

# Life in Brussels - practical info on shopping, food, doctor's appointments, emergency contacts, integration and so on

We know that a new city and country might be overwhelming at first. We would like to help you find your way around Brussels and underneath we collected some information that may help you get a better grasp of what life in Brussels is like.

## Shopping

The opening hours of Belgian shops differ from one shop to another. In general, supermarkets are open from Monday to Saturday from 08:30 until 20:00. Clothing shops are generally open from Monday to Saturday from 09:30 until 18:00 or 19:00. The same working hours are usually applicable to pharmacies and other services.

The main supermarket chains in Belgium are Carrefour, Colruyt, Delhaize, Lidl and Aldi, of which Colruyt, Aldi and Lidl are the cheapest. Some supermarkets, like Delhaize and Carrefour, have smaller sized shops called City Delhaize, Delhaize Shop & Go, Proxy Delhaize and Carrefour Express, which are often open on Sundays.

## Activities day/night in Brussels

Whether you want to admire Brussels' historic monuments, discover its museums or sample local flavours, there's always something to see or do in the capital of Europe! In our city you can find everything you may need and to better orient yourself in there, we advise you to check out [visit.brussels](https://www.visit.brussels), as it provides an overview of events happening in the city!

To truly get to know our capital, you need to dive into the night! The offer is vast, and ranges from exotic, trendy and alternative to chic, gastronomic, musical, and more.

## Food

Like many other regions in the world, Brussels has its culinary specialties, starting with its famous waffles. But how many of them do you know? Chocolate, speculoos, Belgian waffles are the famous sweet treats you may find in the local chocolate shops and small pastry shops, and they will not disappoint! Savoury dishes like Belgian chips, vol-au-vent, Flemish stew, mussels and chips (and many more) can also be easily found in the city. Make sure to try as many traditional dishes as possible! Make sure to check the opening hours of the places you visit, as some of them might be open in the morning, close in the afternoon and then open again for the evening. Some of them might only be open in the evening.

## Household waste

Throughout the university and across Brussels, recycling is vital. The following rubbish bags are used across Brussels, colour-coded:

- **Blue** bags = plastics, drinking cartons and cans
- **White** bags = general waste
- **Green** bags = garden waste
- **Yellow** bags = paper and cardboard
- **Orange** bags = food waste (composting)
- Collection point: glass, clothes, oil,...

## Emergency contacts

Below you can find the general emergency numbers available in Belgium, in case you will encounter an emergency off campus:

<b>112</b> : the number to dial in case of emergency, accessible everywhere in Europe	<b>02 477 32 40</b> : Burn Care Centre (children)
<b>100</b> : in case of fire, suspect smoke, gas leak or any other danger.	<b>02 506 47 47</b> : Civil protection
<b>101</b> : Federal police	<b>04 250 43 31</b> : for SOS Nurses – Brussels
<b>105</b> : Belgian Red Cross	<b>02 513 02 02</b> : for SOS Doctors
<b>110</b> : Child Focus	<b>0900 10 500</b> : for pharmacies on duty
<b>070 245 245</b> : Poison control centre	<b>107</b> : for Remote Help Line (listening day and night in anonymity)
<b>02 268 62 00</b> : Burn Care Centre (adults)	<b>0800 32 123</b> : Suicide prevention

## Police station(s) in Brussels

There are three police stations that are open 24/7 and Temporarily. You can find them below:

### **BXL CENTRE (24/7)**

Rue du Marché au Charbon 30, 1000 Brussels

Tel : 02 279 77 11

Link : [Google Maps](#)

Opening hours: 24/7

### **IXELLES-LOUISE**

Rue du Collège 1, 1050 Ixelles

Tel : 02 279 84 16

Link : [Google Maps](#)

Opening hours: 24/7

## **LAEKEN**

Boulevard Emile Bockstael 246, 1020 Bruxelles

Tel: 02 279 88 10

Link: [Google Maps](#)

Opening hours: 24/7

## **NEDER-OVER-HEEMBEEK / HAREN**

Avenue de Versailles 130, 1120 Neder-Over-Heembeek

Tel: 02 279 81 10 – 02 279 89 10

Link: [Google Maps](#)

**Opening hours:** Temporarily open from 7am to 9pm Monday to Sunday.

## **Doctor's appointment**

Many healthcare professionals in Brussels speak English, so don't worry in case you need medical assistance. There is a general medical practice affiliated with VUB near campus, all general practitioners there speak English. You can find more info and their contact details [here](#).

You can also opt to visit a different medical practice. [The doctoranytime website](#) offers a filter based on the languages you speak, location and other details you deem important when looking for a healthcare professional.

When choosing a doctor, we also encourage you to check if they are considered as **"registered" (in French, 'conventioné')** or not, as it will influence the price you will pay for the appointment. Registered doctors have a set price on their services and with the health insurance that price should be affordable.

A lot of General Practitioners (GPs) and dentists are registered, but only a few specialized doctors (dermatologists, ophthalmologists, orthopedists, etc.) are registered. If you need the help of a specialized doctor, we advise to call them first to inform on the price of their services. If you are not sure how reimbursement affiliated with your health insurance works, please reach out to your health insurance provider.

Be mindful that having a health insurance saves you up to 60-100% of costs associated with your healthcare. Furthermore it is compulsory to have a valid health insurance for staying in Belgium. You are also covered via the VUB Collective Health Insurance for certain services. Contact our HR International team for more information.

Non-urgent doctor appointments require an upfront booking. If you are having an emergency, please visit the nearest accident & emergency department of your local hospital.

## **Hospitals in Brussels**

### **UZ Brussel**

The Services and International Patients desk helps foreign patients at UZ Brussel. They act as intermediaries for cost estimates, contacts with physicians and services and for appointments.

- Tel.: [+32 2 474 91 20](tel:+3224749120)
- [international.patients@uzbrussel.be](mailto:international.patients@uzbrussel.be)
- <https://mysip.uzbrussel.be>
- Adress: Laarbeeklaan 101, 1090 Jette BELGIUM (Route 151 - Hospitalisation entrance, zone A)

### **IRIS-network**

In the Brussels-Capital Region, the IRIS network [brings together five public and university hospitals](#) in 11 locations:

- Jules Bordet Institute
- Brugmann University Hospital
- Queen Fabiola Children's University Hospital
- Saint-Pierre Hospital
- IRIS Hospitals South

You can immediately make an appointment in all hospitals [on the IRIS network website](#).

## **Integration in Brussels with the help of BON**

### ***What is it?***

BON is the Brussels reception office for integration participants. Bon welcomes people of foreign origin who have a minimum 3 month residence permit. Both newcomers and non-newcomers can come to Bon for a free integration programme.

Bon gives clear and correct information about living, working and life in Belgium and Brussels. It also tells you about what the rights and duties of Belgian citizens are. Bon provides this knowledge in a set of courses available in over 20 contact languages. Additionally, Bon offers participants an accessible way to learn Dutch, in close collaboration with the [Huis van het Nederlands Brussel](#). Integration participants get individual and future-oriented counselling, and workshops focused on employment, education and participation in society.

### ***For who?***

*What does BON offer?*

They provide a free integration programme in about 20 languages. The courses are taught at different locations and at different times. BON takes your work and your family situation into account.

BON speaks your language, or they will look for an interpreter. We make time for you and listen to your story.

### **The course**

An integration programme consists of:

- Social orientation: you will learn about life, residing and working in Brussels and in Belgium.
- Learning Dutch: you will attend a Dutch language course via the Huis van het Nederlands Brussel (Brussels House of Dutch)
- Non-binding participation in information sessions and activities.

A programme counsellor will assist you throughout the entire programme.

A course is also great for building an network within Brussels.

Do you want to read more on the courses that BON is offering? [Click here.](#)

## **How do you register?**

Do you want to register for a integration course? [Click here!](#)