

Welcome to
Brussels



Information Brochure 2006-2007

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Options within *BEST* Programs

An overview of our programs in Spain and Belgium



Come to the source and experience modern Spain or Belgium in an economical way. *BEST* offers three programs to choose from, each consisting of an intensive Spanish or French language course in one of our centrally-located, fully-equipped language schools combined with other attractive options.

1. Study – Internship Program in Belgium

French language in combination with an internship in a Belgian company

Immerse yourself in a two or three month program in the heart of the European Union. First, prioritize your language skills which we will bring up to par in a two-week crash course. Then apply that knowledge to your professional field of interest in an internship in a Belgian company.

2. Study - Internship Program in Spain

Spanish language in combination with an internship in a Spanish company

Self-improve while you enjoy yourself to the limit. For people interested in improving their Spanish while increasing their professional experience. The internship program offers two weeks of intensive Spanish classes followed by an internship in a Spanish company. We hand pick companies for interns, placing them in any field of their choice. Options in Madrid, Barcelona and Seville.

3. Seville University Program

Combine an international work experience with university courses

Combine undergraduate courses, for credit or auditing, in business and/or tourism with the real-life challenges of an internship in a Spanish business in Seville. The program is designed to confer a solid competitive advantage to the many people who are passionate about European culture and wish to improve their Spanish while making social and professional contacts for the future. Backed by four centuries of experience and tradition, the University of Seville offers *BEST*'s participants a curriculum in English and Spanish, bilingual coordination and the convenience of being located in the center of Seville at the most competitive cost on the market.

Internship Program in Belgium

Introduction to Brussels

Brussels, the capital and home to one million inhabitants, is located in the center of Belgium.



Brussels, backed by over a millennium of old traditions, is the only bilingual capital in Europe. French and Belgian Dutch are the official languages of this impressive city filled with grand halls, great music, remarkable architecture, and delicious cuisines.



The cosmopolitan nature of this unique city is projected through the dual languages spoken on the street and written on the street signs. This liveliness and international flair is, of course, intimately related to its role as a crossroads for all of Europe and administrative center of the European Union.

Some 2000 or more foreign companies now have offices in Brussels and of these, some 1400 are American. With 60 foreign banks having branches

in the city, Brussels is the seventh most important financial market in the world.

The city is a delightful contrast with many modern buildings and also historic ones, because Brussels has a well-preserved medieval center and numerous examples of their own Art Nouveau style in architecture.

It is renowned throughout the world for the quality of the food in its restaurants. Cream, beer and wine are all routinely used in cooking and on a less exalted level, the fries, known as chips in Belgium and preferably served with mayonnaise, are also famous. The entire country is also extremely well known for its beer and chocolate.



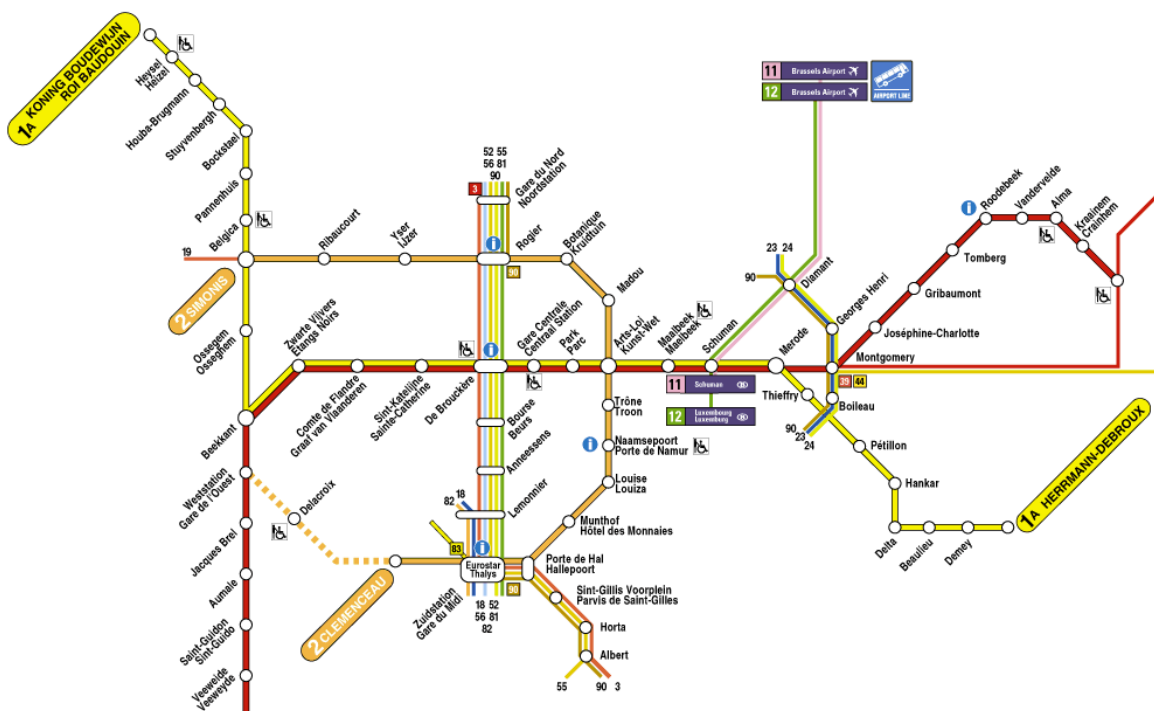
Quick Facts

Country:	Belgium
Area Brussels:	161 sq km (63 sq mi)
Population Brussels:	1,018,800 (the Brussels-Capital Region)
Belgium Population:	10,419,000
Elevation:	57m (190 ft)
Time Zone:	GMT/UTC +1 (plus two hours in summer)
Telephone Area Code:	+32 (0)2

Transport in Brussels

There is an excellent and widespread network of public transport with trams, busses and metro. One single ticket can be used for the duration of one hour on all forms of public transport. Tickets can be bought from the driver of the tram or the bus, or in the underground metro stations where they are sold at booths. Also available are day-cards, 10-drive tickets or 5-drive tickets. There is also the monthly card. It is very convenient in price if you are under 26. Before use, the ticket must be

validated in the orange boxes inside the vehicles or at the entrance of the metro. There are regular controls. The Brussels metro is considered to be very safe, but as in all the world's major cities, it pays to keep an eye on personal belongings, wallets, purses etc. to prevent falling victim to pickpockets. **For a complete metro map, go to website: www.stib.irisnet.be/FR/31000F.htm.** Also see the Night Buses section of this guide for more information. **There are also good maps at www.mappy.be.**



Landscape

Belgium, which is bordered by France, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, has a varied landscape. The rivers and gorges of the Ardennes offer a sharp contrast to the rolling plains, which make up much of the countryside. Well worth a visit is the great forest of Ardennes near the frontier with Germany and Luxembourg. Belgium also has wide, sandy beaches on the northern coast, which total over 37 miles in length and the countryside is rich in historic cities, castles and churches.



Cultural Shock

Adjusting to a New Culture

Culture shock is an integral part of relocating; everyone suffers from it to some extent. The term *Culture Shock* can be misleading, as it is not only the different culture of the host country that can be unsettling. Instead of the label culture shock, try considering the phrase, ‘stress and anxiety resulting from unfamiliar surroundings.’

When moving abroad, not only the predominant culture of the people and city around you changes, there are also personal changes in your lifestyle that must be made. These can include, but are not limited to apartment living instead of a house with a garden; utilizing public transportation instead of owning a personal car; not always being able to speak your mind due to obstacles in communication and different sleeping habits.

Even if you can buy recognisable and favourite food items in the host country, there are likely to be changes to taste, quality and price due to local climatic conditions, production and preparation methods and the cost of importing.

These lifestyle changes can be difficult for an individual to adapt to as their cultural surroundings are altered. The changes in environment can lead to depression, anxiety, dissatisfaction and physical illness. Advance preparation and introduction to the likely changes will result in a less problematic or surprising situation.

Post Arrival Strategies for Relieving Culture Shock

The unfamiliar aspects of a country may amplify the stresses of culture shock. For example the language heard, the unintelligible signs, the buildings, shops, foods and restaurants, can all increase existing anxiety. The occasional visit to a familiar surrounding, such as McDonald’s, although embarrassing as it may be, might possibly be the necessary visitation to relieve symptoms of homesickness.

Making contact with other foreigners who speak your language – preferably those who like the country - will also help when settling in. A peer that one can communicate with can help reduce loneliness and anxiety, and provide explanations of and introductions to the new culture.

A major cause of stress in a foreign country is the inability to understand what is being said and written. This lack of language skills can also make it more difficult to appreciate how to successfully live in a country. If the local language is not already known, consider private lessons.

The effects of culture shock usually fade over time, especially with social support and encouragement to understand the differences met during time spent in a foreign country.

Culture shock often follows a pattern, such as:

Euphoria: initial enjoyment of all the exciting new aspects of the country.

Depression: when the negative differences overwhelm the positive ones.

Adaptation: as adjustment to the country is made.

The time scale of this pattern varies for everyone and not everyone experiences all three. The most common time scale seems to be approximately a week of eu-

phoria, a couple of months of depression and many months of adaptation. Many foreigners living in a new country feel that their first year is one of on-going adaptation and orientation.

However, culture shock can be cyclical and expatriates find that it recurs over time, especially at certain times of year, no matter how long they stay in a country. Special holidays or anniversaries can reawaken aspects of culture shock and spark depression and frustration years after the move.



Additional Information

Useful Links

www.trabel.com/brussels.htm

Tourist info.

www.vlan.be/index.asp

Classified ads in French for all kinds of practical things.

www.xpats.com

Publisher of the Bulletin, Belgium on-line in English.

<http://pespmc1.vub.ac.be/BELGCUL.html>

Very good general Belgium overview.

www.expatriates.com

Web site created for and by expatriates - mostly classifieds.

www.expatsinbrussels.com/topics.php

For expats in Brussels - organized around topics. Guide to living in Brussels.

www.friends.easynet.be/B1-act.htm

Friends club and social program in Brussels.

www.expatica.com

English-language news & information source for expatriates in Netherlands (Holland), Germany, France, Belgium or Spain.

www.expatriate-online.com/living/clubs/clubs.cfm

Expatriate Online Clubs Directory and other info on living and moving to Belgium.

Things to see while in Brussels

There are a lot of “brocantes” or open-air markets in Brussels and each commune organizes one every once in a while. In order to know where they take place the best way is to look at the web page of the commune or look at the local newspapers like “la Tribune de Bruxelles”.



There are two street markets for buying fruits and vegetables at really good prices, both on Sundays: Midi street market near Midi train station and Clemenceau market at the metro station Clemenceau.

During summertime there is what the Belgians call the B-excursions which includes: a train ticket, the entrance to the local attraction (museum, Aquarium etc.) and the bus you take from the train station, sometimes including a drink. A very convenient and enjoyable way to discover Belgium!

See the “10 things not to miss”-section further down in this guide.



Going out in Brussels

Not surprisingly, given its cosmopolitan nature, Brussels has a rich and varied nightlife with 10 theatres and various cinemas, including Kinopolis, which is one of the largest movie complexes in Europe with 24 projection halls and a giant IMAX movie screen. The price of movie tickets is €5 to €8, depending on whether you are a student and the day of the week it is.

There are also numerous nightclubs, discos and cafes in Brussels. The city is home to the famous Toone Puppet theatre, which occupies the first floor of a pub and features marionettes performing classical operas. Most of the attractions (theatres, cinemas, and museums) offer under 26 discounts.

Night Buses

From Bourse train station: Bus N71 (bus de nuit) goes to Ixelles, it costs 3 euros and it runs every half an hour until 3 am. All you need to know about Brussels transport: <http://www.stib.irisnet.be>

Entertainment Links

www.mp3discobar.be

One of the best bars downtown

www.brusselsinternational.be

Useful tourist information

www.trabel.com/brussel/brussels-nightlife.htm

Nightlife in Brussels

www.crazy-up.com

Online events' and news' guide

www.outsoon.be

OutSoon - Online Youth Magazine

www.partyguide.be

Party and Belgian events' guide

10 things not to miss

- **The Atomium**

Boulevard du Centenaire, 1020 Brussels. Metro: Heyssel. Open Apr-Aug 9am-8pm daily; Sep-Mar 10am-6pm daily.

This 102 m steel and aluminium model of atoms in a molecule is Brussel's equivalent of the Eiffel Tower. You get a great view from the top.

- **Grand Place/Grote Markt**

Grand Place, 1000 Brussels. Metro: Bourse, Gare Centrale

This square is described by Victor Hugo as the most beautiful in Europe. It is surrounded by interesting Gothic and Baroque buildings, such as the town hall (Hôtel de Ville).

- **Manneken Pis & Janneken Pis**

Manneken Pis: Corner of rue de l'Etuve & rue du Chêne, 1000 Brussels, Metro: Bourse, Gare Centrale.

Janneken Pis: Impasse de la Fidélité, 1000 Brussels, Metro: Bourse, De Brouckère.

The small statue of a boy taking a leak is one of Brussel's most famous landmarks. What few people know is that he has a female counterpart known as Janneken Pis, located nearby.

- **Mini-Europe**

20, boulevard du Centenaire, 1020 Brussels. Metro: Heyssel. Open 23 Mar-30 Jun 9.30am-5pm; Jul-Aug 9.30am-7pm; Sep 9.30am-5pm; 1 Oct-5 Jan 10am-5pm

Probably the easiest way to see Europe in a few hours. The park contains over 300 miniatures of famous European monuments.

- **The Belgian Comic Strip Centre (Centre Belge de la Bande Dessinée)**

20, rue des Sables, 1000 Brussels.

Metro: Botanique, De Brouckère, Rogier. Open Tue-Sun 10am-6pm.

Here you can find art from the great Belgian comics including Tin Tin, the Smurfs, Lucky Luke and Spirou.



- **Museum of Ancient Arts (Musée de l'Art Ancienne)**

3, rue de Régence, 1000 Brussels. Metro: Gare Centrale. Open Tue-Sun 10am-5pm.

This museum houses a collection of paintings and sculptures from the 15th to the 18th century.



*From top:
Grand Place
Mini-Europe
Palace of Justice*

- **The City Museum (Musée de la Ville de Bruxelles)**

Grand Place, 1000 Brussels. Metro: Bourse, De Brouckère, Gare Centrale. Open 10am-5pm daily.

The museum of Brussels' history is situated in the King's House on the Grand Place. The exhibits include over 500 costumes designed for the Manneken Pis.

- **The Palace of Justice**

Place Poelaert, 1000 Brussels. Metro: Louise. Open Aug-Sep Mon-Sat 9.30am-noon & 1.30pm-3pm.

The impressive building is believed to be the biggest building constructed in the 19th century in the world. It functions as the supreme court of law for Belgium.

- **The Royal Palace**

Place des Palais, 1000 Brussels. Metro: Parc. Open 25 Jul-8 Sep Tue-Sun 10.30am-4.30pm.

The official residence of the Belgian royal family is an imposing building where you can watch the changing of the guard daily at 2.30 p.m.

- **René Magritte Museum**

135, rue Essegheem, 1090 Jette. Metro: Belgica. Open Wed-Sun 10am-6pm.

Between 1930 and 1954 Magritte lived in this house which is now a museum. It contains many of the Belgian surrealist's possessions and famous paintings.



Supermarkets

Many of you may already know them but maybe it will be helpful to know a bit more about them and where you can buy everyday things.

GB is the “posh” option especially if you go to any of the GB Express that flourishes in the city centre. You will find most of the international brands there for food and toiletries but prices are a bit high.

DELHAIZE is another one you will find very easily around town. Delhaize city has a good selection of ready to go dishes and organic and free trade food, plus, it is not so expensive.

ALDI is supposedly the cheap option but take into account that you won't find everything on stock, or all the brands. It is good though if you aren't looking for any special brand. For instance you will find a very similar chocolate dessert as Danone's has but at 17cents instead of 60!

COLRUYT is very popular as they guarantee to offer the same brands at the minimum price. www.colruyt.be. There is one in Etterbeek and another in Ixelles (these are the closest to most of you).

Please take into account neither ALDI or COLRUYT offer plastic bags to their clients so bring them with you or be prepared to pay for them.



Gyms in Brussels

If you are determined to keep fit, these are three gyms situated in Schaerbeek.

Beauty Cool Gym ASBL
Rue Guillaume Kennis
1030 Bruxelles (Schaerbeek)

Body Gym Center SPRL
Rue du Noyer
1030 Bruxelles (Schaerbeek)

Gym Concept SPRL
Avenue Gustave Latinis
1030 Bruxelles (Schaerbeek)

Extra Work

If you are considering picking up some extra work to earn a little more money these are our redommendations:

1. See the work searching web page www.reference.be.
2. To work as a waiter, simply go and ask for work in the many Irish-English pubs in Brussels.
3. Teaching English is another option. There are language schools looking for young monitors during summer.
4. Typing “job étudiant” in Google will also give many job proposals for young people.

Shopping

Brussels is and always has been a city of shopkeepers and the numerous shopping districts bear this out. Rue Neuve and the Avenue Louise are the main reference points, of course, but from Saint-Gilles to Jette, from Ganshoren to Uccle, the city abounds in shopping areas, each with their own specific characteristics. A few of the major shopping centres have an Internet site providing information.

Internet

WIFI (wireless) internet connections are still not that common in public places. Some people have reported being able to connect to unprotected lines randomly.

Brussels Tourist Information

Visit the tourist information to find more facts, links and things to do in Brussels. The tourist information is situated at the Grand-Place in the center of Brussels.

International trains

Thalys is a high-speed train network built around the high-speed line between Paris and Brussels. Beyond Brussels, the main cities Thalys trains reach are Antwerp, The Hague, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Liège, Aachen and Cologne. Travel time from Brussels to Paris is normally 1 hour and 22 minutes.



Interesting websites

www.bitc.be

Tourist Information Brussels

www.thalys.com

Info about international high-speed train

www.city2.be

City 2 shopping centre

www.westlandshopping.be

WestLand shopping center

www.woluweshoppingcenter.be

Woluwe shopping center

Extra information

Beds

The beds are usually 90 cm x 180 cm, but there are sometimes variations. The sheets from the U.S. don't generally fit the beds here exactly.

Appliances

Appliances with motors need converters but since the converters are very heavy and the appliances burn out otherwise, we do not recommend that you bring any that are not dual (for 250 and 125 watts). (ex. hair dryers). In Europe the voltage is basically double that in the U.S. The plug adaptors are not a bad thing to have if you are bringing simple things with you that you will need to plug in. Just as an example though, a curling iron could completely melt off its barrel, even with the plug adaptor. However, there are some that work fine with the adaptors (plug adaptors are small and easy to bring). For instance, a curling iron or other appliance that is adjustable in its settings is generally

fine (for instance, a curling iron with a setting of 1-20, or something similar). We don't recommend bringing many things that you will have to plug in though, due to these factors.



Contacting *BEST* Programs

This booklet is a wikiguide or a collaborative effort. Our best advice to you is to read this and help those who follow you by sending us your feedback.

Thank you and have a great time!

BEST Programs

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