

BRUGES TRAVEL GUIDE – THE CUTEST EUROPEAN GETAWAY



I third wheeled a trip to Bruges with my best friend and her boyfriend, and we literally had the best time. We had been visiting our friend in London and decided to spend one night here before continuing on to Amsterdam. That one night also happened to be Thanksgiving! We honestly had planned zero things and I had only looked up the [NYT 36 hours article](#). Our one night in Bruges was super fun and beautiful and yes romantic and no it wasn't weird. I am dying to go back with my husband for a weekend getaway.

If you're interested in Bruges, you would probably also be interested in my [Wachau Travel Guide](#), a wine country right outside Vienna. If you're ready to visit Bruges, check out my guide to [Booking a Trip](#).



SHOULD I VISIT BRUGES?

If you are nearby (Paris, Amsterdam, Brussels, London, Antwerp, Ghent, etc), then Bruges is the cutest little town to stop and see. Granted, there are lots of cute towns around Europe. The cutest thing about Bruges is that it is so small that a very large percentage of it is charming and adorable. In some larger but adorable towns, a smaller percentage of the town is adorable. I'm not sure if that makes sense, but I'm sticking with it.

Go to Bruges if you enjoy the idea of cute European towns, chocolate, waffles, chocolate waffles, mussels and fries, canal-side strolls, pretty parks, or romantic getaways. This town is so adorable but also pretty touristy and pretty tiny. So try and go on a shoulder season and don't feel like you need more than a day or two here

WHAT TIME OF YEAR SHOULD I VISIT BRUGES?

My friends and I went at the end of November and it was very charming. I can see it being a great destination year round. In the summer, you can enjoy the park and being outdoors, and in the winter you can enjoy some hot cocoa and Christmas markets (the Christmas market was opening in December so we just missed it).

The web says that May – September is the best time to visit Bruges.

HOW DO I GET TO BRUGES?

By train or plane, but I would definitely recommend the train for comfort.

When I went to Bruges, I was stopping there from London to Amsterdam and spending just one night. We took the **Eurostar from London** to Brussels and then a regional train to Bruges. It was very easy to figure out. Book your Eurostar ticket as quick as possible as prices only go up – they usually come up on the site 6 months before departure. The train from London to Brussels is about 2 hours long and Brussels to Bruges is an hour. So the total travel time from London to Bruges is about 3 hours 30 minutes. You can purchase your ticket on the Eurostar website to get to “Any Belgian station” so that you do not have to buy two tickets.

When you get to the train station, if you are using Eurostar, make sure you have your ticket handy. You can either print your tickets or have them on your mobile phone. Check the monitors for what platform your train will be on. To help myself out, I usually pull up Google Maps and enter my destination and the public transportation option. It usually shows me what platform I am on and will also show you what platform you will need to change to in Brussels to get to Bruges. I would recommend getting to the train station about 45 minutes before departure. You do have to go through security and customs. There is nothing wrong with getting there even earlier than that and grabbing a coffee and snack.

There is also an airport in Bruges if you would rather fly. You will probably be tacking Bruges on to another part of your Europe trip.

Use Google Flights to look up flights

Apparently there is a bus you can take from London that is very cheap (15 GBP), but I would definitely not recommend that. It is a 9 or 10 hour ride.

IS THERE A LANGUAGE BARRIER IN BRUGES?

Nope. Too touristy for that!

WHERE SHOULD I STAY IN BRUGES?

Hotel de Orangerie was the most beautiful hotel I have ever stayed in. But I also do not stay in nice hotels often. I read about it in the **NYT 36 hours guide to Bruges** and would definitely stay there again if I went back. The décor was so elegant and fun, and there were Hermes bath products that made me feel rich!

Check out AirBnB if you prefer to do that.

Check out TripAdvisor for other hotels for different budgets



HOW DO I GET AROUND BRUGES?

Walk. Literally you can traverse the city in half an hour. We were amazed at how much we did in such little time. That paired with the cold weather actually caused us to drink beers for hours on end starting at about 2 PM until dinnertime because we had seen all our “must-sees” and were very cold.

I think you can also rent bikes in the summer. Online says you can rent them at the train station for 8 euros for four hours.

In the summer there are also canal cruises that can take you around the town.

HOW MANY DAYS SHOULD I SPEND IN BRUGES?

We only spent 1 night, but I am considering going back with my husband for a weekend just because it was so magical. The hotel definitely helped, but Bruges was definitely one of my favorite places in Europe I have visited. One night was fine, but two nights is even better. I think you would run low on things to do if you stayed longer than two nights.

WHAT IS THERE TO DO IN BRUGES?

MARKT SQUARE

This is just the main town square with the belfry tower. You can pay to go into the tower and go up to the top for 12 Euros (be warned – it is 336 steps). Around the square are lots of little paths and alleys and shops and restaurants. In the winter, they also have a Christmas market right here.



EAT CHOCOLATE

The two places mentioned in the NYT article stand out amongst all the same-ole chocolate shops that dot the town. Go to **The Chocolate Line** for some crazy fun flavors and packaging and **BbyB** for some well-executed flavors and sleek packaging. Both spots have some great souvenirs to bring back. I bought lots of chocolate stocking stuffers! The stores are very beautiful too. Really any of the places around town are great to stop into.

MINNEWATERPARK

This park is so beautiful and dreamy. I can only imagine that in the summer it would be the most romantic place for a picnic. Have plans to walk there and just get lost.







WALK ALONG THE CANALS

The corner where **Café t’Klein Venetie** is on the map is where most people go to get the best pictures along the canal. You can grab a drink there too. As mentioned above, you can grab canal cruises along the canal in the summer.





STROLL AROUND

Online recommends getting lost on the Gouden-Handrei and Sint-Anna neighborhoods. We didn't do this because it was so cold out. The Burg is another square with a town hall and a beautiful church, Basilica of the Holy Blood.



EAT A WAFFLE

We ate at **Chez Albert**, but I have read that **Fred's** may be the best... **Go.fre** is a really cool place to get a dipped waffle stick. I brought some back for stocking stuffers as well.



Share your waffle experience

#WELOVECHEZALBERT

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WHERE DO I EAT IN BRUGES?

With only one night in Bruges, we only ate waffles, chocolate, and a fabulous dinner at **Poules Moules**.

There are actually lots of fine dining restaurants in Bruges that I had read about (**Hertog Jan** with 3 Michelin stars but only open through the end of 2018, **Bruut**, **Bonte B**, **Ganzespel**, **Tete Pressee**), but we just wanted some good ole Flemish cuisine.

I ended up reading about this place called Poules Moules just off the main square that was super delicious. I would recommend making a reservation ahead of time if you can. When we showed up, we said, “do you have space for three people?” They just said no. Through a confusing conversation, we eventually found out that they interpreted that literally, but a table was about to get up and leave and then we could sit there. So make sure that you know whether they are completely booked for the night, or just booked that very minute.

I read about a couple places after the fact that I want to stop at next time. **Chez Vincent** is supposed to be the best spot for Belgian fries, and **De Proeverie** tearoom is written about for great hot chocolate with a homemade lump of chocolate!

IS THERE A PLACE TO GO OUT IN BRUGES?

Bruges is pretty sleepy, but there is a great bar scene. We actually ended up spending hours at the **Bruges Beer Museum**. They are open from 10a – 6:30p every day. We got the “beer flight” that ended up being five full-size beers. It was very economical and got us very tipsy.

De Halve Maan Brewery is a great stop to go to also. We stopped here and tried some beers and got some snacks. They have a brewery tour that we did not do. I read that this brewery is the only brewery with a beer pipeline to feed Bruges’ bars. I was very disappointed to not find any souvenirs with the beer pipeline in the souvenir shop because my dad would have loved that! Honestly, the brewery is not a must see. It’s not “cute” and is pretty far out of town.

Café Rose Red is supposed to be the most romantic bar ever. I did not get to go in.

’t Brugs Berrtje is a pub written about all over the web. We walked by it and it looked kind of dead and on a back alley, so you can check it out and let me know what you think.



WHAT SHOULD I PACK FOR BRUGES?

Walking shoes! The cobblestone walkways are not conducive to shoes with heels. Wear comfortable shoes. When we were there, it was so cold. So we were wrapped up in parkas, gloves, and hats.

HONESTLY, HOW MUCH DID YOU SPEND IN BRUGES?

TOTAL FOR 1 NIGHT – \$361

Train to Bruges – \$120

Hotel – \$94

Food and Drinks \$89

Souvenirs – \$58

MY PERFECT 1 TO 2 DAY BRUGES ITINERARY

DAY ONE

Arrive in Bruges around noontime. Head straight to Markt to check it out. Maybe you go up the Belfry. If you need a snack, head to Fred's or Chez Albert to get a waffle. Beware that it is SO sweet. I could only eat a little bit of it. Head to Minnewaterpark and stop at BbyB and The Chocolate Line on the way. After strolling around the park, stop into the Half Moon Brewery to get a beer if you want to. I think the Beer Museum bar was more fun. Make sure you walk along the canals by Café t'Klein Venetie to get beautiful views. Dinner at Poules Moules. Go to Care Rose Red for a nightcap.

DAY TWO (OPTIONAL)

Do anything you didn't get to do the day before. More strolling and eating and drinking. Get lost in the two neighborhoods I mentioned above. Get some hot chocolate at the place I didn't get to go to. Maybe splurge on a fancy dinner or just eat some fries.