



# IAESTE

## GHENT

Welcome Guide

2024

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# Introduction

Congratulations, you are accepted for an internship in Belgium! We hope your stay in Belgium will be interesting, worthwhile and useful and that you will look upon your IAESTE traineeship not only as a summer job, but as a unique opportunity to explore the Belgian country and culture and get to know many amazing people from all over the world.

It may well be your first trip to Belgium and we anticipate that you will find our country different from your own country. This guide provides some basic information to help you with that. We encourage you to read it carefully before your arrival, so that you are 100% prepared.

In case of any questions or problems, do not hesitate to contact the nearest IAESTE Local Committee at [iaeste@vtk.ugent.be](mailto:iaeste@vtk.ugent.be) (Ghent), [iaeste@vub.ac.be](mailto:iaeste@vub.ac.be) (Brussels) or [iaeste@vtk.be](mailto:iaeste@vtk.be) (Leuven).

## How to read this document

This document contains a lot of information, and you might be a bit overwhelmed. Don't worry, we summarize the most important information in boxes like these:

### Info box

Information boxes highlight the most important information about a certain topic. More details can be found in the text below it.

### IMPORTANT INFO

These boxes contain important information that you must have read before you arrive here! Don't forget to do or remember the things it says!

# Chapter 1

## Welcome to Ghent, Belgium!

### 1.1 About Belgium

Belgium, officially the Kingdom of Belgium, is one of the most underrated, least known and little explored nations in Europe. Surrounded by France, Britain and Germany, Belgium has spent much of its history being fought over and dominated by its neighbours. Only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century did it gain independence and has emerged as a distinct separate identity. It is a small and densely populated country, it covers an area of 30,528 square kilometres (11,787 sq mi) and has a population of more than 11 million.

Belgium's two largest regions are the Dutch-speaking region of Flanders in the north and the French-speaking region of Wallonia in the south. The Brussels-Capital Region is an officially bilingual (French and Dutch) enclave within the Flemish Region. A German-speaking Community exists in eastern Wallonia. Belgium's linguistic diversity and related political conflicts are reflected in its political history and complex system of governance, made up of six different governments.



Belgium is flat in the north, hilly in the south and in the northwest corner of the country there is a small coastal strip. The climate is moderate, with seasonal changes. In the

summer, temperatures are usually somewhere between 15°C (68°F) and 25°C (86°F), and between minus 10°C (14°F) and plus 10°C (50°F) in the winter. It usually rains a lot, no matter what season it is. The weather can be very unstable especially in the spring and the autumn.

Belgium's well-known specialties include its mouth-watering chocolates, a long brewing tradition with a wide range of local beers, many of which are unique, and of course mussels served with French fries.

Belgium is a developed country, with an advanced high-income economy. The country achieves very high standards of living, life quality, healthcare, education, and is categorized as "very high" in the Human Development Index. It also ranks as one of the safest and most peaceful countries in the world.

## 1.2 About Ghent

Ghent is a city in the Flemish Region of Belgium. It is the capital and largest city of the East Flanders province and after Antwerp the largest municipality of Belgium. The city of Ghent is distinguished for its eclectic mix of past and present. Here hides one of Europe's finest panoramas of water, spires and centuries-old grand houses. But this is no place to simply kick back. It's also Flanders' biggest university town, which means linger-as-long-as-you-like cafés, well-priced restaurants and a laid-back atmosphere. The ten-day-long Ghent Festival (Gentse Feesten in Dutch) is held every year and attended by about 1–1.5 million visitors.

The city has been at the cross road of many political and economic shifts in the Western European context. Spanish, Austrian, German, Dutch, French and English, have all influenced Ghent history and left behind traces, thus contributing to a cultural heritage that reflects a unique blend of styles, traditions, architecture, and culinary trends.

The city prospered with the textile trade, and was one of the largest cities in Western Europe. Visiting kings envied the cultural patrimony and had to cope with the stubborn nature of citizens that strongly defended their autonomy. The city has evolved from a variety of settlements on the banks of the River "de Leie" and "de Schelde".

Under the watchful eye of Gravensteen Castle or Castle of the Counts, the city boasts an Opera House, 18 museums, 100 churches and over 400 historical buildings. The most visited site in Ghent is the famous polyptych, The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb, painted by the brothers Jan and Hubert van Eyck in 1432. It still hangs in its original location, the St. Bavo Cathedral.

Nowadays Ghent is an economical centre with its renowned international port and a cultural centre due to the large concentration of educational institutes, including Ghent University, the largest concentration in Flanders of higher professional education institutes, and secondary and primary schools.

# Chapter 2

## Your traineeship in Belgium

When you have signed and returned the confirmation of acceptance (the so-called N5b) you are committed to the contract between the employer and yourself, for the full training period agreed upon and under the auspices of IAESTE. This means that IAESTE is responsible for your traineeship and all other matters regarding your stay and work here. Please, send us the N5b through your national IAESTE office carefully completed as soon as possible. The N5a form is your document which proves that you are an IAESTE trainee. The N5a is the form of the acceptance. Please, keep it and show it to the passport control officer if requested.

### 2.1 Accommodation in Ghent

An internship in Belgium means that you will need a place to stay. It is best to find a home where you are relaxed. Therefore we recommend that you look for accommodation. The best option is to look in Facebook groups where students can rent rooms. Examples can be found here: [group 1](#), [group 2](#), [group 3](#). These groups are in Dutch, but you can always ask us for help. The housing market in Ghent is very competitive, so we suggest you immediately start looking for accommodation. Also note that because of this the rent prices are quite high €400 to €500 per month for a single room with a shared bathroom and kitchen is normal.

In the summer (July - August) we can help you provide a room. Students that are on holiday can let you rent his/her room. However, we do not know how much and which rooms will be provided. Therefore, you should start looking yourself. We will surely help you and give you all info you need. If you have questions, do not hesitate to contact the LC.

### 2.2 Checklist

#### 2.2.1 Before travelling to Ghent

- Sign and return the confirmation of acceptance (the so-called N5b). This confirms that you are committed to the contract between the employer and yourself, for the

full training period agreed upon. IAESTE is then responsible for your traineeship and all other matters regarding your stay and work here. Please, send us the N5b through your national IAESTE office carefully completed as soon as possible. The N5a acceptance form is your document which proves that you are an IAESTE trainee. Please, keep it and show it to the passport control officer if requested.

- Fill out the 'Accommodation and Arrival information' form that was sent to the email address that you filled in on your IAESTE application forms. If you don't know your arrival information yet, send us this information afterwards as soon as possible.
- Once we found suitable accommodation, sign the contracts.
- If you need a visa, start your visa application in time! This is your own responsibility. If you need any additional documents, you can of course reach out to us.
- Just like your visa, your insurance is your own responsibility. If everything went well, you should have received information on insurance already from your own IAESTE office. At the very least, you should have signed a document that says that you (and not IAESTE) are personally responsible for your insurance during your stay. Once again, should you need any documents for this from us, don't hesitate to reach out.
- Start the registration for your Ghent University student card.
- Get in touch with your employer, and arrange your first day at work (when and where are you expected etc.).
- If possible, make sure to bring an extra amount of cash since landlords will often want first month rent plus a guarantee paid upfront.
- Contact your buddy in case of any questions!

### **2.2.2 Upon arrival in Ghent**

- Pick up your Ghent University student card.
- Register at the Migration Office.
- Go rent a bicycle.
- Buy a mobile phone card, if you wish.

### **2.2.3 Before travelling back home**

Before you travel back home, remember there are some things you will need to take care of. All of this is your own responsibility, we are not responsible for any consequences if you neglect these things.

- Return your rented bicycle. You will lose your deposit if you don't.



- If someone lend you some stuff, make sure to give it back before you leave.
- Make arrangements on leaving your room with your landlord: leave it clean, agree on where to leave the keys, how to get your deposit back, etc.

# Chapter 3

## How to get to Ghent?

### Getting to Ghent 101

- If you arrive in Brussels Airport - Zaventem (BRU), take the train to Gent-Sint-Pieters. You can buy your ticket in the airport/train station.
- If you arrive in Brussels South - Charleroi (CRL), use the Flibco shuttle service. Buy this ticket well in advance. You can also use public transport, but this is less convenient and not recommended.
- If you arrive at another airport, look for a similar shuttle service or for a train. Contact us if you need help with this.
- You can also get to Ghent by train, bus or car.
- If you are unsure about which train/bus/... to take, just ask someone! Most people in Belgium know English.
- Make arrangements with your buddy about how you will keep in touch after your arrival in Belgium and where you will meet each other.

### 3.1 By plane

#### 3.1.1 From Brussels Airport - Zaventem (BRU) to Ghent

The biggest international airport in Belgium, [Brussels Airport \(BRU\)](#), is situated in Zaventem, on the outskirts of Brussels.

The best way to reach Ghent from Brussels Airport is **by train**. The train station is located on level -1 of the airport, you will get there by following the signs. You can buy your ticket in advance on the NMBS (national railway company) [website](#) or at the counter or ticket machines in the train station at the airport. Buy a ticket from Brussels Airport - Zaventem to Gent-Sint-Pieters. If you are younger than 26, you can buy a Go Pass 1

(ticket type) and the trip will cost you € 12.10. If you are 26 or older, you have to buy a standard ticket for € 15.90. (When travelling from and to the airport by train, you have to pay an extra fee, called diabolitoeslag. If you buy your ticket in the airport itself, this fee is already included, so you don't have to worry about this.) Keep this ticket with you as long as you are on the train. You might get checked. Tickets must not be reserved or bought in advance. You can board a direct train to Ghent, or you can take a train to the train station Brussel-Zuid/Bruxelles-Midi, which runs more frequently. There, you can change to a train to Ghent. For more information and timetables, check out the NMBS website. From Gent-Sint-Pieters railway station, you can take several buses and trams to the city centre, but normally your buddy will be there to pick you up!

### 3.1.2 From Brussels South Charleroi (CRL) to Ghent

You can also fly to [Brussels South Charleroi \(CRL\) Airport](#). It is located outside of Brussels and it is the airport where budget airlines (Ryanair, WizzAir) mainly fly from.

The easiest way to get from Charleroi Airport to Ghent is to take a [Flibco bus](#). Depending on the hour of your arrival and the remaining spots on the bus trip, this option will be cheap (€ 5.00 - € 15.00) and fast (1h20), but mostly very convenient. The bus leaves in front of the terminal building at Brussels South Charleroi Airport and arrives in Ghent at the back of railway station Gent-Sint-Pieters. We recommend you to buy your ticket in advance, this will be cheaper and ensures your spot on the bus.

Another option, but less recommended, is to go by public transport. Buy a bus ticket at the airport to go to the train station Charleroi-South (Charleroi-Sud) for € 6.00. This trip takes 20 minutes. Once arrived at the train station, take a train from Charleroi-South to Gent-Sint-Pieters. This will take around 1.5 hours and requires you to switch trains in Brussel-Zuid (Bruxelles-Midi). You can buy a Go Pass 1 (if you're under 26 years old, costs € 6.60) or a standard ticket in the railway station. The fee for a standard ticket to go from Charleroi-South to Gent-Sint-Pieters is approximately € 17.00. From Gent-Sint-Pieters railway station, you can take several buses and trams to the city centre, but normally your buddy will be there to pick you up!

### 3.1.3 Other airports

Belgium lies in the heart of Europe, so we are surrounded by a lot of other international airports in The Netherlands, Germany and France. There are also some smaller regional airports in Belgium (Antwerp, Ostend, Liège). If you are arriving at another airport than the ones mentioned above and you need advice on how to get to Ghent, you can always contact us!

## 3.2 By train

There are two main railway stations in Ghent: Gent-Sint-Pieters and Gent-Dampoort, which allow smooth access to the Belgian railway network. If you are coming by high-speed international train, you will probably arrive at the railway station Brussels South

(Brussel-Zuid/Bruxelles-Midi), from where you can take a train to Ghent. If you are younger than 26, you can buy a Go Pass 1 (ticket type) and the trip will cost you €6.60. If you are 26 or older, you have to buy a standard ticket for €9.20. Keep this ticket with you as long as you are on the train. You might get checked. Tickets from Brussels to Ghent must not be reserved or bought in advance. If you want, you can buy your ticket in advance and check the timetables on the NMBS [website](#).

### 3.3 By bus

Check out your options on the [website](#) of Eurolines. You will arrive at the Gent-Dampoort railway station. From there, you can take several buses to the city centre, but normally your buddy will be there to pick you up!

### 3.4 By car

If you decide to come by car, you will find Ghent at the crossroads of 2 large highways:

- E17 connecting Lisbon, Paris, Ghent, Antwerp, Köln, Copenhagen, Stockholm;
- E40 connecting Calais, Ghent, Brussels, Frankfurt, Vienna, Budapest, Sophia, Istanbul.

Keep in mind that the city centre of Ghent is car-free, so you won't get in unless you have a license to enter. Around the city centre, the cost for parking can be very high.

# Chapter 4

## Register at the Migration Office

### IMPORTANT

Registering at the Ghent migration office is important as a foreign intern. Do this as soon as you arrive in Belgium. Make an appointment at the migration office and they will help you through the procedure. See [this website](#) for more info.

As an international student, you have to let the municipality know that you are staying in Belgium. Depending on what nationality is on your passport and how long you are staying, there are different procedures to do this. The migration office in the [administrative center](#) can help you further. You can make an appointment, call them or send a mail. Note that the [opening hours](#) are limited, so it is best to do this before starting your internship. What follows is a list of the information you should mention when contacting them:

- You are contacting them for a "declaration of stay"
- First name and last name
- Nationality
- Correct and fully completed residence address in Ghent
- Period of stay
- Reason of stay: an **unpaid** internship via the IAESTE exchange program
- As an IAESTE intern you are **exempt of a work permit**
- Company your internship takes place at

The people at the migration office will then help you further with the right procedure. You will have to send them a copy of your ID or passport and visa, so make sure to have that with you.

# Chapter 5

## Transport

Ghent is a car-free and rather small city, in which you can easily move around by bike, by foot or by public transport. The most popular – and advisable – way of transportation is definitely by bike!

### 5.1 Bicycle

#### Bike 101

- Get a bike for sure. You'll need it.
- If you are an exchange student at Ghent University, you can rent a bike at '[De Fietsambassade Gent](#)'. Bring with you: your Ghent University student card (see Chapter ??), your passport/ID and at least € 130 in cash.
- If you aren't an exchange student at Ghent University you can get a bike at '[Swapfiets](#)'. Bring your student ID to the shop.
- Always lock your bike to prevent theft. If it is not locked, it is very likely that your bike will be stolen!
- Always put on your lights after dark. You need a red light in the back, and a white light in the front. Not doing so is extremely dangerous and you will also be fined by the police if they see you without them.
- Don't forget to return your bike when your internship is (almost) over.

Biking in Ghent is cheap, fast, safe, convenient and above all: pleasant! Is your place of work in Ghent? Then you can go there by bike. Is your place of work outside of Ghent? Then you can go to the train or bus station by bike. You can go anywhere by bike! We will also very often organize evening activities for you, and since not all places (especially later at night) are easily accessible by public transport, we strongly advise you to rent a bike to be able to carelessly take part in the whole IAESTE experience!

### 5.1.1 Renting a bike

[De Fietsambassade](#) gives students registered at Ghent University the opportunity to rent a cheap bike:

- You can rent a bicycle for 3 to 12 months.
- You can choose from different types of bicycles.
- The rental price depends on the type of bicycle and the duration of the rental period. As an indication: renting a basic bicycle for 3 months costs €50.
- You pay a deposit of €80 when picking up your bicycle, which you will get back when you return the bicycle in good condition.
- You can get a vandalism and theft insurance (which we strongly advise). It only costs €10 and will save you a lot of money in the rare case your bike gets stolen.

Renting a bike is possible at this address: **Kattenberg 2**. It is usually open from Monday till Thursday. You can check the up-to-date opening hours and closing dates on the [website](#).

What you need to bring along:

- Your Ghent University student card. If you didn't pick up your Ghent University student card yet, you can instead also use your invitation letter (which was sent to you via email if you completed the student card application correctly)
- Your passport or identity card
- Enough money **in cash!** Foreign cards are not accepted. The deposit, rent itself and insurance will make for a total of around €130.

In case of theft of your bicycle: report it to the police within 24 hours and try to notify 'De Fietsambassade' as soon as possible. Bicycles that are not safely secured or seem to be neglected are often picked up again by De Fietsambassade. Such initiatives are taken to prevent bicycles from being stolen or rusting away.

To return your bike at the end of your stay, go to De Fietsambassade at Kattenberg 2 during the opening hours. Your bike will be checked and if everything is okay, you will get your deposit back.

### 5.1.2 Bicycle repair

If you are registered as an exchange student at Ghent University, then you can make use of several bike repair shops. You can repair your bike using the repair shop's tools and/or buy new parts at a very reasonable price. There's always someone at hand to help and advise you. You can repair your bike at Kattenberg 2 (the same place as you

picked up your bike) during the opening hours. You can check the up-to-date opening hours and closing dates on the [website](#).

### 5.1.3 Basic rules

In some cities, riding your bicycle is basically suicide, or you need to be a well-trained athlete in order to overcome the high temperatures and steep mountains. Luckily, in Ghent this is not the case! Since we know that not all of you are used to biking, we listed some basic rules you should keep in mind:

- **Always** properly lock your bike if you leave it somewhere. For more tips on this, check the next section!
- **Always** obey the traffic rules and don't go driving around like a crazy person.
- If it is dark outside, use a front (white) and back (red) light to ensure that you are visible. This is not only important for your own safety, but if the police sees you without a light, you will be charged €50.
- If you want to turn left or right, use your arm to signal so.
- Watch out for the tram tracks, cross them carefully so your wheel doesn't get stuck in there.
- Always keep to the right, so people who are going faster can safely overtake you.
- If there is a bicycle lane, use it.
- If you see a sign that says biking is not allowed in a certain street, just get off your bike and walk that part. You might get fined if you decide to bike through anyway.
- Wearing a helmet is not obliged, but of course you can do so for your own safety.
- It is not allowed by law to carry another person on your bicycle.
- If you want to follow some lessons to learn to bicycle, you can contact us by e-mail on [iaeste.incoming@vtk.ugent.be](mailto:iaeste.incoming@vtk.ugent.be). We can help you to bicycle like a real belgian student for free!

### 5.1.4 Anti-theft tips

Bicycle thefts happen every day. The use of the bicycle lock is necessary to discourage thieves, but it's even better to use an extra padlock. Some more tips:

- Always secure your bike (even if you leave it for just a second).
- Secure your bike to a pole, fence, bike stand etc. (never to a traffic sign).
- Use a sturdy lock.



- Make sure that removing your bike takes some time (e.g. use two locks).
- Leave your bike at a safe and visible place (preferably a bike shed or stand). Avoid dark or abandoned places.

## 5.2 Buses and trams

### Bus and tram 101

- Check the bus/tram schedule [online](#).
- Buying a ticket on the bus/tram is not possible!
- Use the “De Lijn” app as it is always cheaper.
- If you travel by bus very often, get a Buzzy Pazz or Omnipas.
- If you travel by bus occasionally, get a ‘Lijnkaart’ (10 rides).
- If you travel by bus only once or twice, use an SMS ticket or the “De Lijn” app.
- The bus doesn’t stop everywhere, only on demand or at major stops. Press the blue button if you know the next stop is where you need to get off.

Public transport in the city is well-organized. Buses and trams ride from early in the morning till late at night. A ticket is valid for 60 minutes and therefore does not depend on the distance but includes changes of bus/tram without restrictions. You can choose between several ways of paying for your ride. Have a close look at the different tickets that are offered according to your transport needs: prices may differ considerably (prices below with reservation to changes made by the transport company De Lijn). Public transport in Belgium is managed on the regional level. Hence Brussels and Wallonia have separate public transport companies. For this reason, the tickets are only valid in Flanders.

- **Ticket:** buy these in a ticket machine, Lijnwinkel or stores, price: €2.50. If you buy a ticket by SMS, you pay €2.65 (send ‘DL’ to 4884). Your cheapest option (€2) is to use the ‘De Lijn’ app.
- **Lijnkaart:** in case you will be using city buses or trams more regularly you are better off buying a ‘Lijnkaart’ (€16 in presale for 10 rides), which you scan each time you make a trip. Valid in all Flemish cities.
- **Day Ticket:** allows you to travel on any tram or bus for the whole day; costs €7.5. Also 3-day tickets available.
- **Buzzy Pazz or Omnipas:** If you will be using the buses and trams for a longer period, it might be a lot cheaper to buy a ‘season ticket’: a ‘Buzzy Pazz’ (if you

are under 25 years old) or an 'Omnipas' (if you are 25 or older). Both cards are valid on any bus and tram of 'De Lijn'. You can also use these season tickets in other Flemish cities and at the Belgian coast. (See next bullet for the prices of these season tickets). Go to a 'Lijnwinkel' and bring your ID/passport to buy one.

- **Season tickets bus + tram 'De Lijn'**

- Period: 1 month - 3 months - 12 months
- Buzzy Pazz: €33 - €81 - €215
- Omnipas: €49 - €132 - €339

- **Night buses:** On every day of the week, you can take one of the night buses until 1 AM. For more details about the tram and bus lines please check [www.delijn.be/gent](http://www.delijn.be/gent)

The routeplanner is available [online](#). Type in the address of departure and arrival, the time and date and this will give you the best travel routes (also includes trains).

More information can be obtained in the shops of 'De Lijn' ('Lijnwinkels') or on the [website](#).

## 5.3 Train

### Train 101

- Check the train schedule [online](#).
- If you travel by train very often, get a Go Unlimited pass.
- If you use the train for a particular occasion and if you don't have a Go Unlimited pass, you can either get a weekend ticket, a Go Pass 1 (if you're traveling alone) or share a Go Pass 10 (if you're traveling in a group).
- You can buy train tickets in the train station or online.

In Ghent there are two railway stations: Gent Sint-Pieters (main station) and Gent Dampoort, which allow smooth access to the whole Belgian railway network. You can check the ticket fares and schedules on the [website](#) of the national railway company NMBS. Some special types of tickets:

- **Go Pass 10:** If you are younger than 26, and planning to travel frequently by train, it is more interesting to buy a Go Pass 10 (valid for 1 year). It is valid for 10 rides (2nd class, single) between two Belgian stations and costs €55; so one single journey only costs €5.50. It's possible to use the Go Pass 10 with several people at the same time. The Go Pass 10 is particularly advantageous for longer journeys.

- **Rail Pass:** If you're 26 or older, you can use the Rail Pass. This card gives the same benefits as the Go Pass 10, but it costs €83.
- **Go Pass 1:** If you are younger than 26, buy the Go Pass 1 for €6.60 and use it for a single journey in 2nd class to anywhere in the country. Just like the Go Pass 10, this is particularly advantageous for longer journeys.
- **Weekend Ticket:** With the Weekend Ticket, your return travel to anywhere in Belgium is half price (based on the standard fare) on weekends. You decide which day you want to leave (Friday after 19:00, Saturday or Sunday).

If you are here during the summer holidays, you are younger than 26 years and you plan to travel frequently by train, it might be interesting for you to travel **Go Unlimited**. With this pass, you have access to unlimited travelling by train in second class during the school holidays for one week. This costs €18 for one week or €29 for 1 month. A single additional fee for the rechargeable card of €5 has to be paid on top of the ticket price. This pass can be bought at the ticket counters in the train stations.

You can travel by high-speed train from Brussels to:

- Paris, Amsterdam, Aachen, Köln, Schiphol, Den Haag, Rotterdam, etc. with the [Thalys](#) train.
- London, Ashford, Lille with the [Eurostar](#) train.

More international trains? Go to:

- <https://www.b-europe.com/>
- <https://be.oui.sncf/>

## 5.4 Long distance travelling

**Share a ride** at [BlaBlaCar](#): to travel to the neighbouring countries for less money. You can easily book your seat online and travel from city A to city B, even last minute. Weekends are perfect to find a ride, as a lot of people go home for a weekend after the work week.

**Long distance buses:** Flixbus, Eurolines, Megabus and other companies have a broad range of destinations in Belgium, France, The Netherlands, Germany, Spain... Check out their promotions and get away for less than €10.

## 5.5 Plane

Belgium has a number of commercial airports, but the 2 major international airports are Brussels Airport (Brussel Nationale Luchthaven) in Zaventem and Charleroi Airport (aka: 'Brussels South'). Bear in mind that travelling by plane is bad for the environment.

# Chapter 6

## Mobile phone

### Mobile phone 101

- If you have a phone number from the EU, then there should be no roaming costs any longer. You can continue using this phone number without any extra cost (but do check with your provider to be sure).
- If you do not have a phone number from the EU, get a Belgian SIM card. Take your passport or ID so you can identify yourself.

Even though roaming costs are disappearing and WiFi is increasingly spreading, it might still be advantageous for you to get a Belgian SIM card.

There are several mobile phone companies in Belgium:

- [Proximus](#)
- [Orange](#)
- [Base](#)
- [Mobile Vikings](#)

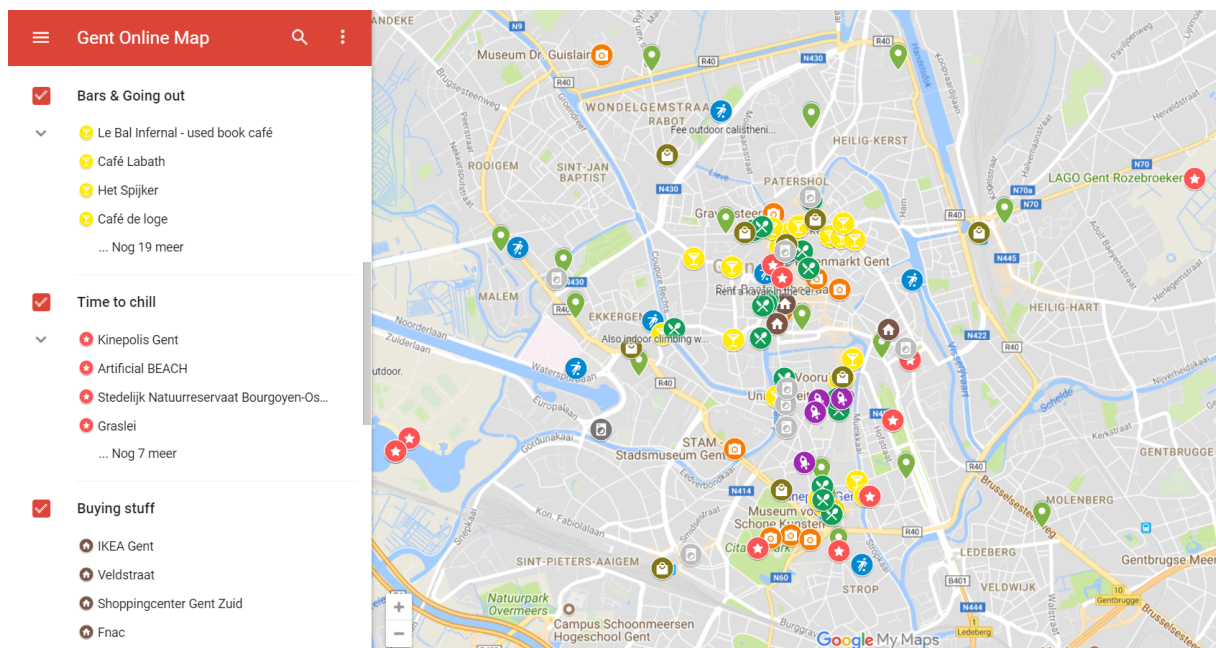
All of them offer prepaid cards. You can find more information on their websites. Visit one of their shops to buy a prepaid card and don't forget to bring your passport or ID!

# Chapter 7

## Living in Ghent

### 7.1 Interesting places

Where can I do sports? Where can I find a supermarket? What are nice places to hang-out? Which are the nice bars? Where to find an ATM? Where to shop? Where can I have a cheap/traditional/nice meal? We have collected the most interesting places (including some comments) in Ghent on [this map](#). Make sure to check it out! The map includes following categories:



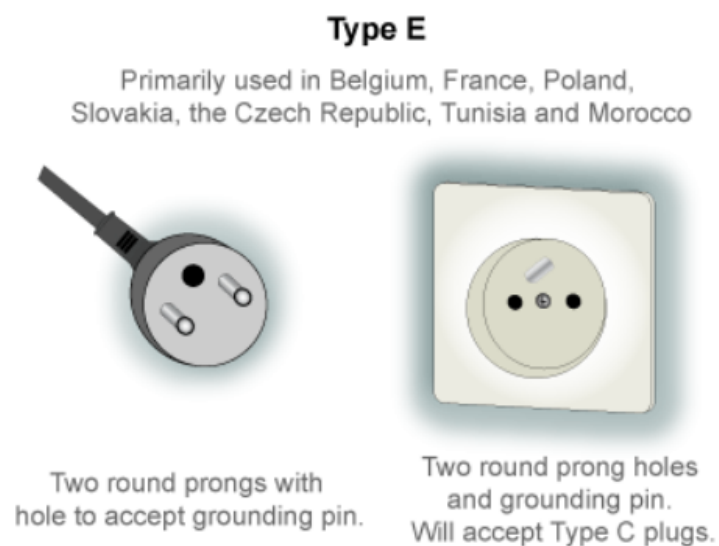
- Where to do sports
- Culture & Museums
- Supermarkets
- Bars & Going out

- Time to chill
- Buying stuff
- Where to eat
- Practical spots
- Where to get cash
- Laundry

## 7.2 Good to know

### 7.2.1 Power sockets

In Belgium, we use power sockets of Type E, which also accept plugs of Type C. Don't forget to bring an adapter if your appliances don't fit these sockets!



In case you forgot, you can buy an adapter at Fnac (Veldstraat 88, 9000 Gent). This will cost you more or less € 10.

### 7.2.2 Public holidays

Banks, public offices and shops are mostly closed on public holidays. You probably also don't have to go to work on those days, but make sure to always check this with your employer. The public holidays in Belgium (Flanders) are:

- New Year's Day - Friday, January 1st 2021
- Easter Monday - Monday, April 5th 2021

- Labour Day - Saturday, May 1st 2021
- Ascension Day - Monday, May 13th 2021
- White Monday - Monday, May 24th 2021
- Belgian National Holiday - Wednesday, July 21st 2021
- Assumption Day - Sunday, August 15th 2021
- All Saints' Day - Monday November 1st 2021
- Armistice Day - Thursday, November 11th 2021
- Christmas - Saturday, December 25th 2021

### 7.3 Student restaurants

If you are an exchange student at Ghent University, there are several student restaurants and cafeterias at different locations, all close to the university buildings, that you can visit. The service and food they offer is of a high quality, while the prices are the lowest in town (average price €4). Dieticians make sure that the menus are varied, healthy and balanced. Vegetarian alternatives are available (no halal or kosher kitchen). The student restaurants are open from Monday to Friday. In weekends and on closing days of the university, Ghent University restaurants are closed.

Note that you need your personal Ghent University student card in order to eat at the student restaurants. If you don't have it (with you), you will need to pay over double the price! It is not possible to buy a meal for someone else.

You can find the locations and opening hours of the restaurants and cafeterias [here](#). There you can also find the weekly menu.

In the evening only 'Resto De Brug' is open:

#### CAMPUS UFO - DE BRUG

Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat 45

selfservice: 11:15 – 14:00 and from 17:30 – 20:00

cafeteria: 11:15 – 14:00 and from 17:30 – 20:00

### 7.4 Waste management

In Ghent, we sort our waste. The rules for this are quite strict, and not sorting correctly is not only bad for the environment, but also might lead to inconveniences (garbage not being collected, fines, ...).

## Waste management: overview

- Talk with your landlord about how the waste management is arranged.
- Sort your waste:
  - plastic, metal and drink cartons → blue IVAGO bag.
  - paper → cardboard box.
  - glass → plastic bucket or other container.
  - other “normal” household waste → green IVAGO bag.
  - vegetables and fruit waste → green IVAGO container (or green IVAGO bag if your landlord doesn’t provide you with one).
- If you are responsible for taking out the trash:
  - Buy the correct IVAGO garbage bags in the supermarket.
  - Check the [IVAGO garbage collection calendar](#).
  - Put the correct waste on the pavement between 5 a.m. and 7 a.m. on the day of collection (not doing this correctly may result in a fine for illegal dumping!).

### 7.4.1 Waste collection

In Belgium, waste is collected at specific times each month at your door. You should make sure that you put your waste out in time. The frequency of collection differs depending on the type of garbage, and the exact dates differ by house address.

Check the [garbage collection calendar](#) by entering your street name and number.

**If you have garbage bags that need to be collected, you’ll have to put them outside on the pavement**, right next to your door, where the garbage collectors can easily see and collect it. Do this **on the correct day, between 5 a.m. and 7 a.m.**. This is because in accordance with police regulations, you are only allowed to put your household waste outside on the day of collection from 5 a.m., but the waste collecting teams start collecting at 7 a.m.! If you put your waste outside too late, it won’t be collected and you will have to take it back inside.

Your landlord may have their own specific rules regarding waste management. Make sure to talk with them about how this is arranged in your dorm or room: who is responsible for buying the garbage bags, you or the landlord? Do you need to put the garbage outside for collection, or is this taken care of for you by the landlord? In large dorms, the landlord typically takes care of this, but in single rooms this might not be the case.



### **WARNING: illegal dumping**

Putting outside household waste on the wrong day, in an inappropriate recipient or depositing your garbage in public waste baskets is considered illegal dumping. **Violations may lead to a fine of approximately 120 euro and a bill of 250 euro cleanup costs!**

## **7.4.2 How to sort your waste: what goes where?**

The rules for sorting are also quite strict. There are different bags for collecting different types of waste, each with their specific color. For other types of waste, there are no bags but you'll have to collect it in another way. Here is an overview:

### **Plastic, Metal and Drink Cartons (= PMD)**

Recyclable plastic bottles and flasks, metal packaging and drink cartons go into the **blue IVAGO bags**. This waste is collected every two weeks. Here's what should and should not go into this bag (and this is very strict!):

- ✓ Plastic bottles of water, soda, milk.
- ✓ Flasks of detergent, shampoo, shower gel.
- ✓ Drink cartons of e.g. milk.
- ✓ Metal packaging of e.g. canned food.
- ✓ All plastic packaging and objects that are not bottles or flasks (e.g. packaging of yogurt, butter, plastic bags or packaging, ...).
- × Non-empty bottles: first use everything in it or pour it away in the sink!
- × Glass bottles: see below.

### **Glass**

Glass should be kept separately. For collection, you should put it in a plastic bucket or solid plastic box with closed bottom and lateral walls (not in wooden crates or cardboard boxes!). In large dorms or apartment buildings, there might be special containers available for glass. Collected once a month.

### **Paper & cardboard**

Collect your paper and cardboard separately in a cardboard box or tie it together with rope. For collection by the garbage collectors, put this cardboard box or bundle outside. The box should be closed or tied together with rope. In large dorms or apartment buildings, there might be special containers available for paper. Paper is collected once a month.

### **Vegetables, fruits and garden waste (= GFT)**

Naturally decomposing garbage can be collected in the green IVAGO bins, if your landlord provides you with one. If you don't have one of those, you should throw this waste with the "normal garbage" (or ask your landlord if he has a GFT container that you can use).

### **Normal garbage**

Normal garbage is all other household garbage, or "Combustible and non-recyclable household waste". These go into the **green IVAGO bags**. If you have to buy your own green IVAGO bags, make sure to buy the official green IVAGO bags of 30 or 50 litres. The bags must be tied up (not taped). Leave a grip, thus allowing easy collection. Mind the maximum weight of 15 kilograms for a 50-litre bag.

### **Batteries**

Batteries are considered "small dangerous waste" and do not belong in the normal garbage. There are collection points for batteries in any shop that sells batteries.

### **Other garbage**

There are more rules for other garbage that does not belong in any of these categories (e.g. electronics, large things like e.g. broken furniture, ...). If in doubt, don't hesitate to contact someone from the local committee!

## **7.4.3 How to avoid waste**

Even better than sorting is **avoiding waste**. Some tips how to do that:

- Drink water from the tap: in Ghent, this is excellent drinking water. It is much cheaper than bottled water and doesn't generate waste.
- Carry your shopping in a reusable bag.
- Don't buy overpacked products.
- Opt for beer and soft drinks in bottles with deposit.

## **7.4.4 Useful links**

- [Ghent City waste management guide](#)
- [IVAGO garbage collection calendar](#)

## **7.5 Shopping and markets**

Shops are usually open between 10h00-18h00, Monday to Saturday. Local grocers and especially the baker's may be open on Sundays and closed on a weekday instead. Some (smaller) stores close for lunch. If you are planning on preparing your own meals, you might be best off buying your food in a supermarket like Aldi, Albert Heijn, Lidl, Match, Spar, Delhaize, Colruyt, etc. Out of these options, generally, Aldi and Colruyt

are the cheapest and the bigger the store, the less money you spend. If you are in urgent need of something when shops have already closed, you may find what you are looking for in a night shop, though these shops are more expensive.

Ghent is an ideal city for window-shopping. There is a wide range of big and small shops and the city centre is a pedestrian area. Ghent's main shopping streets are: the Veldstraat, the Langemunt, the Brabantdam, the Koestraat and the Donkersteeg. Shopping malls in the city centre are: Urbis (Woodrow Wilsonplein) and Post Plaza (Korenmarkt).

Apart from the weekly market days, the specialised markets are certainly worth a visit. On Friday, Saturday and Sunday you will certainly come across one of the many markets where you will find food and clothing, and also pets, antiques and curiosities, art and books. If you love flowers, then get up an hour earlier on Sunday morning: the flower market on the Kouter has been round for centuries. A little further on, dozens of small bookstalls gather on Ajuinlei.

# Chapter 8

## Financial matters

### 8.1 Currency

The Belgian currency is the Euro (€, EUR). There are 8 coins and 7 notes:

- Coins of 1 and 2 EUR and of 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 eurocents
- Notes of 500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5 EUR



Notes of over €50 are rare and are not accepted everywhere.

### 8.2 Your payment

As an IAESTE trainee, you will receive an expense allowance to cover your living costs during your stay in Ghent. How you will receive your payment, depends on your employer.

If you work at Ghent University, IAESTE Ghent will take care of your payment and arrange everything with your employer. You will receive your payment in cash every two weeks on Wednesdays during your stay. Once your first payment is approaching, you will receive an email from our responsible with more information. The payments usually will take place at Jozef Plateaustraat 22 at 20h. If due to circumstances this would change, you will be notified.

## 8.3 Banking

The main banks are [KBC](#), [ING](#) and [BNP Paribas Fortis](#). A full list of the banks in the center of Ghent can be found [here](#).

It will not be easy to open a personal bank account here as most banks require a period of stay of at least 6 months in Belgium. If you would like to open a bank account, the different banks have different options:

- [ING](#): The go-to option is called the 'Lion account'. Two things are needed to open an account. First you have to fill in an online [form](#) with your personal details. Secondly you have to confirm your identity. You can do this online or go to an ING bank office with your ID. When this is done, you will receive a bank card and card reader via mail. In order to open an account at ING, normally you need to stay in Belgium for at least 6 months.
- [KBC](#): They have different pricings, which are given [here](#). It is roughly the same procedure as for ING. But here, besides the [form](#) and ID, you also need a proof of your address in Belgium and proof that you are employed or studying here. If you have collected the necessary paperwork, you need to go to a bank office to open your account. In order to open an account at KBC, normally you need to stay in Belgium for at least 6 months.
- [BNP](#): The go-to option is called 'Hello4you'. First you need to become a [client](#) and then choose Hello4you. In essence it's again about the same procedure. You fill in a form with personal information, proof your ID and you need a proof of stay in Belgium. In order to open an account at KBC, normally you need to stay in Belgium for at least 12 months.

In all three cases, the easiest way to get the specific information, is to go to a bank office. Ask there what they can do for you and what they require of you. Having all the correct information immediately could save you a lot of time later.

If you would like to visit an office to get more information, the three mentioned banks have an office situated at the [Kouter](#). Most banks are certainly open on weekdays from 09h00-12h00 and from 14h00-16h00. Some banks are open on Saturday morning and have late opening hours once a week.

You can withdraw money at any ATM. These are situated in all bank offices but are also placed in the street at various locations throughout the city. You can find their locations [here](#) under the tab 'where to get cash'.

## 8.4 Foreign exchange & money transfer

In Ghent you will find a number of places for exchange and money transactions. Most banks also provide these services. Information about one of these offices is given below.

- Travelex nv – Camrail (Western Union)  
Steendam 108  
Monday to Friday: 08:30 – 17:30  
Saturday: 9:30 - 16:30  
<https://www.travelex.be/>

As a member of a EU or EEA country you will be able to pay your rent by bank transfer. But if you are a resident of a country outside the EU, bank transfer costs are probably relatively high. Therefore, it will be better to do a cash bank transfer at the bpost bank office for a small fee. You can just go to one of their offices for this transfer. One of their main offices in the city center you can find at **Lange Kruisstraat 55, 9000 Gent**.

## 8.5 Cost of living

Living standards are quite high in Belgium. How much money you actually spend will of course depend on your life style and spending habits. If you plan to travel a lot during your stay here, you will of course need a budget for extra travel expenses. Keep in mind that during the first weeks of your stay, there may be extra expenses for deposits, equipment (kitchen utensils, bed sheets, etc.) and other things. For an indication of prices you can always have a look at the following [website](#).

# Chapter 9

## Emergencies

Not nice to mention in a welcome guide, but very necessary none the less, and therefore highlighted in an orange box!

### Emergency phone numbers

Ambulance and fire department	emergencies with physical injury	112
Urgent police assistance	emergencies requiring police assistance	101
Police department	For non-urgent information and reporting	0032 9 266 61 11
Anti-poison centre	In case you believe someone has been poisoned	0032 70 245 245
Cardstop	In case your bank card was stolen or lost	0032 70 344 344
Docstop	In case your ID, passport or residence permit was stolen or lost	00 800 2123 2123
Buddy number	The phone number of your buddy; in case you don't know what to do, (s)he might know	...

# Chapter 10

## Dutch for beginners

### Greetings

Hi, hello	Hallo	Goodbye	Tot ziens
Good morning	Goedemorgen	See you soon	Tot binnekort
Good afternoon	Goedemiddag	See you later	Tot straks
Good evening	Goedenavond	Good night	Goedenacht

### Basic phrases and words

How are you?	Hoe gaat het?	Nice to meet you	Aangename kennis- making
Welcome	Welkom	What's your name?	Hoe heet je?
Good luck!	Veel succes!	How much does ... cost?	Hoeveel kost ...?
Where is ... ?	Waar is ... ?	What?	Wat?
Who?	Wie?	When?	Wanneer?
Yes	Ja	No	Nee
Maybe	Misschien	I don't know	Ik weet het niet
I don't understand	Ik begrijp het niet	Could you please re- peat that?	Kan u dat herhalen a.u.b.?
Excuse me, I'm sorry	Excuseer	Please	Alstublieft (a.u.b)
Thank you	Dank u / bedankt	You're welcome	Graag gedaan
No problem	Geen probleem	Help!	Help!
I don't feel well	Ik voel me niet goed.	May I have the bill please?	De rekening al- stublieft.
Could you show me the way to ...?	Weet u de weg naar ...?	What's the time?	Hoe laat is het?



## Places

Theatre	Theater	Pub/bar	Café / bar
Cinema	Cinema / bioscoop	Concert hall	Concertzaal
Airport	Luchthaven	Railway station	Treinstation
Hospital	Ziekenhuis	Police	Politie

## Food and drinks

Milk	Melk	Water	Water
Coffee	Koffie	Bread	brood
Cheese	Kaas	Meat	Vlees
Fish	Vis	Vegetable	Groenten
Fruit	Fruit	French Fries	Frietjes
Vegetarian	Vegetarisch		

## Language courses at Ghent university

If you are staying in Belgium for a longer time, you might want to learn some more Dutch. The University Language Centre (UCT) offers excellent Dutch courses at various levels. The Language Centre guarantees high-quality University language education by experienced teachers. The sessions take place in relatively small groups to guarantee an interactive approach. Most levels start at the beginning of each semester. For more information such as prices and schedules, we refer you to the [UCT website](#).

### University Language Centre

Campus Ufo, Ufo – Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat 136

uct@ugent.be

T +32 9 264 36 81

Info and opening hours: [www.uct.ugent.be](http://www.uct.ugent.be)

# Chapter 11

## Covid 19 measures

Hopefully, we do not need to take Covid into account. In case the pandemic is still going on, you can find all information on the following sites: [Measures Belgium](#)  
[Measures UGent](#)

In the pandemic, these were the basic rules we followed in Belgium.

### Basic rules

- Wash your hands regularly
- Wear a face mask
- Keep a distance of 1,5m
- Limit your close contacts
- Look out for vulnerable people
- Ventilate indoor spaces
- Take your activities outside

If you have questions, feel free to contact us.