

le boat

Who's on board?

BELGIUM

Region Guide





King Albert I Monument, Nieuwpoort

NIUWPOORT

Nieuwpoort is a lively and cosmopolitan city on the seaside, popular with families, with a 2km long promenade. It is a perfect place to spend a sunny day on the sandy beach or wander into town to soak up the vibrant nightlife, dine on fresh seafood and shop 'til you drop. For enthusiasts of WWI history, visit the King Albert Memorial with excellent panoramic views from the top. Nearby, the Ganzepoot Locks also hold great significance, having kept enemy troops at bay for four years by controlling inland water levels.

Recommended restaurant: Brasserie Nieuwpoort in the centre of town (close to the Tourist Office)

Amenities: Everything you might need: grocery stores, supermarkets and loads of restaurants

Market: Fri (8am-12pm) in the Grote Markt (opposite the Tourism Office)



VEURNE

Veurne is a welcoming city full of history and characteristic local architecture. Head to the 'Grote Markt', one of the best-preserved town squares in Belgium, and admire the town's Gothic/Renaissance architecture. Visit the vast vaulted ceilings inside the Church of Sainte-Walburge, the Town Hall (take a tour if you can) and the Spanish Pavilion. A stop at the Bakery Museum is well worth it, especially if you have children. Discover the history and art of bread-making, waffles, chocolate and ice-cream and more.

Recommended restaurant: Grille De Vette Os, just off the Grote Markt

Amenities: There is a Spar supermarket and plenty of restaurants to choose from

DIKSMUIDE

The central market square is a good place to head to, dominated by the City Hall and Belfry that tower above you. The Belfry contains a carillon of 30 bells and is one of several belfries in Belgium and France to be recognised as UNESCO World Heritage sites. Behind the City Hall, you can also visit the gothic church of Saint-Nicolas. Just north of Diksmuide and adjacent to the river, don't miss 'Dodengang' (Trench of Death). It has a small but excellent museum and a panoramic view of the trenches, both giving a fascinating and moving insight into the life of a soldier during WW1. The Yser Tower memorial is also worth a visit.

Recommended restaurant: Nikolaas, next to the City Hall

Amenities: A thriving town with grocery stores, supermarkets and a wealth of restaurants



Diksmuide



Grote Market, leper

IEPER

Ieper (commonly known by its French name, Ypres) is a beautiful and welcoming city full of history. Like most Belgium towns, the central market square is the hub of activity with beautiful architecture, restaurants and attractions, including the stunning 'Cloth Hall' (home to the excellent Flanders Fields Museum) and 70m belfry. If you wish to pay tribute to the fallen, head down Menenstraat (off the square) to the Menin Gate Memorial, a fitting place to reflect and remember. For some light relief, the rollercoasters and thrills of Bellewaerde Park are 4.5km east of the town.



Bellewaerde Park, near Ieper

Recommended

restaurant: In't Klein Stadhuis, in the Market Square

Amenities: A choice of supermarkets, shops and restaurants can be found here

Market: Sat (am) in the Market Square



OSTEND

Ostend is a big city on the seaside. For family fun, spend the day making sandcastles or hire 4-wheeler bicycles for a ride along Albert I Promenade. The Atlantic Wall Museum is one of the best museums here. There's lots of walking to do, but kids in particular will enjoy running around the tunnels and bunkers while there's much to learn for the adults.

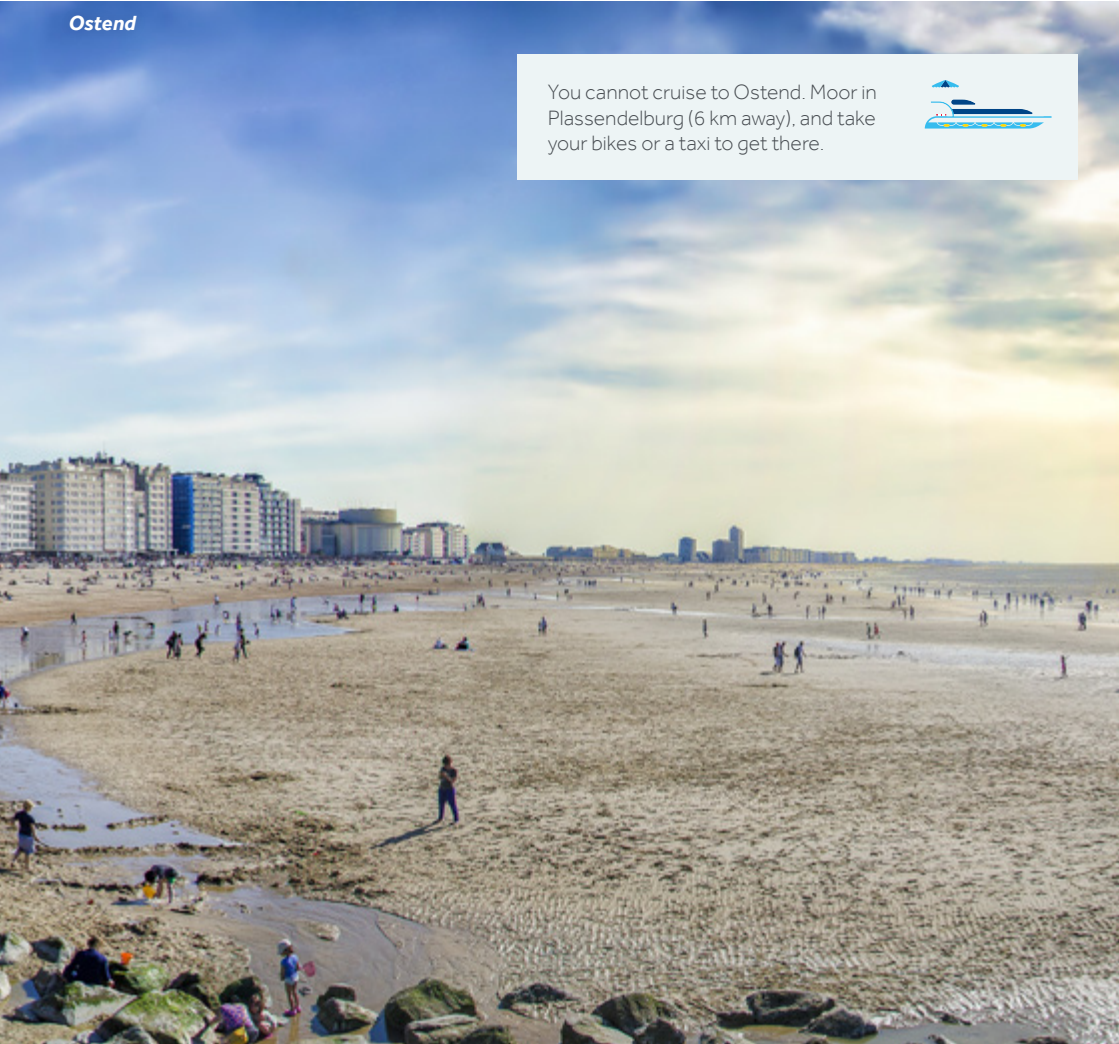
Recommended restaurant: Valentino, on Albert I Promenade

Amenities: Many shops, supermarkets and restaurants and a great ice cream parlour, Gelato Maxzim in Hertstraat.



Ostend

You cannot cruise to Ostend. Moor in Plassendelburg (6 km away), and take your bikes or a taxi to get there.





Bruges

BRUGES

The architecture in the medieval centre of Bruges, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, makes this city one of the most popular tourist destinations in Europe. Small enough to explore on foot, but if the fancy takes there's horse drawn carriage, Segway and hot-air balloon.

There's a wealth of museums to explore – the folklore Museum, the Beer Museum, the Chocolate Museum and even the Frietmuseum (Fries Museum). Art lovers should not miss the Groeninge Museum, housing the world famous collection of Flemish Primitive painting, with masterpieces by Jan van Eyck, Hans Memling, Hugo Van der Goes and Gerard David. There's also the Salvador Dali Exhibition (in the Cloth Halls) or the Picasso Expo (at the historic Oud Sint-Jan site) which are also hugely popular.

The De Halve Maan Brewery is a must-see, and why not top off an action-packed day (or two) by climbing the Belfort for stunning views across this awe-inspiring city?



Bruges



Saint-Salvator Cathedral, Bruges

Recommended restaurant: Reliva, just south of the Holy Savior Cathedral on Goezeputstraat

Amenities: Shops, restaurants aplenty and of course a plethora of chocolate shops and cafes. We recommend the Old Chocolate House on Mariastraat.



Bruges

Follow the Ring Canal around the outskirts of the Bruges and moor safely in La Coupure, a canal inlet protected by a barrier that is lifted by the harbour master. There are mooring fees (approximately €10 per night).





Castle Gravensteen, Ghent

GHENT

Ghent, the pearl of Flanders, was once the largest city in Europe after Paris. No other city in Belgium has as many monuments and important buildings; St Michael's Bridge, St. Bavo's Cathedral, Gravensteen Castle, the Belfry and Cloth Hall to name but a few. The historic centre is ideal to explore on foot - bring your camera - with fascinating museums, quirky bars and stunning architecture. Ghent is a city you won't want to miss!

De Dulle Griet (or 'Brown Café') has a beautiful, medieval interior decorated with cartwheels, signs and historical regalia. This café offers the largest beer selection in Ghent: more than 350 local and international beers. You can exchange your shoe for a 'Max' beer poured in a boot-shaped glass.



Recommended restaurant: Du Progress, in the historic centre on Korenmarkt

Amenities: All the shops, restaurants and supermarkets you'd expect in a major city



Ghent



St. Nicholas Church, Ghent

DEINZE

Deinze is a delightful little town with many shops and restaurants, although the big draw is simply relaxing or exploring Brielmeersen Park.

Wander along beautiful footpaths, flower and herbs gardens, let the kids play in the huge playground, play mini-golf and get lost in the giant bamboo maze.

6km to the north east, sits elegant and majestic Ooidonk Castle, one of the most beautiful in Europe. The castle is only open on Sundays and public holidays, but the gardens are open from Tuesday afternoons to Sunday for a tranquil stroll in among the green and watery surroundings.



Ooidonk Castle, Deinze

Recommended restaurant: Brasserie Bruno, in Kalkhofstraat

Amenities: There are a number of supermarkets and restaurants in Deinze

Town Hall and Belfry, Oudenaarde



LOUDENAARDE

Oudenaarde is famous for its carpet weaving and tapestry. You can discover this history in detail, as well as a fine collection of tapestries at the MAU Museum. The impressive town hall and belfry stands magnificently in the centre market square which is flanked by shops, cafes and restaurants and St. Walburga Church. Cycling enthusiasts should visit the 'Centrum Ronde van Vlaanderen', dedicated to the Tour of Flanders, an annual bike race of the region for over 100 years.

Recommended restaurant:

La Pomme d'Or opposite the Town Hall

Amenities: There are a couple of supermarkets and good choice of restaurants here

BOSSUIT

A small, plain looking village, but an opportunity to stretch your legs. Walk through the village to Bossuit Castle built in 17th century, although more like a very grand stately home.

Amenities: There isn't much in the way of shops and restaurant in Bossuit



Belgian Chocolates

TOURNAI

At first sight, historic Tournai appears to be a quiet provincial town, but there is a lively buzz and lots to see and do. The Cathedral of Our Lady of Tournai (Notre-Dame Cathedral) is one of the most spectacular churches in Belgium and is a UNESCO World Heritage site. Sadly, it is undergoing extensive restoration so much of the outside is masked by scaffolding and parts of the interior are inaccessible. However, there's still enough to see to make a visit worthwhile and the treasury room is not to be missed.

The 12th century Belfry of Tournai is the oldest in Belgium and also on UNESCO's list. During the ascent of its 257 steps, you will encounter multimedia shows and exhibitions, as well as the carillon of bells that chime every Sunday during the summer period (around 3:30 pm). The summit offers the most beautiful panorama of Tournai and its surroundings. There is also a wealth of museums and art galleries in Tournai.

Recommended restaurant: Un the sous le figuier, right on the canal

Amenities: Plenty of shop and restaurants and a supermarket a short walk south east of the Cathedral.

Notre Dame Cathedral, Tournai





Broel Towers, Kortrijk

KORTRIJK

Kortrijk is a beautiful and historic city, where you will discover the Broel towers, St Martin's Church and Eglise Notre-Dame – among many other buildings that make up this town's magnificent local architecture. Why not discover these sites on the 'Metamorphosis of the city' walk, by following the 4.3km route that is marked by metal rivets in the ground. Start at the Tourism office and you can also download an audio guide to guide you along the way.

Visit 'Texture' to learn about the textile, flax – its production has brought much wealth to Kortrijk. Right in the city centre you will discover the tranquil haven of a beguinage, a complex which once housed religious women. This is one of many in Belgium that has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. There is a very informative museum on site.

Recommended restaurant: Paul's Boutique – on Kleine Sint-Jansstraat, part of Kortrijk's huge outdoor shopping precinct

Amenities: There are supermarkets and a vast array of shops in the town's large 'K' shopping precinct.



The Beguinage and St. Martin's Church, Kortrijk

8 Maximum speed allowed on waterways in km/h

3 Maximum speed allowed in ports/marinas in km/h

Pass oncoming boats on the right-hand side



	Approx time		No. of locks		No. of lifting bridges	
Nieuwpoort (Le Boat)	2 hr 40 min	6 hr 5 min	1	3	1	2
Diksmuide	1 hr		0		1	
Crossing between the IJzer river and the Ieper-IJzer canal	2 hr 25 min	7 hr 50 min	2	5	0	9
Ieper	2 hr 25 min		2		6	
Crossing between the IJzer river and the Ieper-IJzer canal	3 hr 15 min	2 hr 10 min	1	2	3	
Veurne	3 hr 15 min		2		3	
Nieuwpoort	2 hr 10 min		2		3	

	Approx time		No. of locks		No. of lifting bridges	
Nieuwpoort (Le Boat)	3 hr 20 min	6 hr 20 min	2	2	6	14
Plassendale (for Oostende)	3 hr		0		8	
Bruges	6 hr	5 hr 55 min	0	0	4	4
Ghent	6 hr		0		4	

	Approx time		No. of locks		No. of lifting bridges	
Ghent	3 hr 35 min	7 hr 15 min	1	3	1	1
Deinze	3 hr 40 min		2		0	
Kortrijk	3 hr 15 min	10 hr 30 min	6	9	0	0
Bossuit (for Tournai)	3 hr 15 min		1		0	
Oudenaarde	2 hr 40 min	4 hr 35 min	1	2	0	
Ghent	4 hr 35 min		2		0	

Times are an approximation only and are calculated on the basis of an average speed of 7.5km/h and an average time of 12 minutes to pass through a lock. Your speed, the flow of the water and the time it takes to go through locks will all affect your progress.



LOCKS AND LIFTING BRIDGES

Lock keepers tend to all locks and lifting bridges in Belgium

OPENING TIMES:

BETWEEN NIEUWPOORT AND BRUGES (KANAAL PLASSEDALE)	IN BRUGES	EVERYWHERE ELSE
Locks are open at fixed hours: From Nieuwpoort: 9am, 11am, 1pm, 3pm & 5pm To Nieuwpoort: 10am, 12pm, 2pm, 4pm & 6pm	8am – 6pm (Sundays/public holidays: 10am – 6pm, except in April and October when they are closed) All bridges are closed between 7:30am – 8:30am & 4:30pm – 5:30pm and on Wednesday they close between 11:50am – 12:30pm as well.	8am – 6pm (10am – 6pm on Sundays and public holidays)

All locks and bridges are closed on Easter Sunday.

MOORING

Moorings are plentiful in Belgium and some are free, although you must moor in dedicated moorings which have bollards or rings to tie you lines to. Whenever you want to stay in a Marina in a city (Diksmuide, Veurne, Ieper, Gent, Bruges, ...) You will pay a fee for it. The price is generally 1€/meter of the boat. So If you are on a 14m boat, you will pay about 14€. There are free mooring spots, but you can only take place on these spots if they are marked as mooring AND not for longer than 24hours. Also: on free mooring spots there are no: shower facilities, there's no shore power and there's no chance to re-fill water tank of boat. If you are going to visit Bruges, follow the Ring Canal around the outskirts of the city, and moor safely in La Coupure, a canal inlet protected by a barrier that is lifted by the harbour master (approximately €10 per night).

WATER

You need to fill your water tank once or twice a week. It is possible to fill up with water in all ports/marinas for a fee of about 1 € per 100 liters.



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Disclaimer: We have endeavoured to ensure that all the information in this Guide is correct at time of printing. However, opening times and prices are subject to change. Attractions, restaurants, locks and even stretches of the canal can close without notice. Le Boat is happy to recommend all of the attractions and eating establishments featured within this Guide. However, they are not owned or managed by Le Boat and, as such, we cannot guarantee the quality of your experience at any particular time. If anything in this guide is not correct, we'd love to hear from you at guides@leboat.com so that we can revise future editions.

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