



Travelling in Belgium

General Info:

Population: 10.4m

Area: 30,528 sq. km

Currency: Euro (100 cents) - EUR (€)

Top 10 popular attractions: Antwerp
Bouillon
Bruges
Brussels
Ghent
Leuven
Liege
Mons
Namur
Ostend

Essentials:

Driving licence:

Driving licences issued abroad can be used in Belgium only by visitors who have reached the minimum ages required for holders of Belgian licences for the same category of vehicle. A motor vehicle not exceeding 3500 kg with up to 9 seats including the driver's may be driven at 18 in Belgium.

Visitors may drive private or commercial vehicles, registered either in Belgium (hired or borrowed) or abroad (temporarily imported), if they are in possession of the following:

- International Driving Permits (1926, 1949, 1968)

Important documents:

Vehicles from the UK may be imported into Belgium for up to 6 months in any period of 12 months. When driving in Belgium the following documents should be carried:

- Full, valid driving licence* (with paper counterpart)
- International Driving Permit (1926, 1949, 1968) (Available from <http://www.rac.co.uk/travel/driving-abroad/international-driving-permit>)
- Proof of insurance (third party or above)
- Proof of ID (Passport)
- Proof of ownership (V5C Certificate)

Visitors driving in Belgium are required by law to carry the following items. Hefty on-the-spot fines can be issued for failing to carry specific items:

- Reflective jackets (must be worn if involved in a breakdown or an accident or alongside a road where stopping or parking is prohibited)
- Warning triangle (compulsory in every vehicle with 4 wheels or more)
- Headlamp beam deflectors (depending on your car, you will either need deflector stickers or have to adjust the beam manually)

Are you covered?

Don't forget to buy your RAC European Breakdown cover & Travel Insurance before you leave. Call RAC European Breakdown Sales on: 0800 015 6000. Call RAC Travel Insurance on: 0870 333 2784

Useful Numbers:

Emergency Services: 112 (SMS 114)

RAC Breakdown Europe: 00 33 472 43 52 44

Useful Links:

- <http://www.rac.co.uk/breakdown-cover/european-breakdown-cover/>
- <http://www.rac.co.uk/insurance/travel-insurance/>
- <http://www.racshop.co.uk/driving-in-europe.html>

- First aid kit & fire extinguisher (vehicles registered in Belgium must carry both, but this is not compulsory for vehicles registered abroad)
- Motorcyclists: Motorcyclists riding in Belgium, including foreigners, must wear protective clothing, i.e.: gloves, jacket with long sleeves, trousers with long legs or overall, and boots protecting the ankles.

Children under 3 are not allowed on motorcycles. Children between 3 and 8 may be carried as passengers in a special seat, only on motorcycles up to 125cc.

Rules of the road & regulations:

Rules of the road:

- **Overtaking & passing**

When overtaking a cyclist or moped rider there should be a distance of least 1m between them and the overtaking vehicle

When the size of the carriageway makes passing difficult, the driver may use the side of the footway provided that pedestrians are not put in any danger.

- **Priority**

Priority must be given to all vehicles coming from the right, except where the driver coming from the right is driving the wrong way in a one-way street.

However, vehicles on rails (trams) always have priority over all other users, whether on the right or on the left. In built-up areas, a driver must slow down or stop for bus drivers who have indicated that they intend driving away from the bus stop.

Priority at pedestrian crossings

When approaching a pedestrian crossing where traffic is not controlled by traffic lights or by a traffic officer, drivers must slow down and give way to pedestrians already on the crossing or who are about to step on it.

- **Warning of approach**

Warning signals must be as brief as possible. Audible warning should not be given unless there is no other way of avoiding an accident. Outside built-up areas, audible warning devices may be used as a warning to road users of the intention to overtake.

Between nightfall and dawn, except in the case of imminent danger, audible warning signals should be replaced by flashing headlights.

Seat belts:

Any person must wear a seat belt whenever one is fitted on the front and rear seats in all vehicles registered in Belgium or abroad.

Travelling with children:

A child less than 1.35m travelling in a car, van or lorry, must be seated in a child seat or child restraint. Where a child restraint/seat is not available, a child 3 years and over, measuring less than 1.35 m, must travel in the rear seat of the vehicle using a seat belt or other safety device attached to the seat. If the child is under 3 years old he/she may not be transported in a vehicle without child restraint/seat, except in a taxi.

Snow chains:

Snow chains may only be used when roads are covered with snow or ice.

Speed Limits:

The following national speed limits apply:

	Motorways	Other roads
Normal traffic conditions	120 km/h	90 km/h

Source: All information in this document is sourced from the AIT (Alliance Internationale de Tourisme) & the FIA (Federation Internationale de l'Automobile) and, to the best of the RAC's knowledge, is correct at the time of publication (August 2013).

Unless otherwise indicated by the appropriate sign, vehicles must observe a minimum speed limit of 70 km/h on motorways, except when traffic is congested or conditions are dangerous. Vehicles which cannot reach a speed of 70 km/h on straight level stretches must not use motorways.

In residential areas the maximum speed is 20 km/h.

Certain zones, indicated by appropriate signs, have a speed limit of 30 km/h.

On roads with humps, drivers must approach with care and at a moderate pace so as to pass over them at a speed not exceeding 30 km/h.

A car navigation system with maps indicating the location of fixed speed cameras is permitted, but equipment which actively searches for speed cameras or interferes with police equipment is prohibited.

Penalties:

- **On-the-spot fines**

The police may impose on-the-spot fines to visitors who infringe traffic regulations.

- **Traffic offences**

There are 4 categories of road traffic offences.

Level 1:

- Not wearing a seat belt
- Parking offence not causing a danger
- Driving in a bus lane

Level 2:

- Using a hand-held mobile phone when driving
- Parking offence causing a danger to others, for example on a pavement, in a disabled bay, near a junction
- Non-observance of the orange traffic light

Level 3:

- Infringement of passing rules
- Not stopping at a red traffic light
- Overtaking when prohibited

Level 4:

- Dangerous overtaking, in a bend or near the top of a hill
- Crossing a railway crossing when prohibited by lights
- Reversing or doing a U-turn on a motorway

- **Confiscation of vehicles**

The police can confiscate a vehicle which is not insured. They can impound a vehicle under certain circumstances, e.g. if the load is unsafe or if the driver tests positive for alcohol.

In certain circumstances, a tribunal can order the seizure or the confiscation of a vehicle which has been involved in a serious offence.

Parking:

- **Parking regulations**

Any vehicle standing must have its engine switched off, unless absolutely necessary.

Any vehicle standing (for the time necessary to load or unload persons or goods) or parked must be left on the right-hand side of the road, except in the case of a one way street when it can be left on either side (but see also below).

- **Paid parking**

Paid parking is regulated by parking meters or automatic parking machines; methods of payment and parking conditions are specified on the machines in question. Where these exist inside blue zones, parking discs must not be used, except when the parking meter or ticket machine is out of action.

- **Enforcement of parking regulations**

Wheel clamps are sometimes used to immobilise vehicles which are not legally insured. They are not used to penalise drivers who have illegally parked their vehicles.

- **Disabled parking access**

Foreign disabled permits are recognised in Belgium.

Special parking places are reserved for the disabled. These are indicated by sign E23, with the addition of the international symbol.

Badge holders may also park without time limit where parking time is otherwise restricted by road signs, in blue zones and by parking meters.

Traffic lights & Road Signs:

- **Traffic lights**

The international three-colour traffic light system is used.

Green, amber and red arrows are used at some intersections

Drink/drug driving

- **Legal limit**

The present legal limit is 0.05% of alcohol in the blood (ie: 0.5g of alcohol per litre of blood) or 0.22mg per litre of exhaled air

- **Alcohol**

Anybody driving, about to drive or presumed to be the author of an accident (even as a pedestrian), may have to undergo a breath test on the spot.

If the test is positive (i.e. shows there is between 0.05% and 0.08% of alcohol in the blood), the person is not allowed to drive for at least three hours and their driving licence is withdrawn for that period.

If the alcohol level is 0.08% or more or if the driver refuses to undergo the test, he is not allowed to drive for at least 6 hours.

Roads & fuel

Belgian motorways are currently toll-free except for vehicles of 12t +.

Service areas

There are service areas with a petrol station, restaurant, shop, showers and toilets, and sometimes a motel. Rest areas have picnic facilities

Availability of fuel

Unleaded petrol, diesel oil and lubricating oil are readily available throughout Belgium.

The fuel SP95-E10, which contains up to 10% of ethanol and 90% of unleaded 95 petrol, is available. This fuel can be used in 60% of petrol-driven cars, especially in recent models.

- **Price of fuel
(April 2014)**

Unleaded petrol (95 octane)	1.642 EUR per litre
Unleaded petrol (98 octane)	1.695 EUR per litre
Diesel	1.433 EUR per litre
LPG	0.599 EUR per litre

- **Means of payment**

Credit cards are generally accepted at petrol stations.

- **Automatic petrol pumps**

Automatic petrol pumps are found in some large towns.

Emergencies

Emergency telephones linked to an SOS telephone network are installed at 2 km intervals along the motorways.

What RAC can do for you

RAC offers great value, flexible RAC European breakdown (<http://www.rac.co.uk/breakdown-cover/european-breakdown-cover/>) cover tailored to meet your needs. We also offer comprehensive travel insurance (<http://www.rac.co.uk/insurance/travel-insurance/>), including cover for medical expenses, baggage, personal money and belongings *. Whilst away, use our Route Planner (<http://www.rac.co.uk/route-planner>) for all your driving directions.

RAC can cover you against vehicle break down in Europe, with options available to suit your travelling requirements.

RAC European breakdown cover Basic and Comprehensive cover provides you with a wide range of benefits.

* Basic, Standard and Executive RAC Travel Insurance policies are sold, administered and underwritten by ACE European Group Limited. RAC Financial Services Ltd is an Agent of ACE European Group Ltd (ACE). RAC Travel Insurance Driving cover is sold and administered by RAC Financial Services Ltd. RAC Financial Services Ltd is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority, registered in England No. 5171817. Registered Office: RAC House, Brockhurst Crescent, Walsall, WS5 4AW. RAC Travel Insurance Driving cover is underwritten by ACE European Group Limited (ACE). ACE is authorised by the Prudential Regulatory Authority (PRA) and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and the Prudential Regulatory Authority reference number FRN 202803. Full details can be found online at the FCA websites or by contacting the FCA on 0800 111 6768.

of benefits