



Evangelolo[®]
BELGIUM

Wallonia



Content

• Word of the editor	3
• Green land in the heart of Europe	4
• In the footsteps of history	10
• It's delicious, it's Walloon!	16
• Walloon farmers: on guard of taste and freshness	17
• Delicacies by seasons	19
• Sweet country	20
• Chocolate passion	21
• Beer is a national treasure	22
• Monastic & Trappist	26
• Double, triple, quadruple ...	27
• The truth is not in wine, but in wine barrels	28
• Beer and cheese - a love marriage	29
• A glass of Belgian drink - strong or sparkling	30
• Digestives	32
• Walloon Abbeys: beautiful and strong in spirit	34
• Reserve of castles	38
• Royal Sport	48
• Kaleidoscope of Holidays	51
• Major events calendar	54
• Binche Carnival	55
• Heritage of the Industrial Revolution	57
• Province of Hainaut	59
• Pairi Daiza Zoological Park	61
• Province of Namur	64
• Province of Walloon Brabant	66
• Province of Liege	68
• Province of Luxembourg	70
• Evangelo Belgium	72



Evguenia BOYKO

Chief Editor of
"Wallonia, by Evangelo Belgium"
Founder & CEO of
Evangelo Belgium®

"The Kingdom of Belgium and its fabulous region of Wallonia will forever enchant you with their beauties!

If you are a frequent traveler and are in constant search of unexplored and untrodden paths by mass tourism, then Wallonia is certainly for you!

I can assure you from my own experience, since I have lived in Wallonia for more than twenty years, that this place can pamper as the lovers of authentic rest in the bosom of nature, as well as the most demanding travelers.

This brochure will tell you a lot of new and interesting things about this extraordinary region.

In Wallonia, you can have fun and enjoyment all over the year: old fairs, festivals, medieval holidays, sports events, carnivals, events in ancient castles, ... All this events accompanied by a glass of fabulous Walloon beer, wine, whiskey, gin, ... and tasting delicious Walloon food with family, friends or on a romantic trip. It is really a tastefully life in all its glory!

Walloon people are people with incredible hospitality and courtesy. I often compared them with fairy elves in the first years of my stay in this wonderful corner of the world. The times, when everything was unknown to me, these "cute Walloon elves" always rushed to my aid.

Locals will gladly immerse you in the atmosphere of a good old fairy tale and will proudly share with you their ancient legends: and they have plenty of them, believe me!

Wallonia will give you an endless opportunity to explore deep history, spirituality, art, sports, gastronomy, culture and traditions from the very heart of old Europe.

It doesn't matter if you are young or have reached the age of wisdom, Wallonia will always have something to surprise you.

Wherever in the world I am, even in the most heavenly places with impeccable service, I always return home, to my beloved Belgium, with a great pleasure.

The moment you will step foot on this amazing land and will feel the atmosphere of its cultural identity, you will definitely remember my words. "



Green land in the heart of Europe

In the very center of Europe, at the intersection of its historical and cultural paths, having survived all waves of western civilization, unattainable for modern noise behind a ridge of dense forests, on the feather bed of the hilly plains, chastely slumbering, mysterious, fabulously beautiful, hospitable and the almost unexplored Wallonia.

Wallonia (Wallonie) is part of the Kingdom of Belgium along with Flanders and Brussel's metropolitan area. It occupies just over half of the Belgian Kingdom territory and located south of Brussels, in opposite of Flanders, occupying the northern part.

** In Netherlands and in Flanders this river is called Maas, and in France and in Wallonia – Meuse.*

Local residents, called Walloons, are twice less than the neighboring Flemings. The vast majority of Walloons speak French, which has here the status of official language.

Wallonia has no access to the littoral and is surrounded on all sides by the territories of other Belgian regions or neighboring states: the Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg and France.

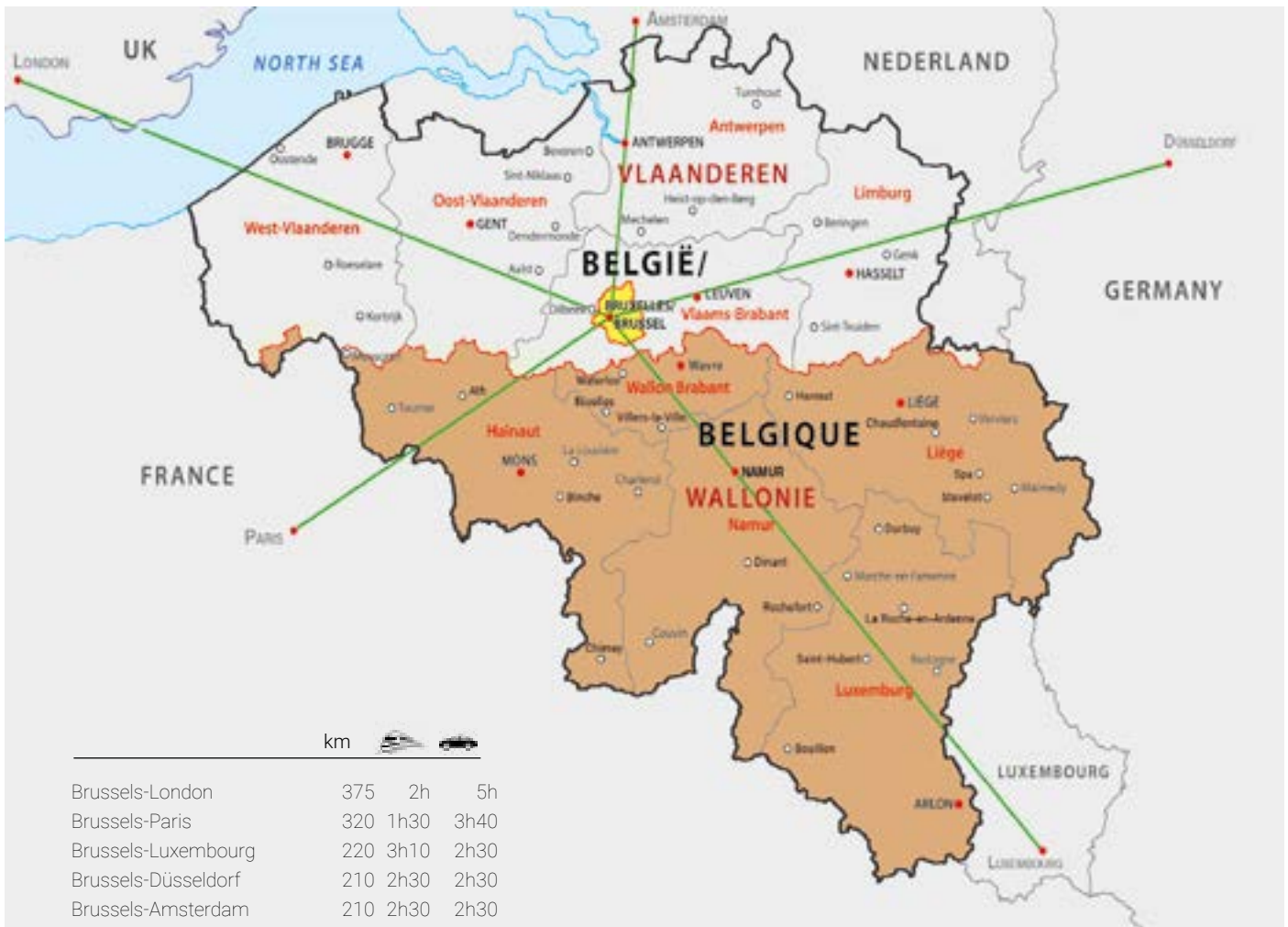


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© WBF • JP Remy

Rochehaut • Panorama sur Frahan

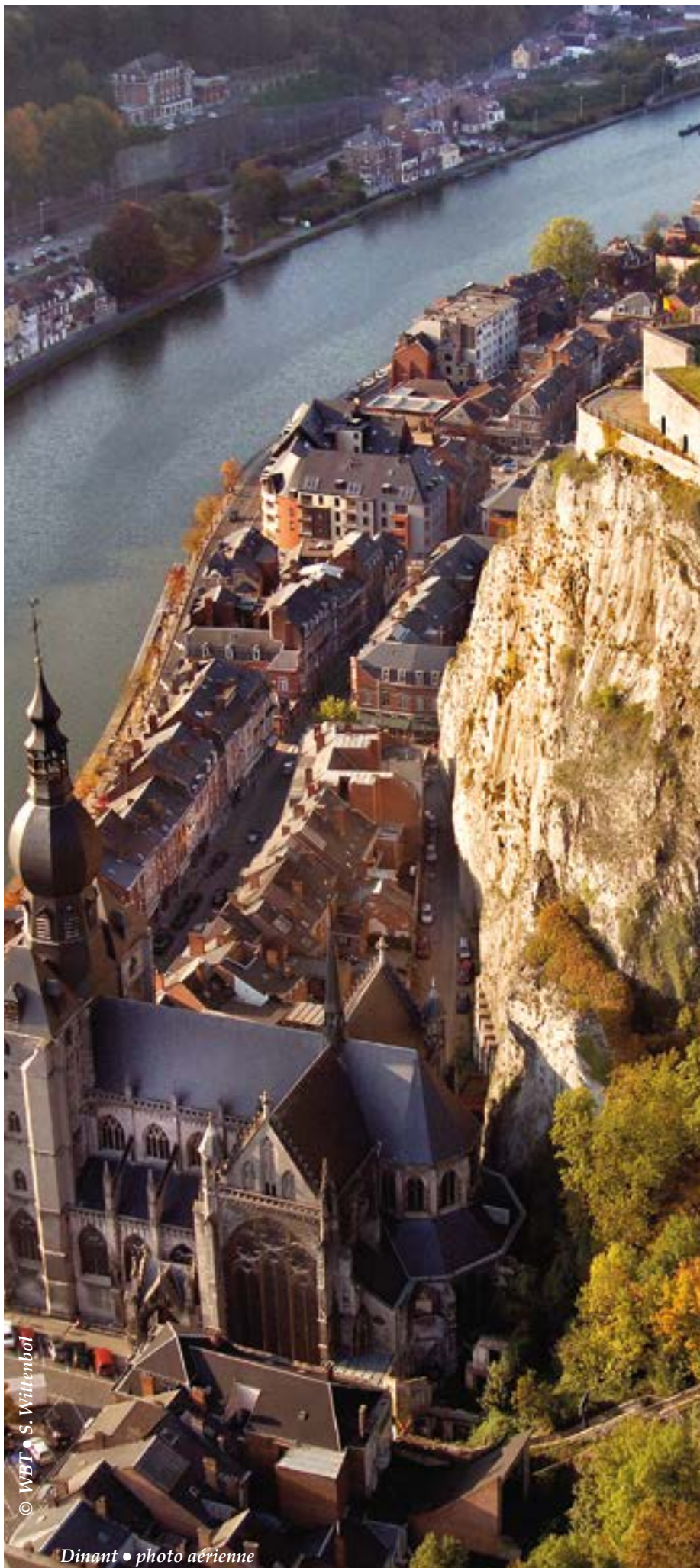


Territory of Wallonia is divided into five provinces: Hainaut, Brabant Wallon, Namur, Liège and Luxembourg.

Northwest part of Wallonia is a picturesque hilly plain, and the southeast is covered with lush forests of Ardennes. Plains and rocky hills appears in the river valley of Meuse *. Meuse is flowing in the middle of the Wallonia territory, such as “central artery”. The largest Walloon cities are located on the river Meuse - Liège and Namur (capital of Wallonia), as well as a very small and splendid city of Dinant.

Wake up this “sleeping beauty” - Wallonia, and you will: reveal its treasures, captivate by the fantastic beauty of its landscapes, fall under a charm of its medieval cities and castles, enchant with the majestic tranquility of the abbeys, generously drink the delicious beer and wine, taste the exquisite food, whirl in a colorful dance of carnivals, listen ancient legends and tales...





Ardennes mountains are low, most outstanding point does not exceed 700 meters. It's rather flat highlands with an average height of about 400 meters. Nevertheless, the Ardennes are rocky and famous for their deep side gorges. Gorgeous forests, mostly mixed and lushes, are chiefly rich state of the Ardennes region. By these forests, like hundreds of years ago, roam the red deer, fallow deer, roes and wild boars. The Ardennes are less populated than other areas of Wallonia, but it is by no means endless forest, there are many cities and beautiful villages here and there.

The whole territory of Wallonia is generously riddled with a network of rivers. Their specular waters, high and rocky shores, give a multitude of special and magical Walloon landscapes. There are also several amazing natural caves. The most impressive of them are: the cave of Hotton and the cave of Han-sur-Lesse. People over a century ago found the entrance to these "mountains king's domains", then added coziness and light there, so that you can comfortably walks through the huge passageway, decorated with stalactite chandeliers, and descend on boats on an underground river.

© WBT • S. Wittenbol

Dinant • photo aérienne



© WBT • Olivier Legardien

Vue sur Mabège

Wallonia has soft and comfortable climate. Walloon summer is not too hot and winter is not frosty. Precipitation is fairly frequent, but not intense. This region has a wonderful weather conditions for cultural tourism all over the year. But this does not mean at all that Wallonia is always the same. On the contrary, the change of seasons is obvious here. The nature of the weather does not change strong, but “the dress of the Wallonia Nature”, like any beauty, selects according to the season. And there is no such an outfit that would not suit Her!

Wallonia most wows are green. Wallonia’s famous fact is that green, very green. All the long summer Wallonia shimmers with a fifty shades of green: from sunny chrysolite of plains to dark malachite of the thicket. And only gray rocks and silvery rivers disturb the green omnipotence.



© WBT • JL Flémal

Caution! These forests are found trolls. They collect magic ingredients for cooking exhilarating drinks and are in the service of some brewery for ages.

Mirwart • forest





© WBT • S. Wittenbol

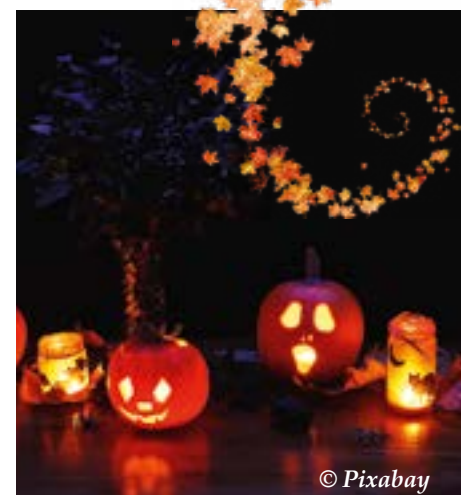
Château de Walzin • photo aérienne

Autumn in Wallonia is magically beautiful. She comes up softly and delicately adding each day pieces of amber in crown trees, until it reaches orange peak, closer to the middle November. This is the season of cozy walking along forest paths, when the stones, left behind druids, begin to whisper old Celtic legends. This is the most mystical and magical time of the year. Most under walking to celebrate the night before All Saints Day. In Wallonia, folks love and celebrate brightly Halloween. Its atmosphere is very friendly, soulful and enigmatic.



© WBT • FTLB • P. Willems

Tenneville • Fall season



© Pixabay



© WBT • Christel François

Bouillon in the snow

In winter, in many areas of Wallonia, especially in the Ardennes, snow falls, but severe frosts does not happen, the temperature keeps approximately of zero. Rivers and lakes are almost never freeze. During the period of Christmas, Wallonia is just fabulously beautiful. Walloons don't skimp on Christmas decoration. They, sincerely, believe in Christmas miracle and therefore know how to create absolutely marvelous atmosphere of this holiday.



© WBT • Braine-le-comte • Wallonie insolite

Bois de la Houssière

With the beginning of spring, the Walloon forests and the plains spread their colorful carpets. At this period, many wooded gardens and parks enchanting their visitors with flower festivals, where the Walloon gardeners demonstrate their art. Walloon, living in rural areas since olden days, have always been especially close to nature, they feel keenly and wait for the approach of spring. Therefore, since the end of winter, Walloon begin the series of the brightest spring holidays – Carnival's time. Initially, this tradition was created for atonement of the earth's spirits and provide a bountiful harvest. These carnival actions cover the Walloon cities and villages with a plenty of colors.

In the footsteps of history



The Walloon's ancestors chose Wallonia's territory from the most ancient times. About -400,000 – 40,000 years BC, Neanderthals appeared in the Meuse valley and gradually settled the entire territory of the modern Walloon provinces of Liege and Namur.

Wallonia's rich prehistoric past is evidenced by found in several Liege and Namur caves, beautifully preserved bones and other traces of Neanderthal sites, megalithic structures, erected by ancient people in 6-3 millennia BC, and also the largest in Europe Neolithic flint mine.

In the 5th century BC, Wallonia was inhabited by Celtic tribes, bringing with them a rich culture and belief in immortality souls. Wallonia owes Celts its own name, since it has "Walh", which means "stranger". Ancient Germanic tribes called "Walh" their Celtic neighbors, who spoke a language foreign to them.

In 57 BC, "ubiquitous" Julius Caesar came to Wallonia, as usual - with war, and, as always - won it. Then, Walloon lands became several centuries ahead part of the vast Roman Empire and acquired the Latin language. Under the Romans, Wallonia was actively agriculture developed.





Some of the farms, that miraculously have survived to this day, were founded in the era of Roman rule..

At the beginning of the 5th century, the Merovingian dynasty of Frankish kings replaced the rule of Rome. In 466, in the Walloon city of Tournai, was born the first king of all Franks - Clovis I. Tournai became the first capital of the Frankish state, as well as the center spread of Catholicism. In the 7th century the first monasteries began to appear in Wallonia.

Meanwhile, in Tournai, since the dawn, people prepare a delicious cake named "Clovis". By its form it resembles a Merovingian dynasty crown

In the 8th century, Pepin the Short (born in another Walloon city - Liege) dropped the last Merovingian from the Frankish throne and declared himself king. It has come time of the Carolingian dynasty. His son Charlemagne, often called "The father of Europe", strengthened the power of Franks and enormously expanded state borders. River valley Meuse became the economic and political center of the new empire.





© WBT • Daniel Elke

Château de Bouillon

From 11th to 14th century Wallonia survived a period of feudal fragmentation, on its territory. Many counties, duchies and principalities lived in warring coexistence. It was the time of Crusades, of powerful religious orders formations, of cities and middle ages culture flourishing. In these centuries, Walloon catholic monasteries reached an exceptional power. In the same period, French language replaced Latin as the language of literature and authority.

Perhaps all Wallonia represents a vast museum of the medieval era. Castles, monasteries, folklore traditions - all this is alive and breathes a mysterious past.

In the 15th century, Walloons territories became the part of Duchy of Burgundy for several decades.

From 16th to late 18th century Walloon lands, except the independent Principality of Liege, belonged to the Spanish-Austrian Empire of the Habsburgs and were involved in many military conflicts.



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©WBT • MT Waterloo • Jean-Philippe Van Damme

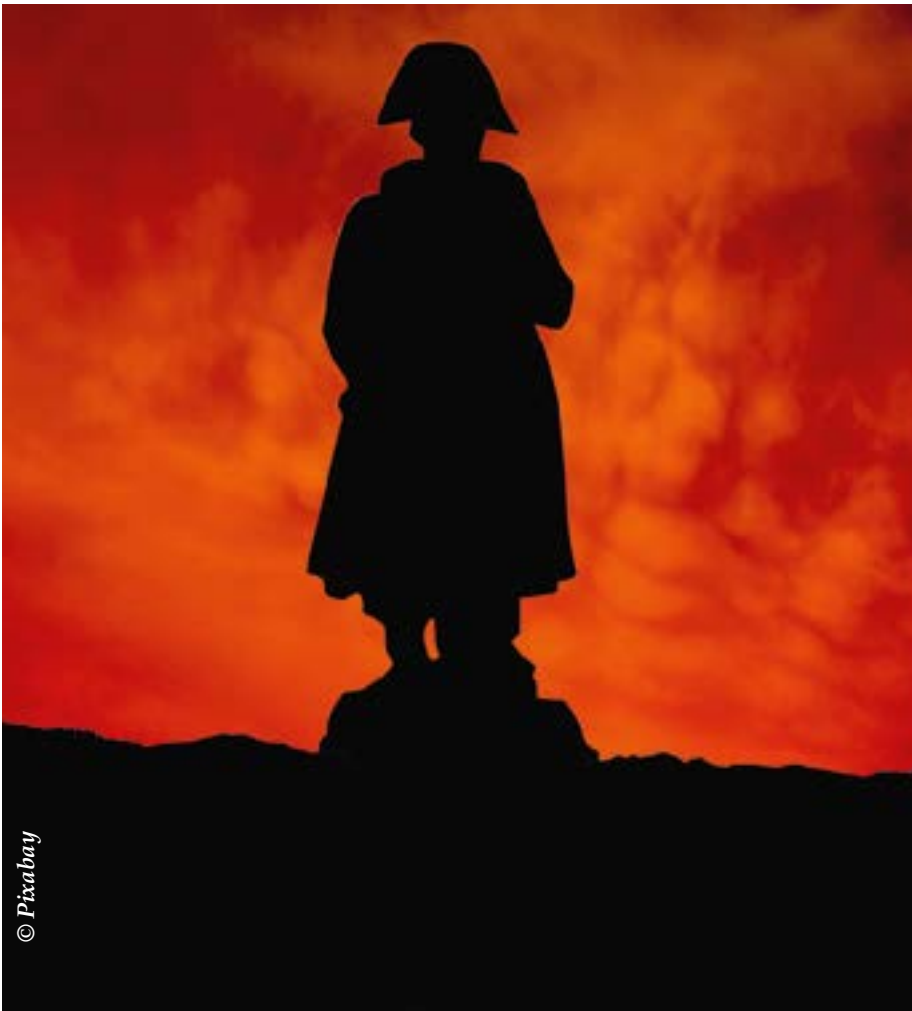
Lion of Waterloo • Panorama

In 1789, the Great French Revolution took place, and in 1795, its relentless wave reached Wallonia. Many monasteries and estates of the Walloon nobility were destroyed and plundered. The power of the French Republic, and then the Napoleonic French Empire, held out in Wallonia twenty years.

June 18, 1815 years near the town of Waterloo, which is located in Walloon Brabant - 15 kilometers south from Brussels, an epic battle of the Napoleon's army and European monarchs coalition took place. This epic battle was ended by the crushing defeat of Bonaparte and the End of the entire Napoleonic empire.

After Napoleon's defeat, the great powers of that time (Great Britain, Austria, Prussia and Russia) decided among themselves the fate of the former French possessions. Walloon territories were ceded to the crown of the Netherlands.

Wallonia has many memorable places associated with the French Revolution and Napoleon I. However, the most iconic place to see, is the site of the Battle of Waterloo.



© Pixabay

In 1830, the Walloons, dissatisfied with the policy of the king of the Netherlands, took an active part in revolutionary movement that led to the proclamation of independence. In January 1831 - a new state appeared on the map of the world - Belgium, which chose a constitutional monarchy as a form of government. The Walloon Lands became part of the Kingdom of Belgium along with the Flemish Territories and the Brussels Region. The Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha was elected the king of the Belgians. He was related with all the great European monarchies: German, British, French and Russian.



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Léopold I

The years 1810-1880 fell on industrial leadership of Wallonia. The rapid growth of the coal mining and metallurgical industries in Wallonia, spurred on by the construction of the first railway network in continental Europe. This provided to Belgium the status of the most industrialized country in Europe, after the UK.



© WBT • Bernard Carbonneaux

Chemin de Fer à Vapeur des 3 Vallées



© WBT • Fr. Mazy

Fort of Loncin

During the First World War from 1914 to 1918, the territory of Wallonia was completely occupied by German troops and suffered devastating losses, almost completely losing its industrial facilities.

In May 1940, Wallonia, like all of Belgium, was rapidly captured by Hitler's army and was under occupation before liberation allied troops. Large battles on the territory of Wallonia unfolded at the very end of the war with the offensive of the allied forces. The most significant was the great Ardennes battle, that took place in the winter of 1944-1945, and ended with the victory of the Anglo-American troops. As part of this battle, the Walloon city of Bastogne was sieged, during which the allied forces suffered huge human losses.



© E. Boyko

Bunker d'Hitler • Brûly-de-Pesche

Major memorial sites, associated with the Second World War, are located in the area of the Battle of the Ardennes. Nevertheless, the bunker of Hitler's general staff, from where he was about to launch a decisive offensive against France in 1940, became an important memorial, hidden in the woods near the village of Brûly-de-Pesche.

It's delicious, it's Walloon!



© WBT • David Samyn

Villers-le-Bouillet • 'Un temps pour soi'

The Walloon region can offer the most sophisticated tourist a lot of vivid impressions. However, for the sake of only Walloon cuisine, it would be worthwhile to get there on a weeklong journey: for gastronomic discoveries and pleasures.

The love of good food is one of core values of Walloon culture. No wonder that one of the most famous, albeit fictional, foodies personage of Agatha Christie was a Walloon. Of course, speech is about the famous Belgian detective Hercule Poirot, who was originally from the city of Liege

In Walloon cuisine, rustic soulfulness is harmoniously combined with refined gastronomic traditions. Culinary Wallonia's offer is unusually diverse. Here you can taste many local original recipes as well as excellently prepared French and Flemish dishes.

One of the main virtues of Walloon cuisine is a rich palette of game and fish, which comes directly from the Ardennes forests and rivers falls on the tables of Walloon chefs. Also a distinctive feature of the Walloon cooking is the use of beer to prepare many traditional dishes.



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Hercule Poirot



© WBT • MT de Ganne • J. Cornerotte

Cheeses



© WBT • Gabriele Croppi

Durbuy • 'Le Sanglier des Ardennes'

Walloon farmers: on guard of taste and freshness

The freshness and quality of products is very important for the Walloons. Therefore, they prefer to cook from those products that are produced on their land. Correspondingly, Walloon cuisine is characterized by a pronounced seasonality.

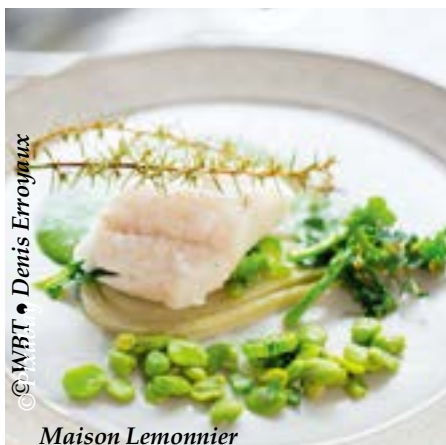
Wallonia farmers can cater to the needs of any gourmet restaurant. A multicolored variety of vegetables is grown here, from aristocratic asparagus to simple potatoes, which in Wallonia is the know-how to cook it in a royal style - exquisite and tasty.

By the way, the Walloons claim to primacy in the invention of French fries. Although Walloon fries different (for the better) from the one to which everyone is accustomed.

In the vast orchards, the finest apples, tasty pears and others fruits ripen to be used for making syrups, confectionery products, cider, and strong alcoholic drinks. Wallonia is a champion in strawberry cultivation, there is even museum of this sweet beauty.

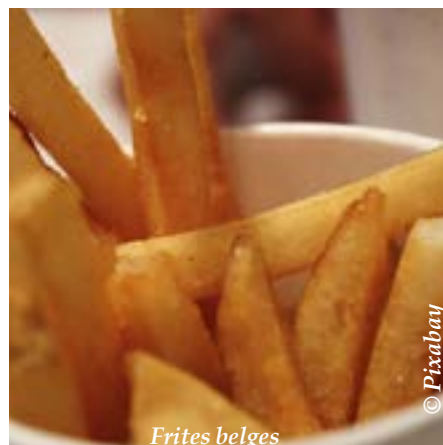


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© WBT • Denis Erroyaux

Maison Lemonnier



© Pixabay

Frites belges



© Pixabay



© WBT • Gabriele Croppi

Upigny • 'Le Foie Gras Upignac'

Local farmers produce the richest meat range. In addition to rabbit and lamb, as well as a complete assortment poultry (including guinea fowl, bullet, geese, ducks and even ostriches), in Wallonia beef and pork are produced, which are distinguished by excellent taste. This meat is from Belgian white-blue cows, which are traditionally bred in Wallonia, and from Ardennes pork of a special quality. Delicious delicacies are made from meat: foie gras, rillettes, sausages, the famous Ardennes ham and much, much more.



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Escargots bourguignon

There are also a numerous farms for the cultivation of grape snails. The province of Namur is especially famous for this. Therefore, prepared by the most different ways, the snails (escargots) – are frequently proposed dish in many Walloon restaurants.

And of course, Walloon produces excellent milk products. Including yoghurts, ice cream and more than five hundred varieties of cheeses. In terms of the quantity and taste of the cheeses produced, Walloon farms are on an equal footing compete with the French.



© WBT • Avantage

Produits du terroir

Most Walloon farms are open to visitors who want to buy the freshest products, taste the dishes made from them, and sometimes get to know with the production process.

Delicacies by seasons

From early fall to mid-December, when it's time to hunt in the Walloon forests, local restaurants cook game culinary masterpieces: roe - deer, wild boar, hare, pheasant.



Mid-November to late March the time comes for old homemade dishes, when every chef takes out a cherished notebook with recipes of the grandmother, to surprise the guests with hearty cozy dishes, such how their ancestors prepared them.



From the beginning of the season of the first vegetables until the end of summer, the most delicious multicomponent salads are prepared in Wallonia.

From July to the end of April in all Belgium is the time to eat mussels, and in Walloon restaurants and brasseries they are just divine!



Sweet country

Walloons love and know how to cook pies and confectionery. In almost every commune you will be treated to their own “signature” cake, pie, sweets or unique delicacies that are not made anywhere else, except Wallonia.

However, all this local sweet variety only complements two traditional Belgian confectionery values: chocolate and waffles.

By the way, there is two types of Belgian waffles:

- Brussels waffles
- Liege waffles.

Brussels waffles are more porous and less sweet, they are more tasty hot and sure poured with liquid chocolate, whipped cream or other sweet additions.

Liege waffles bake more dense, with delicate “pearl” sugar inside. They are amazingly good without any additives and are delicious warm or cold.





© WBT • Gabriela Crippi

Enghien • Maison Léger



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Pralines belges



© WBT • FTLB • P. Willems-Houffalize

Vincent Fontaine Chocolates

Chocolate passion

Belgium is renowned for its fine chocolate, and owes much of this fame to the Walloon masters of the chocolate art. There are no large chocolate producers in Wallonia, but there are many small family businesses producing exquisite and varied chocolate products that are exported to all continents and often wins prestigious awards at international competitions.

Walloon chocolatiers stick to traditional old recipes, but sometimes offer something completely innovative to chocolate gourmets.

Did you know that:

- *The world's favorite Belgian chocolates were invented by a pharmacist?*

Chocolate appeared on the table of European nobility in the 17th century as a hot drink. Over time, it turned into a hard dessert and became available to wider layers population. However, chocolate candy appeared only in the second half of the 19th century. The Brussels pharmacist Jean Neuhaus came up with the idea of covering bitter medicines with chocolate to make them more pleasant to take. His chocolate pills had a huge success. Neuhaus's son continued his chocolate experiments, and his grandson came up with the idea of stuffing chocolates with grated sugar and cream nuts, so it appeared famous Belgian pralines.

Beer is a national treasure



© WBT • Philippe Lermustaux • Bière

Belgium is a country of excellent beer. The Belgian tradition of beer production and consumption goes back centuries and is an important component of the Belgian “art de vivre.” This is not only a national treasure, but also a recognized worldwide value. Since 2016, Belgian beer culture was declared intangible heritage of mankind by UNESCO.

In the formation of the Belgian art of brewing, undeniable merit belongs to the monks. Back in the 8th century, Charlemagne gave them the priority right to produce beer. The monasteries could provide the significantly better sanitary conditions to the brewery process, compared to country brewers. Since then, the monasteries have become real experimental laboratories for this foam drink. During the medieval epidemics, beer became “alive water “ for the monks and the entire population. The purity of the springs could

not be checked, inversely, the beer was guaranteed to be disinfected during the brewing process.

Almost 90% of the world’s production beer is produced by the way bottom fermentation. Beer like this type, commonly called Pils, good thirst quencher, has low alcohol content (4.5- 5.5%) and lathers profusely. Belgium it is famous primarily for its amazing variety of flavors and top-fermented beer styles, which in English culture called Ale. This beer has pronounced, round, slightly sweetish taste with hints of fruit and higher content alcohol, while it is not so strongly saturated with carbon dioxide gas. The Belgian ales, noble and strong, rich in taste, aroma and color, are the pride of Belgian brewing and distinguish Belgian proposal from all the rest of the brewing countries.

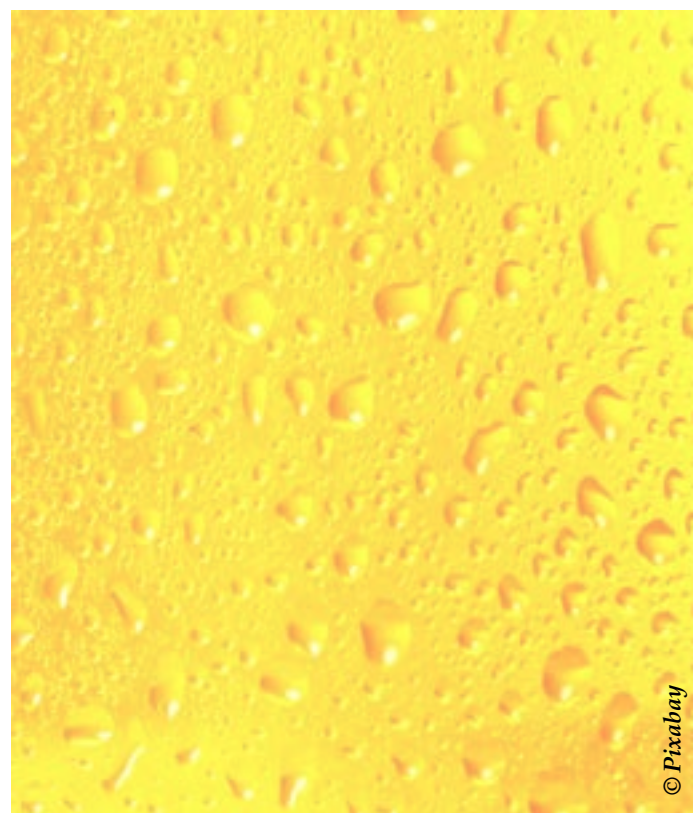


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When it comes to beer, every Belgian regions: Walloon, Flanders, and Brussels - are in solidarity. Beer is loved everywhere and they know how to cook it perfectly and naturally. Every region has its own brewing characteristics.

Wallonia produces more than 500 varieties of the most varied and sophisticated beer for any taste. Most breweries are open to the public, where you can taste all produced beer varieties, buy your favorites one, learn about the brewery's history in a small museum, or even take a look on the brewery's process production. Some breweries have their own restaurant serving food, matching perfectly with local beers, or even some dishes prepared with their own beer. And if you are not yet a fan of Belgian beer, then having made a trip to the Wallonia breweries, you will understand that you did not know practically anything about beer before, and inevitably will meet your "love" (and, most likely, more than one) amid the boundless ocean of the Belgian beer.





DARK BEER (BIÈRE BRUNE)

obtained from a mixture of roasted and light malt. He wears a brown dress with



STOUT (BIÈRE STOUT)

obtained by using the maximum quantity of roasted malt. The dress of the stout is dark brown, almost black. The roasted coffee beans and dark chocolate are evident in its taste and aroma.



LIGHT BEER (BIÈRE BLONDE)

brewed from light malt. The light beer's color, as say professionals, his dress is golden yellow. This beer has a slightly fruity, sweet taste with a bitter after-taste and aroma of citrus and white flowers.



WHITE BEER (BIÈRE BLANCHE)

it is a light and refreshing beer. Get it adding to barley a large proportion of wheat (from 30 to 50%), which gives it whiteness and "milkiness". White beer is not filtered, therefore it is semitransparent. He has "bakery" aromas, as well as notes with fresh citrus and coriander.

By the way, Walloon brewers began to make this beer not only light, but amber, fruity and even spicy.

a reddish tint and a tight cream foam cap. Its "round", slightly confectionery taste is accentuated by aromas of chocolate, berries and spices. By the way, dark beer is not necessarily bitter, since is the hops that give bitterness, and not roasting malt.

FRUIT BEER (BIÈRE FRUITÉE)

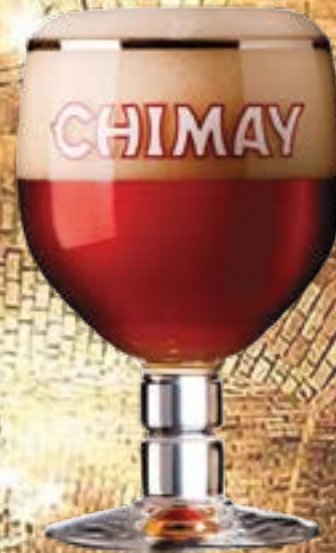
can be white, light, amber or dark. The brewer adds fruit or natural fruit flavors into beer. Fruit beer can be almost savory like fruit lambics, or lightly sweetened. In Wallonia, beer is brewed with the addition of cherries, peaches, raspberries, blueberries, apple, grapefruit, lemon, pear, strawberry, and black currant.

SPICY BEER (BIÈRE ÉPICÉE)

is characterized by increased strength and the addition of various spices. Spicy beer can be light, amber or dark. The most famous is Christmas beer, which is drunk during the cold winter months.

AMBER BEER (BIÈRE AMBRÉE)

is an intermediate step between light and dark. For its production small amount of



SEASONAL BEER (BIÈRE DE SAISON)

it is light beer, brewed with increased amount of hops. Earlier, this beer was brewed in winter, to be drunk in the summer by the seasonal workers. His increased hop content ensured better preservation.

roasted malt is used. His dress has a dark amber color. This beer is characterized by caramel flavors, but floral and fruity notes of light beer are also clearly taste.

Monastic & Trappist



The centuries-old traditions of monastery brewery are still always alive in Wallonia. The names of numerous monasteries appeared on the various brewery's brands. Such as: Abbaye de Leffe, Abbaye du Val-Dieu, Abbaye de Saint Feuillien, Abbaye de Maredsous, Abbaye des Rocs and many other glorious names of monasteries, became famous all over the world thanks to the wonderful Belgian beer. And if some brands beers are rather symbolic connection with the abbey, whose name they proudly bear (this concern, mostly, destroyed monasteries), then other breweries really closely related to existing or historic abbey. These breweries are often located on the monastery's territory or nearby, pay deductions for the monastery needs or for cultural foundation of former abbey. They also consult the monastery regarding the market brand policy.



Such breweries have the right to display the "Recognized Belgian Abbey Beer" logo on their beer labels (French, Bière belge d'Abbaye reconnue).



Double, triple, quadruple ...

However, there is the abbey beer in Wallonia, which is still brewed by monks within the walls of operating monasteries according to old recipes. We are talking about the famous Trappist beer, which is well-respected by beer connoisseurs. There are only twelve breweries in the world that belong to the Trappist monastic order. Half of these breweries are located in Belgium and split equally between Flanders and Wallonia.

This gradation existed in ancient monasteries and has been partially preserved to this day. The fact is that the monks brewed light - simple beer - for their own consumption (it was also called table beer), rich - double beer - for the abbats and even denser and stronger - triple beer - for guests.

There is an unofficial ranking of beer based on its wort gravity and its fortresses into: simple, double, triple and quadruple.

Then, on Walloon soil there are three Trappist breweries: Orval, Chimay and Rochefort. Trappist beer, as well as Belgian monastery beer are distinguished by their increased strength and rich taste, but each of them has its own exceptional properties. The taste of Trappist beer reflects the characteristics of the local terroir, historical traditions and the unique technology of the brewery. All Trappist beer is united only by the fact that they belong to the living monastery brewing heritage.



© Pixabay

The truth is not in wine, but in wine barrels

Strong beer, aged in wooden barrels from noble wines or cognac, and thus acquiring many of the organoleptic properties of wine, stands out in a separate category. The first makers of this kind of beer was British as an alternative to French wines, and then this product was named "barley wine".

Strong Belgian ales are perfect for this technology, which is why barley wine has become popular in Walloon breweries and they have achieved impressive results in this field.



© Pixabay

Dégustation

The beer is aged in barrels from several months to two years and has a strength of 8 to 13% alcohol. This beer is distinguished by an intense and rich taste and his culture of serving and drinking belongs rather to the wine concept.

Here is how professional tasters describe the taste of one of the representatives Walloon barley wines: "The first sip tastes like white plum and oak wood, and the aftertaste is full of Armagnac and spices. The second sip brings a light note of coffee, aromas of cognac and orange peel and leaves a sweetish aftertaste. From the third sip, a complex harmony is established in the mouth with the predominance of the taste of ripe fruits against the background of the aromas of a five-year-old oak barrel. Alcohol emerges from the amber depths gradually and gives out all its power ...".

Beer and cheese - a love marriage

How many words of praise have been said about the wonderful combination of French cheese and French wine!

But we can say no less about the alliance of Belgian cheese and Belgian beer - many varieties of which are so refined, that they are ready to compete with noble wine!

But, don't rush to try randomly on your gastronomic journey, you will need an experienced guide, which will tell the laws of harmonious combination. The best place to learn the science of combining beer and cheese is the Walloon abbeys, where both of these products are often produced.

Must visit tasting space is the Notre-Dame-de Scourmont monastery, whose monks make Trappist beers and Chimay cheeses. The abbey will tell you in detail not only that what to combine with, but also how to taste it correctly.

Memorize the sequence of tasting:

- step one – take a little sip of beer;*
- step two – try a piece of cheese without a crust;*
- step three – put another piece of cheese in your mouth, on this time with a crust;*
- step four – take a long sip of beer to mix both products in your mouth.*

*And enjoy the taste
Enjoy!*

A glass of Belgian drink - strong or sparkling



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Vines • Valley in the mist

The history of the Walloon winery dates back to the Middle Ages. The first to grow the grapevine in the Walloon lands and the making of wine began, as usual, by the monks. By the 14th century, all major cities of Walloon had their own vineyards and were engaged in winemaking. Cooling climate in the Renaissance era has complicated grape cultivation and winemaking was abandoned in favor of brewing. And only in the 60s of the last century, one Walloon farmer decided to repeat the forgotten experience and planted their first grape vines. Thus, Walloon winemaking became recover slowly. From the beginning of this century, especially in the last ten years, the popularity of winemaking in Wallonia has been sharply rose and Walloon wines became receive worldwide recognition. Now in Wal-

lonia there are about 150 vineyards, however only 25-30 farms are engaged in wine production on a significant scale. The Wallonia terroir* is best suited for production of sparkling wines, therefore, they account for almost half of the total volume. In addition to that, Wallonia produces quiet white and liqueur wines. The red and rose wines are less common.

* *Terroir (fr.terroir from terre -land) - a set of soil and climatic factors and other features of the area, defining taste and other product characteristics.*



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© E. Boylko

Dégustation



© Château de Bioul

Château de Bioul • Vins

Wine production in Wallonia is now about million bottles per year, which is quite small compared to neighboring France. However, winemaking in Wallonia is only gaining momentum and growing rapidly in volume and quality. Experts admit that the Walloon region has great potential in terms of production of high quality white wines, especially sparkling wines.

The best illustration of the meteoric Walloon winemaking rise is the Domaine de Chant d'Éole. This winery was established in 2015 year, but already in 2019 one of his wines was recognized as the best in the world in categories of sparkling wine, and in the next 2020 year, Chant d'Éole wines also took more than one "gold" at international competitions.

Among the producers of quiet wines, the excellent example of the Walloon approach to wine-making is the Château de Bioul. This vineyard is situated on the territory of the old possession of the barons Vaxelaire, where flaunts the picturesque castle - Bioul, built in the 16th century.

Wine is produced by the members of this aristocratic family themselves. The purest bio-wines are made here, and the process of vinification and maturation is influenced by the accompaniment of classical music.



© WBT • Denis Erroyaux

Domaine du chant d'Éole-Vignoble



© Château de Bioul

Dégustation vin



© WBT • Bernard Boccara

Distillerie de Biercée

Digestives

Byond Wallonia's wines, there is a unique spirits and liqueurs making. Each Walloon province can boast of its own alcoholic specialties, known by a narrow circle as well as recognized internationally.



© WBT • Isabelle Harsin

La Maison du Peket Bar • Amon Nanesse Restaurant Liège

One of the most popular spirits in Wallonia is Pékèt. This is a typical Walloon drink - a "companion" to all festive feasts. The name Pékèt means «savory» in Old Walloon. It is obtained by distilling fermented barley wort or berries and infused with juniper and other spices. In France, this drink is called Genièvre, in the Netherlands - Jenever, and in England - Dutch gin. Peket is mainly produced by distilleries located in the Meuse Valley, which is mostly situated in the province of Namur.



© WBT • Emmanuel Mathez

The Owl Distillery • Etienne Bouillon • Amazing Wallonia

The Belgian Owl single malt whiskey, laureate of many international competitions, is produced in the province of Liege.

By the way, in Wallonia, the permissible alcohol content in blood for drivers leaves 0.5 ppm, which allows you to drink an average of 200 ml of wine.

© WBT • MT de Gaume - Jacques



Maitrank and Tendra

One of the Walloons' favorite aperitifs is Maitrank, which translates from German as "May wine". It is made from fragrant woodruff flowers aged in Moselle wine with oranges, sugar and cognac. In the city of Arlon in the Luxembourg province, where this aromatic drink is produced, every year, on the fourth weekend of May, there is a bright folklore festival dedicated to this wonderful drink.

© WBT • JL Elémal



Distillerie de Biercée

Eau de Villée, lemon liqueur and Poire Williams #1 fruit pear brandy, which are growing in popularity all over the world from year to year, are produced by Distillerie de Biercée, one of the oldest distilleries in Belgium, located in the province of Hainaut.

© antonymartin



Waterloo GIN • Ferme de Mont-Saint-Jean

And finally, in Walloon Brabant, at the small distillery of Waterloo Mont-Saint-Jean, located at the foot of the Lion's Mound, towering over the field of the great battle of Waterloo, the fabulous Waterloo gin is making. This gin enjoys well-deserved respect not only in Belgium, but also far beyond its borders.

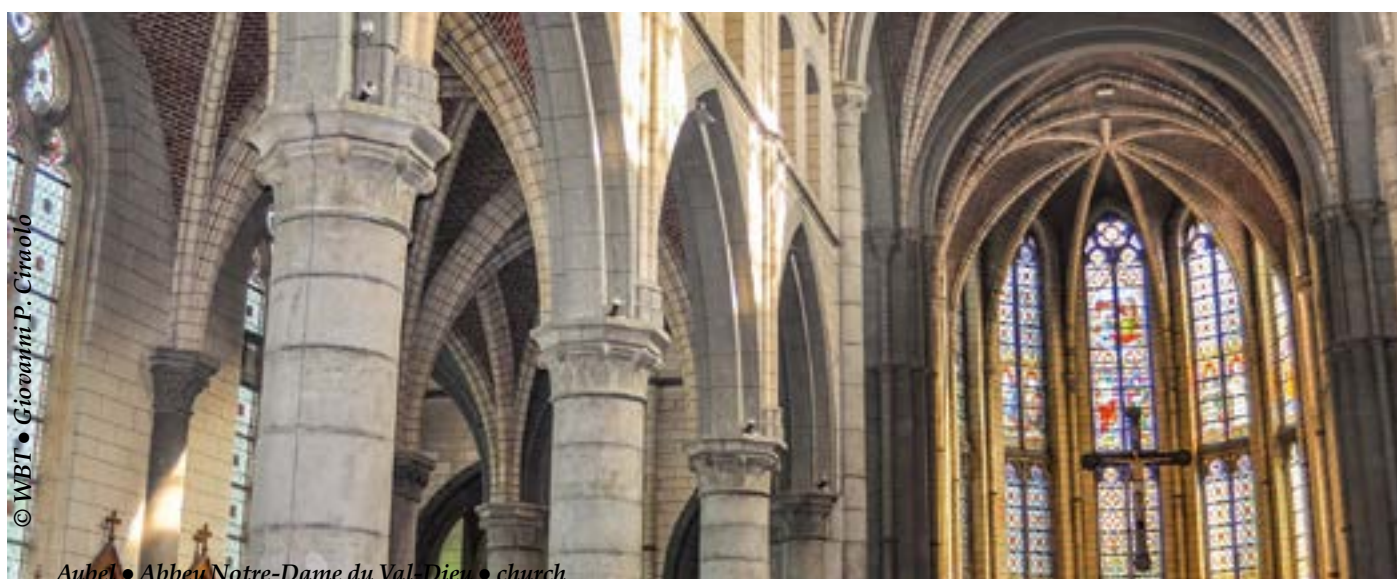
Walloon Abbeys: beautiful and strong in spirit



© WBT • David Samyn • Orval

Wallonia would not be Wallonia without its abbeys. The first Catholic monasteries appeared on the Walloon lands in the 7th century, mainly they belonged to the Benedictine order. Since that time the Abbey of Stavelot, Nivelles, Aulne, Andenne, Saint-Hubert have been leading their history. Then erect monasteries became Cistercians, Augustinians, ... Totally in Wallonia more than eighty monasteries were built, which is half more than in neighboring Flanders. The most striking trace in Wallonia history is left by the Cistercian order. This order is appeared in Europe late 11th century as a branch of Benedictine order.

The era of prosperity of the Cistercians in Wallonia, as well as throughout Europe, fell on the 12-15th century. At the same time, the architecture was dominated by magnificent Gothic style, so the buildings Cistercian abbeys usually had a mind-boggling beauty and greatness. Cistercians ranked first in their wealth and influence on contemporaries among other monastic orders. Cistercian abbeys owned large land holdings, led extensive economic and agricultural activities. So they made a huge contribution to the development of the economy, science, education and technical progress in the medieval Europe.



© WBT • Giovanni P. Ciruolo

Aubel • Abbey Notre-Dame du Val Dieu • church



© Abbaye d'Orval

In the 17th century from the Cistercians the Trappist order stood out, subjugated themselves to the even more strict charter. The number of Trappists soon greatly increased, and most of the Cistercian monasteries became their properties.

Among the inactive monasteries, the most powerful impression produce the ruins of the great Cistercian abbeys that were mothballed from further destruction and open to the public. The most romantic and impressive are the ruins of Abbey of Aulne and Abbaye de Villers-la-Ville.

Throughout its history, each Walloon abbey has experienced both periods: prosperity and difficult times. However, the end of the 18th century became the most tragic moment for all Walloon monasteries. Almost all of them fell victim of the French revolution. Many have been plundered, burned or even completely destroyed. Rare units only were able to recover, therefore there are few active ancient monasteries in Wallonia today. From former abbeys are now left mostly monastic churches, sections of fortress walls, cellars and some other buildings.



© E. Boyko



© WBT • Orval

Abbaye de Notre-Dame d'Orval



And of course, Walloon Abbeys are famous all over the world for their excellent beer, which brewed within their walls according to original recipes. Some abbeys produce their own beer until now, and the names of other monasteries, unfortunately destroyed, continue to live in the names of Walloon breweries that have received this honorary right.



Despite the endured 18th century desecration, the spirit of the ancient abbeys remained to live on Walloon soil. The ability to build great places of prayer, bringing a person closer to Divine, preserved in the blood of the Walloons.



In the 19th and 20th centuries, new monasteries appeared and amazed the imagination with their grandeur and harmony, such as, the Benedictine Abbey of Maredsous in the province of Namur.



© E. Boyko

Abbaye Notre-Dame de Clairefontaine

In fairness, it should be noted that in addition to the monasteries, where the brewing art has been perfected for centuries, there were and still exist convents in Wallonia, where nuns hid from the harsh worldly realities and studied mostly creative crafts.

The current female abbeys of Wallonia are small, they usually number no more than thirty nuns. However, how many secrets each of them keeps? How much they know about the history of European civilization, seen through the prism of women's destinies?...



Nostradamus



© Pixabay

The abbeys led a quiet monastic life, disturbed, perhaps, by the visits of famous personalities. So, for five years from 1539 to 1544, Nostradamus was visiting the Orval Abbey. He studied books of interest to him from the magnificent monastery library, which was the richest in Europe, and performed mystical rituals in the forest surrounding the abbey.



© Pixabay

At the end of the 18th century, the armed forces of the French Revolution reached Orval and ruthlessly destroyed it. However, in 1913, the Belgian government decided to restore this enigmatic monastery.

Reserve of castles

© WBT • ostbelgien.eu • Dominik Ketz



Castle of Reinhardstein

What does your imagination paint when you hear the word "castle"? A harsh fortress of a feudal lord? A gothic haunted castle? Graceful chateau from the age of gallantry? Or the fairytale castle of a sleeping beauty?

Castles are all different, but they all possess magnetic power. If you feel this attraction, appreciate ancient castles and you are interested in the history of Europe, a kaleidoscope of impressive encounters awaits you in Wallonia.

There are more than three hundred castles on the Walloon land *. All historical epochs, all architectural styles and the whole palette of moods are generously presented here: lyrical, heroic, mystical, severe castles, flirty and even fabulous.

** In French-speaking countries, the term "castle" (in French château) has not only architectural meaning but geographic and historical one.*

A residential building erected in any era and in any style can be called a castle. The main thing is that at this place it should be the feudal castle before (it does not matter whether it was rebuilt or completely destroyed before the construction of a new building). The historical continuity between the new and the old building should be preserved.



© Pixabay



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Chevalier

Wallonia will definitely be able to delight lovers of knightly romance. Some of the oldest medieval castles, dating from the 10th-12th centuries, are well preserved here. This kind of castles are called in French château fort - fortress castle. These Romanesque castles embody the era of feudal wars, knightly tournaments and crusades. The main purpose of the fortress castle was protection from enemies; it was usually built on a hill and surrounded by a deep moat. Facades were made smooth, without decorations, along which the enemy would have the opportunity to climb the wall.

Besides the well-preserved medieval castles in Wallonia, there are also several feudal fortresses destroyed by time. Then, romantic ruins could share with their visitors the adventure of the past.

The continuity of the noble dynasties is very strong in Wallonia; so strong that some feudal castles still belong to the descendants of those very feudal lords. Naturally, medieval castles are not suitable for the life of a modern person, therefore, even while remaining private property, all of them are now cultural and historical monuments, and are often open to the public.



© WBT • ET • Province de Namur

Corroy-le-Château • Castle



© WBT • Gabriele Croppi

Castle of Durbuy

The castles of the later Middle Ages, built in the 13-15th centuries, have a more graceful appearance due to the influence of the Gothic aesthetics, which began to spread from France at the end of the 12th century.

The Gothic style was embodied most in Catholic cathedrals (where dizzyingly high ceilings, pointed vaults, open-work pediments and huge stained-glass windows were called to praise the divine majesty), but it was incompatible with the function of a dwelling. In addition, in those days, castles could not completely abandon the role of fortresses. Therefore, the Walloon castles of the Gothic era differ from their Romanesque predecessors only in more refined details.



© WBT • Tijis Blom

Château de Jemeppe



© WBT • I.Montfort

Vèves castle

Pointed turrets with spires, battlements, decorative facades, and large windows give them a more elegant and lyrical look.

Such castles are usually inspired by artists, illustrating the tales of Charles Perrault, Andersen or the Brothers Grimm.



©WBT • David Samyn

Château de Jehay

In the 16th century, the era of the Renaissance began in Europe. The internecine wars had practically ended, and the European nobility began to pay more attention to the appearance of their homes and the comfort of living.

At that time, fortified castles began to be supplanted by luxurious residences, which in French are called *château de plaisance* - a castle for pleasure.

Due to the fabulous beauty of the Walloon landscapes, the architects of the Renaissance and of the subsequent eras built not only the architectural ensembles here, but natural and architectural masterpieces.



©WBT • Antoine Davister

Parc du Château à Braine-le-Château



©WBT • Château de Freijr

Château de Freijr-sur-Meuse et ses jardins à Hastière

The dense lace of Walloon forests, the emerald expanses of the valleys, the pearl-gray islets of rocks, and the shimmering silver of the rivers, created such a rich setting. The architects had to make a big reflection to get their architectural "diamonds" compete with this marvelous "setting".



© WBT • JLFlémal

Château de Beloeil

Especially beautiful are the Walloon castles located on the river banks. Some stand at the very edge of the river and flirt with their reflection, others grow from rocky cliffs, adding to themselves a gigantic height, still others have surrounded themselves with a water surface from all sides and seem to be floating on its surface.

The happy fact is that the major Walloon rivers Scheldt, Meuse and Sambre are navigable and gives the great opportunity to admire many of these castles from aboard a boat.

At the end of the 17th century, the Age of Enlightenment began in France, coinciding in time with the Gallant Age. In Europe, reigned the fashion for luxurious palace and park ensembles in the style of classicism and baroque.



© WBT • JP Renny

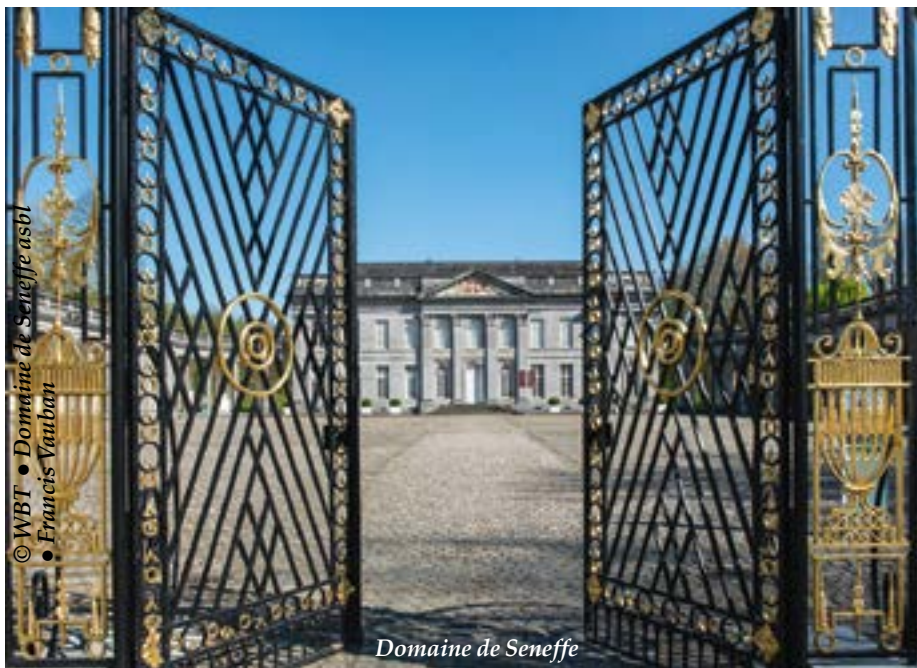
Château de Modave



© WBT • JP Renny

Les Jardins d'Annevoie

In Wallonia, you can visit the Lunique castles, gardens and parks of that era, illustrating the spirit and life of high society. In some castles, mostly in the province of Hainaut, absolutely stunning exhibitions have been created, immersing you in the world of the enlightened and gallant 18th century.



© WBT • Domaine de Seneffe asbl
• Francis Vauban

Domaine de Seneffe

Enlightenment, with its new worldview, passion for scientific research and geographical discoveries, was reflected primarily in the study of curiosities, found in every self-respecting home.



© Shutterstock

Cabinet de Curiosité

Geographical maps, collections of butterflies, overseas stuffed animals, archaeological finds, sea-shells, medical instruments, achievements of technical progress and much more were presented in the “cabinets of wonders”. This cabinet should have given out the impression that the owner of these objects is a thinking, interesting and philosophical person.



© Château de Seneffe

Chocolatière

In coffee, tea and chocolate salons, exotic drinks brought from the colonies were intimately drunk. In the women’s drawing rooms, new philosophical ideas were spread, literary and musical works were published, and verbal duels were fought.



© Shutterstock

The quintessence of the gallant age with its luxury, lightness, play, coquetry, fashion, cult of pleasure and eternal youth was the women's boudoir. In the boudoirs, which initially served as a place of solitude in case of a bad mood (bouderie) and boycotting a spouse, women received close guests, dressed up, wrote letters, read books,... Here, the intrigues were thought, intimate secrets and weapons for flirting and seduction were kept: fans, flies, perfume and wigs.



© Pixabay

Jardins d'Annevoie

The Walloon manors of 18th century are more than interesting for their interiors as well for their gardens (jardins).



© Pixabay

La Charmille

In Walloon estates, the great gardeners of the past combined the English park style with the French, Italian sculpture with wilderness, subdued the local waters to their artistic whims, weaved labyrinths and hid gallant secrets in them.



© WBT • A.B. de L.-Château & Jardins

Domaine de Frejyr

Many estates still maintain the same design of parks and gardens as it was originally conceived. The centuries-old trees, ancient greenhouses, the rarest species of flowers and plants brought here once are precious kept.



© Pixabay

Falconnerie

Walloon castles are usually surrounded by spacious land holdings: forests in which the owners and their guests hunted, or agricultural land, some of which are now covered with vineyards.



© WBT • Fabrice Debatty

Château de Bioul

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the Walloon nobility and the bourgeoisie preferred to build their castles in the neo-classical and neo-gothic style. Among them there are stunningly beautiful creations that have absorbed the best architectural experience of the past.



© WBT • Bruno D'Alimonte

Château de Chimay

Most of the Walloon castles are open to the public. In addition to traditional museum exhibitions, concerts and art exhibitions - modern creative events, night visits by candlelight, medieval festivals and other local history entertainments are often organized.



© WBT • Koupriatoff

Castle of La Hulpe

A significant number of Walloon castles still belong to aristocratic families or to the Belgian Royal family.



© WBT • Ville d'Antoing

Château des Princes de Ligne

Private castles are not always open for visits, and some of them, are only visible from the outside. Nevertheless, even the most inaccessible possessions sometimes open their doors on the occasion of big holidays or special cultural and historical events. And believe me, such a chance should not be missed. An ancient castle that is inhabited, especially if it is inhabited by its historic owners, and they will personally guide you on a guided tour, will create an unforgettable moment for you.



© E. Boyko

Salon des Lumières

Royal sport



© WBT • Olivier Legardien

Golf • Château de la Tournette

The nature of Wallonia is really made for golf. All this green hilly-flat land, cut by rivers and framed by wooded hills, is like one big golf course.

Golf spread in Wallonia in the late 1920s as an alternative to tennis, which was the main sports entertainment of high society. Then, golf became a truly royal sport, as it developed largely thanks to the passion of the Belgian monarchs.

More than thirty different golf courses, from the most democratic to the prestigious, are waiting for fans of “a small white ball and club” in Wallonia. Here, people will be patient with beginners and will be able to satisfy the needs of the most demanding golfers. The most

prestigious golf clubs, with royal status, are located in the bosom of stunningly beautiful nature and often occupy historic castle estates



© Pixabay



© E. Boyko

'PRO1Golf' • Golf des Lacs



© WBT • Olivier Legardien

Golf • Château de la Tournette

If the distance of mentioned below addresses is not enough for you, feel free to throw the ball to the other half of the Kingdom of Belgium: Flanders or Brussels region (there are definitely a dozen more amazing golf courses) - and keep going!

** The golf course consists of 18 holes, but 9-hole courses are also common, which are played twice per round, first in one, and then in the opposite direction.*

Did you know that:

- Golf appeared in Scotland and Holland in the Middle Ages era. Then, in the 14th century, noble ladies and lords played golf right on the streets of cities. The houses were stripped of glass, and passers-by were injured. This continued for several decades, until finally the king sent all the golfers to the countryside for playing.*
- The first golf balls worth more than golf clubs. They were sewn from leather, tightly stuffed with specially treated feathers and covered with lead paint for waterproofing.*



© WBT • Olivier Legardien

Golf • Château de la Tournette



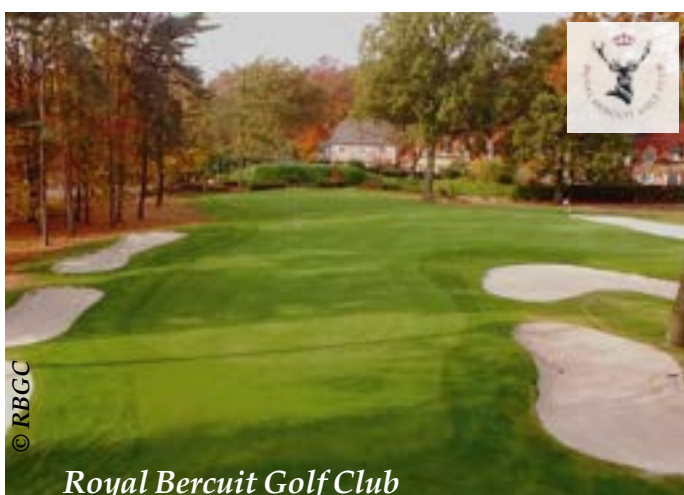
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Spa • Royal Golf Club des Fagnes



© RGCCRA

Royal Golf Club du Chateau Royal d'Ardenne



© RBGC

Royal Bercuit Golf Club



© Golf Club de 7 Fontaines

Golf Club de 7 Fontaines



© RWGC

Royal Waterloo Golf Club



© R • G • C • S • T

Royal Golf Club du Sart-Tilman



© R.G.C.H.

Royal Golf Club du Hainaut



© Golf Club d'Hulencourt

Golf Club d'Hulencourt

Kaleidoscope of Holidays



© WBT • Olivier Legardien

Le carnaval de Binche • Mardi gras

Walloons cherish and maintain the traditions of their folklore holidays. Some of the annual Walloon festivals are so large-scale, impressive and preserved since ancient times (many have their roots in the 14th century) that they have been recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. However, for the people of Wallonia, folk festivals are much more than the cultural heritage. The Walloons' love, reverence and involvement for their carnivals and ducasse*, amazes and inspires sincere respect. The most amazing thing is that from year to year for centuries, a recurring Walloon event experienced with delight, as for the first time. They are seriously preparing for the holidays, are very proud of their participation, spend a

lot of their own money on costumes and jewelry and participate in citywide rehearsals.

** Ducasse - in Northern France and Wallonia, an annual traditional city festival, usually including a parade of giants (huge figures, up to nine meters high, depicting mythical heroes, historical and biblical characters) or symbolic battles with dragons. The most famous Walloon ducasses take place in Mons and Ath.*



© WBT • Kim Foucart

Saint-Martin



© WBT • FTPL • P. Fagnoul

Stavelot • Laetare

Walloons have always particularly enjoyed the carnivals. These actions in the past centuries had a deep social meaning. Dressing up and wearing someone else's mask meant a revolution in social roles, giving the necessary relaxation, at least, once a year.

The carnival season in Wallonia falls at the end of winter. During the Fat Days **, carnivals take place in many Walloon cities. This is that happy time when all kinds of excesses are allowed: in food, drinking alcohol and noisy fun. The brightest of the Walloon carnivals can be seen in the city of Binche. This carnival has become so popular, all over the world, that the city even opened an international carnival and mask museum.

*** Fat Week is the festive week before the start of Catholic Lent, ending on Fat Tuesday.*

In addition to ducasses and carnivals in Wallonia, processions are very popular as well. They honor the saint who is the patron of their area. Such religious marches always

include a fun-loving socialite part and often accompanied by a military band. Processions always take place on Sundays and mainly in summer: from May to October.



© Pixabay



© WBT • FTPL • P. Fagnoul

Tilff • Laetare

Besides the general Catholic holidays, each commune has a calendar of its own distinctive holidays. These entertainment events are always accompanied by tasting of traditional local cuisine, and of course, the beer produced in this community.



© E. Boyko

Les costumés de Venise • Jardins d'Amnevoie

Medieval festivals play a significant role in the culture of Wallonia, due to the well-preserved heritage of those times. They often take place on the territory of medieval castles and include various historical reconstructions, performances, hunting scenes, demonstrations of medieval crafts and knightly art, dances to the music of minstrels. Especially whole medieval feasts are arranged for important events, when all food is prepared and served the way it was done centuries ago.



© E. Boyko

Fête Médiévale • Sougné-Remouchamps

Major events calendar

December

- Magical Christmas markets in: Namur, Mons, Tournai, Liege, Dinant, Andenne, Binche, Durbuy, Hotton, Thuin, Chimay, Anthisnes, La Roche-en-Ardenne, Stavelot, Enghien, Huy, Annevois.

January

- Dragon carnival in Emines,
- "Lost Monday" in Tournai,
- Local food fair in Auvélais.

February

- Night torchlight procession in Bouillon castle,
- Carnival in Binche and Malmedy.

March

- Carnival of «white saints» in Stavelot,
- Carnival in Tilff.

April

- Medieval holiday in Binche,
- Festival of comestible plants in Rhisnes,
- Jazz Festival in Tournai,
- Celtic Music Festival in Anthisnes.

May

- Venetian masquerade in the Gardens Annevoie,
- Feast of Maitrank in Arlon,
- Beer festival in Mons,
- Days of the Middle Ages at Moha Castle.

June

- Durbuy Crayfish Festival,
- Ducas in Mons,
- National Music Festival,
- Reconstruction of the Waterloo battle,
- Wepion Strawberry Festival.

July

- Middle Ages days in Citadel of Namur, in Comblain-au-Pont and in Bouillon,
- Days of Francophilia in Spa,
- International Classical music Festival in Saint Hubert,
- Jazz festival in Dinant
- World Music Festival in Waterloo,
- Bicycle race Wallonia Tour.

August

- Festive extravaganza in the castle of Beloeil,
- Belgian Grand Prix racing Formula 1 at Spa Francorchamps,
- "Fighting" on the water in Namur,
- International «bathroom» regatta in Dinant,
- Giant omelet in Malmedy,
- Ducasse in Ath
- flight hot air balloons in Hotton,
- Galo Roman weekend in Arlon.

September

- Middle Ages Days in Braine-le-Château,
- Cheese festival in the Bouillon castle,
- Jazz in the vineyards of the abbey Villers-la-Ville,
- Night of Lights in the castle of Helecine,
- Hunting days in Saint Hubert,
- Namur Wallonia Day,
- Steam Festival in Mariembourg.

October

- Halloween in: Durbuy, Citadel of Namur, Han-sur-Lesse caves, castles Jehay and Bouillon,
- Night of Lights in Liege,
- Liege Fair,
- Trolls and legends festival in Mons,
- Liege beer festival,
- International Horse Racing/Jumping in Liege.

November

- Torchlight procession in Citadel of Namur,
- feast of saint Hubert at Saint-Hubert,
- Circus festival in Cours-Saint-Etienne,
- Hunting festival in Bouillon,
- Equestrian festival in Libramont,
- Antique salon in Namur.

Binche Carnival



© WBT • News Agency -
Wu Wei Xinhua

Binche • Carnival • UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage

Once a year in early spring, the small provincial town of Binche becomes the arena of the brightest festive action. This fabulous event is among the world's top ten carnivals.

Carnival lasts three days, and on Fat Tuesday is its culmination. On this day, the legendary "Gilles", the messengers of spring, enter the streets of Binche. Being a "Gilles" is an honorable role that only indigenous (male) people can play. There are about a thousand of them in Binche, from young to old.

There is no consensus on the origin of this personage, but the image "Gilles" seems to symbolize social equality. He has, at the same time, the attributes of a rich bourgeois and of a peasant.

"Gilles" costume and mask are highly regulated and costly, and are only entrusted to professional hands. "Gilles" headdress consists of white flat

cap and white hat with a huge plume of ostrich feathers. Wearing this stunning hat completely depends on the whims of nature. The weather will be good – "Gilles" will take to the streets with a luxurious a white fountain of feathers on their head, and if it rains - they will only put on their caps.

"Gilles" begin preparations for the march with the sunrise, they gather in groups and have breakfast with oysters and champagne. Champagne is the official drink of "Gilles" during whole carnival, but in perfect combination with unique Belgian beer.

After breakfast, "Gilles" join together into a column and set off on their first march to the town hall. The march of "Gilles" is accompanied by a thunderclap of their wooden shoes (to "wake up" nature) and the music of the orchestra playing the traditional melodies of this carnival.



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Wu Wei Xinhua

Binche • Carnival • UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage



© WBT • Olivier Legardien

Le carnaval de Binche • Mardi gras

For the afternoon, “Gilles” go out wearing stunning white hats with feathers, weather permitting, and arm themselves with baskets of oranges. Walking the streets of the city for the second time, “Gilles” throw these sweet “kernels” to the public. The lucky ones catching a sunny fruit - according to Walloon beliefs, this brings good luck.

Despite the unbridled fun and some external recklessness, huge number of spectators and participants, the Binche carnival is a serious, well-organized and regulated event.

Shop owners located along the route of the “Gilles” procession, close their windows on this day with wire mesh to protect them from the orange “shelling”. Total time of this cheerful celebration is about two hours. Each “Gilles” launches into the crowd up to forty kilos of oranges (relatives bring them their “cartridges”).



© Pixabay

The march ends with a round “Gilles” dance on central square. And in the evening, the participants and guests of the carnival will see a grandiose fireworks. Spontaneous festivities continue during the night, but everything must be finished before the sunrise, at “Ash Wednesday” morning.



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Carnaval Binche 2020

Heritage of the Industrial Revolution



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Wallonie insolite • Carrières de Quenast

Wallonia in 1810, at the time ruled by Emperor Napoleon, began the first industrial Revolution in the continental Europe. The bituminous coal, became the main source of economic development in the region. This mineral lay so close to the surface in the provinces of Liege and Hainaut, that people, already in The Middle Ages, had learned to extract it in significant volumes.

By the end of the 18th century, the level of development of coal mining and ferrous metallurgy in Wallonia was so high that, accompanied by the technical progress of the early 19th century, the Walloon industry made a quantum leap and captured the leadership in continental Europe. In addition to the coal and steel industries, Wallonia had machine building, the production of weapons, glass and textiles.

In 1835 the first railway, among continental Europe countries, was built in Wallonia.

Ten years later, the railway network connected all the main cities of Belgium, the Walloon coal mines, and also came out on the neighboring states territory, that were strategically important for further development of the industry. In 1810-1880, thanks to Walloon industry, Bel-

gium retained the status of the most industrially developed country in Europe, after Great Britain.

Walloon industrial glory time is proudly held in the memory of the Walloons, leaving behind a rich material legacy and providing the foundation economic welfare to the entire country.

Coal mining in Wallonia ceased in the seventies of the last century. In memory of this, the most important phenomenon in the life of the region, which provided the huge industrial growth, several former coal mines have become museums.

These interesting monuments of the Wallonia mining past can be seen in the province of Hainaut (mines Grand Hornu, Bois du Luc, Bois du Cazier) and in the province of Liege (Blegny-Mine).



© WBT
• Bernard Carbonneaux

Chemin de Fer à Vapeur des 3 Vallées !



© E. Boyko

Tram Royal de Léopold II

The old railways, preserved to this day, are also the part of the Walloon Industrial Revolution legacy. They have become tourist routes and museums of the railway industry. The entertaining, educational and very romantic journey in old carriages, driven by a steam or diesel locomotive, is one of the best ways to admire the beauty of Walloon nature.

Almost all Walloon provinces have their own railway museums: “Chemin de fer du Bocq” and the “Chemin de fer des 3 Vallées” in Namur region; Rebecq-Rognon road in Walloon Brabant, Tramway touristique de l’Aisne in the province of Luxembourg.

At the request of the most discerning travelers, these routes can be used to organize trips in the former private carriages of the Belgian kings, accompanied by exquisite lunch and champagne on board.

Province of Hainaut



Province of Hainaut - the most western part of Wallonia. From the north it borders with Flanders, and from the south-west with France (the longest border with French people of all Walloon provinces).

There are many well-preserved medieval towns: Tournai, Mons, Chimay, Ath, Thuin, Binche, where you can admire all facets of the Romanesque and Gothic architecture and feel the romance of the Middle Ages.

On the hilly plains of the province of Hainaut, beautiful castles and parks of the great aristocratic dynasties estates: Boleuil, Antoine, Trazegnis, Attre, Seneffe.

The province of Hainaut is the most carnival region of Wallonia. World-wide famous folklore festivals and the Binche carnival are celebrated here.

Hainaut is the champion producer (by sorts) of all Belgium beers. Almost every small commune here has its own brewery (there are about a hundred in total). It is definitely, worth tasting, on the spot, the brewery products of: Abbey Olne, Binchoise, Bruno, Chimay, Dubuisson, Saint-Foyen and Pipet.





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Parc du Château d'Attré

Our tips:

- visit the memorial mines Grand Ornu, Bois du Cazier, Bois du Luc, reminiscent of the great industrial past of the region;
- make an unforgettable canal tour, along the Central channel;
- look into prehistoric flint mines in Spiennes;
- spend an unforgettable day and a fantastic night at the Pairi Daiza Zoological Park;
- visit the extraordinary museum of the monastery hospital "Notre Dame a la Rose";
- taste the wonderful sparkling wine from the Chant d'Eole vineyards as well as the aromatic fruit liqueurs and brandy of the Bierce distillery.

Did you know that:

- *the first Masonic lodge in continental Europe was created in the city of Mons;*
- *the Walloon city of Tournai was the first capital of the great Frankish state;*
- *the heroine of the French Revolution Teresa Tallien found her family happiness in the Prince Chimay castle.*



Hôpital Notre-Dame à la Rose • Lessines

© E. Boyko

PAIRI DAIZA Zoological Park



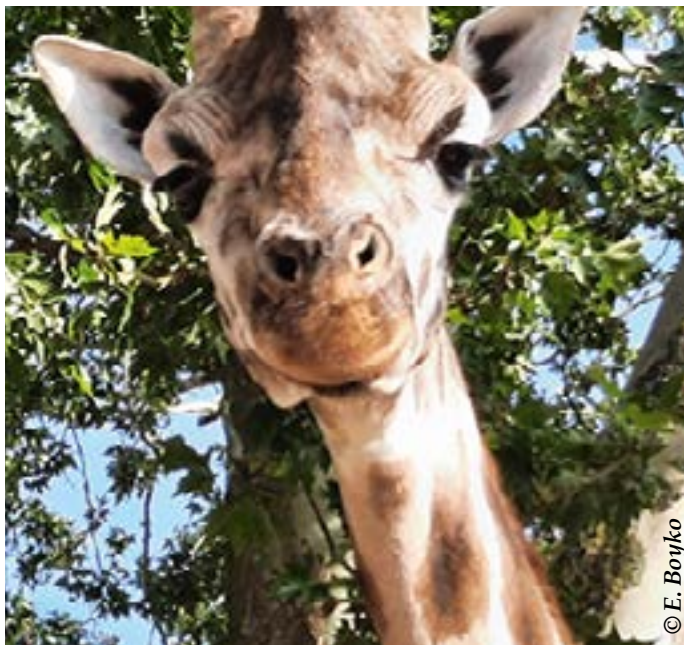
Unique and totally stunning zoological park **PAIRI DAIZA** is located on the territory of the ruined abbey of Cambron.

PAIRI DAIZA has about six hundred species of animals and birds - representatives of five continents, more than seven thousand individuals. The park is divided into thematic zones, which are called "worlds", and the whole park is the "garden of the worlds".



© Païri Daïza

Fullmoon lodge



© E. Boyko

In 2018, the PAIRI DAIZA park won the title of the best zoo in Europe and still keeps it today.

In only one visit to this extraordinary park, you will visit five continents! You will feel their unique climate (get ready: it will be hot in Africa, humid in Indonesia, and cold in Siberia). From up close, you will see all the variety of their fauna against the background of vegetation, architecture, and even music.



© E. Boyko



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© Païri Daïza

Walrus house

The most amazing thing in PAIRI DAIZA is to spend night in its immersive hotel inside the park. From the windows of the cozy lodges, located in different corners of the park, a panoramic view of the animals is open to you: bears, wolves, tigers, polar bears, birds or marine mammals.

Indeed, about sleeping in your bed in the morning, you will be able to see a huge polar bear diving into a transparent pool just a couple meters from you. Other advantages to staying at the hotel is that you will get a unique opportunity to wander in the park during the morning, and the evening, when there are no visitors and the animals are being fed.



© E. Boyko



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Province of Namur



Province of Namur is located in the very heart of the Walloon territories and borders only with France.

Almost the entire Namur region is the most picturesque valley of the beautiful Meuse River and its tributaries. Here you can fully feel the charm of life by the water: by going on one of the river cruises, you will admire the beautiful shores, where lush forests and steep cliffs, palaces and parks, city embankments and bridges replace each other. While resting on a high bank in the city, you could gaze at the smooth river bends and languid movement of water.

The main cities of the Province are situated on the water. The capital (of Wallonia) Namur, is protected, for more than one and a half thousand years, by one of the largest and legendary citadel fortress in Europe. Picturesque city Dinant also guards the fortress spread out on a rocky cliff, from where you can see stunningly beautiful “postcard” views.

In the province of Namur, wonderful castles are waiting for you: Castle of Vêves, recognized as one of the most fairy in the world, beautiful Freyr castle with its amazing gardens, rising from the sheer cliff Walsin castle, knightly Corrois castle, cozy Lavaux-Sainte-Anne castle...





© WBT • Denis Erroyaux

Rochefort • château de Lavaux-Sainte-Anne

Our tips:

- enter the caves of Han-sur-Lesse and enjoy a wonderful light and sound show in their high vaults;
- be captivated by the neo-Gothic beauty and magic of the acting Maredsous Monastery;
- take a fascinating journey to the industrial 19th century on a vintage train;
- visit an exquisite Bioul castle and taste the excellent wine from its vineyards;
- walk through the Annevoie Gardens and see the romantic park streams, ponds and fountains;
- taste the richest palette of products from the breweries of Fagnes, du Bock and the Abbey of Rochefort;
- discover the remains of Hitler's general headquarters in the forest, built on the «advice» of Nostradamus.

Did you know that:

- *In 1675 at the Freyr castle, while signing a peace treaty between Spain and France, Louis IV was first served coffee, which marked the beginning of the coffee spread in Belgium;*
- *Wallonia is the homeland of the saxophone. The inventor of this amazing instrument, Adolphe Sax, was born in Dinant.*



© WBT • Grottes 'Origin'

Province of Walloon Brabant



© WBT • Jean-Paul Remy

Nivelles • Dodaine Park

Walloon Brabant – the Duchy of Brabant part until the end of the 18th century, whose territory divided now between Wallonia, Flanders and Brussels region. This is the smallest province of Wallonia, located in the center of Belgian kingdom and the closest to the capital. The green and flowering Walloon Brabant is often called the “Gardens of Brussels”.

In the middle of a wide plain towering the mesmerizing ruins of the Abbey of Villers-la-Ville. They beautifully reflect the former richest scope of the Middle Ages’ Cistercian monastery. The sky in its infiniteness now occupies the absent roof of the majestic cathedral and missing stained-glass windows.

Situated in this province is the site of the great battle - Waterloo, corresponding to the Napoleon’s crushing defeat. On the field of Waterloo, an impressive memorial has been created, dedicated to this major European event.



© WBT • Olivier Cappellez

Commemoration The Battle of Waterloo



©WBT - JP Remy

Parc du château de la Hulpe

Our tips:

- discover the richest world of Belgian comics, by visiting the Museum of Hergé, the author of the famous comics "Tintin" in the town of Louvain-la-Neuve;
- have a look at the grandiose Romanesque church of Sainte Gertrude and take a delicious coffee break on the central square of Nivelles;
- taste Waterloo beer and gin at Mont Saint-Jean farm near the famous battlefield;
- admire the picturesque La Hulpe castle and its beautiful park;
- play golf on one of the royal golf courses or just have a glass of champagne on the terrace of the golf club, admiring the magnificent countryside and enjoying the relaxing atmosphere.

Did you know that:

- *the first city in history to be headed by a woman was the Brabant city of Nivelles?*
- *after the defeat of Napoleon, more than a hundred places named Waterloo appeared on the world map?*
- *Victor Hugo wrote part of "Les Miserables", walking on the ruins of Villers-la-Ville.*



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Province of Liege



© WBT • OT Liège • Mady Andrien

Liège • Place Saint-Barthélemy • 'Les Principautaires'

The Province of Liege is the north-eastern region of Wallonia, bordered by Flanders, Germany, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Before the French Revolution, there were two autonomous spiritual principalities on the territory of the province: Liege and Stavelot-Malmedy.

The Ardennes highlands are situated in the Eastern part of the province of Liege. On the west part, is the place of the picturesque peat bogs, which in the spring, covered with a continuous carpet of blooming daffodils. This is the edge of lakes and thermal springs, where they beat from underground. Here are some famous names of mineral waters: Spa, Bru, Chaudfontaine. The charming town of Spa, one of the

most famous thermal spas in the world, which gave the name to the entire global spa industry. Many monarchs, aristocrats, bourgeois and outstanding cultural figures improved their health in this city. The city of Spa has also its own Casino, which is one of the oldest in Europe.

Liege is a city of fine arts, great history, gastronomic delights and, perhaps, the most fashionable city of the Walloon region. On its central square for a thousand years there is an imposing Palace of Princes-Bishops, reminiscent of the spiritual past and secular power of the Principality of Liege.



© WBT • spagrandprix.com

Grand Prix F1 de Spa Francorchamps



©WBT • Eric Martin • Figarophoto

Thermes de Spa

Our tips:

- feel like a Formula 1 driver, having passed the «race baptism» on the Spa-Francorchamps track;
- see unique racing cars in the basements of the former Stavelot Abbey;
- appreciate the original architecture and the frivolous sculptures in the park of the Jehay castle;
- spend a bliss relaxation day in one of the province's spa castles;
- take a bike ride around the rugged Rheinhardstein castle.

Did you know that:

- *The invention of the revolver Nagant and the pistol Bayard are from the city of Liege;*
- *On September 19, 1888, in Spa, was the first final of the world beauty contest;*
- *The author of the famous detective novels about the commissar Megre, Georges Simenon, was born in Liege.*
-



©WBT • Julien Libert

Sentiers du Phoenix • A cheval près de Libin

Province of Luxembourg



© WBT • SPRL Cernix • Pierre Paquay

Statue of Godfrey of Bouillon

The Province of Luxembourg is the south-eastern part of Wallonia, bordering France and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. This province belonged to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg before the Belgian Revolution in 1831.

The entire territory of the province of Luxembourg is occupied by the Ardennes highlands. It is the most wooded, largest in area and the most sparsely populated province of Wallonia.

The pearl of this forest land is one of the smallest cities in the world – Durbuy. It is a wonderful “islet of the Middle Ages”, hidden from the wind of time behind bizarrely curved ridges in the middle of the endless forests. People come to Durbuy to get into a good old fairy tale, and

the inhabitants of the town are trying to maintain this spirit. Therefore, in Durbuy you have a chance to meet the most magical Christmas and the most magical Halloween in Wallonia.

Another attraction is the medieval castle-fortress – Bouillon. This castle is full of secrets and legends - the oldest witness of the feudal era in Belgium. The castle belonged to Godfried of Bouillon, the leader of the first and successful campaign of the crusaders in Palestine. The territory of this fortresses is a favorite place for medieval festivals.



© WBT • DELHASSE Ismerie

Illuminations Durbuy • Noel 2020



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Hunting horn player of the Royal-Forêt • Saint-Hubert

Our tips:

- stop by the beautiful village of Weris and try to solve the riddle of «Belgian Stonehenge»;
- spend a romantic weekend in a hunting chalet in the middle of the magnificent Saint-Hubert forest;
- find the Trappist Abbey of Orval among the woods and taste its wonderful beer and cheese;
- make a gastronomic “pilgrimage” to the lavish farms of the province;
- meet an elf, fairy or troll, or at least, discover them in the names of streams, meadows and paths;
- climb the hills and admire such landscapes that takes your breath away.

Did you know that:

- *Godfried of Bouillon went down in history due to the fact that he died in the Holy Lands by eating poisoned broth (bouillon);*
- *Nostradamus was visiting the abbey Orval from 1539 to 1544, studying books from the library of the monastery and performing mystical rituals in the nearby forest.*



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Wéris • Sunrise - Summer solstice



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