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“BRUGES IN DEPTH”

WITH VISITS TO FLANDERS’ FIELDS, GHENT, ANTWERP, AND BRUSSELS

A glorious spring break in a city that is classified in its entirety as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is arguably the best preserved medieval urban centre in all of Europe. Our visit to this “Venice of the North” with its canals and bridges, cobble-stoned alleys and lovely squares, is complemented by other attractions of Flanders and the rest of Belgium, such as Ghent, another medieval metropolis, the great seaport of Antwerp, “Flanders Fields” with focus on sites of Canadian interest, and Brussels, capital of Belgium and of the European Community. The distances to and from all these places are minimal, so only two (first-class) hotels will need to be used, and fine dining will be complemented by tastings of specialties such as Belgian beer, chocolates, and waffles. Your tour host, historian Jacques Pauwels, PhD, author of books on both World Wars, will share with you his intimate knowledge of his “old country”.

13 DAYS, FROM WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13 TO MONDAY, MARCH 25, 2024

TOUR COST FROM TORONTO, BASED ON DOUBLE OCCUPANCY: \$4,895

“LAND ONLY”, FROM/TO BRUSSELS AIRPORT MARCH 14-25: \$3,495

SINGLE ROOM SUPPLEMENT: \$795

PROPOSED ITINERARY:

Day 1 - Wednesday, March 13: Departure from Toronto to Amsterdam with KLM around 7PM.

Day 2 - Thursday, March 14: Early morning arrival in Amsterdam and short connecting flight to Brussels, arriving around 9AM. A private coach will be waiting to take us to the grounds of the 1958 Brussels World Fair for a look at its theme building, the spectacular Atomium. Continue to the beautiful old town of Bruges in Flanders, with en route pause for a late morning coffee in the picturesque artist village of St. Martens-Latem, located on the river Lys, which meanders slowly through the flat Flemish landscape. Arrival in Bruges and check into the four-star/first-class [Hotel De Medici](#), superbly located on one of the many canals that criss-cross this city, earning it epithet “Venice of the North”. Free time to settle in and get some rest after your overnight flight. In the late afternoon, leisurely introductory walking tour of the historical city center, followed by welcome dinner in the restaurant of our hotel.

BRUGES AND THE HOTEL DE MEDICI:

Bruges (Flemish: Brugge), a UNESCO World Heritage site, is not only the top tourist attraction of Belgium, but also one of the prettiest and most interesting cities in all of Europe. Full of churches, museums and other stately buildings, Bruges is not only a cornucopia of architectural and cultural treasures, mostly from the Middle Ages, but also a dynamic city with countless cafés and bars, excellent restaurants, and superb shopping. And there is much to see in the surrounding Flemish countryside, including the North Sea coast, only 15 kms away! For more information, see the [city’s website](#), and [Wikipedia](#). Please note that the local language is Flemish, i.e., Dutch as spoken in Belgium, but the majority also speak English. For visuals of Bruges, [see here](#). For travelers’ tips and comments, see the [TripAdvisor](#) listing.

- Rick Steves’ [video](#) on Bruges and Brussels
- Books to read about Bruges: [a list](#).
- The bestselling 2008 film “[In Bruges](#).”

Hotel De Medici is a first-class hotel, located in the middle of the old town, overlooking one of the city’s romantic canals, only a few minutes walking distance from the main Market Square. The comfortable rooms feature all the usual amenities, plus a seating area, free Wi-Fi, minibar, and a tea & coffee facility. The copious buffet breakfast includes warm dishes such as scrambled eggs and bacon. In its health center, guests can enjoy optional facilities such as a jacuzzi, sauna, and Turkish steam bath. The hotel bar overlooks the courtyard garden and serves snacks.

Day 3 - Friday, March 15: After breakfast, we walk along the scenic Spiegelrei canal to Jan Van Eyck Square, featuring a statue of the famous master of the so-called Flemish Primitives school of the late Middle Ages, and past the Opera to the heart of this romantic city, the vast Market Square, surrounded by magnificent guild houses and dominated by the 83-meter high tower of the Belfry, emblem of the city since the 13th century, with its [famous carillon](#). (You may want to come back here later to climb all 366 steps of the tower to enjoy a stunning view over the city and its surroundings!) On to the Burg, the city’s historic heart, where we admire the Gothic City Hall and Law Courts and the Basilica with its reliquary said to contain a vial with the Holy Blood of Christ, a gift to Bruges by a crusading Count of Flanders. Via the Blind Donkey Street and Bridge and the Fish Market and the Square of the Tanners we reach the most photographed site of Bruges, the Rozenhoedkaai or Quay of the Rosary. After a lunch break, sight-seeing cruise on the scenic canals crisscrossing Bruges. Then we return to the hotel via a pretty little square named after Simon Steven, a famous scientist who was born in Bruges in 1548, and the city’s main shopping street, the Langestraat. Dinner in a typical restaurant, probably featuring one of Belgium’s many culinary specialties, such as shrimp croquettes, Flemish beef stew, mussels and frites, eel in a sauce of green herbs, Ostend sole, and Belgian chocolate mousse or Dame Blanche, vanilla ice cream with warm molten chocolate and plenty of whip cream, for dessert!



The Quay of the Rosary and the courtyard of the Beguinage

Day 4 – Saturday, March 16: Our walking exploration of Bruges continues after breakfast with a visit to the superb Gothic Cathedral of Our Lady, featuring a Michelangelo Madonna and Infant Jesus as well as the ornamental tomb of [Mary of Burgundy](#). (Your guide will explain the connection between Flanders and Burgundy!) On to the Minnewater or “Lake of Love”, the former harbour, where swans have replaced the caravels of old. On to the adjacent [Beguinage](#), a typically Flemish quasi-nunnery, classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Centre; its courtyard, once a vineyard, should be blooming with countless daffodils at this time of the year! After a demonstration of lace-making, an ancient local tradition favoured by the beguines, we continue past numerous chocolate shops to the Cathedral of Saint Saviour, featuring yet another huge medieval tower piercing the (hopefully sunny) Flemish sky, and contrasting starkly with the vast open space of the city’s second market square, situated on the edge of the old town and known as the Zand, where venerable ancient facades and gables try to ignore the highly controversial modern architecture of the new Concert Hall. The rest of the day at leisure, and this evening it will perhaps be possible to enjoy a concert of classical music in the Concert Hall.

Dame Blanche



Michelangelo’s Bruges Madonna



Damme and its windmill



Day 5 - Sunday, March 17: Full-day excursion in the Flemish countryside between the Dutch border and the North Sea Coast. We start with a look at the medieval village of Damme, situated in a “polder” landscape reclaimed from the sea, then explore the North Sea Coast from the port of Zeebrugge (“Sea Bruges”) to the sophisticated resort of Knokke. Returning inland, we cross the Dutch border to see the picturesque town of Sluis, then re-enter Belgium and explore the area where in the fall of 1944 Canadian troops fought the Battle of the Scheldt along the Leopold Canal. After a visit to the Canadian War Cemetery and War Museum in the village of Adegem, we return to Bruges, entering the city via Canada Bridge, so named because it was used by Canadian troops, Manitoba Dragoons, when they liberated this city in early September 1944.

Day 6 - Monday, March 18: Full-day excursion into Flanders’ Fields, the World War I battlefields zone in Belgium, stretching from the French border to the North Sea. Our tour will include the town of Ieper (Ypres), with the Menin Gate, one of the world’s most famous [British war memorials](#), and the excellent [Flanders’ Fields Museum](#), located inside the town’s emblematic medieval Cloth Hall; the Canadian Memorial in Passchendaele, in whose muddy fields Canadian troops fought an epic battle in 1917; Tyne Cot Cemetery, the largest Commonwealth War Cemetery in the world; the [Brooding Soldier Monument](#), commemorating the men who fell during the first gas attack in 1915; [Essex Farm Cemetery](#), where John McRae composed his famous poem; the [German War Cemetery of Vladslo](#), site of the poignant Käthe Kollwitz sculpture “The Mourning Parents”; and the little seaport of Nieuwpoort, at the mouth of the Yser River, where in 1914-1918 the frontline ended with barbed wire stretched across the beach and into the salty water of the North Sea. Return to Bruges in late afternoon or early evening.



The Ypres Cloth Hall then and now

Day 7 - Tuesday, March 19: Today we focus on the fine museums of Bruges! First we visit the Groeninge Museum with its wonderful collection of paintings by masters of the very inappropriately named 15th-century school of “Flemish Primitives,” such as [Van Eyck and Bosch](#). Then, we tour the Gruuthuse, a splendid medieval residence full of antiquities such as majestic tapestries, stained-glass windows, wooden sculptures, weapons, historic lace, Burgundian manuscripts, and Chinese porcelain (<https://www.museabrugge.be/en/visit-our-museums/our-museums-and-monuments/gruuthusemuseum>). In mid-afternoon, museumed-out, we meet for a tasting of Belgian waffles, the real thing, that is, not the tasteless fabrications that masquerade as such in some parts of the world, and a snack never served for breakfast, lunch, or dinner, but only in the afternoon! (And please, do not ask for chocolate or strawberries with your waffle, your guide will explain why not.)

Day 8 - Wednesday, March 20: Excursion to Ghent, the former capital of Flanders, a city which, like Bruges, experienced its Golden Age during the Middle Ages. Our walking tour here will include the Belfry, City Hall, the impressive Castle of the Counts of Flanders, the vast Friday Market, the big late-medieval cannon known as Mad Maggie, the Romanesque Church of St James (a favourite of past and present pilgrims on the way to Compostela), the house where the Treaty of Ghent was signed in 1814, and of course St Bavo's Cathedral with the famous painting by Van Eyck, "The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb." Also some free time to explore on your own and/or shop before our return to Bruges.

The Count's Castle in Ghent >

Day 9 - Thursday, March 21: Morning visit to the [Hospital of St John](#), a magnificent 12th-century brick building that is home to a fine museum devoted to the work of another Flemish master, Hans Memlinc, as well as contemporary works of art and an authentic 17th-century pharmacy. Afternoon at leisure and this evening we enjoy our final group dinner in Bruges in one of Belgium's most beautiful and romantic restaurants!



Day 10 - Friday, March 22: After breakfast, departure from Bruges for Antwerp, one of the world's greatest seaports but also a city of great historic and cultural importance, situated about 100 km east of Bruges. City tour, with as highlights include the Steen Castle on the banks of the River Scheldt, Antwerp's lifeline to the sea, the Renaissance City Hall, the huge Gothic Cathedral, the architecturally stunning buildings of the Port Authority and the new [Museum aan de Stroom](#), better known as the MAS, and a visit to the house of the famous Baroque painter Peter Paul Rubens. In late afternoon we continue a short distance to Brussels, where we will stay in the centrally located first-class/four-star [Hotel Thon Brussels City Center](#). Dinner in the hotel or in a nearby restaurant.



< The building of Antwerp's Port Authority

Day 10 - Saturday, March 23: After breakfast, panoramic tour of the capital of Belgium and of the European Union, including all the important sights: the Atomium, emblem of the city since the World Exposition held here in 1958; the Cinquantenaire Complex with its triumphal arch; the Royal Palace; Saint Michael's Cathedral; the imposing Palace of Justice; and of course the magnificent Grand Place, one of the most beautiful squares in the world! Afternoon free to explore on your own or shop. No group dinner.

Day 11 - Sunday, March 24: Morning visit to the superb Royal Museum of Fine Arts, featuring countless works by masters such as Brueghel, Rubens, Ensor, and Magritte. Afterwards, you may want to check out the picturesque neighbouring Sablon Square, featuring an antiques market and many fine restaurants and pastry shops such as the famous Wittamer! Afternoon at leisure, and final group dinner in a typical restaurant.

Day 12 - Monday, March 25: After an early breakfast, short transfer to Brussels Airport in time for the 10:45 departure of our return flight to Toronto, via Amsterdam. Arrival in Toronto around 4:30PM.



The fabulous Brussels Grand Place

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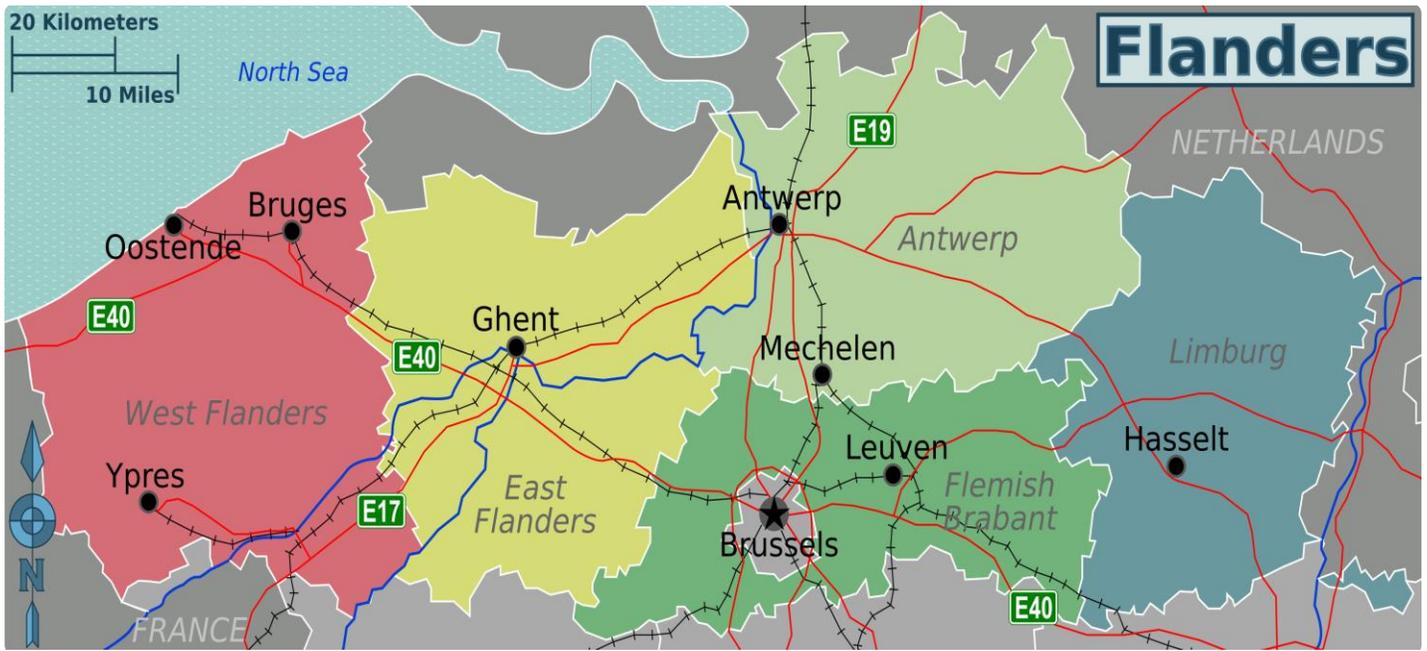
SINGLE ROOM SUPPLEMENT: \$795

INCLUDED IN THE PRICE ARE:

- Accommodation based on double occupancy in centrally located first-class/four-star hotels; (the single room supplement is \$795).
- Buffet breakfast daily and six three-course dinners or lunches – please note that beer, wine, coffee/tea are not normally included with meals (other than breakfast) in Belgium, and that tap water is not normally served in restaurants.
- Airport transfers and excursions via private coach.
- All visits and sightseeing as outlined in the itinerary, including admission to museums and monuments mentioned.

NOT INCLUDED:

- A gratuity for the coach driver(s) of a total of 30 Euros.
 - Beverages with dinners (see above), and meals other than those outlined above.
 - All expenses of a personal nature.
 - Travel insurance. Please call or email office for rates.
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REGISTRATION FORM

Please book _____ seat(s) on the “Bruges in Depth” tour on March 13th to March 25th.

I wish to book on group flights _____ OR land only _____.

(If booking land only please send the office a copy of your flight details).

Please be prepared to pay a deposit of **\$1000 per person and any applicable insurance premium** at time of registration. Balance is invoiced no later than 60 days prior to departure.

WE REQUIRE A COPY OF YOUR PASSPORT (INFORMATION PAGES ONLY) VALID 6 MONTHS AFTER THE TOUR TO BE SENT IN WITH YOUR REGISTRATION FORM.

PASSPORT NAME(S):

Surname _____ First _____ Middle(s) _____

Date of Birth (ddmmmyyy): _____

Surname _____ First _____ Middle(s) _____

Date of Birth (ddmmmyyy): _____

Address: _____ City: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

If traveling alone, is a **single room** required? Yes _____ No _____

If sharing, what is your bed preference: twin (2 beds) _____ double (1 bed) _____?

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: Please list any dietary requests, allergies, special physical needs, or frequent flyer numbers etc., below. We cannot ensure requests made 30 days or less prior to departure will be possible.

INSURANCE: Review plans and rates by clicking [here](#) or calling the office. Record your quoted premium below:

All-Inclusive: _____ Emergency Medical: _____ Non-Medical/Trip Cancellation: _____

Decline Insurance: _____

PAYMENT: Cheque payable to Pauwels Travel Bureau LTD, e-transfer to tours@pauwelstravel.com or call the office to provide credit card (Visa, Mastercard, American Express) to Sandra or Jessica.

Amount To Pay: _____

CONSENT: “I/we have read and agree to the terms and conditions attached to the tour program, have selected or declined insurance, indicated any special requests, and authorize payment of the above amount.”

Date _____ Signature _____

Date _____ Signature _____

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TERMS & CONDITIONS

RESERVATIONS AND DEPOSITS:

Reservations should be made as early as possible to ensure the departure of your choice. No reservations will be accepted without a deposit and signed registration form. Deposit amounts vary by tour and are listed in the registration form.

REFUND OF UNUSED ARRANGEMENTS:

Because the rates of Pauwels Travel Bureau Ltd. are based on group participation, no refund can be made for any tour accommodation or tour service, or tour feature not taken. If cancellation occurs while the tour is in progress, no refund can be made for the tour portion not taken. We strongly suggest that to allow for any unexpected contingencies, you purchase the all-inclusive insurance.

CANCELLATION POLICY:

A refund of deposit is made if cancellation is received in writing by Pauwels Travel Bureau Ltd. at least 91 days prior to the departure date of the tour less a \$250.00 non-refundable administrative fee per person. For cancellation received in writing 90 days prior or less the following cancellation penalties apply for tour costs:

- 90 days to 61 days before departure: 35% of tour cost
- 60 to 31 days before departure: 65% of tour cost
- 30 – 0 days prior to departure: 100% of tour cost

Penalties for cancelling insurance or individual airfare may differ than the policy above. Clients are advised to review the cancellation terms for any additional services they may have purchased for the tour.

RESPONSIBILITY:

The acceptance of the initial service to be provided under the tour shall be considered an acceptance by the tour member of those conditions. We also reserve the right to decline, to accept or retain any person as a member of the tour. We reserve the right without notice to withdraw any part or all of the tour. Factors such as airline schedule changes, hotel overbookings, inclement weather, travel warnings by the Canadian Government etc. may necessitate changes in the itinerary. There may also be other circumstances in which changes become necessary or advisable. By commencing the tour, I agree to the release and agreement as included below.

RELEASE & AGREEMENT:

By placing my deposit, submitting my registration, and commencing the tour I understand and agree to the following:

1. That all tours are delivered in conjunction with other service providers, including but not limited to travel agent and booking services, airlines, hotel and accommodation providers, transportation providers including but not limited to coach, train and ferry services, restaurant providers, and local guides. We shall not be held responsible for the failure by any person or company to render any transportation, lodging, or other travel service to be provided on the tour. All hotels, transportation and other travel services are provided subject to all the terms and conditions under which they are offered to the public generally.
2. I know that tour programs include walking and may include hiking and fitness programs that have potentially hazardous activities associated with them. I should not participate prior to approval by my physician. I assume any and all potential risks associated with these events included but not limited to falls, contact with other participants, the effects of the weather including high heat and/or humidity.
3. To release, indemnify and hold harmless Pauwels Travel Bureau and their affiliates (which term shall include parents, subsidiaries, officers, directors, shareholders, agents and employees of Pauwels Travel Bureau as well as Pauwels Travel themselves) (the "Released Parties") from, and agree not to sue the Released Parties for, any claims that I may have arising from, or in connection with, any personal injury, bodily injury, mental anguish, emotional distress, physical, property or other damage that I may suffer from any cause whatsoever related in any way to my participation in this tour. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, I release, indemnify, and hold harmless the Released Parties from, and agree not to sue them for any personal injury, bodily injury, mental anguish, emotional distress, physical, property or other damage that I may suffer from the Released Parties' negligence other than from intentional or reckless acts by such

parties. I further agree to release, indemnify and hold harmless the Released Parties from any and all acts of God, war (whether declared or undeclared), terrorist activities, incidents of politically motivated violence, illness or quarantine, strikes or government restrictions or the acts or omissions of any other agents over which the Released Parties have no direct or indirect control, including, without limitation, airlines, railways, bus companies, hotels, shipping companies, guides and sub-contracted agents or tour operators. This release also includes activities not offered that may be considered risky. I further release any Tour Directors, bus drivers or other individuals involved in my tour.

4. That the air carrier's liability for loss of or damage to baggage or property, or for death or injury to person, is limited by their tariffs, or the Warsaw Convention, or both.

5. That Pauwels Travel Bureau shall have no liability or responsibility for me when I am absent from activities, such as visits to friends or relatives or during pre-tour/post-tour option periods if the pre-tour/post-tour period does not include the services of a Tour Director.

6. To abide by the directions of my Tour Director or other leadership personnel during my tour. Failure to do so may result in my termination from the tour immediately. I understand that to disobey such rules or directions is to waive the right to any refund, and that I may be sent home at my own expense. The participant and family undertake full financial responsibility for any damage caused by the participant and agree to pay his/her return home on the first available flight, should his/her behavior be deemed detrimental to the welfare of the group.

7. To abide by all local laws when in Canada and abroad, including those concerning drugs and alcohol. (Minors must have parents' permission to use alcohol even if the local law would otherwise permit them to). I understand that if I abuse or disobey such laws, even unintentionally, I waive my right to a refund, and Pauwels Travel may send me home at my own expense. I also understand that should local authorities be involved; I will be subject to the laws of the country I am visiting.

8. That if I become ill or incapacitated, Pauwels Travel and its employees, or a designated chaperone may take any action they deem necessary for my safety and well-being, including securing medical treatment (at my own expense) and transporting me home. In the event of a medical emergency, Pauwels Travel will attempt to cause appropriate treatment to be administered, and the traveller authorizes Pauwels Travel to do so. Pauwels Travel, however, makes no warranty that it will be able to cause effective (or any) emergency treatment to be administered.

9. That Pauwels Travel may use any film likenesses taken of me and any of my comments while on a tour for future publication and use my contact information for future Pauwels Travel communications.

A WORD ABOUT GROUP AIRFARES:

Please note that when booking one of our air inclusive tours, Pauwels Travel has negotiated reduced rates with the airline that we are able to confirm and lock in up to 359 days before travel. While it is wonderful to share the savings and flexibility this provides with you, our valued guests, the privilege does come with some restrictions. In some cases, it may not be possible to collect frequent flyer miles, you may not be able to check in online 24 hours before travel, or you may need to try checking in with your ticket number rather than your booking reference. Additionally, most airlines do not allow advanced seat-selection on group airfares. It is the airline's policy, not ours, that prevents us from assigning specific seats. If a request is made, it is passed on to the airline by our staff when they submit the names to the airline 60 days prior to departure but no requests are guaranteed. Our staff will not be able to aid in advanced seat selection if the airline does not allow it on the group airfare. If a certain type of seat is indispensable to you, we suggest that you book our tour on a "land only" basis and make individual flight arrangements, in which case you may be able to get the seat of your choice; Pauwels Travel would be happy to assist you with that reservation. We will offer you the best fare available, but please note that this can only be done once a tour is a guaranteed departure because individual airfare conditions are stricter than the conditions of the group airfare rate. We thank you in advance for your kind understanding of the above!