Brugge (Zeebrugge)
Belgium Port Guide

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Toms Brugge (Zeebrugge) Cruise Port Guide: Belgium

This guide includes port maps, a map of Blankenberge train station to Brugge station, walking tour maps for Brugge showing key tourist sites and location of canal boat docks. Riding a canal boat is a must!

Brugge is a charming, pedestrian-friendly city. There aren't many vehicles, it's mostly people on foot or bicycles. Walkways are flat and there are few steps to climb.

The architecture is striking with many beautiful buildings. The parks are beautiful and there are many museums, churches, and places to shop. Be sure to take a canal boat ride for scenic views of the city and buy some delicious chocolate.

Brugge is an outstanding example of a medieval historic settlement which has maintained its historic fabric as this has evolved over the centuries, and where original Gothic constructions form part of the town's identity. It is an outstanding example of an architectural ensemble illustrating significant stages in the commercial and cultural fields in medieval Europe, of which the public, social, and religious institutions are a living testimony.

As one of the commercial and cultural capitals of Europe, Brugge developed cultural links to different parts of the world. It is closely associated with the school of Flemish Primitive painting. (Source: Unesco website)

Zeebrugge is one of the largest ports in Europe covering an area 2.4 by 3.2 miles. It is a commercial port with many vehicles moving cargo so it is unsafe for pedestrians. You cannot walk through the port area and will be stopped at the port gate if you are on foot.

Cruise ships provide a shuttle bus service to Blankenberge train station for trains to Brugge. My preference is to pre-arrange a taxi service to take me directly to center city Brugge.

Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zeebrugge port map</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three travel methods to Brugge – 1) the most complicated, 2) the fastest/easiest, and 3) the most common</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel via shuttle bus from the port to Blankenberge and a train to Brugge</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Brugge train station to Markt Square, the center of Brugge</td>
<td>4-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting around Brugge</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map of central Brugge</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markt square, Church of Our Lady</td>
<td>8-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canal boat rides</td>
<td>10-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle rental, Brugge Town Hall, Basilica of the Holy Blood, Choco-Story Museum</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ‘Princely Beguinage Ten Wijngaarde’</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning your visit</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User Feedback, Copyright Notice, Terms and Conditions for use of Toms Port Guides</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Caveat

Information contained herein is believed to be accurate. PLEASE verify the information you use for your travel plans. Opinions expressed are my own. This port guide is protected by copyright law - see the last page of this guide for legal notices.

Tom Sheridan

Note: I would like to thank Mike Engelberg for his help on this port guide.
Zeebrugge Port

Zeebrugge is a HUGE port with outer and inner harbors in a 2.4 by 3.2 mile area. **You CANNOT walk between the port gate and your ship.** This is a commercial port with many vehicles moving cargo. It is dangerous for pedestrians. If you try to walk into the port, you will be stopped by security guards. The ONLY way to enter the port is in a vehicle (bus, van, automobile).

Cruise ships dock at Wielingen, Albert II, Leopold II, Zweedse Kaai, and Britania. The main dock areas for cruise ships are:
1) Leopold II (Harbour Mole). It's next to the docks for P&O Ferries.
2) Zweedse Kaai (Swedish Quay). A new cruise terminal will be built at this dock in 2014 costing 4 million euro.

How to Get to Brugge?

**The Most Complicated Travel Method**
The most complicated and time consuming route to Brugge is a port shuttle bus to the port gate, then ride coastal trams, trains, and walk from Brugge train station to center city. I do not recommend this complicated, time consuming travel method.

**The Fastest and Easiest Travel Method**
We booked an 8 passenger taxi-van to pick us up at our ship. In 25 minutes, we were in downtown Brugge. We spent five and a half hours exploring Brugge. Round trip 2012 taxi cost was 100 euros (~ $ 16 per person). **Book your taxi before your ship arrives in port.** There are several taxi companies; we used Taxi Snel, info@taxisnel.be www.taxisnel.be +32 50 36 36 49 +32 50 33 44 55

**The Most Common Travel Method**
Cruise ships provide a shuttle bus to/from Blankenberge train station. Your ship may offer this for free or charge ~$ 8/person each way. It's a 10-20 minute ride from your ship to Blankenberge train station. Crowds are usually smaller at the train station in the morning; try to get an early bus from your ship to Blankenberge.
Train tickets are ~ 6 euro to Brugge round trip. Trains run ~ once an hour; travel time is 14 minutes. From Brugge train station, walk 1.4 Km (18 minutes) or take a bus (6 minutes and 2 euro) to Brugge Markt center.

**Caution re taking the coastal tram from Blankenberge train station back to your ship.**
You can't see cruise ships from the coastal tram. Unless you know the correct tram stop for your ship, you may end up stranded along the road outside the port. In addition, you are not permitted to enter the port on foot. There may or may not be a port shuttle bus at the security gate to take you to your ship.
We saw cruisers lined up at the security gate shouting to buses and cabs asking for a ride to their ship. If there is space in the bus or van you might get aboard. Otherwise, you have to hope that a later bus or van has space. Consequently, if you are returning to the port on the train from Brugge to Blankenberge, the trouble-free way to get back to the ship from Blankenberge is your ship's shuttle bus.
The Ship's Bus to Blankenberge Train Station:
Depending on where your ship is docked, it's a 10-20 minute bus ride to Blankenberge Train Station. The train schedule changes during the day from 20 to 60 minute intervals; the train ride is 14 minutes. **Train schedule changes almost every day. Check the schedule for the day you will be in Zeebrugge at [http://www.b-rail.be/main/N/](http://www.b-rail.be/main/N/).

The schedule below is for August 15, 2012

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The train is ~ 6 euros round trip. Google estimates it's a 1.4 Km and 18 minute walk from the Brugge Train Station to Markt square, (see map below). If you don't want to walk, it's a 6 minute bus ride (2 euros) from Brugge train station to Markt.
Map Coordinates

Zeebrugge Port - Zweedse Kaai (Swedish Quay) = 51.339513,3.207051
Blankenberge train station = 51.312595,3.133638
Brugge train station = 51.197976,3.21784
Brugge Markt square = 51.20892,3.22424

Throughout this port guide, I list map coordinates for tourist sites and points of interest. Enter these coordinates in Google or Bing Maps to find the exact location on the map. Google shows a down pointing green arrow at the exact location and a red balloon at the nearest street address. Bing maps show a blue dot at the exact location. Use the “Get Directions” function and specify you want the walking route between map coordinates. Here is the technique to create the walking route map (shown on the previous page) from Brugge train station to Brugge Markt square:

See the Google Map “Get Directions” screen (photo at left)
Open Google Maps “Get Directions” and enter:
- map coordinates for the Brugge train station in box “A”
- map coordinates for Brugge Markt square in box “B”

Then, click on the walking man icon shown by the red arrow.

Google Maps draws the walking route, shows street names, and estimates walking distance and time.

Bus Lines from Brugge Train Station to Downtown Brugge
For bus information see http://www.delijn.be/index.htm
NOTE: Station = Brugge Train Station
Brugge center city stop is Markt. Other stops near the Markt are Biekorf and Wollestraat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
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<td>Centrum: Station - Markt - Biekorf - Station - Katelijneparking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ver-Assebroek: Station – Wollestraat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A.Z. St.-Lucas: Biekorf - Station (via parking Bargeplein)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Assebroek (Peerdeke): Markt - Biekorf - Station (via parking Bargeplein)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Parking Bargeplein: Biekorf - Station (bus naar Assebroek)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sint-Pieters: Station – Markt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>St.-Jozef: Station – Markt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Koolkerke: Station – Markt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>St.-Andries (Hermitage): Biekorf - Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>St.-Kruis (Malehoek): Station – Wollestraat</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>St.-Michiels (Kloosterhof): Biekorf – Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Kristus-Koning: Biekorf – Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Hertsvelde: Biekorf – Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Assebroek (Sint-Kruis): Station – Wollestraat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>A.Z. St.-Jan: Station – Markt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Sint-Jozef: Station – Markt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To find the timetable for a bus line, go to http://reisinfo.delijn.be/dienstregelingen/

There are many bus lines outside the Brugge Train Station. Here is the schedule for bus line 1 (below). The bus runs every 20 minutes and takes 6 minutes from the Brugge train station to Markt in downtown Brugge. The ticket cost is 2 euros on the bus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bus Line 1 timetable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bus Stops to Markt</strong></td>
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<td>Biekorf</td>
<td>8:09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brugge Centrum (Merk)</td>
<td>8:15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assenbroek Peedeleke</td>
<td>8:21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ver-Assenbroek</td>
<td>8:27</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bus Stops from Markt</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Biekorf</td>
<td>9:09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brugge Centrum (Merk)</td>
<td>9:15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assenbroek Peedeleke</td>
<td>9:21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ver-Assenbroek</td>
<td>9:27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bus Stops in Brugge Center</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Markt</td>
<td>10:09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wollestraat</td>
<td>10:39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bus Stops in the Center of Brugge**

- **Biekorf Bus Stop**
  - Map coordinates for bus stops in Brugge Markt area
    - Biekorf bus stop = 51.209824,3.223258
    - Markt bus stop = 51.208722,3.224867
    - Wollestraat bus stop = 51.207976,3.225543

For more guides, see www.TomsPortGuides.com
Brugge Central City  Comments by Mike Engelberg:

The main Travel Information Center in Brugge is located west of Markt, at the end of Steenstraat, about 10 minutes' walk. It is not worth the trip. It is much too busy and has only a few people helping. Plus, they know absolutely nothing about public transportation. They were a total bust.

Somewhat better is City Hall, which is in the square a few minutes' walk east of Markt. The finance department there has tons of literature, and clerks willing to help. Ask for a street map of the town, and perhaps suggestions about what to see and how to get there.

Banks (for ATMs) are located primarily along Steenstraat, west of Markt. The banks congregate around a verdant square, Simon Stevin Plein, on Steenstraat about halfway between Markt and the Travel Information Center. This square seemed busier and nicer than Markt.

Restaurants are also in the Stevin Plein area, as well as along other streets that emanate from Markt. Steenstraat is the primary retail street. Another retail street, Mariastraat, runs south from Stevin Plein. Visitors tend to use Steenstraat; city dwellers seem to prefer Mariastraat.

Belgian chocolate stores are everywhere. Prices might be slightly cheaper along Mariastraat.

Belgian waffle stores and carts are numerous as well. We noticed a small waffle store along Steenstraat, west of Stevin Plein, which was very busy because it had good prices. For example, a 2.5-euro plain waffle we purchased in Markt was 1.8 euros at the store on Steenstraat.

Bathroom facilities are available near City Hall and at the train station. There is also a bathroom facility in the church complex on the south side of Markt, but it was not open when we needed it.

A grocery store is located along Ouide Burg near Nieuwstraat, just southeast of the Stevin square mentioned previously.

The highlight of Brugge is its canal system. Several boat companies offer canal rides. Fares are similar. The company we used is at Dijver and Nieuwstraat. The fare was 7.6 euro, no senior discount. Canal boat rides take perhaps 30 minutes, and are a must. Don't leave Brugge without taking a canal boat ride. Don't miss the city's charm.

Enjoy your visit to Brugge,
Mike Engelberg

Websites for information on Brugge


Video introduction to Brugge = http://foto.brugge.be/dl/filmen.wmv


See a marked up a section of the Brugge map (on the following page) highlighting the streets mentioned by Mike Engelberg and important tourist sites.
Brugge Markt Square (map coordinates = 51.20892,3.22424)

Begin your tour at this impressive square. The Belfry is an imposing structure; the tourist brochure describes it: *Bruges’ most important tower stands 83 metres tall and houses a treasury, an impressive clock mechanism and a carillon with 47 silver-toned bells. Your reward after a climb up the tower’s 366 stairs is a breathtaking and unforgettable panoramic view of Bruges and its surroundings. Admission ~ 8 euros* 

Markt Square (photo - below)  Belfry (photo - right)

It's exciting to visit Markt Square, the center of the city, to take in the beauty, visit the shops, take photos, and begin to explore Brugge. The city “wakes up” between 9 and 10 am. Horse drawn carriage rides begin and end at Markt. The half-hour ride costs ~ 35 euros with room for five.

Two “must see” sites are:
1. Michelangelo's Pieta' at the Church of Our Lady, and
2. Views of the city from Canal Boat rides.

Church of Our Lady  (map coordinates = 51.204295,3.22413)

Built from the 13th to 15th centuries, the church has a valuable art collection including Michelango's Madonna and Child (Pieta') in white marble. 

See photo at right. 

The church has many paintings, interesting sculptures, plus sepulchers and tombs of Mary of Burgundy and Charles the Bold. Hours are 9:30-12:30 and 1:30-4 pm Monday-Saturday and 1:30-4 pm on Sunday. Admission is free for the Church and Madonna and Child altar. There is a ~ 3.00 euro charge to visit the Chapel of Charles and Mary and the museum.

I highly recommend visiting the church. As best I can tell, there are no restrictions on photography in the main part of the church.
We had to walk around the Church of Our Lady to find a door that was open – see photo below-left

This sculpture is interesting (photo above)

Main Altar – photo above
Canal Boat Rides = “A Must”

To appreciate the beauty and charm of Brugge, you must go on a Canal Boat ride. Rides begin at 10 AM. Tickets are ~7.60 euro; the ride takes 30 minutes. You can't buy tickets for a future ride; you only buy them for the next ride. Boats take about 20 passengers so they sell 20 tickets at a time and you either wait until a boat returns to the dock (up to 30 minutes) or you walk to another dock to see if the lines are shorter. There are five different docks where you can buy tickets and board a boat – see the map below.

Boat dock map coordinates:
51.208071,3.227649  51.207327,3.227896  51.206857,3.226953  51.205689,3.225262  51.203855,3.224578

The map below shows all five of the canal boat docks. I created this Google Map using the “Get Directions” function with each boat dock listed in the boxes “A” through “E”. Then I clicked on the walking man icon (red arrow) to get the walking route. It is 650 meters and 8 minutes to walk from “A” to “E”
Canal boat rides are an excellent and relaxing way to “take in” the beauty and charm of Brugge. The boat quietly and slowly passes through the city giving you a unique perspective of the architecture and parks.
Bicycle Rental

Brugge is a pedestrian friendly city with very few vehicles. It is mostly people walking and riding bicycles. To reach the far corners of the city, you might want to rent a bicycle. Four hour rentals are ~ 6 euros. Eight hours are ~ 10 euros. A deposit is required ~ 13 euros. You can rent electric powered bikes at higher prices. I don't know why you'd need a powered bike because the land is flat except for the slight elevations over bridges.

There are bike rental sites at the train station, next to Markt square, and several other locations in the city.

This website lists several bicycle rental sites:

Also, check these websites:
http://www.fietsenpopelier.be/

Popular Tourist Sites – see the map on page 7 of this guide

The Bruges Town Hall  City Hall  (map coordinates = 51.208382,3.227608)

Built in 1376, it is one of the oldest town halls in the Low Countries. The city has been ruled from here for over 700 years. The Gothic hall is a work of art in itself, with its splendid 19th century murals and a colourful vaulted ceiling. The painted figures depict Bruges’ glorious past. The theme ‘citizens and government’ sheds light on the eternal power struggle between the city government, the sovereigns, and the people of Bruges.

Open: every day from 9:30 to 17:00 hrs Closed: 01/01, Ascension Day (afternoon) and 25/12
Tickets: ~ € 2

Basilica of the Holy Blood  (map coordinates = 51.208187,3.226622)

On ground level: St. Basil's Chapel (1139-1149) in roman style.
The first floor chapel, converted into gothic style in the 15th century, contains a.o. the famous Relic of the Holy Blood (worship: every Friday).
Church services on Sundays: 8 a.m. & 11 a.m.

The museum displays the reliquary of the Holy Blood, clerical vestments and paintings.
Opening hours
April-14th October: 9.30 a.m.-12.00 a.m. & 2 p.m.-5 p.m
15th October-March: 10 a.m.-12.00 a.m. & 2 p.m.-5 p.m.
Closed: 1st January, 1st November. Winter: Wednesday afternoon

Entrance fee  Chapel: free  Treasure-chamber: ~ 1,50 euro

Choco-Story Museum  (map coordinates = 51.210762,3.226224)

It's a short distance north of Markt square. The tourist brochure describes it as:
A great experience! You are immersed in the ancient Mexican world of the Mayas and the Aztecs for whom chocolate was the drink of the gods and cocoa beans a means of payment. The chocoholic gets to find out all about the production of chocolate truffles, chocolates, hollow figures and bars of chocolate.

Opening hours: daily between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Closed: 1/1-13/1, 10-21/01, 24, 25 and 31/12.
Entrance fee ~ 7,00 euro  Students, seniors: 6,00
The ‘Princely Beguinage Ten Wijngaarde’

Map coordinates for small whitewashed houses = 51.201504,3.222188
Map coordinates for medieval gate = 51.201729,3.223744

This is near the Train Station and next to Minnewater park. The main entrance is the “Medieval Gate”

With its whitewashed house fronts, tranquil convent garden and beguinage museum, it was founded in 1245. Today, the nuns of the Order of Saint Benedict inhabit the site. The Beguinage entrance (medieval) gate closes without fail at 6.30 p.m.

Small houses in the inner court are between 300 and 400 years old. Formerly the houses were inhabited by Beguins. Beguins were not nuns, but devout women famed for their good work. Many dedicated their lives caring for the sick, whilst others made bobbin lace. The huge lawn on the inside is covered with daffodils in springtime - beautiful!

Opening hours  Monday-Saturday : 10.00-17.00 h. Sunday : 14.30-17.00 h.
Prices  The beguinage : free  Beguine's house: ~2 euro

It is a short walk from the train station under the highway to the Beguinage area. Walking paths are shown by dashed lines on this map below. The two streets to Markt Square are shown.
This is a beautiful, peaceful area to explore and photograph. The Minnewater park is on the right side of the canal. It has a hotel. The Medieval Gate is at the end of a bridge shown as the blue dot on the map above.

The map above is a Microsoft Bing “Birdseye” view. Bing maps show walking pathways. Google Maps don't show walking paths, but they have the slick little yellow man icon you can drag onto the map to see street level photos. For a virtual tour, enter the map coordinates for the Medieval Gate on Google Maps. Set the view to Satellite and enlarge the image. Then drag the little yellow man icon onto the map and center it on the blue dots to see photos taken by other travelers. This is a great and fun way to preview your visit to Brugge.

### Planning your visit to Brugge

*Brugge is a wonderful city to visit and would be a great place to spend a vacation. If I had to pick a word to describe it, I'd say it is “relaxing”. It is quiet and spotlessly clean. There is no noise from traffic because it is a pedestrian city. The architecture is amazing and the landscape is wonderful with canals, parks, and pathways.*

*One of your first decisions is how you plan to get to Brugge from Zeebrugge Port. I have described the travel issues in this guide.*

*Brugge is ideal for self-guided touring.* We were comfortable exploring the city on our own as most people are. We took a canal boat ride, visited a few sites, walked the streets, and, of course, did some shopping and tasting of the chocolate. If you plan an extensive walking tour to see everything or if you wish to spend a lot of time in the 16 museums, you might want to be with a group and a guide.

I have provided map coordinates and tips on how to create your own walking routes to the sites you wish to visit and I would like to remind you to visit these websites:


*Have a great day in Brugge,*

*Tom Sheridan*
User Feedback Is Welcome

Goal
My guides are designed to help you plan a great cruise vacation by providing information such as where the ship docks, location of tourist sites, public transit, walking tour maps, things to see and do, travel issues unique to the port, etc. Knowledge of ports is important when planning shore excursions because you have to make many decisions and commitments long before your ship docks. I believe the information in this guide is accurate, however you are responsible to verify accuracy of the information that you use to plan your vacation.

Information on cruise ports frequently changes such as bus routes, admission fees to sites, rental car locations, etc. Cruise Critic is the best source for up-to-date, detailed information on travel details for shore excursions, reviews of cruise ships, etc. There are many knowledgeable people on Cruise Critic who are willing to share their expertise and travel experience. I highly recommend www.CruiseCritic.com; it's free to join.

Why feedback is important
User feedback helps me make corrections and improve the format and content in my quest to produce the “ultimate” port guides. I welcome offers to collaborate with me or provide materials for use in my guides.

PLEASE Help “spread the word” about my website
The only negative feedback I get is, “I wish I knew about your port guides before my vacation”. Please tell your friends and post a reference to my guides and website on the blogs. To receive email notification when new guides are available, send your email address to me at TomsPortGuides@gmail.com

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Fortunately, a friend of mine on that ship complained to the purser and the ship stopped violating my copyright.

If there is any question about use of my guides, contact me at  TomsPortGuides@Gmail.com

Tom Sheridan