

Discover Belgium Tour

June 4-20, 2026



European Studies Association
esaparis.org

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Tour Highlights

This new ESA tour for June, 2026, will explore both French and Flemish-speaking regions of picturesque Belgium. We will see how this region which prospered in the 15th and 16th centuries offers today's travelers a rich variety of cultures, languages, cuisines and perspectives. As Belgium is relatively compact, moving from one city to another is fast and permits us to maximize our time visiting the famous sights.

We will be staying in comfortable hotels in city centers with a fine breakfast each day. Hotels are selected so you may enjoy being close to attractions. We have a group dinner in each town plus an extra one in Namur. French-speaking, southern Belgium (Wallonia) has a French flavor in its cuisine, and Flanders displays culinary talent in seafood and variety. Don't miss the famed Belgian beer, too!

ESA Director Dr. Tom Blair and Professor Camilo Bonilla are leading this tour in conjunction with Linh Hanine, seasoned traveler from Paris and a Sorbonne alumna, whose perspective and expertise will greatly enrich your experience on this unique trip.

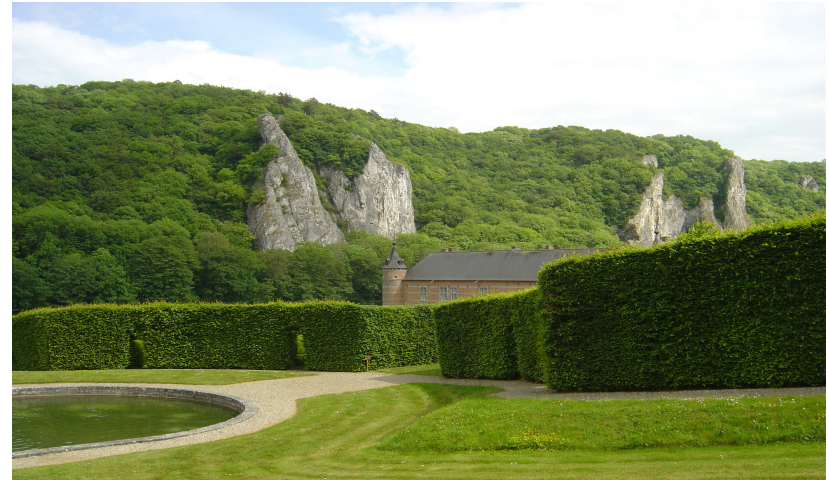


We start with your arrival at the Brussels Airport (or Namur if you prefer) and a transfer from the Brussels Airport to the francophone town of **Namur**. There we stay at the comfortable hotel, Les Tanneurs, in the heart of old town. The hotel is a completely remade group of 15 tanneries, now a comfortable modern hotel in the old town. We hold a group dinner on arrival evening.

Namur, the capital of Wallonia, lies on the Meuse River, and a guide will take us on a discovery walk the second day. Namur has an enormous military citadel from Roman times, redone in the 17th century when the area became French under Louis XIV.

The following day we go upriver to **Dinant**, a charming town sitting between a huge cliff and the river. It was home of another citadel not to mention the birthplace of the saxophone. The Citadel contains a fascinating exhibit on Belgium in World War I. Following Dinant, we visit the lovely eighteenth century Freÿr Castle and Gardens on the Meuse River. (We have kept the first days at a relaxed pace to allow you to get over your jet lag.)

At our next day in Namur, we have group lunch at the Chateau training restaurant, where our speaker tells us about francophone Belgium.





Our next stop: **Ypres** or **Ieper** in Flemish. Our bus takes us to this famous World War I site, where we visit the outstanding Flanders Fields Museum while staying at the Albion and the Ambrosia Hotels. World War I was a horrendous time for Belgium as the Germans chose to enter France through Belgium. Each evening at 8 PM British military units hold a ceremony honoring the lives lost here.

Next stop, **Antwerp**, capital of Flanders and one of the most dynamic cities in the Low Countries. In the 15-16th centuries, Antwerp was among the richest cities in Europe thanks to the wool trade. Antwerp's city center with its renaissance City Hall and Cathedral attests to its importance. We'll have a town walk and also see the famed **Plantin-Moretus Museum**, the only museum in the world on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Plantin-Moretus was the dominant printing family for nine generations in a time when the religious wars had made printing the internet of its time. Its collection of printed materials from over three centuries will help you understand why Antwerp was so significant. In Antwerp, we stay at the Banks Hotel near the Plantin-Moretus Museum, and on a charming square in the old town.

After three nights in the center of Antwerp, we move on to the jewel of Belgian tourism, **Bruges**. Although the center of Bruges has only about 20,000 inhabitants, the town receives 7 million visitors a year. We'll be staying in the very comfortable Hotel Navarra, just a block off the main market square for four nights. The trick in Bruges is to enjoy the evenings when the boat tour groups have vanished. We'll have a group dinner and a town walk plus a visit to one of its outstanding museums as well as a boat ride on the canals which encircle the town. Four days in Bruges will delight you and allow you to visit your personal favorites.

Our final destination is the capital of **Brussels**, home of the government, the European Union and NATO plus many companies and international organizations. The Grand Place with its beautifully illuminated square is the center of Brussels. Our hotel, the Dominican, is only a short walk from the square as well as the 19th century "passages," large covered shopping streets. The hotel is opposite the Mint Opera House. We'll have three nights here and take a local guided walk as well as see the **Magritte Museum** and the national Fine Arts Museum (think Rubens and Bruegel) and an Art Nouveau site. A group dinner in Brussels with a speaker to answer your questions about Flanders will be offered.

Belgium brings together a wide range of interests—picturesque townscapes, great food and beer, fine art and two different cultures. All this in small distances to make it so visitable!



Tour Itinerary

Date	Activity Details	City & Hotel
June 4	Depart USA	
June 5	Arrive Brussels Airport, transfer to Namur, group dinner	Namur Hotel les Tanneurs <i>4-nights</i>
June 6	Namur guided walk	
June 7	Daytrip to Dinant & Freÿr Castle	
June 8	Visit the Citadel and group lunch with speaker at the Chateau restaurant	
June 9	Coach to Ypres. Explore the Flanders Fields Museum. Group Dinner	Ypres/Ieper Hotel Albion or Ambrosia <i>1-night</i>
June 10	Coach to Antwerp and Antwerp city walk	Antwerp Banks Hotel <i>3-nights</i>
June 11	Visit the Plantin-Moretus Museum and the Cathedral	
June 12	Group dinner	
June 13	Coach to Bruges followed by guided walks	Bruges Hotel Navarra <i>4-nights</i>
June 14	Museum visit and boat ride	
June 15	Group dinner	
June 16	Free time to explore	
June 17	Coach to Brussels; walking tour	Brussels Dominican Hotel <i>3-nights</i>
June 18	Magritte and National Art Museum Group dinner at <i>Aux Armes de Bruxelles</i>	
June 19	Art Nouveau visit	
June 20	Depart for US	

General Tour Information

Prices: the land package is \$4300 per person in double or twin rooms. The single supplement is \$1200. Prices are subject to change and were set at the end of August 2025.

Hotels: All hotels are comfortable establishments with rooms with private bath and daily buffet breakfast included and located in town centers.

Meals: Breakfast is provided each day. Six other lunches or dinners are included.

Transportation

As the World Cup has blocked airlines from writing standard group tickets, we ask you to book a flight which suits you and arrives at the Brussels Airport between 11 AM and 2 PM on June 5. Current roundtrip fares run from \$1207 on Icelandic to \$1591 on United to \$1745 on Lufthansa. There are also flights via London Heathrow. Here are viable sample flights with prices as of 9/1/25

- **United 996** departs SFO at 2 PM, changes planes in Munich and arrives at Brussels Airport at 1 PM.
- **Lufthansa #457** departs LAX at 255 PM, changes in Frankfurt and arrives at Brussels at 140 PM.

We will be at Brussels Airport to welcome you and take our chartered bus to Namur. Or, you can take a train from Brussels to Namur in about 45 minutes. For the return, a chartered bus will take us from our Brussels hotel to the airport.

Insurance

We suggest you consider travel insurance as you must cover yourself for any medical expenses abroad.

Applications & Payments

As we anticipate this tour will fill quickly and space is limited, we encourage you to send in your **\$500 deposit** as soon as possible. A further \$1,000 is due Jan. 1, 2026, and the balance of the land package is due Mar. 15, 2026. All land package fees may be charged, but please consider that credit cards exact a 3% fee, and we would appreciate checks.

Fees, Eligibility & Refunds

The program fee includes all activities listed in the itinerary, lodging according to your choice, daily breakfast plus six lunches or dinners, transportation between cities and from and to Brussels airport. **The program fee does NOT include** airfare, passport, visas, independent travel, laundry, medical, accident, luggage loss, personal liability, trip cancellation insurance, lunch and diner except as indicated.

Eligibility & Fitness Requirements: Participants must be at least 18 years of age. The schedule has been arranged that most walks and activities will be about 90 minutes long and the first few days will be less demanding to allow you to get over jet-lag.

REFUNDS: Refund requests received by email Feb. 1, 2026 or earlier will incur a \$200 cancellation fee. Refund requests received by email Feb. 2 to Mar. 1, 2026, will incur a \$500 cancellation fee. Refund emails received by ESA from Mar. 2 to Apr. 1 will incur a \$1000 cancellation fee. Cancellations received Apr. 2 to May 3, 2026, will incur a \$2,000 cancellation fee. Those May 4 to May 25 have a \$3000 cancellation fee. No refunds after May 25, 2026. Because of flight scheduling or unforeseen changes, ESA reserves the right to modify the itinerary, program dates and activities accordingly.

Application

SIGNATURE: I have read the itinerary for the ESA tour to Belgium and wish to apply to participate. I agree to the payment and refund schedule as listed in the brochure.

Signature _____ Date _____

Please Print

Full Name as listed on your passport _____

Address _____ City _____

ZIP _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Transportation

____ I wish to take the group bus from Brussels Airport to Namur on 6/5 and will arrive at BRU between 11 AM and 2 PM.

____ I wish to make my own way to Namur and will check in at the Hotel Les Tanneurs.

Lodging Selection ____ Single Room with supplement of \$1250; ____ Double Room with _____ (Insert Name) or
____ Twin Room with _____ (Name of roommate)

Meal preferences: ____ Vegetarian ____ I do not eat _____ (List foods you cannot eat.)

Alternate Walks

____ I have already been to Antwerp and would like to join an alternate walk there if numbers permit.

____ I have already been to Bruges and would like to join an alternate walk if demand permits.

Payment enclosed: ____ \$500 deposit

For land package: if you wish to charge, ____ Visa ____ Mastercard ____ Amex

Card number _____ expires _____

Card billing address _____ Security code _____

Signature _____

Mail Application to ESA at:

424 Dorado Terrace

San Francisco, CA 94112-1753

Questions? Email Dr. Tom Blair at
tblair.esa@gmail.com or call him at
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