



Vibrant **VEGETABLES** *take the lead*

- 21 **LEEUV**
Kapelstraat 51
Hasselt
Limburg
+32 (0)468 14 74 47
leeuw.restaurant

Book a table at the brandnew restaurant of Laurens Snykers and Lien Buntinx if you're up for a culinary adventure. The innovative seasonal tasting menu always includes a wide range of forgotten plants, root vegetables and seeds. As asparagus take pride of place in the Belgian terroir, we recommend booking a table at Leeuw during the asparagus season, which starts mid-April and runs until the end of June.

- 22 **'T AARDS PARADIJS**
Merendreedorp 65
Merendree
East Flanders
+32 (0)9 371 57 56
aardsparadijs.be

The green herb garden of 't Aards Paradijs (paradise on earth) invites you to enter this converted shoe factory. Chef Lieven Lootens and his family have been running this restaurant for over 30 years now. His cuisine expertly pays respect to the natural flavours of vegetables, fruits and flowers. Lieven himself is a big fan of bees, as they pollinate no less than three-quarters of all our vegetable crops. Is it necessary to state that his honey-infused vegetable dishes are not to be missed?

- 23 **PEGASUS**
Guido Gezelle-
straat 5-7
Poperinge
West Flanders
+32 (0)475 94 31 27
pegasusrestaurant.be

Chef Bert Recour has a love for fine products which he serves without frills in his 18th-century dining room, including a romantic fire place. In addition to locally grown chicory and hop sprouts, there is much more to discover at Pegasus. Have a slice of Bert's heavenly homemade bread, pair it with a reasonably priced wine from his cellar and your culinary party is just getting started.

Where to go for that **OLD-SCHOOL** *fine-dining experience*

49 'T FORNUIS

Reyndersstraat 24
Antwerp
+32 (0)3 233 62 70

Let's call Johan Segers the godfather of Antwerp gastronomy. After forty-five years, the rustically renovated 't Fornuis* is still packed with guests, who come there to celebrate life. The no-menu approach gives this classic restaurant a special touch. The chef himself welcomes you like a true craftsman by explaining the dishes he has been working on during the day. Don't expect frills or gimmicks, but be prepared to taste authentic Belgian cuisine at its best.

50 BOZAR

Rue Baron Horta 3
Brussels
+32 (0)2 503 00 00
bozarrestaurant.be

Victor Horta's magnificent Centre for Fine Arts in art deco style is the perfect setting to enjoy Karen Torosyan's modern take on French classics. The Armenian chef of Bozar* attracts foodies craving a taste of his famous pâté en croûte – a discipline in which he became world champion in 2015 – and lovely artisanal desserts such as a millefeuille and a Paris-Brest. As these traditional preparations are created from scratch, some of them require preordering; remember when booking.





AROUND THE WORLD IN BELGIUM

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SWEET spots worth the sin

130 SIGOJI

Rue du Commerce 123
Ciney
Namur
+32 (0)83 65 57 50
sigoji.be

Euphrasie Mbamba is at the forefront of a new generation of talented chocolatiers. Her chocolate brand – Sigoji – is inspired both by the Belgian culture and the raw materials from her native Cameroon. Visitors of her Ciney atelier and luxury boutique can witness on-site how the cacao nibs are turned into delicious treats. The chocolatière has said that she puts all her emotions into her 100% dark chocolate pralines, which have a distinctive fruity but exquisite taste. Just try not to drool.

131 CONFISERIE TEMMERMAN

Kraanlei 79
Ghent
East Flanders
+32 (0)9 279 59 01
temmermanconfiserie.com

Before you enter this cosy shop on Kraanlei in Ghent, take a look at the baroque façade from the 17th century. Six works of mercy are incorporated into the decoration. Confiserie Temmerman cheerfully claims to perform another work of mercy by making life sweeter. The shop originally started by selling gingerbread, but now you can find all kinds of old-fashioned sweets – like *wippers*, *muilentrekkers* and *vuile taloren* – as well as Ghent's best-known candy, the *cuberdons*, made of gum arabic and raspberry juice. Stock up here!



131 CONFISERIE TEMMERMAN



BELGIAN FRIES

done right

182 **FRITUUR BOTERMARKT**
Hundelgemse-
steenweg 10
Ledeberg
East Flanders
+32 (0)9 330 01 70

You can't very well visit Belgium without indulging in some frites – as they are the guilty pleasure of many Belgians – and Frituur Botermarkt always delivers. Do mind: the queue at Frituur Botermarkt can be long, but don't worry, its length just illustrates how much people love this place. Apart from the very fresh chips, crispy on the outside and soft on the inside, the homemade Belgian stew and vol-au-vent also make this place well worth the wait.

183 **MAISON ANTOINE**
Place Jourdan 1
Etterbeek
Brussels
+32 (0)2 230 54 56
maisonantoine.be

Maison Antoine has been in business for ages, starting as a small hut and evolving to its current form, a big shop. The speciality of this *frituur* or chip shop is Belgian frites – double-fried in beef fat by the way – with various sauces ranging from mayonnaise, samurai, andalouse, tartare sauce, and pickles to *speciaalsaus* (mayonnaise and ketchup topped with chopped onion). Since it doesn't offer tables nor chairs, you're allowed to bring your meal in at all of the nearby cafes, which offer drinks and accommodation. After visiting the EU Commission and Parliament, this is a great place to refuel. Even Angela Merkel queued here for her paper cone of fresh chips, so why wouldn't you?



FOOD PAIRINGS

with BEER

210 CAFÉ VLISSINGHE

Blekersstraat 2
Bruges
West Flanders
+32 (0)50 34 37 37
cafevlissinghe.be

It goes without saying that Café Vlissinghe can rely on a rich history, since the cafe celebrated its 500th anniversary in 2015. As soon as you start walking down along the canals from the city centre to this cafe, it seems like a time machine has beamed you into the past. We dare you to try the special fish soup, or the meatballs in beer sauce served over *stoemp* (mashed potatoes). On a warm day, the back garden is perfect for playing boardgames outside. Visiting Café Vlissinghe is the most delightful way to experience some *couleur locale* while having a (house) brew and a bite.

211 DE GEBRANDE WINNING

Zepperenweg 7
Sint-Truiden
Limburg
+32 (0)11 68 20 47
degebrandewinning.be

Even the finest restaurants in the world are usually oblivious to the incredible flavour diversity that beer has to offer, but this doesn't hold true for beer-themed restaurant De Gebrande Winning. Chef Raf Sainte serves generous gastronomy with a creative audacity (including some amazing surf-and-turf combinations), pairing it with the treasure trove of bottles that are maturing in the restaurant's cellar. You can quench your thirst with aged sours and decent Belgian ales, as well as with trendy craft beers from Sweden and the United States.

212 'T VIJFDE SEIZOEN

Stationsstraat 9
Aalter
East Flanders
+32 (0)9 351 74 60
tvijfdezeizoen.com

Before chef Broes Tavernier decided to open up his own restaurant and Eetalage deli, he was part of the glorious De Karmeliet*** team. The menu of 't Vijfde Seizoen focusses on regionally sourced produce such as North Sea bycatch, farm-fresh vegetables, local cheeses and Belgian chocolates. The restaurant has a small and cosy terrace with a well-kept hidden garden, providing the perfect setting for the beer pairings they offer.

213 HEEREN VAN LIEDEKERCKE

Kasteelstraat 33
Denderleeuw
East Flanders
+32 (0)53 68 08 88
heerenvanliedekercke.be

Belgian beer gastronomy definitely deserves a spot in the ranking of the world's most memorable restaurant experiences. Heeren van Liedekercke proves this, having received the honour of being named the number-one best beer restaurant in the world. The rather traditional food served here meticulously holds the balance between comfort food and gourmet cuisine, with the accompanying beers being perfectly served. Their dessert menu is a real treat every time, featuring sabayons made with Rochefort, Westmalle or other beers, a signature cheese and even beer pralines.



212 'T VIJFDE SEIZOEN

LUXURY

indulgence

251 ZILTE

AT: MAS

Hanzestedenplaats 5

Antwerp

+32 (0)3 283 40 40

zilte.be

In this restaurant, located at Antwerp's MAS (Museum aan de Stroom / Museum by the River), guests can enjoy chef Viki Geunes' refined and subtle flavour combinations, while being treated to breathtaking views of Antwerp's skyline. The overall elegant wooden design provide Zilte*** with a contemporary look, while maintaining a warm and friendly atmosphere, expertly managed by maitre Viviane Plaquet.

252 HOF VAN CLEVE

Riemegemstraat 1

Kruisem

East Flanders

+32 (0)9 383 58 48

hofvanleve.com

Hof van Cleve's*** farmhouse exterior belies the elegant dining room within, where chef-patron Peter Goossens and lady of the house Lieve Fermans have been wowing guests since 1987. The attention to detail, which is evident in the service, the decor, the bespoke cutlery, and even in the flower arrangements, is mirrored in the dishes. Belgian produce (think of game or North Sea fish) meets global influences in a dish combining grilled turbot with lobster Béarnaise and bouillabaisse puree, as well as in the entirely vegetarian tasting menu. Peter Goossens' stated aim is for guests to leave with a smile on their face, and it's safe to say he succeeds. If this temple is not on your bucket list yet, add it now.





322 GARNAALVISSERS



FISH to catch

322 GARNAALVISSERS

Astridplein – beach
Oostduinkerke
West Flanders
+32 (0)475 65 11 32
(Stefaan Ancke)
visitkoksijde.be

Oostduinkerke's *garnealvisers* or shrimp fishermen on horseback are on UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage. These fishermen trawl the sea from late June (starting with the official shrimp festival that kicks off the season) to early September, fishing for a special variety of brown shrimp, used in Belgian specialities like tomato-crevettes. Sign up for an excursion with one of the fifteen remaining fishermen on horseback, or travel to the NAVIGO National Fishery museum to discover the history of this tradition.

323 COMMANDERIE 7

Commanderie 7
Sint-Pieters-Voeren
Limburg
+32 (0)4 381 14 30
commanderie7.com

Starting with the organically fed trout swimming in their ponds, the walk through the old castle grounds of the Commanderie 7 will lead you to the famous restaurant that serves fresh fish from the country's oldest trout farm, dating back to 1700. The fish are raised in clear water, supplied by the source of the Voer River. Taste the smoked trout roasted in butter and enjoy the house beer, along with other local specialities such as Hervé cheese.

324 CAPTAIN BLUE

Albert I-promenade 1
Ostend
West Flanders
+32(0) 59 70 62 94
captainblue.be

Captain Blue is a North Sea company based in Ostend that offers boat trips to explore the marine population or enjoy a day of fishing at sea. For the latter no fishing experience is required, so people of all ages can participate in this activity. When you hear the ship's siren, that's your cue to cast out the fishing rods. As a bonus, you can take home any fish you may have caught.

349 **JULES DESTROOPER**

Gravestraat 5
Lo-Reninge
West Flanders
+32 (0)58 28 09 33
julesdestrooper.com

Did you think that all waffles were soft and airy? Guess again. Flat, hard and crispy, the Butter Crisp by Jules Destrooper offers a whole different waffle experience. These thin treats are based on a recipe dating back to the 19th century. Even though this West Flemish company produces a whole range of premium biscuits, it remains widely known for its butter waffles locally referred to as *lukken*.

350 **CONFISERIE LÉOPOLD**

Chaussée d'Asse 35
Enghien
Hainaut
+32 (0)2 395 77 32
cuberonsleopold.com

The famous little raspberry cone with gum arabic, called *neuzeke* (little nose) in Flemish, was created over 150 years ago and, since then, has established itself as a Belgian delicacy. However, its exact origin is still unknown, and its artisanal recipe is a passionately guarded secret held by a very limited number of artisans, such as Confiterie Léopold. Their genuine *cuberons* have a delicately hardened outer layer that gently bursts in your mouth, releasing an elegant syrup, making them the perfect souvenir of your trip to Belgium.

351 **MAISON DANDROY**

Rue au Beurre 31
Brussels
+32 (0)2 540 27 02
maisondandroy.com

Founded in 1829, Maison Dandroy is a family-owned artisanal bakery. This Brussels institution became world-famous for selling *speculoos* biscuits, which are still made the traditional way today, using real butter, brown sugar, flour, salt and hand-crafted wooden moulds. Tourists, sweet teeth and curious foodies all rush to the aptly named Rue au Beurre (Butter Street). If you follow their lead, you might as well take a seat and try the cinnamon *pain à la Grècque* in the en-suite tearoom.

352 **WOSTYN**

Conscienceplein 7
Torhout
West Flanders
+32 (0)50 21 23 00
mostaardwostyn.be

In 1869, Ivo-Jacob Wostyn started making the mustard that, more than 150 years later, would be named the best in the world by the famous chef Ferran Adrià. The spicy and dark-coloured Wostyn mustard is made out of finely grinded dark Brassica Nigra mustard seeds, vinegar, water and salt. More than a decade ago, Wostyn's descendants opened a museum which exhibits an old mustard mill, pottery and other curiosities that add to the mustard mystery.

353 **MOEDER BABELUTTE**

Graaf d'Ursellaan 6
Heist-aan-Zee
West Flanders
+32 (0)50 51 32 13
moederbabelutte.be

Derived from the Flemish word *babbelen* (chatting) a *babelutte* is a kind of long toffee, flavoured with honey or local sugar from Veurne. These chewy caramel treats invented by Rosalie Desmedt in the 19th century, are still very popular. Today, the Moeder Babelutte sweets are sold at the flagship cafe near Knokke and all throughout Belgium, instantly recognisable by their sailor-themed blue-and-white packaging.



351 MAISON DANDROY