



OPEN COMMUNITY
EXPERIENCE

Brussels Guide

Welcome to OCX!



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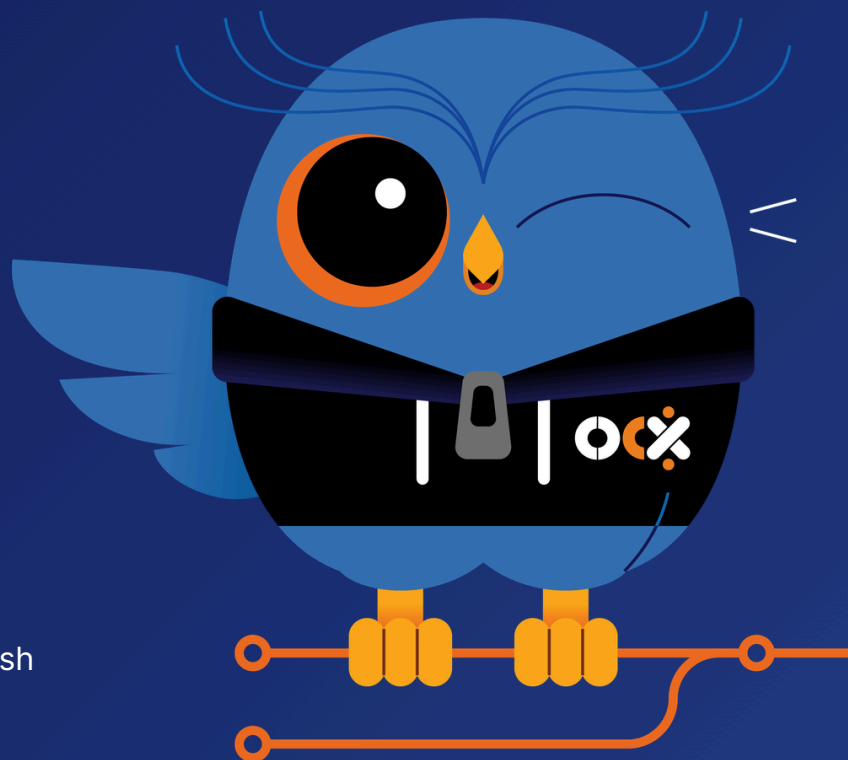
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Welcome to Brussels,

the capital of Belgium and the heart of Europe. Beyond being home to the European Union, Brussels is a vibrant city full of history, art, food, and fun. Whether it's your first time here or you're returning, this guide will help you make the most of your stay during OCX.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Population: ~1.2 million
- Languages: French & Dutch (English widely spoken)
- Currency: Euro (€)
- Getting around: Easy to explore on foot or by public transport (metro, trams, buses). Taxis and ride-sharing are available. From the airport, the city centre is a 20-minute train ride.



Top 10 things to see

GRAND PLACE

The beating heart of Brussels, the Grand Place is considered one of the most beautiful squares in the world. It is the most famous, lively, and photographed place in Brussels. It is one of the most beautiful architectural ensembles in Europe.



ATOMIUM

A futuristic symbol of Brussels, the Atomium was built for the 1958 World's Fair. Its structure represents an iron crystal magnified 165 billion times! From the highest sphere, the panoramic view of the city is spectacular.



MUSÉE DU TRAM

This museum traces the history of transportation in Brussels with an impressive collection of vehicles that have traveled the streets of the capital for over a century. You can even hop aboard an old tram for a retro ride through the city.

PARC ET PALAIS ROYAL

The Royal Park, in the heart of Brussels, is a green haven surrounded by historic buildings. It is the city's oldest park and the first to be opened to the public. The flag hoisted on the roof indicates whether the King is present in the capital.

PARC DU CINQUANTENAIRE

Commissioned by Leopold II to celebrate Belgium's 50th anniversary of independence, this majestic park is dominated by a triumphal arch. It features three major museums and vast lawns perfect for picnics.

GALLERIES ROYALES SAINT-HUBERT

Opened in 1847, these covered galleries are among the oldest in Europe. You will find great chocolate shops, bookstores, and theatres.



SAINT MICHAEL AND GUDULA CATHEDRAL

It's one of the most iconic monuments in the city. Its Gothic-style construction began in the early 13th century, on top of an 11th-century Romanesque building.

MAGRITTE MUSEUM

The Magritte Museum houses the largest collection of works by one of Belgium's greatest artists of the 20th century. Dedicated to the Belgian surrealist painter René Magritte, this museum exhibits more than 250 works.

MONT DES ARTS

A breathtaking view of Brussels! This site connects the upper and lower parts of the city, with its geometric gardens, museums, and cultural institutions. At sunset, it is one of the most popular photo spots in the city.

MANNEKEN PIS

Created in 1388, it's one of Brussels' most beloved symbols. It's a small statue showing a cheeky little boy urinating on top of a fountain. It has over 1,000 costumes, donated by countries and associations from around the world.



Fun things to do

- Take a beer tasting tour (from Trappist ales to local craft beers).
- Visit Comic Strip Murals around the city.
- Every Wednesday afternoon/evening, the market of Châtelain transforms the square into a real Brussels hotspot. There will be stalls selling artisanal products, food trucks, fresh flowers, and wine tastings.
- Explore the Sablon District for antiques, art, and chocolate boutiques.
- Try a day trip to Ghent, Bruges, or Leuven (all <1h by train).



Explore Brussels based on your **OCX track**

TOOLING TRACK

LIVING TOMORROW EXPERIENCE CENTER

Located just outside Brussels in Vilvoorde, it's the perfect stop if you're looking for a space blending tech, creative coding, and new media.

[More information.](#)

AUTOMOTIVE TRACK

AUTOWORLD BRUSSELS (CINQUANTENAIRE PARK)

If you're passionate about mobility, Autoworld is your stop. This museum showcases classic cars, prototypes, and the evolution of the automobile. [More information.](#)

AI TRACK

AI EXPERIENCE CENTER

Explore the AI Experience Center at VUB, a high-tech test, demonstration and meeting environment where companies, researchers, policy makers and the general public can experiment with AI. [More information.](#)

COMPLIANCE TRACK

PARLAMENTARIUM

Experience European politics as never before at Europe's largest parliamentary visitor centre. Entrance to the Parlamentarium is free. [More information.](#)

RESEARCH TRACK

ROYAL LIBRARY OF BELGIUM

Visit the library to explore medieval manuscripts and early books, or enjoy the KBR museum and rooftop views over Mont des Arts. [More information.](#)

Where to sleep

OCX attendee rates are available at these hotels in Brussels.
Please check [our website](#) for discount codes and deadlines.

- Marriott Grand Place (marriott.com)
- Cardo Brussels (cardohotels.com)
- Hilton Grand Place (hilton.com)
- Ibis Brussels off Grand Place (accor.com)
- NH Collection Brussels (nh-hotels.com)
- Novotel Grand Place (accor.com)



Belgian specialties to discover

WAFFLES

If you're a foodie with a sweet tooth, you can't miss Belgian waffles! Try our top picks:

[Maison Dandoy](#)
[Le Funambule](#)
[Aux Gaufres de Bruxelles](#)

FRENCH FRIES

Belgian fries are a culinary icon. Here are a few spots to try:

[Frites Maison Antoine](#)
[Frit Flagey](#)
[Fritland](#)

CHOCOLATE

Belgian chocolate is a must! Don't miss tasting classics from:

[Choco-Story Brussels](#)
[Pierre Marcolini](#)
[Godiva](#)
[Neuhaus](#)

BEER

Beer lovers, rejoice! Belgium is home to some of the world's finest brews:

[Brussels Beer Project in Dansaert](#)
[Delirium Café](#)
[Le Bar des Amis](#)
[L'Ermitage](#)



Where to eat

Casual & foody experiences

More relaxed restaurants with creative or fun food, good value, and informal vibes.

1. WOLF FOOD MARKET

€-€€ (mains ~€10–€25)

 wolf.be

Vibrant indoor food hall with many different vendors. Great for groups and casual pick-and-mix dining. No need to make a pre-reservation.

2. ROOFTOP 58

€-€€ (mains ~€15–€30)

 58.brussels

Chilled rooftop spot with views, drinks, burgers, and shareable plates. Ideal for aperitivo or casual dinner. No need to make a pre-reservation.

3. BRASSERIE BOEMVOL

€€-€€€ (mains ~€22–€38)

 boemvol.be

Stylish brasserie near Sainte-Catherine serving refined Belgian dishes and well-paired wines. Best to make a reservation.

4. RICOTTA & PARMESAN

€-€€ (mains ~€18–€30)

 ricottaandparmesan.be

Modern Italian restaurant appreciated for wood-fired pizzas, creative antipasti, and flavorful pasta.

5. BIA MARA

€-€€ (mains ~€10–€20)

 biamara.com

Trendy fish & chips concept in the heart of Brussels, known for crispy, flavorful fried fish and chips with creative sauces.

Where to eat

Refined dining experiences

Elegant sit-down restaurants with table service and a more elevated atmosphere.

1. RESTAURANT VINCENT

€€€ (mains ~€25–€40)

 restaurantvincent.be/en

Elegant yet relaxed classic Belgian brasserie with grilled meats, local dishes, and beautiful tiled interiors just off Grand-Place. Best to make a reservation.

2. BELGA QUEEN

€€€ (mains ~€30–€50)

 belgaqueenbrussels.be

Iconic restaurant set in a beautifully restored 18th-century former bank with striking stained glass ceilings. It has contemporary Belgian classics (seafood, waterzooi, local favourites). Best to make a reservation.

3. LA ROSE BLANCHE

€€€
(mains ~€25–€40)

 laroseblanche.be

Classic Belgian restaurant located on the Grand-Place with traditional cuisine and historic charm. Best to make a reservation.

4. LA BELLE MARAÎCHÈRE

€€€
(mains ~€28–€45, seafood+)

 labellemaraichere.be

Classic seafood brasserie known for fresh fish, oysters and generous seafood platters. Best to make a reservation.

5. RISTORANTE BOCCONI

€€€
(mains ~€28–€45)

 [Website](#)

Elegant Italian restaurant inside Hôtel Amigo near Grand-Place, offering refined pastas and seasonal Italian mains.

Travel resources

The STIB/MIVB ([website](#)) manages the **city's metro, tram, and bus network**. You can check timetables and routes and purchase tickets via their official website or mobile app. Tickets are also available at stations and on board vehicles.

Several taxi companies serve Brussels. You can book a taxi by phone, via their mobile app, or directly at a taxi station.

POPULAR TAXI COMPANIES

- Taxis Verts: +32 2 349 49 49 [taxisverts.be](#)
- Taxis Bleus: +32 2 268 00 00 [taxisbleus.be](#)

Uber is also available in Brussels. The app allows you to book rides with a driver, offering a convenient alternative to traditional taxis. Please note that availability may vary depending on demand and time of day.

If you prefer to drive, there are several car rental agencies in Brussels offering a wide range of vehicles to suit your needs.

POPULAR RENTAL AGENCIES

- Europcar ([website](#)) offers a variety of vehicles, from city cars to minivans, with several agencies in Brussels.
- Sixt ([website](#)) offers high-end vehicles and flexible rental options.



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ocxconf.org

