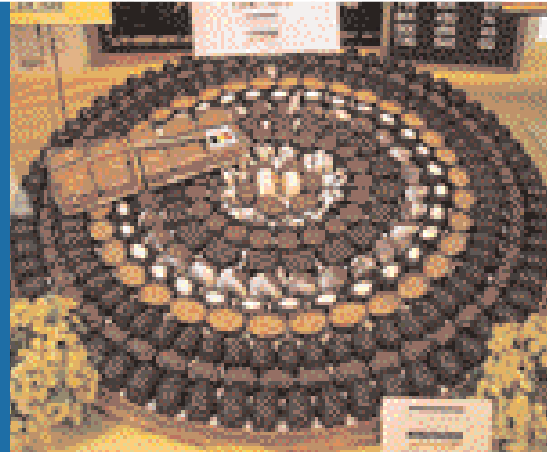


# Belgium

## WHERE HISTORY SHAPES THE COUNTRYSIDE

Just inland of Belgium's delightful coastline, cruise the peaceful countryside and historic towns connected by the Flemish waterways and enjoy the poetic charm of this warm-hearted country.



Your cruising area is called the Westhoek, an attractive corner of Belgium with a wealth of unspoilt countryside, and a past rich in history. Sweeping landscapes dominate the north of this area, and the river Ijzer winds through Belgium's unique countryside.

Your base at Nieuwpoort has a superb beach and a reputation for good fresh seafood. Be sure to cruise to Bruges, also known as the 'Venice of the North', with its meandering canals and hump-backed bridges. The cobbled winding streets of gabled houses and its superb shopping centre make it a delightful city, and its museum is home to several

masterpieces. On a coastal cruise you can take in the sights of Dunkerque across the border into France; the bustling shipping port of Ostend or venture further inland to Ypres to visit the museums and memorials to the Second World War.

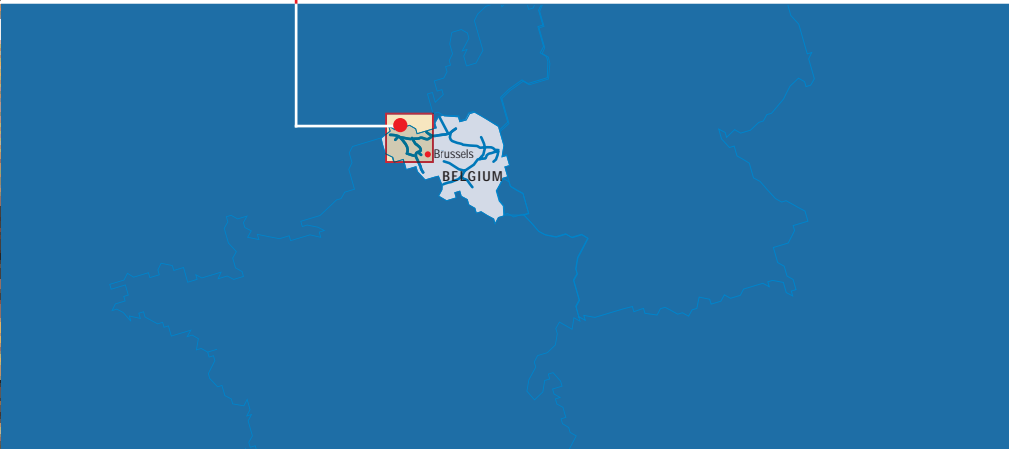
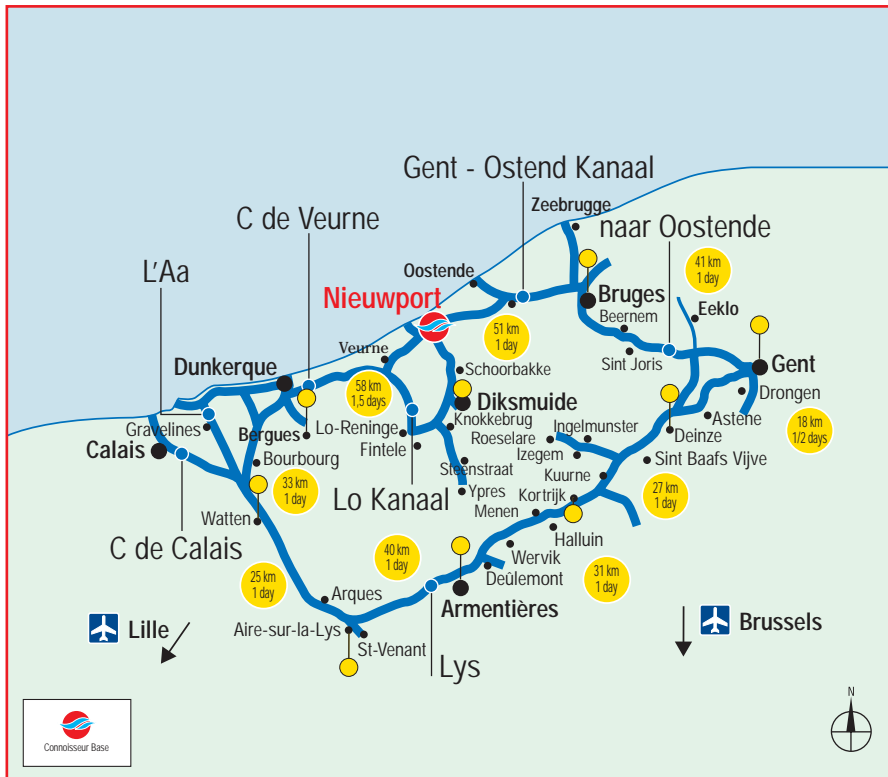
Gent, Belgium's ancient Flemish capital with its monuments, fairy tale facades and statues should also not be missed. As you cruise further south, Oudenaarde is the centre of the Flemish tapestry industry, still thriving today, and in the market square is the elegant and flamboyantly designed by Stadhuis.

### Flavours of the region

Wherever you go in Belgium there is an excellent range of superb, specialist food shops –pâtisseries, charcuteries, poissonneries, bakeries and delicatessens. However, the country must be most famous for its exquisite hand made chocolates, which have been produced since the middle of the last century and remain a speciality.

No other country in the world offers a greater variety of beers. They are outstanding in their quality, from the dark, strong and pure Trappist abbey breweries, to the quenching sour lambics of the Senne Valley.

# SUGGESTED CRUISES



## One week cruises

### Ijzer cruise

Return trip – Nieuwpoort to Veurne  
158 km/28 bridges/12 locks

### Gent-Oostende Canal cruise

Return trip – Nieuwpoort to Deinze  
198 km/22 bridges/7 locks

### Flanders cruise

Return trip – Nieuwpoort to Deinze  
198 km/ 22 bridges/ 7 locks

## Two week cruises

### Nieuwpoort cruise

Return trip – Nieuwpoort to Plassendales  
352 km/27 bridges/23 locks

## Not to be missed...

Cruise the Westhoek area and take in the town of **Diksmuide**, set against a landscape of open fields perfect for walking or cycling. Cruise through Diksmuide and its nearby nature reserves to **Veurne**, a former Spanish garrison town where you can visit the Museum of Bakery and discover all aspects of the famous Belgian bakery trade.

**Ostend**, in the north, is a popular seaside resort with a good sandy beach, bustling harbour and shops to explore.

**Gent** is the versatile capital of East Flanders, with so many places to explore. Visit the Belfry and cloth market, the city hall, the museum of fine arts or the University's botanical garden, as well as the many shops.

**Bruges** is a fascinating historical city dating back to the early centuries. Visit the museum, the many churches and Boudewijn Park – a recreation ground including an ice rink.