

Antwerp

Belgium

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Antwerp is Belgium's second city and its main port, built on a bend of the river Scheldt. In its 16th-century golden age it was one of Europe's richest trading cities, and that wealth still shows in its Gothic cathedral, grand guild houses, and art collections. Today it mixes that history with a strong contemporary edge: Antwerp is a global centre for diamond trading and has produced some of fashion's best-known designers.

The city suits travelers who want world-class art and architecture without the crowds of Bruges or Amsterdam, in a compact center that is easy to cover on foot. *Peter Paul Rubens* lived and worked here, and his student *Anthony van Dyck* was born in the city — both left their mark on its churches and museums.

When to visit

Spring and autumn are mild and pleasant for walking. Summer is warm but rarely uncomfortably hot, and winter is cold and damp with occasional snow.

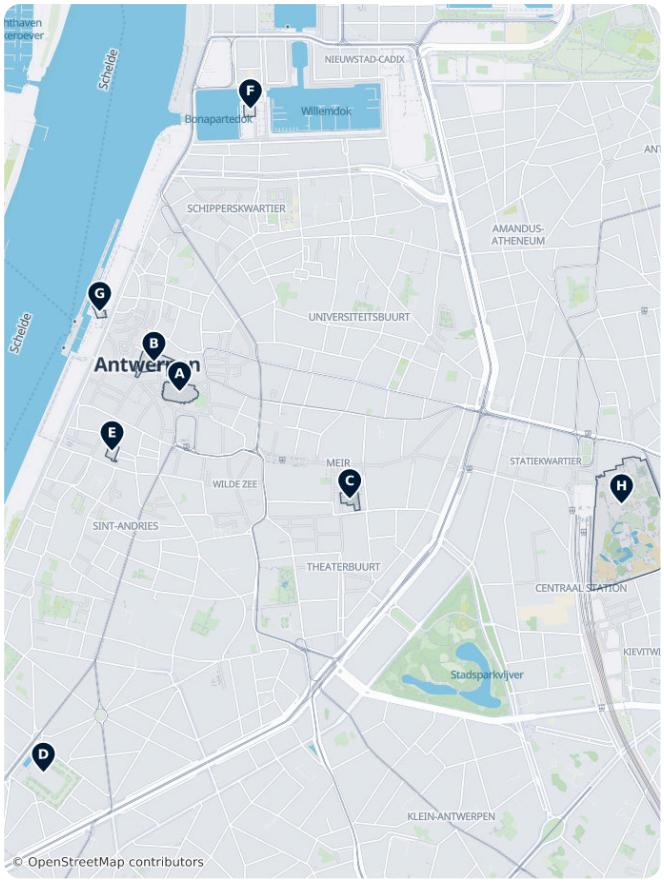
Consider timing a winter trip around Antwerp's Christmas market, which fills Groenplaats and the Grote Markt with stalls, mulled wine, and an open-air ice rink from late November into early January.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for sightseeing	6° / 11° Feels like 0°	0° / -7°	14 rainy days · Dry air
February	Poor Poor for sightseeing	7° / 13° Feels like 2°	1° / -6°	13 rainy days · Dry air
March	Poor Poor for sightseeing	11° / 17° Feels like 6°	2° / -4°	Dry air
April	Fair Fair for sightseeing	15° / 22° Feels like 11°	5° / -1°	Dry air
May	Good Good for sightseeing	19° / 25° Feels like 16°	8° / 3°	13 rainy days · Dry air
June	Great Great for sightseeing	22° / 28°	11° / 7°	12 rainy days · Dry air
July	Great Great for sightseeing	23° / 29°	13° / 10°	14 rainy days
August	Great Great for sightseeing	23° / 30°	13° / 10°	13 rainy days
September	Great Great for sightseeing	21° / 27°	11° / 7°	12 rainy days · Dry air
October	Fair Fair for sightseeing	16° / 22° Feels like 12°	8° / 1°	14 rainy days · Dry air
November	Poor Poor for sightseeing	10° / 16° Feels like 6°	4° / -2°	15 rainy days · Dry air
December	Poor Poor for sightseeing	6° / 12° Feels like 1°	2° / -5°	15 rainy days · Dry air

Best months: June, July, August, September

Climate data: NASA POWER (MERRA-2) · 1996–2025

Top sights



A Cathedral of Our Lady is Belgium's largest Gothic church, with a soaring tower and three major altarpieces by Rubens inside.

Just outside it, B Great Market Square is ringed by ornate 16th-century guild houses and the city hall, and is the natural starting point for exploring the old town.

C Rubenshuis was Rubens' home and studio, restored with period furniture and several of his paintings on display.

D Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp holds a major collection of Flemish Baroque painting, including works by Rubens, van Dyck, and Jordaens.

E Plantin-Moretus House-Workshops-Museum Complex preserves the workshop of Europe's leading 16th-century printing house, and is the only museum on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

F Museum aan de Stroom is a striking modern museum on the old harbor front, worth visiting as much for the free rooftop panorama over the city and port as for its collections.

At the river's edge, G Het Steen is Antwerp's oldest building, a small medieval fortress that once guarded the Scheldt.

H Zoo Antwerpen, right by Centraal Station, is one of the oldest zoos in the world and a good stop for families.

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What to experience

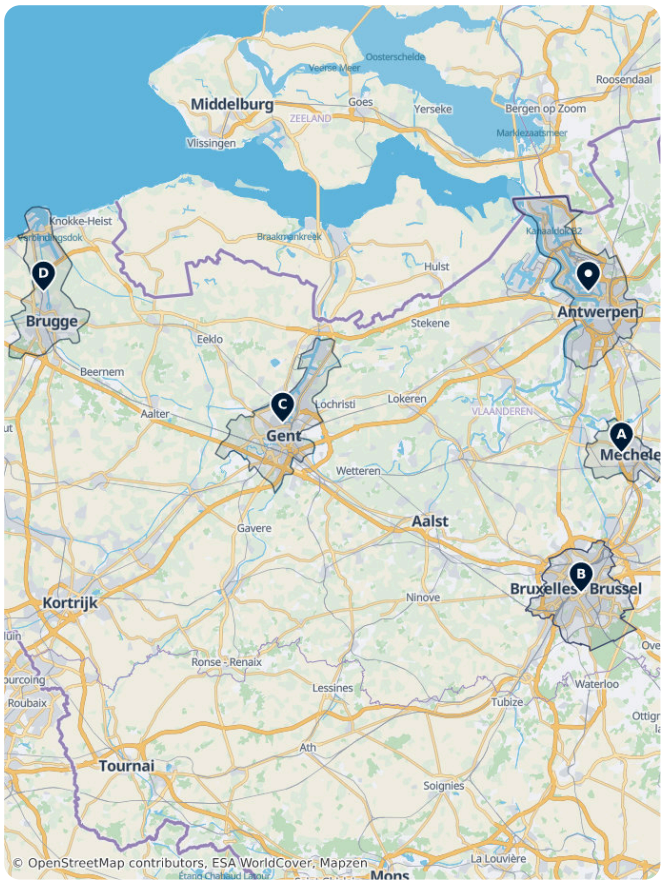
A few things in Antwerp are worth doing rather than just seeing.

- Browse the window displays of the diamond district around Centraal Station, one of the world's leading centers for cutting and trading diamonds.
- Cross the Scheldt through Toegangsgebouw Sint-Annatunnel, a 1933 pedestrian tunnel whose original wooden escalators are still running — among the last of their kind anywhere.
- Browse the vintage and antique shops along Kloosterstraat.
- Window-shop the boutiques around MoMu — Antwerp has produced several internationally known fashion designers, and the area still reflects that.
- In December, skate and browse the stalls of Antwerp's Christmas market on Groenplaats and the Grote Markt.

Day trips

Antwerp sits within easy reach of several of Belgium's best-known towns, so a day trip is simple to plan.

- A Mechelen — around 15 minutes by direct train. A small, walkable town with an unfinished Gothic cathedral tower and a well-preserved historic center, with none of the crowds of the bigger cities.
- B Brussels — around 45 minutes by direct train. Belgium's capital, with the Grand Place, EU quarter, and a much larger museum and dining scene.
- C Ghent — around 50 minutes by direct train. A canal-lined medieval city that many travelers find more relaxed and less touristy than Bruges.
- D Bruges — around 1 hour 15 minutes by train, sometimes with a change. Belgium's best-preserved medieval city, worth the longer trip for its canals and Gothic architecture.



Where to explore

A couple of smaller towns just outside Antwerp make an easy half-day out.

- Lier is a picturesque historic town a short train ride away, known for its medieval Zimmer Tower with its astronomical clock, and for its beguinage.
- Boom is a quieter riverside town on the Rupel, useful mainly as a stop on the way further south.

Getting there

- **By air**: Brussels Airport (BRU) is Belgium's main international gateway, about 45 km away. Direct trains run to Antwerpen-Centraal in around 45 minutes. Antwerp's own small airport, Antwerp Airport (Deurne, ANR), has scheduled flights to only a handful of leisure destinations, so most travelers arrive via Brussels.
- By train: Antwerpen-Centraal is a major rail hub, with direct trains to Brussels, Ghent, and Amsterdam (around 1 hour 15–20 minutes), plus connections toward Germany.
- By bus: Long-distance coaches (including Flixbus) serve a bus station near Antwerpen-Centraal, with connections to major European cities.

Getting around

- **Public transit**: De Lijn runs the trams, buses, and a small underground premetro network covering the city center and suburbs. Tap a contactless bank card or phone directly on the reader when boarding — no advance ticket is needed. De Lijn journey planner
- **On foot / cycling**: The old town is flat and compact, easily covered on foot. Cycling is common and practical, with bike-share stations across the city.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The old town is flat, compact, and best explored on foot; cycling is common and practical throughout the city.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

High

Antwerp is flat with a dense network of bike lanes and city bike-share stations, making cycling a practical way to get around.

Driving

- Is a car worth it? No, not for the city itself — the old town is compact and walkable. A car is useful only for exploring the wider Flemish countryside.
- **Parking**: Use one of the Park & Ride sites on the ring road, or a signposted underground car park in the centre, paid by app or machine.
- **Restrictions**: Antwerp has a Low Emission Zone covering most of the city. Foreign-registered vehicles must register online in advance, which is free for compliant cars; non-compliant vehicles can buy a one-day pass instead.

Food & drink

Look out for Antwerpse handjes, hand-shaped chocolates and biscuits tied to a local legend, and Elixir d'Anvers, a bitter-sweet herbal liqueur made in the city since the 19th century.

For a genuinely distinctive spot, Brouwerij De Koninck is Antwerp's own historic brewery, best known for its "Bolleke" amber ale. For a wider choice, head to the streets around Kloosterstraat and Het Zuid, which cluster with restaurants, bars, and cafés popular with locals.

What to eat & drink

DINNER

Moules-frites
Mussels steamed in wine, herbs, or beer, served with a large portion of fries.

Carbonade Flamande · Stoofvlees / Carbonade flamande
Beef stewed slowly in dark Belgian beer, onions, and mustard.

Waterzooi
A creamy stew of chicken or fish with vegetables, originally from Ghent.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Fries · Frites / Frieten
Twice-fried potato chips served from dedicated frituurs with a wide range of sauces.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Belgian Waffle · Wafel / Gaufre
Two distinct styles: the dense, caramelized Liège waffle and the lighter, crisper Brussels waffle.

Belgian Chocolate · Chocolade / Chocolat
Handmade pralines and chocolates, best bought from specialist chocolatiers.

DRINKS

Trappist Beer · Trappistenbier / Bière trappiste
Strong ales brewed by or under license from Trappist monasteries.

Lambic · Lambiek / Lambic
A sour, spontaneously fermented beer style found mainly in and around Brussels.

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Safety & health

Antwerp is a safe city for tourists by international standards. The main risks are petty theft and pickpocketing in crowded spots such as Centraal Station, busy shopping streets, and public transit at rush hour. The diamond district is well monitored and poses no particular risk to visitors just passing through.

History

Antwerp's golden age began in the 16th century, when merchants from across Europe settled around Handelsbeurs, opened in 1531 as the world's first purpose-built commodity exchange. That wealth funded the guild houses around Great Market Square, rebuilt after Spanish troops sacked the city in 1576, and drew *Peter Paul Rubens* back from Italy to found his workshop at what is now Rubenshuis. Rubens is buried in Sint-Jacobskerk, under an altarpiece he painted himself.

The 20th century was harder. In the winter of 1944–45, occupying German forces fired more V-2 rockets at Antwerp's port than at any other target, including London, killing thousands of civilians in what the press at the time called the "city of sudden death."

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Belgium at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY

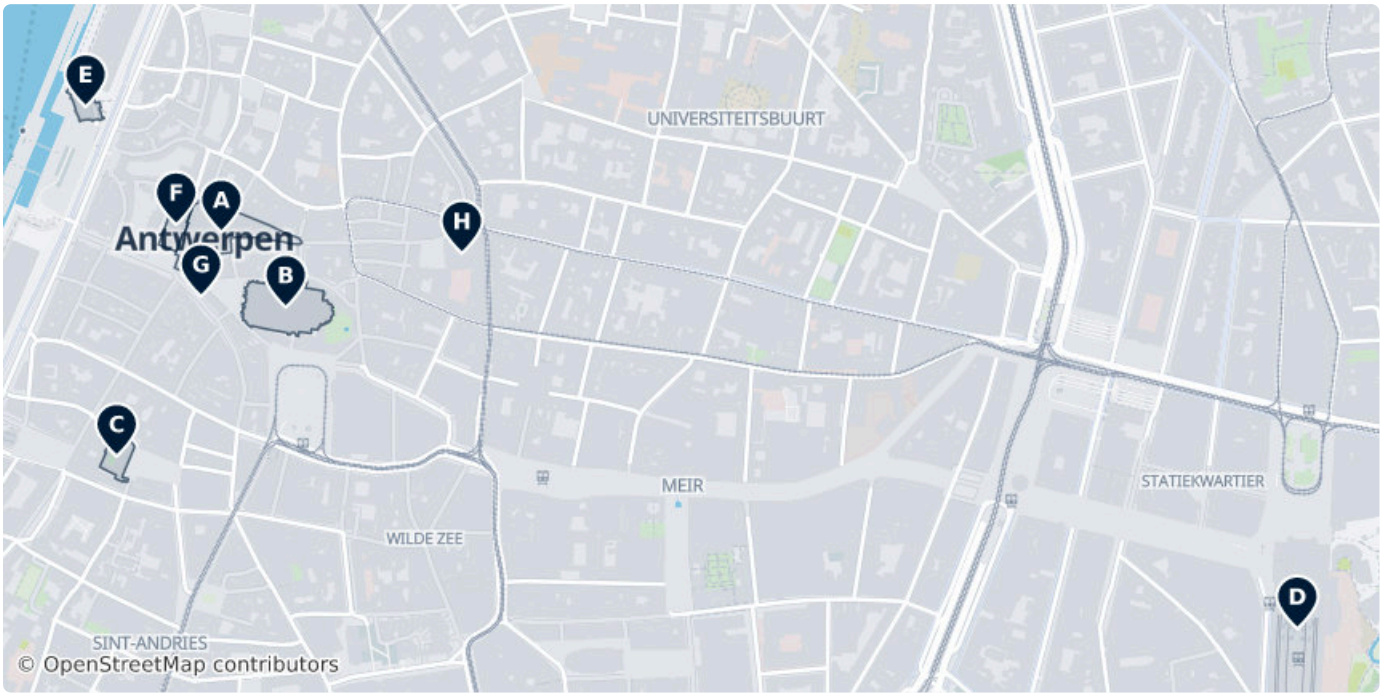
Type C / Type E
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
Dutch, French, German

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Antwerpen's Essential Treasures

Antwerpen's historic core showcases a wealth of architectural and cultural landmarks, ranging from the Gothic splendor of the Cathedral of Our Lady, housing masterpieces by Peter Paul Rubens, to the Renaissance-style City Hall on the Great Market Square. The city features significant UNESCO World Heritage sites, including the Plantin-Moretus Museum, home to the world's oldest printing presses, and the opulent Antwerp Central Railway Station. This collection spans the medieval fortress of Het Steen, the hidden 16th-century Vlaeykensgang alleyway, and the Baroque interior of St. Carolus Borromeus Church.





A Great Market Square

Historic central square featuring Renaissance and medieval architecture with notable landmarks and seasonal markets.

30 Grote Markt, Antwerpen 2000, Belgium
(51.22121, 4.40004)



B Cathedral of Our Lady

Gothic cathedral known for its impressive architecture and artworks by Rubens. It is a UNESCO World Heritage site and a significant religious and cultural landmark.

Groenplaats 21, 2000 Antwerp, Belgium
(51.22029, 4.40130)

Mo–Fr	10:00–17:00
Sa	10:00–15:00
Su	13:00–17:00

dekathedraal.be/en/, +3232139951



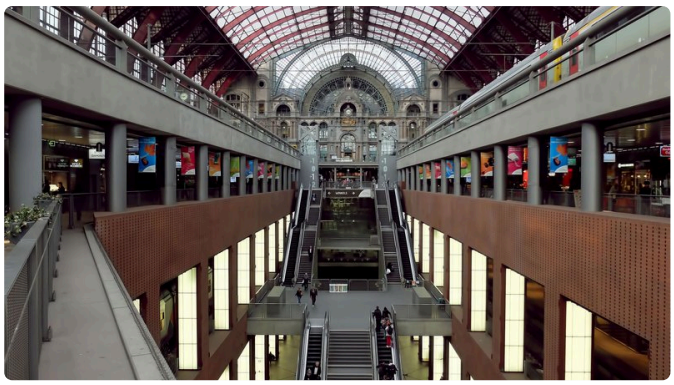
C Plantin-Moretus House-Workshops-Museum Complex

The Plantin–Moretus Museum is a printing museum in Antwerp, Belgium which focuses on the work of the 16th-century printers Christophe...

Vrijdagmarkt 22, 2000 Antwerpen (51.21847, 4.39800)

Tu–Su 10:00–17:00

museumplantinmoretus.be, +32 3 221 14 50



D Antwerp Central Railway Station

Antwerpen-Centraal railway station is the main railway station in Antwerp, Belgium.

Koningin Astridplein 34, 2018 Antwerp, Belgium (51.21636, 4.42108)

youtu.be/Lp1YKuSEBtE, +32 2 528 2828



E Het Steen

Medieval fortress and museum serving as a regional heritage site and cultural attraction. It includes a Visitor Center and the Antwerp Story attraction focused on local history.

Steenplein 1, 2000 Antwerpen, Belgium (51.22275, 4.39739)

youtu.be/75c0sckzYbg, +32 492 918 805



F Antwerp City Hall

Renaissance town hall with Gothic features and historical murals, recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Grote Markt 1, 2000 Antwerpen, Belgium (51.22131, 4.39916)

Mo–Fr 08:30–17:30

antwerpen.be, +32 3 221 13 33



G Vlaeykensgang

Hidden maze of tiny medieval streets and courtyards is perfect for strolling and discovering hidden passageways and alleys.

6 Oude Koornmarkt, Antwerpen 2000, Belgium
(51.22043, 4.39964)



H St. Carolus Borromeus Church

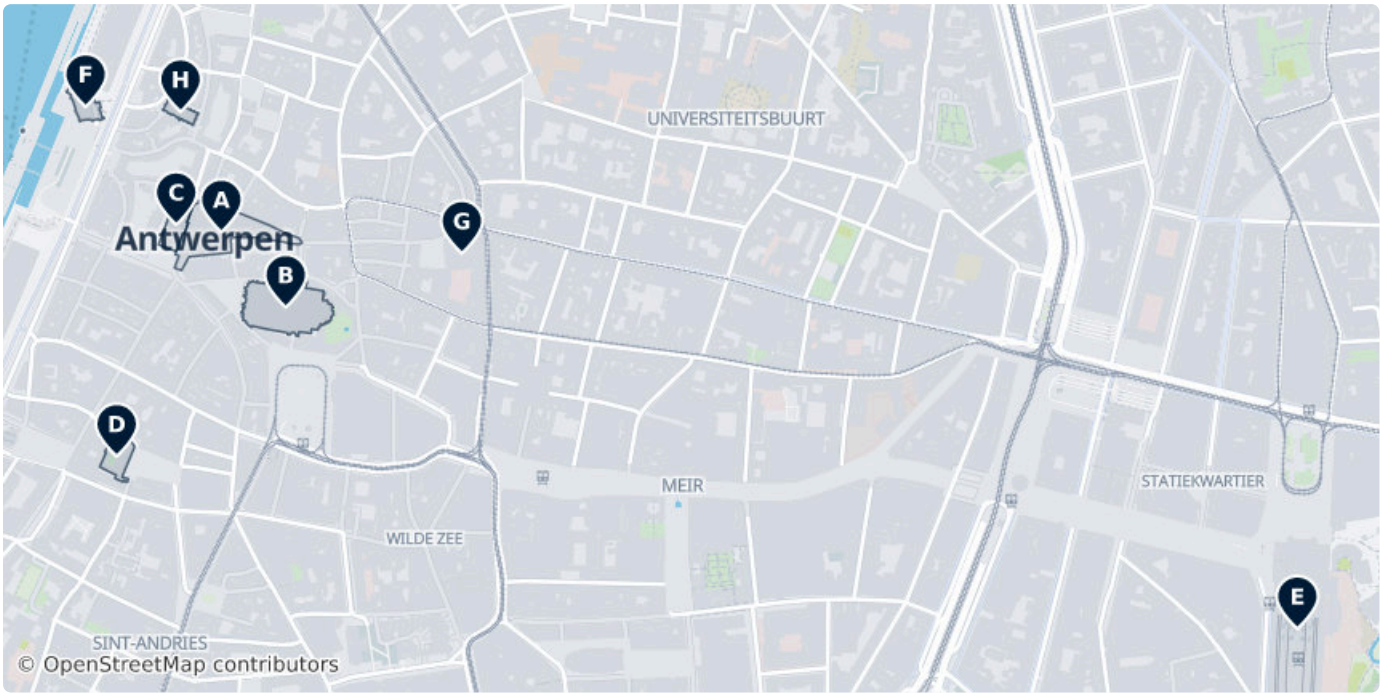
St. Charles Borromeo Church is a church in central Antwerp, located on the Hendrik Conscience square.

Hendrik Conscienceplein 6, 2000 Antwerp, Belgium
(51.22095, 4.40475)

carolusborromeus.com, +32 3 231 37 51

Antwerp Heritage Treasures

Antwerp's historical landscape is defined by its architectural diversity and cultural significance. This collection features UNESCO World Heritage sites like the Gothic Cathedral of Our Lady and the Renaissance City Hall. It includes the Plantin-Moretus Museum, the world's only museum on the UNESCO list, and the eclectic Antwerp Central Station. From the medieval fortress of Het Steen to the Baroque elegance of St. Carolus Borromeus Church and the former guildhall of Butcher's Hall, these landmarks trace the city's evolution from a medieval stronghold to a global center of trade and art.





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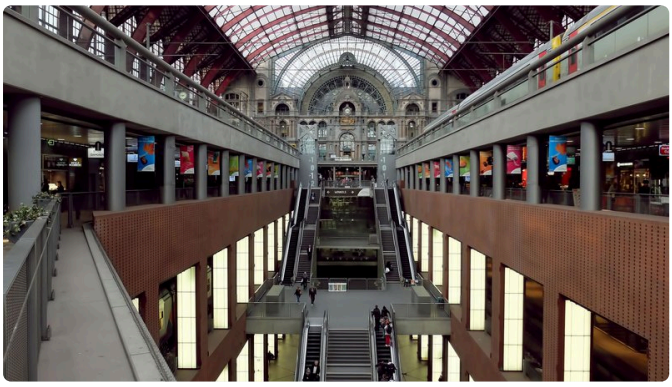
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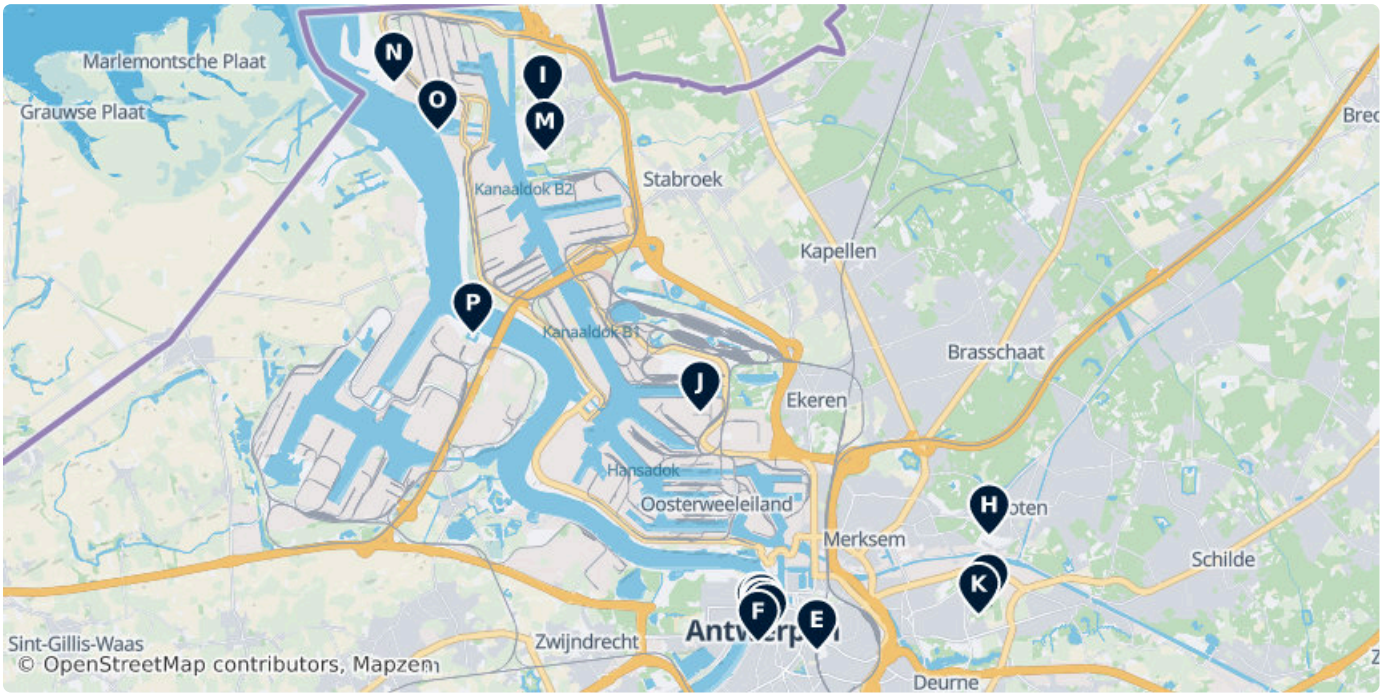
Vleeshouwersstraat 38, 2000 Antwerpen
(51.22269, 4.39924)

Th–Su 10:00–17:00

museumvleeshuis.be, +32 3 292 61 00

Architectural Treasures of Antwerp

Antwerp's skyline is defined by centuries of architectural evolution, from the 123-meter Gothic spire of the Cathedral of Our Lady to the eclectic, domed grandeur of the Central Railway Station. This collection highlights Renaissance masterpieces like the City Hall and the UNESCO-listed Plantin-Moretus Museum alongside medieval fortifications like Het Steen. Beyond the historic center, the list explores 19th-century castles, industrial maritime radar towers, and the isolated Gothic tower of Wilmarsdonk, the sole remnant of a village lost to port expansion.





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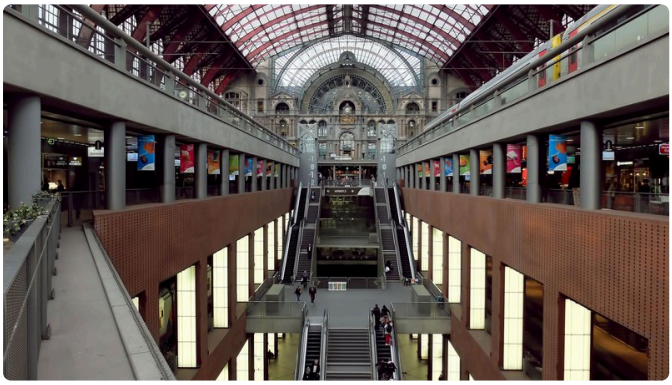


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museumvleeshuis.be, +32 3 292 61 00



H Kasteel van Schoten

A moated castle dating back to the 13th century, significantly rebuilt in the 16th and 19th centuries. It now serves as a cultural center within a public park.

Vijverpad, 2900 Schoten, Belgium (51.24475, 4.48911)

I Buitenmolen

A historic brick belt mill built in 1822. This protected monument in Berendrecht is a well-preserved example of 19th-century industrial wind power.

3 Zandvlietsesteenweg, Berendrecht 2040, Belgium (51.35077, 4.31291)

buitenmolen.be, +31 6 14452560



J Kerktoren Wilmarsdonk

A 15th-century Gothic tower that remains the only surviving structure of the village of Wilmarsdonk, which was demolished in the 1960s for port expansion.

(51.27518, 4.37508)

K Zwarte Arend

A former 16th-century estate in Deurne featuring neo-Renaissance elements. It is located within the provincial domain of Rivierenhof.

(51.22521, 4.48491)

L Kasteel Ertbrugge

A neoclassical castle built in the late 18th century, situated on the border of Deurne and Wijnegem within a landscaped park.

(51.22769, 4.48872)

M Kasteel Reigershof

A private 19th-century castle in Berendrecht showcasing traditional Flemish estate architecture.

(51.33935, 4.31372)

berendrechtonline.be/historie/kasteel.htm

N Radarpost Ballastplaat

A modern maritime radar tower used for vessel traffic management and navigation safety in the Port of Antwerp.

(Unnamed Road), 2040, Belgium (51.35634, 4.25414)

vts-scheldt.net

O Radarpost Oudendijk

A tall monitoring tower essential for coordinating shipping traffic and ensuring safety along the Scheldt estuary.

2040, Belgium (51.34460, 4.27143)

vts-scheldt.net

P Fort Liefkenshoek

A 16th-century fortification on the Scheldt river built for city defense. It now features a visitor center and museum focused on the history of the local polders.

(51.29460, 4.28538)

Mo–Tu	Closed

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