tipping: Service included in restaurant bills. Round up or add 5-10% for excellent service. Taxi drivers: round up to nearest euro.
Exchange: Banks and exchange offices on Meir. Airport rates less favorable. ATMs typically offer best rates.

Language

Official Language: Dutch (Flemish)
English: Widely spoken in tourist areas, hotels, restaurants, and by younger residents. Most signs include English.
Useful Dutch Phrases:

- Hello: "Hallo" / Good day: "Goedendag"
- Thank you: "Dank u" or "Dank je"
- Please: "Alstublieft"
- Excuse me: "Excuseer"
- Do you speak English?: "Spreekt u Engels?"
- Cheers!: "Proost!"

Safety

Antwerp is generally very safe. Standard precautions:

- Watch belongings in crowded tourist areas and on public transport
- Central Station area can have pickpockets - keep valuables secure
- Bike theft common - always lock bikes properly
- Avoid poorly lit areas at night, though city center well-patrolled
- Emergency medical care excellent; EU citizens bring EHIC card

Water & Health

Tap water safe to drink throughout Belgium. Pharmacies (marked with green cross) plentiful for minor ailments. Many pharmacists speak English.

Food & Dining in Antwerp

Must-Try Belgian Dishes

- **Moules-Frites (Mussels & Fries):** Belgium's national dish. Steamed mussels in white wine, garlic, celery, served with crispy fries. Best September-April when mussels in season. Try at Polder or De Muze.
- **Stoofvlees/Carbonnade:** Flemish beef stew braised in Belgian beer with onions, mustard, and spices. Hearty winter comfort food traditionally served with fries or bread.
- **Belgian Fries (Frieten):** Double-fried perfection, thick-cut and crispy. Authentic frituren (fry shops) serve in paper cones with choice of sauces. Favorites: Frituur No. 1, Frites Atelier. Try with andalouse, samurai, or traditional mayo.
- **Waffles:** Two types - Brussels waffles (light, rectangular) and Liège waffles (dense, sweet, caramelized). Eat plain or with toppings. Avoid tourist traps; locals prefer simple preparation.
- **Waterzooi:** Creamy Flemish stew with chicken or fish, vegetables, and egg yolk. Ghent specialty popular throughout Flanders.

- **Bolleke:** Antwerp's local beer, a pale ale served in unique bowl-shaped glasses. The city's pride, brewed by De Koninck since 1833.
- **Paling in 't Groen:** Eel in green herb sauce, a traditional Flemish specialty. Acquired taste but authentic local experience.
- **Gentse Mokken:** Local candy - cone-shaped hard candy. Traditional Antwerp sweet, often filled with berries.

Belgian Specialties to Take Home

- **Chocolate:** Premium pralines, truffles, bars from artisan chocolatiers
- **Beer:** Trappist ales, lambics, local brews - huge variety available
- **Speculoos:** Spiced cookies, also as spread (cookie butter)
- **Cuberdons:** Cone-shaped purple candies (best fresh, don't travel well)
- **Belgian Biscuits:** Butter cookies, wafers, various traditional varieties

Dining Neighborhoods

Grote Markt & Old Town: Tourist-oriented but scenic. Higher prices, quality varies. Choose carefully or treat as atmospheric experience rather than culinary highlight.

Zuid: Trendy dining scene with upscale restaurants, wine bars, brunch spots. Mix of Belgian and international cuisine. Reservation recommended for dinner.

't Eilandje: Waterfront seafood restaurants, modern Belgian cuisine, harbor views. Great for sunset dining. Try The Barn, RAS, Lux.

Fashion District: Stylish lunch cafés, vegetarian options, international flavors. Popular with fashion crowd and younger locals.

Scheldekaaien (Riverfront): Summer terraces with river views. More casual dining, good for drinks and lighter meals.

Restaurant Types & Tips

Brasseries: Traditional Belgian restaurants serving classics in relaxed atmosphere. Usually open lunch and dinner.

Estaminets: Cozy brown cafés with simple, hearty Belgian fare. Authentic local experience.

Frituren: Fry shops (takeaway stands) serving authentic Belgian fries. Look for locals queuing - sign of quality.

Lunch Spots: Many restaurants offer affordable lunch menus (€12-18) vs. pricier dinners. Great value for same quality.

Dining Etiquette & Customs

- **Reservations:** Recommended for dinner at popular restaurants, especially weekends
- **Meal Times:** Lunch 12-2 PM, Dinner 6:30-10 PM (Belgians dine earlier than southern Europe)
- **Service:** Can seem slow by American standards - meals are leisurely affairs
- **Bread:** Often served but may not be complimentary (€2-4 charge)
- **Water:** Tap water free but restaurants prefer selling bottled water. Ask for "kraantjeswater" for tap.
- **Tipping:** Service included (indicated by "service compris"). Round up or add 5-10% for great service
- **Splitting Bills:** Less common in Belgium. Specify "aparte rekeningen" (separate checks) when ordering

Budget Eating

- **Frituren:** €4-8 for large fries with sauce
- **Sandwich Shops:** Fresh baguettes €5-8
- **Lunch Menus:** €12-18 for 2-3 courses
- **Supermarkets:** Delhaize, Carrefour for picnic supplies
- **Turkish/Middle Eastern:** Excellent kebabs, lahmacun €5-10
- **Asian Restaurants:** Chinatown area near Central Station, affordable noodles/rice dishes

Food Markets

- **Exotic Market (Saturday):** International foods, spices, produce at Theaterplein
- **Farmers Market (Wednesday):** Fresh local produce near Conscienceplein
- **Organic Market (Saturday):** Bio-products at Sint-Jacobsmarkt

Dietary Restrictions

Vegetarian/vegan options increasingly available, especially in Zuid and Fashion District. Traditional Belgian cuisine meat-heavy, but modern restaurants accommodate dietary needs. Always inform restaurants of allergies - staff generally helpful and English-speaking.

Recommended Restaurants

- **The Jane:** Two Michelin stars in converted chapel (splurge-worthy, book months ahead)
- **'t Fornuis:** Upscale Belgian classics, Michelin-starred
- **Dôme:** Modern Belgian with harbor views
- **Fiskebar:** Seafood specialist with Danish influence
- **Bistro't Stoveke:** Traditional Flemish in cozy setting (mid-range)
- **Kafenio:** Excellent Greek, relaxed atmosphere
- **Lombardia:** Authentic Italian, local favorite
- **Het Gebaar:** Refined Belgian in garden pavilion

Tourist Passes

Antwerp City Card

The pass is now called the Antwerp City Pass. offering free or discounted access to museums, attractions, and public transport. Available in 24, 48, or 72-hour options.

Includes:

- The pass gives access to participating attractions; check the current list, since some named museums may be closed.
- Free use of De Lijn public transport (trams, buses, metro)
- 25% discount on attractions like Antwerp Zoo, boat tours, walking tours
- Discounts at selected restaurants and shops
- Free city map and guidebook

Current prices: 24h €45, 48h €55, 72h €65.

Best For: Visitors planning to see multiple museums and use public transport extensively. Breaks even after visiting 2-3 museums plus transport.

Where to Buy: Visit Antwerp Tourist Office (Grote Markt 13), Central Station, online at visitantwerpen.be, or participating hotels.

Activation: Card activates on first use, then valid for consecutive hours. Digital version available via app.

www.visitantwerpen.be

Antwerp Zoo Annual Pass

Unlimited year-round access to **Antwerp Zoo and Planckendael Animal Park. Aquatopia is not Planckendael. Excellent value for families or visitors staying longer.**

Benefits:

- Unlimited visits to Antwerp Zoo for 365 days
- Unlimited visits to Planckendael Animal Park (outside Antwerp)
- Skip ticket queues with direct entry
- 10% discount at zoo shops and restaurants
- Invitation to exclusive passholder events

Prices: Adult: €73 | Child (3-17): €56 | Family packages available

Best For: Families visiting multiple times, or anyone staying in Antwerp over a week. Pays for itself after 2 full-price visits.

www.zooantwerpen.be

Museumkaart (Museum Card)

Annual pass providing **free access to 175+ museums** across Belgium, including many in Antwerp. Ideal for museum enthusiasts planning to visit multiple cities.

Includes in Antwerp: KMSKA, Red Star Line Museum, Plantin-Moretus, Snijders&Rockox House, and more.

The Belgian Museum Pass costs €64.95 for one person for one year; the official site describes access to participating Belgian museums.

Best For: Serious museum lovers, residents, or visitors staying in Belgium for extended periods. Requires 5-6 museum visits to break even.

www.museumkaart.be

ICOM/ICOMOS Professional Cards

International museum professional cards offering **free admission to most Belgian museums** including Antwerp's major institutions.

Eligibility: Museum professionals, art historians, archaeologists, conservators with valid ICOM or ICOMOS membership.

Coverage: Free entry to KMSKA, MAS (exhibitions), Plantin-Moretus, MoMu, and most Antwerp museums.

Tip: Always carry your valid professional card and photo ID. Some museums may require advance booking even with professional cards.

icom.museum