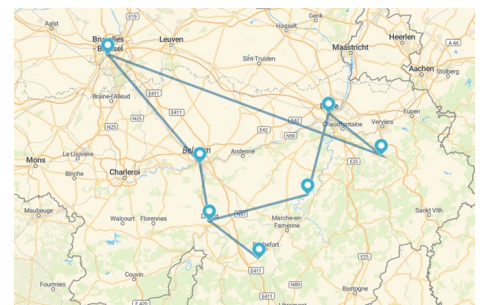




Belgium, 7 Days · Tailor-made by car

Route through Wallonia

This region, with an immense historical and cultural wealth seen in its buildings, works of art and festivities, is divided into 5 provinces: Walloon Brabant, Hainaut, Namur, Liège and Belgian Luxembourg. If you are in search of a spot of fresh air and nature, then Wallonia, with its numerous open spaces, three quarters of which are covered by the Meuse basin, is the ideal place. Wallonia also marks the border with southern Europe, both in terms of language and in lifestyle, for which it has a relaxed pace of life and Mediterranean style attitude. Wallonia probably has also the highest concentration of castles in the world. Although some of the old military fortresses or bourgeois houses have been transformed over the centuries into lavish residences, there are others now in ruin that bear testimony to their glorious past. The region's Trappist abbeys, famous for their internationally acclaimed beers, are not the only abbeys in Wallonia. Other religious orders, such as the Benedictines, Premonstratensians, Recollects and many others once made the peaceful corners of Wallonia their home. If you are looking for thrills and excitement, Wallonia offers a wide range of activities to suit everyone. From the depths of its caves to tops of its roller coasters, not forgetting its natural parks and recreation centres, there is always something exciting and fun to do.



CULTURAL

Departure date: Departures from May 2026 till May 2027

From: Dublin, Shannon, Cork

Travel details

DAY 1 · CITY OF ORIGIN - BRUSSELS

Flight departure from the city of origin to Brussels. Arrival and rental car pick-up at the airport. Set off for Brussels where we will enjoy free time to get to know the city. Enjoy the day in Brussels, Belgium's capital, and the main administrative headquarters of the European Union. Brussels is a blend of old and new. Its population is probably one of the most diverse in Europe. It is unofficially seen as the continent's capital, since it houses the European Council, the European Commission, the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament. These buildings are all together in what is known as the European neighbourhood, with Robert Schuman Avenue in tribute to the French minister who was the "Father of Europe". The city also hosts the building of the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

The Atomium is an imposing sculpture that adds a touch of vanguardism to Brussels. This structure, which was designed by the architects André Waterkeyn and André & Jean Polak on the occasion of the World Fair in 1958, represents an iron molecule of 9 atoms measuring 18 metres in diameter, joined together by tubes with escalators and stands over 100 metres tall. There is a museum inside and it offers one of the best panoramic views of the city. Its restaurant in the top sphere is a great place to dine. The other iconic symbol of Brussels is the Manneken Pis, a small bronze statue, sculpted by Jerome Duquesnoy in 1619, depicting a boy urinating in a fountain. Listen to the various legends about this figure, which is actually a copy of the original that was stolen and reclaimed several times, and which is currently housed in the City Museum. It is very close to the Grand Place and a must for any visit. The Grand Place, Brussels is a beautiful square, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1998. It consists of Gothic and Baroque buildings that once housed the Guild Houses, the Gothic style Town Hall, and the King's House. In August, in alternate years, a 1,800 square metre carpet of begonias covers the square. The square is surrounded by streets full of shops and restaurants, while the nightlife begins at sunset. There are buildings nearby not to be missed: the Gothic style Cathedral of St. Michael and St. Gudula; the Bolurse; the Palace of Justice, in neo-Baroque style built during the reign of Leopold II and for decades the largest building in the world; the Art Nouveau style houses, designed by the architect Víctor Horta, and the Royal Palace. It is the official residence of the Belgian monarchy, but the Royal Family actually live in the Castle of Laeken. It is open to the public during the summer months. The Sablon neighbourhood is also interesting; it is home to the church of Notre Dame du Sablon, a bijoux Gothic house of worship. During the weekend there is an antique market that we recommend visiting. You can dine near the Grand Place, where there are plenty of restaurants offering delicious dishes. And do not miss the famous Belgian chocolate. Several internationally known makers have shops in the area. There is no better souvenir.

Overnight stay in Brussels.

DAY 2 · BRUSSELS - NAMUR - ANNEVOIE - DINANT

Head for Namur, the capital of the Walloon region, a 55-minute drive away. The town is crowned by an imposing Citadel, built between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries, which covers some eight hectares and extends for seven kilometres. Its highest part provides spectacular views and is also home to the Visitors Centre. It is best to drive the Route Merveilleuse, the road that leads to the old town. It definitely lives up to its name. A winding road with various viewpoints over the Meuse river valley and the city. Its fascinating 7-kilometre long network of tunnels complete with old military arsenals give the town a mysterious aura. The medieval castles and ruins complete an almost magical journey. Namur plays host to many interesting cultural events. The "Day of Traditions and Folklore" is celebrated on the third Saturday of April; several local groups dressed in typical clothes gather in Place d'Armes to parade through the town. Then there is "Namur in May" which is a huge festival of street theatre that brings the entire town to life. September is the time of "Festivals of Wallonia" (Fêtes de la Wallonie), with a vibrant atmosphere where you can taste a range of beers and the traditional "péquet", a type of fruit spirit. This month also plays host to the French language film festival "International du Film Francophone de Namur (FIFF)". Apart from the main cultural events and those of its Citadel, its wide range of attractions mean that the town is the perfect place to visit at any time of the year. They include a couple of castles you simply can't miss. The magnificent Castle of Namur with its "Sense Garden", today transformed into a luxury hotel, and the Castle of the Counts, with the remains of an old medieval village. There are also several noteworthy churches, some from the 16th century and others from the 18th: the Cathedral of Saint Aubain, the Church of Saint-Loup, the old Episcopal Palace and the Church of Saint John the Baptist... Visit the Hospice Saint-Gilles, seat of the Walloon Parliament, and the Arsenal, with its structure originally built during the time of Louis XIV, now converted into a university canteen. The city also boasts several interesting museums based around art and local traditions. The nature around Namur is worth seeing too. The confluence of two rivers gives life to lush vegetation and the river Meuse lets you enjoy boat trips or cycle along its course.

Head for Annevoie, less than a quarter of an hour by car, where the Gardens sharing the same name are a must. They were created in 1758 by Charles-Alexis de Montpellier and ooze beauty and the passion for water. They belong to the Castle that bears the same name; unfortunately, it can't be visited, but its exterior alone makes a visit worthwhile. It is said to be the most beautiful water garden in Europe.

After discovering this fascinating city, the Tour continues to Dinant, about 40 minutes away. First sight of this little city, nestled between the rocky massifs of the Ardennes with the river Meuse below, will leave you lost for words. Its elegant buildings, with its Collegiate Church of Notre Dame rising majestically, create a stunning reflection in the water. Visit this unique Gothic building with its unusual bulbous bell tower, where light passes through one of the largest stained-glass windows in Europe, the work of maestro Ladon. Free admission. Enjoy a walk around the Citadel, get there by either climbing its 408 steps or by cable car. The views make it worthwhile. End the day in a nice restaurant in the old town and enjoy a beer or two. Of particular note are the Le Bocq Brewery, in the village of Purnode (about 10 minutes by car), founded in 1858, and the Le Caracole Brewery, with copper vats that are still heated by firewood.

Overnight stay in Dinant.

DAY 3 · DINANT - HAN-SUR-LESSE - BOUILLON - ORVAL - DINANT

Wake up to the enchanting light of Dinant and continue the Tour. Today we suggest visiting interesting cities before returning to spend the night in Dinant, where there is a whole host of places to visit: castles, abbeys, museums and caves.

Very near to Dinant you can visit the spectacular walkways of Han-sur-Lesse, where you can see, among other things, a giant 5.8-metre tall stalagmite. If you're looking forward to getting behind the wheel, one of Europe's greatest fortresses awaits us in Bouillon, as does the Notre-Dame Abbey in Orval, a Cistercian-Trappist monastery located in Florenville.

After a day filled with so many interesting sites, head back to Dinant. If you arrive in time, you can visit the House-Museum of Adolphe Sax, the inventor of the saxophone, and two other museums devoted to sound and music: the Abbey of Notre Dame de Leffe and the House of the Pataphonie. Have dinner at the Citadel and once again enjoy Belgium's most famous drink.

Overnight stay in Dinant.

DAY 4 · DINANT - DURBUY - LIÈGE - BLEGNY - SPA

After breakfast it is the ideal time to get going and visit the prehistoric caves around Dinant, such as La Merveilleuse. We also recommend the natural parks surrounding the city and a visit to one of the many castles in the area, such as those at Celles Vêves, Lavaux Sainte Anne and Freyr.

Continue the Tour to Durbuy, 50 minutes away. It is a small city-museum that has retained its ancient character. They call it the world's smallest city and its medieval origins have been magnificently preserved. It is home to an 11th century castle, along with the Topiary Park on the banks of the river Ourthe with its spectacular creations by Albert Navez. There are some 250 sculptures pruned in boxwood, yew and holly dotted around the site creating a natural open-air museum. Do not miss Barbaux Maze, a giant labyrinth in a cornfield with entertainers, and the Caves of Hotton, with wonderful shapes and colours situated some 65 metres underground where a subterranean river runs. We recommend that you check the opening hours. The price for adults is 9.5 euro.

After this, you can continue the Tour by driving just over an hour to Liège. This city was once the stronghold of the Germanic Roman Empire for eight centuries and nowadays it has a cosmopolitan air about it. This is helped by its position close to the border with Germany, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. It is an extremely lively city, with fairs, festivals and other cultural events practically all year round, from March to December. The historical architectural heritage is a tourist attraction in itself. Liège was the centre of Mosan art during the 10th and 11th centuries. Visit the Citadel and the Palace of the Prince-Bishops, rebuilt twice after being devastated by two separate fires in the 12th and 16th centuries. Saint Paul's Cathedral, with several valuable pieces of medieval heritage, such as the famous 'Reliquary of Charles the Bold', is not to be missed either. Finish off the tour with the Grand Curtius Museum, the Collegiate Church of Saint Bartholomew with its baptismal fonts and the Paix Notre Dame Abbey. The city is home to three of the most important cultural institutions in the country: the Royal Opera of Wallonia, the Liège Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Théâtre de la Place. Those with a sweet tooth should indulge in a heavenly treat before leaving: a waffle from Liège. Rejoin the Tour to Spa, on the way make a stop at a very interesting place, only a quarter of an hour by car: the Blegny mines. It is an original coal mine, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. Enter a mine cage to explore its underground tunnels, some 30 and 60 metres underground, and see how this mineral is extracted. You can also take a tour by wagon train. After this fascinating experience, drive 30 minutes to Spa. Relax and enjoy a hearty dinner before turning in for the night.

Overnight stay in Spa.

DAY 5 · SPA

Spend the day in this city whose reputation has crossed the Belgian borders to such an extent that in English the word "Spa" is used to refer to a thermal resort. This city has been famous since Roman times for its baths and hot springs; the perfect combination of relaxation and well-being. Spa is renowned for its celebrated iron-rich waters. The most famous spring, that of Peter the Great, has an octagonal arbour built in 1880. It is currently an exhibition hall with magnificent paintings by Antoine Fontaine, who in 1894 portrayed the 96 most famous people who visited the thermal baths, including Tsar Peter the Great, Wellington, Montagne and Victor Hugo. Spa's Casino is the oldest in the world; it was built in 1763 with Louis XVI style gambling halls and a ballroom that imitates the Queen's Theatre at the Court of Versailles. Spa's thermal baths, with a Napoleon III façade, have now been transformed into a modern complex. You can access it by cable car and enjoy a drink with stunning views. You must visit Galerie Léopold II, with its 160 wrought iron columns. It hosts an interesting street market every Sunday. Drive to one of the best Formula 1 circuits in the world, Spa-Francorchamps, built in 1920, home of the Belgian Grand Prix. To top it off, we recommend you visit the Abbey of Stavelot, which has a hundred old and modern racing vehicles on display. In the evening, take a walk around the Citadel and have dinner surrounded by the splendid architecture.

Overnight stay in Spa.

● DAY 6 · SPA - BRUSSELS

Say goodbye to this city in the province of Liège and head back to Brussels, 90 minutes' drive away. Take the opportunity to once again enjoy its magical sights and do some shopping. If you are looking for luxury shops, take a stroll down Avenida Louise. Do not forget to purchase some chocolate from the famous Belgian brands: Godiva, Galler Neuhaus and Leonidas. You will also find beer gift packs. If comics are your thing, we recommend a visit to the Comic Museum, where you can buy books and figurines.

Overnight stay in Brussels.

● DAY 7 · BRUSSELS - CITY OF ORIGIN

Arrival at the airport with enough time to drop off your rental car and flight back to the city of origin.

Arrival. End of the trip and our services.

Your trip includes

Your trip includes

- ✓ Return flight.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Brussels.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Brussels.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Dinant.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Dinant.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Spa.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Spa.
- ✓ Rent-a-car.

Your trip doesn't include

- ✗ Accommodation taxes in Belgium direct payment in facility.
- ✗ Possible toll charges.
- ✗ Insolvency protection.
- ✗ Bike rental.
- ✗ Boat tours.
- ✗ Entrance to historical buildings (some are free).

Destinations Visited

Brussels



Namur



Dinant



Han-sur-Lesse



Durbuy



Liege



Spa



Important remarks

- Triple rooms in Europe are generally rooms with twin beds or a double, in which a folding bed is installed to accommodate the third person. Due to the inconvenience this causes, we advise against using this option as far as possible.
- Check-in time at the hotel on the day of arrival depends on each establishment, but in no case will it be before 3:00 p.m., unless otherwise indicated.
- The proposed excursions and tours for each day are purely suggestions, as you can tailor the trip to suit your times, tastes and needs.
- A credit card is considered a guarantee, so sometimes you will need one for check-in at hotels.
- Hotels usually have cots available. Otherwise, babies will have to share a bed with an adult.
- To pick up your rental car, you'll need a credit (not debit) card in the name of the person who made the booking, who must also be the named driver of the vehicle.
- Consult the necessary documentation to enter the destinations visited and for transit in the countries where air stopovers are made.