**Bruges Sights or Things to Do**

Sample one day visit

1. **Groeninge Museum**--The Groeninge ranks among Belgium's leading traditional museums of fine arts, with a collection that covers painting in the Low Countries from the 15th to the 20th centuries. The Gallery of Flemish Primitives holds some 30 works--many of which are far from primitive--by painters such as Jan van Eyck, Rogier van der Weyden, Hieronymus Bosch *(The Last Judgment),* and Hans Memling. Works by Magritte and Delvaux also are on display. Closed Monday. Admission charge.
2. **Market Square**—Wednesday is market days. The bell tower is in market square.
3. **Bell Tower**--The tower stands 84m (272 ft.) high. Its lower section dates from around 1240, with the corner turrets added in the 14th century, and the upper, octagonal section in the 15th century. It has 47 bells in the belfry. Climb the 366 steep steps to the Belfry's summit for panoramic views of Bruges and the surrounding countryside all the way to the sea. Admission charge to climb the tower.
4. **Burg Square**—this opulent square is the historical birthplace, political center and religious center of Bruges
5. **City Hall**—located in Burg Square. This Gothic structure was built in the late 1300s, making it the oldest Town Hall in Belgium. Don't miss the upstairs **Gotische Zaal (Gothic Room)** [SS] with its ornate decor and wall murals depicting highlights from Bruges's history. Most spectacular of all is the vaulted oak ceiling, dating from 1402, which features scenes from the New Testament. Admission charge. Closed Monday
6. **Basilica of the Holy Blood** --A 12th-century Romanesque basilica with a Gothic upper floor, this church houses a venerated relic of Christ and is well worth a visit for the richness of its design and its other treasures. It is the repository of a fragment of cloth stained with what is said to be the blood of Christ. Located in Burg Square. ([www.holyblood.com](http://www.holyblood.com))
7. **Memling Museum/St.John Hospital**--This museum is housed in the former Sint-Janshospitaal (Hospital of St. John), where the earliest wards date from the 13th century. To get a sense of the vastness of the wards when this was a functioning hospital, take a look at the old painting near the entrance that shows small, efficient bed units set into cubicles along the walls. Admission charge. Closed Mondays.
8. **Church of Our Lady**--it took 2 centuries (13th-15th) to build this church, whose soaring 122m (400-ft.) spire can be seen for miles around Bruges. Among the many art treasures here is a beautiful Carrara marble sculpture of the ***Madonna and Child*** by Michelangelo. Church & statue free; admission charge for museum. ([www.sintsalvator.be](http://www.sintsalvator.be))
9. **Begijnhof**—this Benedictine nun convent has a nice courtyard and a small museum. Admission charge for museum.
10. **De Halye Maan Brewery Tour**--The brewery here was mentioned in dispatches as early as 1546 and has been in use in "modern" times since 1856. Today, it produces the famous Straffe Hendrik beer. Admission charge. ([www.halvemaan.be](http://www.halvemaan.be))
11. **Visit Chocolate Shops**—chocolate shops are everywhere—enjoy! 100 grams is about 5 or 6 chocolates.
12. **Gruuthuse Museum**--The Flemish nobleman and herb merchant Lodewijk Van Gruuthuse, who was a counselor to the dukes of Burgundy in the 1400s, lived in this ornate Gothic mansion. Among the 2,500 numbered antiquities in the house are paintings, sculptures, tapestries, lace, weapons, glassware, and richly carved furniture. Closed Monday. Admission charge.
13. **Choco-Story: The Chocolate Story**—located a 3 minute walk from market Square. This museum tells the history of chocolate. Then a demonstration of making chocolate. Admission charge. ([www.choco-story.be](http://www.choco-story.be))
14. **Biking**—exploring the countryside and possible bike ride to nearby Damme (4 mile ride).

**Getting Around**

The Center of Bruges is compact and filled with pedestrians-only streets, which makes walking the best way to get around. There a 2 trains an hour to Bruges from Brussels. They arrive at the only train station. The station is on Stationsplein, 1.6km (1 mile) south of the center of town, a 20-minute walk or a short taxi or bus ride -- choose any bus labeled CENTRUM and get out at the Markt.

**Day Trips from Bruges**

1. **In Flanders Field Museum**—40 miles southwest of Bruges, this World War I museum tells the story of the battles fought near Leper, where the British lost 60,000 dead and wounded in 5 weeks. It takes 2 hours by train or easier, take a tour from Brugge