

BELGIUM

— Bruges —

"By 6 p.m., the coaches groan away and Bruges deflates back into itself. Then the city you came to see finally appears."

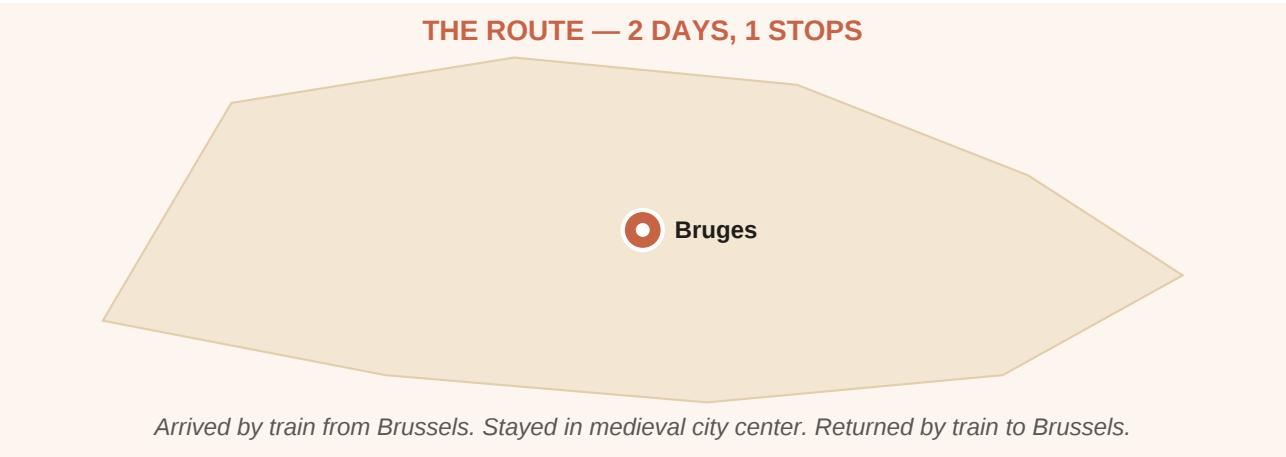


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By Ayushi & Harshit Jain

Belgium at a glance

Bruges stopped us in our tracks—a medieval trading port frozen almost exactly as it looked in 1500. Five centuries of history preserved because its harbor silted up and the money left. We climbed 366 bell tower steps, walked past swans on slow brown canals, discovered the Basilica of the Holy Blood's quiet medieval faith, and learned that staying overnight transforms Bruges from a day-trip cliché into a place that belongs to you after dark. The quiet lamplit streets after 9 p.m., mist on canals, and the smell of Belgian chocolate made every step count.



Best time	April to October (October has fewer crowds and golden light)
Visa (IN)	No visa needed (EU/Schengen)
Currency	EUR (€)
Getting around	Train from Brussels to Bruges (25 minutes). Walking is primary mode within medieval city. Canal boats available. Local buses minimal—everything is walkable.
If we did it again	Visiting only 2 days; the overnight magic deserves 3-4 days minimum.

The top 10 — our personal highlights

Ten moments worth flying back for. Ranked roughly in the order they made us go “oh.”

- 1 Belfort Tower · Bruges**
83-metre bell tower with 366 steps—breathless climb to medieval Bruges spread below.

- 2 Markt Square · Bruges**
Long piazza ringed by candy-coloured guild houses with stepped gables—the postcard image.

- 3 Basilica of the Holy Blood · Bruges**
Double-decker chapel with quiet upper church—lived medieval faith unlike anywhere else.

- 4 Canal Boat Ride · Bruges**
Half-hour on water-level Bruges—willow branches trailing on surface, back gardens, water gates.

- 5 The Beguinage · Bruges**
Whitewashed courtyard of 13th-century houses—serene, hushed, moss-covered grass and tall trees.

- 6 Minnewater Lake · Bruges**
Lake of Love—swans, willows, end-of-walk reward, deeply photogenic.

- 7 Dumon Chocolate · Bruges**
Tiny family operation with three shops—salted-caramel praline worth thinking about forever.

- 8 Liège Waffles & Frites · Bruges**
Dense sugar-studded waffles, mayonnaise (mayo is not optional), friterie culture.

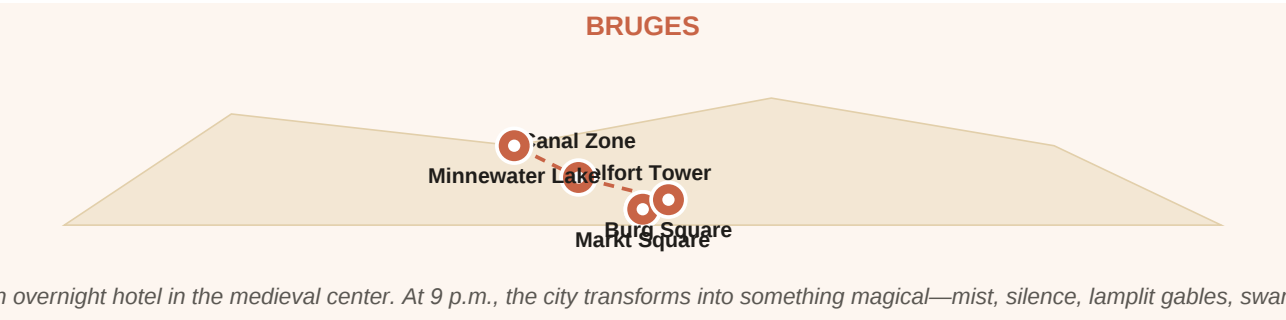
- 9 't Brugs Beertje Beer Bar · Bruges**
300 Belgian beers, cramped wooden tables, sticky in a convivial way, patient barman.

- 10 Bruges After Dark · Bruges**
Walking empty lamplit streets after 9 p.m.—mist on canals, footsteps echoing off gables—the real city.

Bruges

Medieval City Frozen in 1500—Climb 366 Steps to Magic

Bruges is smaller and softer than Venice—a city of gabled houses, slow brown canals, swans, bell towers, and people on bicycles ringing little bells at you. It arrived frozen in time because a medieval trading port's harbor silted up and the money left. For five centuries, almost nothing was demolished. But between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m., it's absolutely overrun with day-trip coaches from Brussels and the Channel ports. The solution is simple: stay overnight. By 6 p.m., the last coach groans out of the car park, Bruges deflates back into itself, and the city you came to see finally appears—canals turning silver, lanes empty, lamplight flickering on gables.



Top 5 here

- **Belfort Tower** — 83 steps, narrowing alarmingly, bell chamber genuinely loud—366 steps total to terracotta roofs and green ribbon canals.
- **Markt Square & Burg Square** — Postcard images of tall candy-coloured guild houses, civic heart with Gothic City Hall, intimate squares.
- **Basilica of the Holy Blood** — Romanesque lower level, extravagantly painted upper chapel—pilgrims approaching reliquaries, unhurried medieval faith.
- **Canal Boat Ride** — Half-hour water-level view, willow branches trailing, back gardens and brick water gates, tourists and authentic experience coexisting.
- **Overnight Magic** — Walking empty lamplit streets after 9 p.m.—mist on slow water, echoing footsteps, Bruges finally belongs to you.

Days	2 days (October 2024)
Where we stayed	Hotel in medieval city center, 10-minute walk from train station, core attraction proximity
Getting around	Train from Brussels (25 minutes), local walking only—everything accessible on foot
Where we ate	Liège waffles (dense, sugar-studded), Brussels waffles (lighter, rectangular), frites with mayo (mayo mandatory), Dumon chocolate pralines (salted-caramel favorite), The Chocolate Line (theatrical), 't Brugs Beertje beer bar (300 beers), casual cafes
Reality check	MUST stay overnight. Day-trip gets you Markt queue and coach park. Overnight gets you the city itself. Food is serious here—chocolate and beer quality varies wildly; trust locals. October has fewer crowds and golden light. Belfort climb is steep but worth every step.

→ Read the full Bruges guide on the site: desk2destinations.com/belgium-bruges.html

Costs — where the rupees went

Mid-range, vegetarian-friendly, two travellers splitting stays. Numbers are per-person, rounded honestly. Flights vary the most.

Accommodation	Hotel in city center, overnight stay essential	180
Food	Waffles, frites with mayo, chocolate from Dumon and The Chocolate Line, cafes	350
Transport	Train from Brussels (25 min, 15 EUR round-trip), walking in medieval city	20
Attractions	Belfort climb (366 steps), canal boat ride (~12 EUR), church entries	80
Chocolate & Beer	Dumon chocolate, The Chocolate Line, 't Brugs Beertje Belgian beers	120
Miscellaneous	Coffee, Minnewater lakeside sitting, sunset moments	80
Currency Exchange	ATM withdrawal and modest conversion costs	50
Photography & Memories	Just bring your camera—Bruges photographs itself beautifully	0

Total: 1,800 per person

One last thing

Stay overnight—the difference between day-trip and proper visit is transformative. Book accommodation in city center; 10-minute walk from station.

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