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What is this guide?

WheelTribe is a website where we are putting together lots of information from locals and travellers of all abilities, to create guides of various destinations. It is not only about the accessibility, but also about introducing you to great people in our destinations, and discovering places and experiences that only the locals know.

The WheelTribe guides are created in a way that you can use them to organise your own trip. Should you feel that you would prefer an organised tour - please write us! We know all the best specialised accessible tour operators around, and are happy to share useful contacts.

The WheelTribe guides are always evolving: if you have good tips to share, we'll soon have a nice forum for you to chat with other travelers and locals, and exchange good tips that we will then add to the guides.

Meet the locals

Hi, I am Eleonora, and I am “almost” a local, since I am from Italy but have been living in Brussels since 2014. After the pandemic, I thought I would create a website for people with accessibility requirements who like to organise their trips independently: WheelTribe.

In June 2024, I spent a day in Bruges with my friend Erik (you'll spot him in the photos with a green shirt and eyes) on a tour organized by Inter Vlaanderen, the Flemish region's disability and accessibility organization.

We explored Bruges' initiatives to facilitate wheelchair access. We met Tim from Bruges, who works for Inter and is a friend of Erik's, and along the way, we connected with Emmanuel, a local YouTuber showcasing the city from a wheelchair perspective, and Janae, an American architect specializing in mobility.

This guide is the result of that day out, and some more research and tips from Tim, Erik and Emmanuel. Thanks guys!



BRUGES VISIT BRUGES

Ooch!

Bruges, accessible for everyone

EN

Here you will find all the information on the accessible and not-so-accessible places, and maps. Save the maps especially, and bring them with you.

The maps contain the itineraries that allow you to visit the Bruges landmarks and avoid the worst cobblestone streets and the bridges. It also includes the locations of all the accessible toilets - and is available in English, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, French and German!

[DOWNLOAD THE GUIDE HERE](#) (switch the language of the page on the top right hand corner, and get the guide in the corresponding language).



1. Avoiding cobblestones is difficult in Bruges, but it is wise to use the pavements in Steenstraat or Noordstraat coming from the station and Zand.
2. Shops are sometimes difficult to access. A mobile ramp is an option if you have one. Especially when using an electric wheelchair.
3. From the train station there is a free shuttle, accessible for manual chair users: it runs from 7 am to 7 pm. [Check here for the itinerary and timetable.](#)
4. People traveling by car should park in the free parking lot P/R Waggelwater. The express bus number 1 across the road, which is wheelchair friendly and electric, will take you to the center via the stop "Hoefijzerlaan" or Station.



Top spots



Erik is not from Bruges - but he is our expert on both the accessibility point of view (as a manual wheelchair user himself) and the art, musical and fun side of anything Belgium has to offer. Oh, and good food, he is very much into that too. Here are his favourite spots in random order.

1

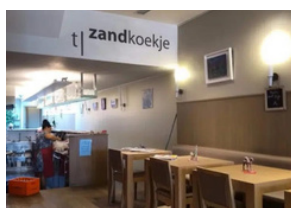
View:
ConcertGebouw



Head up to the rooftop terrace at the 7th floor of the Concertgebouw! You can also eat at the café at the ground floor. All the venue is wheelchair accessible. If you love music, you should also book a concert.

2

Quick snack:
't Zandkoekje



't Zandkoekje is a tea-room that also offers a quick lunch with very fresh and great quality ingredients. Entrance is step free but a bit narrow. This is not a tourist trap! We loved especially the sour cherry waffle - super honest prices.

3

Jerusalem Chapel
+ Scottish Lounge



A hidden pearl: the Adornes Estate, founded by the Adorno family in the 15th century: the Jerusalem Chapel, almshouses, a mansion with a large garden, partially but mostly accessible. Travel hundreds of years and thousands of kilometers.

4

Classic: Basilica of
the Holy Blood



Two churches of different eras on two floors, connected by a (tiny) elevator. If you fit, it's worth the squeeze, but the one on the ground floor is also impressive. All the info.

5

Romantic:
Minnewaterbrug



An accessible bridge on the canals of Bruges and it's immediately accessible romance. Come from the station, and it will be your first highlight!

6

Eleonora's tip:
the Triennale



If you visit in 2024 you will also see the contemporary art installations of the Bruges Triennale in the streets: otherwise see you in 2027!

Top spots



Tim lives in Bruges where he works for Inter Vlaanderen - he is our "true local" and he shared a bunch of useful information and places not to miss! These are his tips to visit Bruges.

1

Itinerary 1: from the train station to the Astrid Park

It is always good to start at the station (all public transport is there) and cross the station square. On the right you see the three towers of Bruges showing you the way in a glimpse. You should see all those towers and definitely go to the OLV (Our Lady) church and see the "Madonna and Child" by Michelangelo there. It was stolen by the Nazis and later retrieved by the Monuments Men. The Bonifacius burg is also worth seeing. Via the beautiful Dijver and the Wollestraat you get to the Markt. On the Markt at the Belfry you can visit the provincial court. The adjacent Burg is also worth a visit, with the accessible Holy Blood chapel. Finally, via the Vismarkt you arrive at the Astridpark.

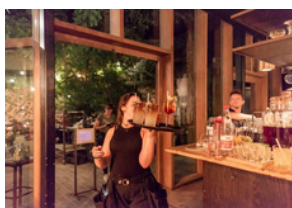
2

Itinerary 2: from the station through the Minnewater

From the station you can also cross the square and visit the Minnewater and the Beguinage at your left side. At the Minnewater there are accessible sanitary facilities and you can take the most beautiful photos on and of the bridge and the beautiful houses around. From there you will get also to the center of Bruges.



Cocktails and food: Republiek



Lovely location, on the pricier side, but consider we are in Bruges - and this is a place for locals, not tourists. Republiek is wheelchair accessible.



Affordable & ethical: Paradijs



Reasonably priced, socially responsible and good: Het Paradijs. They employ people with difficult backgrounds and make delicious food. Does not have fully accessible bathroom though.



Toilet hunting: fanciest venue



Near the Paradijs is the Magdalena church, which is actually a museum and they have a "luxury" accessible bathroom: "going there, you feel like in a museum while using the restroom. A divine experience and the most beautiful toilet in Belgium" says Tim.

Toilet hunting

You can mostly forget about using toilets in restaurants or cafés: so this is another thing that needs some pre-planning. Most toilets in Belgium's restaurants and bars are not accessible for wheelchair users, either they are on top or at the bottom of a flight of stairs, or they are super small - and not accessible in any way.

So save the spots of the accessible toilets in your planning, and here are some images we got recently on a "selection" of toilets for you.

The first toilet you come across, if you are coming from the station is near the Minnewater, so you can't miss it. It is paying (1 Euro) and always clean - it is not super spacious though (No. 1).

At the Rebel Garden Museum there is another accessible bathroom (No. 2), a bit more spacious, and then there is one in the tourist office in the Concertgebouw building (No 3). For that one, enquire at the welcome desk of the tourist office and they will open it for you. Not huge either. In the Province building, straight in the Markt square, there is a changing place (No 4), but the hoist does not come with the harness, so you should have your own. But it is the biggest accessible toilet we've seen in Bruges.

Find more toilets in the [Accessible Bruges guide!](#)

Try a mystical and artistic toilet experience in the Magdalena Church museum, as suggested by Tim! We do not have photos yet, but it's on our list for the next trip.



1



The entrance of the accessible paying toilet



The toilet seat with grab bars



The sink with the mirror



2



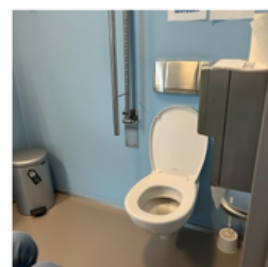
The toilet with double grab bar at the Rebel Garden Museum



3



The toilet at the tourist office of the ConcertGebouw



4



Head to the Provincial Hof on the Main Markt Square for a changing place



Bring your own harness if you need to use the hoist



Opening hours: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 10:30 to 18:00

Hotel suggestions

Looking to travel cheap and wheelchair accessible? There are not a huge amount of options (so what's new you might say) but there are pretty good descriptions of the hotels and youth hostels in the guide made by the City of Bruges. So this is good news.

So you can download the guide and get some good addresses in the [Bruges Accessible for Everyone guide](#), and then you can go to the [Accessible holiday accommodation in Flanders and Brussels guide](#) for detailed descriptions and photos. There is, at the same link, a brochure for group tours accommodation too. Below is a selection of accessible accommodation from the Visit Flanders Accessible Accommodation guide.

Travel cheap:
Snuffel Youth
Hostel



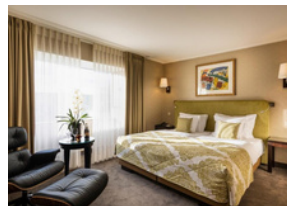
These people are really committed to accessibility: they have all rooms wheelchair accessible, common areas, common adapted bathrooms with shower chair and grab bars, and 4 rooms with private adapted bathrooms. Give them a call and book the best room for you!
PS: reviews praised the cleanliness of the bathrooms and the accessibility level.

Travel classy:
Martin's Hotel



There is one accessible room with adapted bathroom, but make sure to read the full description on the Accessible accommodation guide, as it might not be perfect for you. If yes, then call to make sure you are given the right room (number 701 is listed as the accessible one). Super central, has one accessible parking space too.

Deluxe option:
Grand Hotel
Casselbergh



Also here is one accessible room with adapted bathroom, with roll in shower, shower chair with handles available, and double grab bars for the WC. The accessible room is number 11.03. Super central, large parking, this is a conference hotel with various meeting rooms too.

Apartments De
Pepel



Not in the centre of Bruges, 3.5km away, but it is near the Abdijen cycling and hiking trail with the Ryckvelde Forest and Castle, and the Assebroekse Meersen nature reserve. So if you want to see more than just the city of Bruges, this is the perfect holiday home. Maximum accessibility of the property and the rooms, however check with the owners for the bathrooms, as they look a little on the small side.

(please refer to the Accessible Holiday Accommodation guide for more options, full details and contacts)

And now, the floor is yours!

Have you ever been to Bruges or would you like to go? We'd love to hear about it.

This guide is just the basis for a wider collaborative project: share with us your stories (good and bad) on your trip to Bruges, ask questions, tell us why you would like to visit and which information is still missing, and we'll get down to work!

How? Drop us a message in the contact form at the end of the Bruges page, or comment on Instagram and Facebook!



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