



Belgian Country Guide

Page 1 of 5 Important Information Prior to Travelling to Belgium

Current DFAT Travel Advice

This advice is current for Mon, 5th November 2018.

Exercise a high degree of caution in Belgium due to the high threat of terrorist attack. Terrorists may be planning further attacks in Belgium. An attack could occur at any time. Exercise particular caution around locations known to be possible terrorist targets. See [Safety and security](#). In June 2017, there was a failed terrorist attack at Brussels central train station. In March 2016, terrorist attacks at Brussels National Airport and at Maalbeek metro station killed 32 people and injured more than 300. See [Safety and security](#). There are increased security checks at airports and train stations.

Always carry your passport with you when entering or leaving Belgium. Be alert to crime in Belgium, particularly in Brussels, Antwerp and other urban areas. Theft, muggings, bag snatching and pickpocketing are common in Brussels, particularly around major train stations, on trains and in the metro. More serious robberies and assaults also occur. Pickpockets operate on intercity and international trains. Pay close attention to valuables and your passport on public transport. See [Safety and security](#).

The above information is an edited excerpt of the Travel Advice Summary from The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Travellers are encouraged to read the travel advice in full, subscribe to updates to this advice and to register their presence in Belgium at www.smartraveller.gov.au.

Passport and Tourist Visa Conditions

Belgium forms part of the Schengen Area. Australian passport holders are usually allowed to enter the Schengen Area for Tourism or Business purposes for up to 90 days in any 180 day period without a visa. The countries which make up the Schengen Area are Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

Travellers to the Schengen Area are recommended to ensure their passport is valid for at least six months beyond their intended stay. Travellers are also recommended to be able to provide documentation confirming their ability to financially maintain themselves during their stay as well as tickets and entry documents for their onward destination. For further information and to confirm that your specific circumstances make you eligible to travel to the Schengen area without a visa, please contact a Belgian mission on the details below.

Vaccinations and Health Precautions

The following information is intended as a guide only and in no way should it be used as a substitute for professional medical advice relative to a travellers individual needs and vaccination history. No guarantee is made as to its accuracy or thoroughness. For further information, please contact The Travel Doctor on 1300 658 844.

Frequent or long stay travellers to Belgium should consider vaccination against hepatitis B. Regardless of destination, all travellers should be up-to-date with their routine "background" vaccinations, including a recent annual Influenza vaccination. Please consult a medical practitioner or contact The Travel Doctor for your specific risk to these preventable diseases and the appropriate avoidance measures.

Australians in Belgium are entitled to subsidised health care as part of the Reciprocal Health Care Agreement (RHCA) between the two countries. To take advantage of this program, travellers need to pay for the treatment or service they receive and take their receipt and Medicare card to any Belgium health insurance fund for reimbursement. For further information regarding the RHCA, please go to www.humanservices.gov.au. This agreement does not replace the need for travellers to take out travel insurance to cover the length of their stay. Medications that are legal in Australia may be illegal in other countries. For further information on insurance, taking medication overseas and other issues please visit www.smartraveller.gov.au/tips.

Belgian Representation in Australia

Belgian Embassy, Canberra

19 Arkana Street
YARRALUMLA ACT 2600

Tel: (02) 6273 2501
Fax: (02) 6273 3392

Web: www.diplomatie.be/canberra

Belgium also maintains honorary consulates in most Australian states and territories, however the embassy in Canberra is the best contact for further information on visa and entry requirements for Belgium.



Belgian Country Guide

Page 2 of 5 Important Information while Travelling in Belgium

Time Differences between Belgium and Australia

Belgium is Greenwich Mean Time +1 hour (+2 during daylight saving). The applicable time zone is Central European Time (CET) or Central European Summer Time (CEST). Daylight saving is observed from the last Sunday in March to the last Sunday in October.

Belgium, 12 noon, Winter (Dec) = Perth 7pm, Darwin 8:30pm, Brisbane 9pm, Adelaide 9:30pm, Hobart, Melbourne, Sydney 10pm.
 Belgium, 12 noon, Summer (Jun) = Perth 6pm, Darwin, Adelaide 7:30pm, Brisbane, Hobart, Melbourne, Sydney, 8pm.

Important Contact Numbers

Country Code for Belgium: +32
 To Dial Australia Call: 00 61 <City> <Number>
 Australian Reverse Charges Direct: 0800 100 61
 Users may need to insert phone cards/coins.
 Travelex Card Services:
 Call the US on +1 954 838 8294
 Visa Global Assist: 0800 7 8465
 MasterCard: 001 800 307 7309
 American Express Travellers Cheques:
 0800 80038
 International Operator: 1304
 Emergency Services:
 All - 112
 Fire - 100
 Ambulance - 100
 Police - 101

The emergency services operators should be able to answer calls in French, Dutch and English.

Important Information to be Recorded

Travellers are encouraged to carry photocopies of all important documents separately to their originals and to leave a set of these photocopies with someone in Australia. This includes those documents listed below.

Passports

Name: _____ Passport #: _ _ _ _ _

Name: _____ Passport #: _ _ _ _ _

Credit Cards

Name: _____ Institution: _____

Card Number: _ _ _ _ _

Name: _____ Institution: _____

Card Number: _ _ _ _ _

Travel Insurance

Name: _____ Institution: _____

Policy #: _____ Emergency #: _____

Name: _____ Institution: _____

Policy #: _____ Emergency #: _____

Australian Representation in Belgium

Australian Embassy, Belgium

Level 7, Avenue des Arts 56
 1000 BRUSSELS

Tel: (+32 2) 286 0500
 Fax: (+32 2) 286 0576

Web: www.belgium.embassy.gov.au

Alternatively, Australians may obtain assistance by contacting the 24 hour Consular Emergency Centre in Australia on (+61) 2 6261 3305.

Australians in Belgium are encouraged to register their presence and contact details with the Australian Embassy in Brussels, or online with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade at www.orao.dfat.gov.au.



Belgian Country Guide

Page 3 of 5 General Destination Information for Belgium

Duty Free Allowances for Belgium and Australia

Duty Free limits when entering Belgium from a non EU state:
 Alcohol: 1 L spirits (>22% alc vol) or 2 L other beverages; as well as 4 L of still wine and 16 L of beer.
 Tobacco: 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 250g of tobacco.
 Other Goods: Up to a value of €430 for air and sea travellers, €300 for others and €150 for those under 15 years.

Duty Free limits when entering Australia:
 Alcohol: 2.25 litres of alcoholic beverages.
 Tobacco: 25 cigarettes plus one open packet of cigarettes.
 Other Goods: Up to \$900 (\$450 for minors).

Minors may not claim alcohol or tobacco products (min age limits is 17 yrs). Further restrictions apply when entering/exiting Belgium, Europe and Australia. Travellers are encouraged to familiarise themselves with these restrictions before crossing the borders of either country. For information on Belgian customs please visit www.ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/common/travellers, or for information regarding Australian customs please visit www.homeaffairs.gov.au.

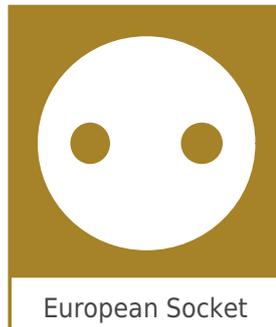
Electrical and Telephone Adaptors

Electrical Socket type: European.

Voltage: 220-240 volts (same as Australia, no voltage/frequency converter required).

Modem Plug: USA and Belgian.

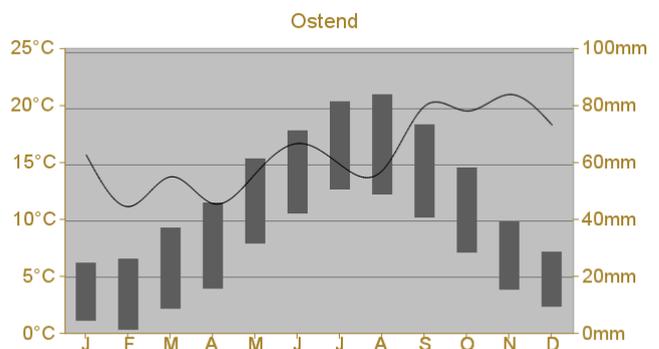
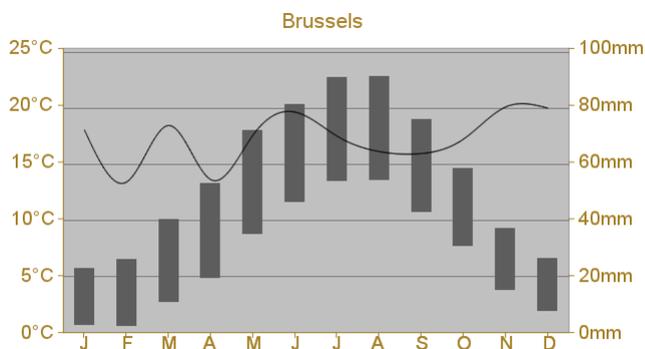
To purchase electrical/modem adaptors, or for further information on this matter, please view the Korjo adapter guide at www.korjo.com.au.



Belgian Holidays 2018

01 Jan:	New Year's Day	21 Jul:	National Holiday
30 Mar:	Good Friday	15 Aug:	Assumption of Mary
02 Apr:	Easter Monday	01 Nov:	All Saints Day
01 May:	Labour Day	11 Nov:	Armistice Day
10-11 May:	Ascension Day	25 Dec:	Christmas Day
21 May:	Whit Monday	26 Dec:	Boxing Day

Average Temperature (Bar) and Precipitation (Line) in Belgium



Source: Royal Meteorological Institute of Belgium. For local forecasts please go to www.meteo.be.

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Belgian Country Guide

Exchange Rate

Interbank Rate

1 Australian Dollar (AUD) = 0.63 Euro
 1 Euro (EUR) = 1.58 Australian Dollars

With 4% Margin

1 Australian Dollar (AUD) will buy 0.61 Euro
 1 Euro (EUR) will cost 1.65 Australian Dollars

All rates were correct at a point in time on Monday, 05 Nov 2018. The "Interbank Rate" does not take into account any exchange fees, while the "With 4% Margin" adds 4% to the exchange rate to simulate a typical margin that would be paid when exchanging currencies. These rates have been rounded and should not be used when calculating transactions of large value.

Purchasing Power Parity

The following is a purchasing-power comparison of the Euro in Belgium and the Australian Dollar, using the Big Mac as a common good. While this is not a faultless comparison, it is a useful indicator of the purchasing-power of the two currencies.

Big Mac Australia: \$5.95 (AUD) = 3.76 Euro
 Big Mac Belgium: €4.10 (EUR) = 6.49 Australian Dollars

A Big Mac in Belgium is therefore 9% more expensive than in Australia.

This comparison is based on 2018 prices using current exchange rates. Prices may not include variations by locality or local taxes.

Currency Cheat Sheet

This cheat sheet uses the "With 4% Margin" rate of exchange listed above.

€0.50 = \$0.82 AUD	€10 = \$16.47 AUD	€100 = \$164.73 AUD
€1 = \$1.65 AUD	€20 = \$32.95 AUD	€200 = \$329.47 AUD
€2 = \$3.29 AUD	€30 = \$49.42 AUD	€300 = \$494.20 AUD
€3 = \$4.94 AUD	€40 = \$65.89 AUD	€400 = \$658.94 AUD
€4 = \$6.59 AUD	€50 = \$82.37 AUD	€500 = \$823.67 AUD
€5 = \$8.24 AUD	€60 = \$98.84 AUD	€600 = \$988.40 AUD
€6 = \$9.88 AUD	€70 = \$115.31 AUD	€700 = \$1,153.14 AUD
€7 = \$11.53 AUD	€80 = \$131.79 AUD	€800 = \$1,317.87 AUD
€8 = \$13.18 AUD	€90 = \$148.26 AUD	€900 = \$1,482.61 AUD
€9 = \$14.83 AUD		€1,000 = \$1,647.34 AUD

Notes and Coins

The legal currency of Belgium is the Euro, which is abbreviated using the symbol € (for example €100). The subunit of the Euro is the cent, of which there are 100 in every Euro. The following units of currency are the most common in Belgium but other versions and denominations are also in circulation (including a purple €500 note and other nations' coins). Pictures are not to scale.





Belgian Country Guide

Page 5 of 5 About Belgium and Belgian Travel Map

About Belgium

Full Name: Royaume de Belgique / Koninkrijk België.
 (Kingdom of Belgium)

Independence: 4 October 1830 (from the Netherlands).

Size: 30,528 sq km (45% the size of Tasmania).

Population: 10.5 million (45% the size of Australia).
 Brussels (capital) 1.9 million; Antwerp 960,000.

Language: Dutch (official) 60%, French (official) 40%.

Ethnicity: Fleming 58%, Walloon 31%, other 11%.

Religion: Catholic 60%, none 31%, Sunni Muslim 5%,
 Protestant 2%, Jewish 1%.

GDP Per Capita: US\$38,500 (Australia US\$40,800).

Significant Dates:

57 BC - Julius Caesar conquers the whole of Gaul.
 100's AD - Frankish tribes begin to settle in the area.
 496 - King Clovis unites the Franks, converts to Christianity.
 768-1830- Belgium comes under the rule of many nations
 including the French, Habsburgs, Spanish and Dutch.
 1815 - Napoleon is defeated at Waterloo.
 1830 - Independence from Netherlands. The German Prince
 Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha is elected King.
 1914-18 - Germany invades during World War One. The
 Western front runs through West Flanders.
 1939-45 - Germany invades again in WW2. Allied forces liberate
 Belgium after victory in the Battle of the Bulge.
 1960-62 - Belgian colonies in Africa given independence.

