

Definition: **Brussels** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

(Bruxelles) Capital of Belgium and of Brabant province, central Belgium. During the Middle Ages, it achieved prosperity through the wool trade and became capital of the Spanish Netherlands. In 1830 it became capital of newly independent Belgium. Sites include a 13th-century cathedral, the town hall, splendid art nouveau buildings, and academies of fine arts. The main commercial, financial, cultural and administrative centre of Belgium, it is also the headquarters of the European Community (EC) and of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Industries: textiles, chemicals, electronic equipment, electrical goods, brewing. Pop. (2005) 964,000.

Summary Article: **Brussels**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

City and capital of Belgium, and of Brabant province, situated almost in the centre of the country in the Senne river valley at the junction of the Charleroi-Brussels and Willebroek canals; city population (2003 est) 981,200, urban agglomeration 1,750,600. Industries include lace, textiles, pharmaceuticals, electronics, processed food, machinery, and chemicals. It is the headquarters of the European Union (EU) and, since 1967, of the international secretariat of NATO. It contains the Belgian royal seat, the chief courts, the chamber of commerce, and is the centre of the principal banks of the country. Founded on an island in the River Senne c. 580, Brussels became a city in 1312, and was declared capital of the Spanish Netherlands in 1530 and of Belgium in 1830. The city is officially bilingual (French and Flemish).

**History** Brussels was probably a military camp during Roman times, and was inhabited later (7th century AD) by the Franks. It was first mentioned as *Broekzelle*, a Dutch word meaning 'marshland village', in the 10th century. The city was fortified c. 1100, and became, by the late 12th century, a commercial centre on the trade route from Bruges and Ghent to the Rhineland. During the 13th century it developed into a centre of the wool industry, and in the 15th century the arts flourished and many stately mansions were built. The dukes of Brabant lived here for some considerable time, building their castle on the site of the present royal palace. The duchy of Brabant was absorbed in 1430 by the duchy of Burgundy and Brussels became the seat of the dukes of Burgundy and later (1477) of the governors of the Spanish (after 1714, Austrian) Netherlands. Brussels was made the capital of the Netherlands in 1530. During the War of the Protestant Succession Brussels was bombarded by the French general Villeroy in 1695 and great damage was done to it. During the French Revolution, Brussels changed hands several times; later, during the Waterloo Campaign (1815), it was Arthur Wellington's headquarters. From 1815 to 1830 it was, with The Hague, the alternate meeting place of the Netherlands parliament. It became the centre of the revolution for Belgian independence. The republic was proclaimed here, and in 1830 Brussels became the capital of Belgium.

During World War I, the German army entered Brussels on 20 August 1914. It was occupied for four years, although underground Belgian resistance continued throughout, in spite of German reprisals. King Albert and Queen Elizabeth returned to the capital on 22 November 1918, having never left the remaining unconquered strip of their country. In World War II Brussels was occupied by the Germans from 17 May 1940 until 3 September 1944. The Germans, on the eve of their retreat, set fire to the

Palais de Justice, and the cupola, which dominated the whole city, was completely burnt out.

**Features** The city has many fine buildings including the Collegiate Church of St Michael and Ste Gudule (founded in the 11th century and rebuilt in the 13th–15th centuries); the Palais de la Nation (parliament building); and the royal palace. The historical centre of the city is the medieval and Renaissance Grand' Place, a large square which is also the site of the Gothic city hall (15th century), and the Renaissance-style Maison du Roi or Broodhuis (13th century), the meeting place of the old States-General of the Netherlands. The Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique hold a large art collection. There is a monument near the Avenue Longchamp to the English nurse, Edith Cavell, who was shot in 1915 for helping Allied soldiers to escape from German-occupied Belgium. The bronze fountain statue of a small naked boy urinating, the *Manneken Pis* (1388), is to be found here.

**Architecture** The boulevards which surround the city proper owe their origin to Napoleon. The upper town, crossed by the rue Royale and the rue de la Regence leading to the Palais de Justice, is the chief residential quarter. Among the many buildings of interest is the king's palace, which occupies the site of the old palace, burnt down in 1731. The Grand-Place, in the old part of the town, is the site of the Hôtel de Ville (15th century), the Maison du Roi, and 17 guild houses of the industrial corporations. Other medieval buildings include the churches of Saints Michael and Gudule, Notre-Dame des Victoires, and Notre-Dame de la Chapelle. The free and independent university was founded in 1834 by the Belgian Liberals.

**Transport** Brussels is connected with Antwerp by a ship canal to the River Rupel, tributary of the Schelde. It is a junction of several international railways and airways. Since 1994 there has been a high-speed rail link to London, England, through the Channel Tunnel.

#### **weblinks**

Things to see in Brussels

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Brussels. (2018). In Helicon (Ed.), *The Hutchinson unabridged encyclopedia with atlas and weather guide*. Abington, UK: Helicon. Retrieved from <https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/brussels>

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## APA

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## Chicago

"Brussels." In *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*, edited by Helicon. Helicon, 2018. <https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/brussels>

## Harvard

Brussels. (2018). In Helicon (Ed.), *The Hutchinson unabridged encyclopedia with atlas and weather guide*. [Online]. Abington: Helicon. Available from: <https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/brussels> [Accessed 14 November 2019].

## MLA

"Brussels." *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*, edited by Helicon, 2018. *Credo Reference*, <https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/brussels>. Accessed 14 Nov. 2019.