



Since you've decided to visit the Brussels Gueuze Museum, we'd like to invite you for a stroll through the Brussels of today and yesteryear. Your walk will take you from the historical town centre right to the Cantillon Brewery, which houses the Museum.

## Grand'Place

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The walk starts at the Grand'Place and the Town Hall. Inside the Town Hall, there is pleasant courtyard (1) with, in its centre, a star used as the reference point for calculating distances from Brussels. The star itself was made using old cobblestones found at this very location during restoration works.

Other cobblestones in the courtyard indicate the various dates on which construction work was carried out on the building, i.e. 1402, 1444, 1705 and 1717.

At the back of the courtyard, there are two fountains symbolising the two major rivers flowing through Belgium, the Meuse and the Scheldt.

As you leave the Town Hall's courtyard, remember to take in the Grand'Place (2), a UNESCO world heritage site whose beauty has been praised by artists the world over. Herman Teirlinck, Victor Hugo, Jean Cocteau and other renowned authors have made this square famous throughout the world.

Turn right as you leave the courtyard and, before taking rue Charles Buls, stop and look to your left at the houses on the corner with the Grand'Place. Very few people notice this, but the "maison de l'Etoile" (De Ster in Dutch or The Star in English) (3) at the corner of rue Charles Buls sits on top of an arcade. Right next to it is the house "Le Cygne" (The Swan) (4), which is easy to recognise thanks to the elegant bird

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sculpted above the entrance. Today, this building is a restaurant, but in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century it was a much more proletarian place. For example, this is where Karl Marx wrote *Das Kapital* with Engels in 1847 and, in 1885, it housed the inaugural meetings of the Belgian Workers' Party, the forerunner to the Socialist Party.

The third house is the "Maison des Brasseurs" (Brewers' House) (5), whose current appearance dates back to 1698, when the Grand'Place was rebuilt. The previous building on this site was called "De Hille" as a reference to the surrounding landscape and there is evidence that it was already here in the late 13<sup>th</sup> or early 14<sup>th</sup> century. Sometime during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the name was changed to "Den Gouden Boom" (The Golden Tree). At that time, this was one of the first houses to be made of stone and it belonged to other corporations, for example the tanners and then the weavers, before being purchased by the brewers at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. However, a house here was nothing very new for the brewers since they had already owned another one on the Grand'Place since the 15<sup>th</sup> century. During the French Revolutionary Regime, the guilds and trades were abolished and their property was auctioned off, and this also applied to the Brewers' House. Finally, it would take over 150 years before the house reverted back to the brewers in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Today, the building is home to the Union of Belgian Brewers and it houses the Brewery Museum.

## Rue Charles Buls

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Start walking down rue Charles Buls. Under the arcade, there's no need to polish poor old Everard 't Serclaes (6) as all the visitors before you have already done a great job making his effigy shine. This commemorative statue carved by Julien Dillens commemorates events which

took place in the 14<sup>th</sup> century when 't Serclaes gave Brussels back to the Duchy of Brabant after driving off the occupying army of the Count of Flanders.

Also at the beginning of the street, on the wall of the Town Hall, there is plaque recalling the destruction and reconstruction of the Grand'Place after it was shelled in 1695 by French troops under Louis XIV.

## Rue de l'Amigo

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Keep walking down rue Charles Buls and turn right into rue de l'Amigo. Right in front of you on the corner is the Hotel Amigo (7).

The "Amigo", as the people of Brussels called it, was a prison until just before Expo '58 (1958 World Fair). The hotel you see today, which kept the name, then replaced the prison. In fact, the name "Amigo" is the product of an incorrect translation of the medieval Dutch word "Vrunte", which means "enclosure" and by extrapolation also "prison". Spanish forces, which occupied Brussels at the time, misunderstood "vrunte" as "vriendt" (friend), and as such translated the name of the street as "Amigo" (friend in Spanish).

Also at the corner of the rue de l'Amigo and the rue Charles Buls, at sidewalk level there is a plaque on the wall of the Town Hall (8) indicating the site's elevation above sea level, i.e. 21.15 metres.

Continue along the rear facade of the Town Hall, and you will see that the rear entrance of the courtyard is guarded by two small fountains (9) representing lions.



At the end of the street, on the corner of rue Marché au Charbon and rue aux Pierres, have a look at the so-called “fontaine du Cracheur” (10) (the spitter’s fountain). On the ground, to the left of the fountain, you will see a seashell made of bronze embedded into the pavement. There are in fact several such seashells throughout Brussels, and they show the path taken by pilgrims travelling to Santiago de Compostela in Spain.

## Rue Marché au Charbon

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Follow the direction shown by the seashell and take rue Marché au Charbon (Kolenmarkt in Dutch). In front of police headquarters, you will notice that the street widens by about one metre. The blank wall there has been painted with a fresco (11) by Belgian comic book artist François Schuiten.

After walking a little further, you will find yourself in rue du Midi, which is known throughout the world by coin and stamp collectors. Carefully cross rue du Midi and continue down the narrow rue Marché au Charbon.

At the next intersection, keep an eye out as five streets converge here. Make sure the “Plattestein” and rue des Teinturiers are to your right and that rue du Lombard is to your left and go straight ahead to take the last section of rue du Marché au Charbon. You will see frescoes (12) by Victor Sackville and Broussaille on each side of the intersection.

The City of Brussels had two main goals when it embarked on the comic book fresco project: by decorating over 30 walls, the city paid tribute to Belgium’s comic book artists while also beautifying what were often dilapidated areas and making the city more pleasant for residents and tourists alike.

In the rue du Marché au Charbon, the first street on your right is rue Bon Secours, where you will notice a strange difference in elevation (13). This is the result of civil engineering works carried out at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the Senne, the river running through

Brussels, was covered over. Thousands of houses built along the banks of the river were torn down and the river was diverted underground through two channels. Above ground, large boulevards were built based on the Parisian model, but as the channels redirecting the Senne were not placed very deep underground a difference in level of over one metre was created between the old and the new urban landscape. Brussels inhabitants of the time referred to these differences in street height as “Anspaschbulten” or Anspach bumps, named after the mayor of Brussels during the works.

A little bit further, still on your right, you will see the church Notre-Dame du Bon Secours (14). This church, built in the baroque style, is located on the former site of hospital Saint-Jacques, which catered to pilgrims making their way to Santiago de Compostela.

On the corner of the church there is rue du Jardin des Olives. At the intersection, a small fountain (15) reminds passers-by that the Senne River flowed next to the church until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

At this point, you're halfway and you can do two things.

Either you continue your walk. In this case, jump the following lines and read the rest of the itinerary. Take the rue du Jardin des Olives on your left.

Or you can take a break. In this case, we suggest that you walk straight on to the end of the Rue du Marché au Charbon (50m). When you arrive at the place Fontainas, on your left you'll see a pub whose pleasant name reflects the warm welcome you get: "Moeder Lambic" (Mother Lambic), one of the best beer bars in Brussels. Ready to start again? Go back and, pay attention, turn right to continue your walk and take the rue Jardin des Olives.

## Rue du Jardin des Olives

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Turn left into rue du Jardin des Olives. Continue towards the left and the street name changes to rue des Moineaux. On your left, you will see one of Brussels’s

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picturesque and unexpected locales: rue de la Gouttière (16).

## Rue des Moineaux

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Keep going in rue des Moineaux up to the corner of rue du Midi, where Madame Chapeau (the hat lady) (17) is waiting for you. She’s just bought a few things in the neighbourhood and is putting away her change. Madame Chapeau - her real name is Amélie Van Beneden - is a well-known character from Brussels folklore and a local play, *Bossemans et Coppinolle*. She exemplifies the rivalry between two major football teams in Brussels: Daring de Molenbeek and Union Saint-Gilloise. A word to the wise: when you reach the Cantillon Brewery at the end of your stroll, you will have the pleasure of meeting some very serious Union supporters.

At the intersection, go right into rue du Midi.

## Rue du Midi

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Once you’ve passed the traffic signal at the corner of rue des Bogards, turn around to admire the fresco dedicated to the comic strip character Monsieur Jean (18). This fresco was painted on the façade of the last army surplus store in Brussels.

As you continue to walk down the street, on your left you will see the Académie des Beaux-Arts (Fine Arts Academy) (19). Many artists, for example architects, sculptors and painters, learned their trade here. Famous former students of the academy include architect Victor Horta and painter Vincent van Gogh.

Continue your walk towards Place Rouppe.

## Place Rouppe

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This square was named after Nicolas Jean Rouppe, who was the first mayor of Brussels after Belgium became an independent country. He held this office from 1830 to 1838.



In the middle of the square you will see a fountain (20) representing a woman who symbolises the City of Brussels. The fountain is the work of the archetypal “schieven architect” (crooked architect), Joseph Poelaert, who also designed the Congress Column and the Brussels Palace of Justice.

Many years ago, this fountain was the first or last bit of Brussels that travellers saw since this is where the original South Train Station (Gare du Midi), at the time called Gare des Bogards, was located. Among the many French travellers who came through this station in the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was the famous author of *Les Misérables* and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, Victor Hugo.

The hôtel de la Grande Cloche (21) at the corner of the square and rue du Midi is an allusion to the clock that reminded travellers of the train they had to catch.

At number 28, in the right corner of the square, is the old entrance to the Ecole normale Charles Buls (a name which came up at the beginning of the walk) (22). As the alderman for educational matters, he was fully aware of the importance of a high quality education and so in 1875 he created the first Ecole Modèle. Once you get to the brewery you might bump into a couple of old pupils of the school, because this is where Jean-Pierre Van Roy studied and where he met a brewer's daughter named Claude Cantillon. And so, this is how Jean-Pierre Van Roy became one of Belgium's most “sparkling” brewers.

## Avenue de Stalingrad

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Continue down rue du Midi, which becomes avenue de Stalingrad.

House number 24 of this avenue is the former townhouse of the Wielemans-Ceuppens family (23), who were well-known Brussels brewers. The actual brewery, located avenue Van Volkem in the Brussels municipality of Forest, closed for good in 1989. Even though the building housing the brewery is a masterpiece of industrial architecture in Brussels, it was allowed to stay in a derelict state for several years before being turned into a contemporary arts centre (Wiel's). Today, what was

Belgium's biggest brewery in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century has been given a new lease on life.

As you continue your walk, you will soon see the Palais du Midi (24) directly to your right. This building was originally designed to house a large indoor market and apartments. Later on, it was used as an administrative centre for the municipality. Nowadays, it is multi-purpose and one can find a mix of apartments, small businesses, offices and a sports centre.

To the left of the street, take in the original architecture of certain buildings, such as for example number 62 (25).

At the end of avenue de Stalingrad, stay on the sidewalk and continue towards the right - on a section of boulevard du Midi - up to the intersection with boulevard Lemonnier on your right which goes back to the centre of town. At the traffic light, cross the street in front of you.

Stop and turn around to have a look at the former “Express-Midi” building, which is now “Avenida” (26), and which was erected in 1934 for the Caulier Brewery. The top part of the façade has a nice example of industrial archaeology, the advertisement for “Perle Caulier 28”, the Caulier Brewery's top product. In the 1960s, the Caulier Brewery merged with the Impériale Brewery, which at the time was a neighbour of Cantillon Brewery.

Next door, at number 214 on boulevard Lemonnier (27), you can see the boulevard's last house built in Art Nouveau style. It was built by the architect Ernest Blérot, who designed around a dozen other buildings in the same style in Brussels.

You are still at the traffic light, so now cross boulevard du Midi and leave boulevard Lemonnier behind you. Once you've gone across the second crosswalk, you will be on boulevard Poincaré.

This double boulevard is part of what is known as the “petite ceinture” (small ring road) that goes around the historical centre of Brussels, which is often referred to as the “Pentagone” (pentagon). For the most part, this

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small ring road follows the path of the second set of fortifications that surrounded Brussels hundreds of years ago.

Once over the crosswalk, turn right along boulevard Poincaré. At number 77 you will see the restaurant “La Grande Ecluse” (28). This is the sluice gate which controlled the level of the Senne river after 1871, once it had been channelled underground. The old machinery used to control the flow of water can still be seen in the cellar and in the restaurant's courtyard.

## Square de l'Aviation

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Continuing down boulevard Poincaré, to your left you will see square de l'Aviation. The sculpture (29) on the square commemorates the fairground entertainers who gave their lives for Belgium in wartime. Walk across the square and look at the Art Deco building of the former head office of the insurance company “La Prévoyance sociale” (30).

Take rue Crickx, to the right of the building. In this street, you will come across a few very nice buildings from the interwar period. Go across square Pequeur at the end of rue Crickx and turn right at the vacant lot, which some time ago was a tram depot. You are now on rue Gheude.

Number 56 is the Cantillon Brewery and the Brussels Gueuze Museum (31); you've made it! Come in and visit the very last operational brewery in Brussels and discover the fascinating story behind lambic beers and gueuze.



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