**Brussels Sights or Things to Do**

Sample one day visit—enjoy the Grote Martk, visit Municipal Museum, take a picture of Manneken Pis and eat in a sidewalk café—maybe visit Galeries St. Hubert. You can visit Brussels for 3 hours and get most of the key sights without the museums. Longer visits—Royal Museum of Fine Arts of Belgium, BELvue museum or you pick of others, Atomium Day Trips.

1. **The Grand Place (Grote Martk)**—a fine medieval square—considered to be one of the most beautiful squares in Europe. It is a pedestrian only zone, North West of Central Train Station. The square has a daily flower market and a weekly bird market. From April through September, there is a music and light show.
2. **Gothic Town Hall**—the town hall was the only building left intact when the Grand Place was destroyed by the French in 1695. On top of the slim tower on the hall, St. Michael, the patron saint of Brussels, protects the town. Limited English tours (40 minute). Admission charge for tour.
3. **Municipal Museum in** **King’s House**—this is not a royal residence, but a civic museum. It is located opposite the Town Hall across from the Grand Place. Among its collections are 18th and 19th century ceramics and tapestries. It also holds the collection of the costumes for Manneken Pis. Closed Mondays. Admission charge.
4. **Manneken-Pis**—situated 3 blocks behind the town hall, due west of the Central Station on Rue Chene; this bronze statue was designed by Jerome Duquesnoy in 1619. It is an iconic landmark and people have fashioned an extensive set of costumes for the 24 inch figure.
5. **L’Hot Sacre**—traffic free area of restored houses with restaurants, art galleries and craft shops. The touristy Rue des Boucher’s has lots of restaurants—some like it others think it is not worth it.
6. **Galeries St. Hubert**—are glass vaulted arcades of boutiques and restaurants—built in 1847, is the oldest still operating shopping mall in Europe. It is a short walk from Grand Place, northwest 2 blocks.
7. **The City Opera House**—site of operas and where the first rumbles of the 1830 revolution took place, leading to national independence.
8. **St. Michael’s Cathedral**—white stone Gothic church where Belgian royals are married and buried. It features 5 stained glass windows of various rulers of Belgium. About 2 blocks northeast of central station. Metro stop Gare Centrale.
9. **Le Sablon**—an elegant district with antique shops and restaurants.
10. **Royal Army and Military History Museum**—holds a vast collection of weapons and uniforms. Closed Mondays. Not many English signs—get the audioguide (fee) Free. ([www.klm-mra.be](http://www.klm-mra.be)) Metro stop Merode
11. **BELvue Museum**—interesting Belgian history museum with a focus on the popular royal family. Admission charge. Closed Mondays. South of Central Station about 2 blocks.
12. **Belgium Comic Strip Center**—Belgium has produced many popular comic charters such as the Smurfs, Tintin and lucky Luke. About 15 minute walk from Central Station. Admission charge. Closed Mondays. ([www.comiccenter.net](http://www.comiccenter.net)) Metro stop Gare Central.
13. **Brewery Museum**—has one room of old brewing items and one room of new brewing items. There is also a beer video in English. Admission charged. Grand Place 10. ([www.beerparadise.be](http://www.beerparadise.be)) Metro stop Gare Centrale.
14. **Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium**—three museums in one, displaying ancient art, modern art and works by Surrealist painter Rene Magritte. Closed on Mondays. Admission charge. ([www.fine-arts-museum.be](http://www.fine-arts-museum.be)) About a 5 minute walk south of Central Station.
15. **Notre-Dame de la Capelle**—final resting place of the great artist Pieter Brueghel About 8 blocks south of the Central Station
16. **Porte de Hal**—remnants of the 14th century fortified ramparts
17. **Royal Museum of Art and History**—known as the Belgian Louvre, this museum has 2 wings. European items are in one wing; antiquities and items beyond Europe in the other. The entrance to the museum is hidden behind Autoworld. Closed on Mondays. Allow 3-4 hours. Metro Stop Parc. ([www.fine-arts-museum.be](http://www.fine-arts-museum.be))
18. **Musical Instrument Museum**—over 1,500 instruments and there is audio of their sounds. About 2 blocks south of Central Station.
19. **Bois de la Cambre**—a favorite park that begins at the top of avenue Louise (tram: 94) in the southern section of Brussels. Its centerpiece is a small lake with an island in its center that can be reached by a neat little electrically operated pontoon. The park gets crowded on sunny weekends.
20. **House of Erasmus**—home where the humanist lived, now a museum.
21. **Atomium**—this giant, sliver, iron molecule was created for the 1958 Universal Exhibition. You can get to the top but not the best idea for those who do not like tight spaces. Admission charge to ride to the top. Metro stop Heysel + 5 minute walk. ([www.atomium.be](http://www.atomium.be)) Metro stop Heysel.
22. **Eat Mussels, have a beer and some chocolate**—French fries, waffles too! Restaurant row is on Rue des Bouches, but cafes on and near Grand Place

**Getting Around**

There are 3 train stations in Brussels (Nord, Midi and Central). The main sights are around the central station. Check to see if the train goes to Central station—it’s easy to get on the wrong train even if you are at the right track. From Central station, it is a short walk to Grand Place. Most of central Brussels sights are walkable.

The Métro is quick and efficient, and covers many important center-city locations, and the suburbs, the Bruparck recreation zone, and the Heysel congress center. Stations are identified by signs with a white M on a blue background. A trip underground takes you into an art center. Métro stations are decorated with specially commissioned paintings by contemporary Belgian artists.

**Day Trips from Brussels**

1. **Waterloo Battlefield**--10km (6 miles) S of Brussels, the battle that ended Napoleon's empire was fought on rolling farmland near **Waterloo,** just south of Brussels. From Brussels, TEC bus W departs twice hourly for Waterloo from Gare du Midi (Métro: Gare du Midi). The 18km (11-mile) ride takes 55 minutes and costs 3.25€ ($5.20). The bus stops at both the Wellington Museum in Waterloo itself and at the battlefield Visitor Center, south of the town. By car from Brussels, take the ring road (R0) to Exit 27 for Waterloo, and N5 south to the battlefield.
2. **Beersel Castle**--Beersel is a half-hour train ride from Brussels, 5 ½ miles SW of Brussels. The only local example of a still-intact fortified medieval castle is **Kasteel van Beersel,** Lotsestraat, Beersel (tel. **02/359-16-46;** [www.beersel.be](http://www.beersel.be) ). The three-towered, 13th-century castle is set in a wooded area and surrounded by a moat, which you cross via drawbridge. Pick up the excellent English-language guidebook at the entrance for a detailed history of the castle and its inhabitants, and then wander through its rooms for a trip back through time.
3. **Gaasbeck Chateau**--The ancestral **château of the counts of Egmont** is at Gaasbeek, beyond the village of Vlezenbeek. The furnishings of **Kasteel van Gaasbeek,** Kasteelstraat 40 (tel. **02/531-01-30;** [www.kasteelvangaasbeck.be](http://www.kasteelvangaasbeck.be) ), are magnificent, as is the castle itself. All the rooms are splendid and worth a visit. Take De Lijn bus no. 142 (Gaasbeek-Leerbeek) from Brussels’ Gare du Midi/Zuidstation or from the end-of-the-line Métro station Erasmus, and get out at the Kasteel van Gaasbeek stop.