

A
warm
welcome



ANTWERP AWAITS YOU

**Antwerp,
a pocket-sized metropolis
in the centre of Europe**



Welcome to Antwerp

You may know that Antwerp is Europe's second largest port. Or that the city is a world-leading diamond centre. Or that it's the birthplace of quirky fashion. You may even have read in Michael Pye's widely acclaimed book, 'The Glory Years', that in the 16th century Antwerp was as sensational and international as New York was in the 20th century.

Actually, it doesn't matter how or what you know about Antwerp. What matters is its people. For just as the river Scheldt has always flowed through the city, entrepreneurs, investors and its residents have been drawn to Antwerp for centuries. It is they who inspire and set things in motion. In golden years and in dark times. And just as the city knows how to deal with the river's constant ebb and flow, the people of Antwerp never give up. They keep on doing business and innovating in their own unique way. This exceptional drive, this creative energy, this inventiveness is illustrated here through the stories of people who, in their own way, contribute to the city's success.

Get to know Antwerp better. Make Antwerp come alive with countless 'Do & See' tips from both international and local experts.

Interested in finding out more? Please do. One more thing: we'd love to meet you, in Antwerp or anywhere else. You can find out how to reach us on page 92.

Wishing you pleasurable reading and a warm welcome to Antwerp.

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WELCOME
TO

A
city
for everyone

THIS IS WHY I LOVE ANTWERP

Newcomers to Antwerp realise that a pocket-sized green metropolis really exists. It's easy to meet other people, build a new home, and simply just fall in love...

"Multilingualism is one of Antwerp's greatest advantages. Almost everybody speaks English."

Alexander Varvarenko, Latvia

"I arrived here as a 10-year old from Latvia. My father was an expat managing a stevedoring company and we chose Antwerp out of a list of Hamburg, Geneva, Houston, Miami and Singapore. Why? A great mix of advantages in location, culture, values, traditions, proximity to the sea and cost of living. I find Antwerp almost synonym to hedonism. To me Antwerp is all about culture, sports infrastructure, historic landmarks, restaurants and quick access to Amsterdam, Paris, London, Düsseldorf and Brussels. When I'm abroad, I'm an enthusiastic ambassador for the city."

"Antwerp is like a smaller version of Paris. Super easy to travel around and very diverse."

Julien Burlat, France

"I fell in love with Sophie from Belgium and for seven years I travelled between Paris and Antwerp. When we were ready for our own business, we didn't hesitate to choose Antwerp. Our restaurant Dôme was an instant hit. After two-and-a-half years we received a Michelin-star. Later we started Domestic Bakery. After 15 years we decided to focus solely on the bakery. Antwerp is a perfect place to open a business. During the week, there's a lot of businessmen and during the weekend, many tourists visit the town. They love to spend money on quality products. You have to work hard to succeed, but the clientele is here."

Julien Burlat divides his time between *Domestic Bakery* (three branches in Antwerp) and consulting hotels on how to run their kitchens.



Alexander Varvarenko is a shipping and digital technology entrepreneur at *Shipnext*.

"Being honest builds unbreakable trust and that pays off in the long term."

James Kruger, South Africa



"I'm originally from Cape Town. When I got a job offer from Saatchi & Saatchi Brussels, I picked Antwerp as a place to live because the language in South Africa, Afrikaans, is so close to Dutch. I was very lucky to meet Rizon Parein (founder of USBYNIGHT, a design and creativity festival) the moment I arrived here. We became good friends and he introduced me to a lot of people."

I live in Borgerhout, a beautiful multicultural neighbourhood where I feel very much at home. Antwerp is also an immensely creative city across all sectors, with an abundance of art, culture and food. My tip: always be honest. No matter how hard it might sound and even if it means earning less money. Being honest builds unbreakable trust and that pays off in the long term."

James Kruger, co-founder of **FCKLCK.STUDIO**, a multidisciplinary creative studio.



"In my field of work, everyone speaks English. That's not only very comfortable, it also makes me feel very welcome in the city."

Izumi Hongo, Japan

"I came to Antwerp because it was my dream to study fashion in the city of Dries Van Noten. Later I started my own fashion brand Van Hongo and opened my atelier-shop in 2011. Once I settled in the city, I really liked the life here. As I am from Tokyo, it was refreshing to do almost all my activities by foot or bicycle. All my friends live in my neighbourhood. In my field of work, fashion and architecture, everyone speaks English. That's not only very comfortable, it also makes me feel very welcome in the city. At the same time I do my best to study Dutch and French."

Artist/designer Izumi Hongo was born in Tokyo and studied fashion at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts Antwerp.

"So many talented people have chosen to live here. It feels like a privilege to share the city with them."

Débora Gomes de Oliveira, Brazil

Débora Gomes de Oliveira, founder of *boter.dev*. A company active in IT services and IT consulting.

"Antwerp is very unique in that it's small and charming but at the same time international, diverse and culturally vibrant. The city has managed to keep a balanced investment strategy in infrastructure, entrepreneurship, education, social security and the arts. To me, it's one of the most liveable and authentic cities in Europe and that's why I chose to move here. You can walk and take the bike anywhere and it's filled with local shops. Integrating into Antwerp community takes a bit of effort and time, but you'll be absolutely accepted."

"Integrity is key in Antwerp. I can really recommend interacting with other entrepreneurs, it's very inspirational."

Asser Zaky, Egypt

"I'm from Egypt. The moment I arrived at the stunning Central Station, I knew I wanted to stay in Antwerp for a while. In no time, I found myself immersed in the culture and the society. People are kind, honest and open minded. That makes my daily interactions very easy."

Integrity is key in Antwerp. I can really recommend interacting with other entrepreneurs, it's very inspirational. People are very polite, as long as you approach them politely. Once there is a connection, it's easy to make friends. Language is no barrier. To the contrary, everybody speaks English. That makes it challenging for me to learn Dutch! I've never felt like a foreigner here. It helps that there are a lot of options to connect with people."



Asser Zaky completed a Master's degree in Global Management at Antwerp Management School and works as a supply chain engineer at *Tenneco Automotive*.

“Antwerp’s entrepreneurial spirit is firmly rooted in its historical legacy as a hub for trade and commerce.”

David Gotlib, Belgium



David Gotlib is president of the Antwerp Diamond Bourse, diamond dealer and the creative mind behind a stylistically diverse cufflinks brand.

“When my grandfather returned to Antwerp after the atrocities of the Second World War, he was welcomed with open arms and given the opportunity to start his diamond business by the mayor. The generosity of this city towards my family, and how it created our future, is something I still cherish deeply. Antwerp is a vibrant city.

The quality of life here is excellent, the unique blend of history, culture, innovation, creativity and connectivity make Antwerp a very pleasant and inspiring place. We are a very diverse industry, with people from all corners of the world, yet we’re a tight-knit community where personal, face-to-face relationships are indispensable.”

Jump to page 98 for the insiders’ guide. Tips from the international locals and interviewees.



“There’s freedom of speech, you can exercise your rights. A place without excessive rules or regulations.”

Kiarash Nabavieh, Iran

“From the moment I moved here from Iran, I experienced Antwerp as a dynamic cultural city with a vibrant expat community. I definitely recommend Voka – the Chamber of Commerce, and the Facebook group ‘Expats in Antwerp’.

Antwerp is an open city. There’s freedom of speech, you can exercise your rights. It is also a place without excessive rules or regulations. It’s a blissful place where you can exercise your faith freely. I really consider it as ‘my city’! A personal tip: respect people’s personal space. Give them room to breathe. Otherwise you could easily come across as pushy. My secret to success? Embrace your ambition and go for it.”

Kiarash Nabavieh, co-founder of Flyetic. An easy-to-use, independent private jet booking platform.

PORT

A city with a world-class port



Port of Antwerp-Bruges is the largest European port for conventional cargo.

Port of Antwerp-Bruges is a critical hub in global maritime trade and logistics, accommodating the second largest integrated chemical cluster in Europe.

Major Economic Hub

The superb connectivity of Antwerp, its proximity to other major economic centres in Europe together with its business-like residents, means Antwerp has been a major economic hub for more than five centuries. Now, the second largest port in Europe, it is also home to Europe's largest integrated chemical cluster. By joining forces, the port platforms of Antwerp and Zeebrugge have strengthened their position in the global logistics chain. In 2022 the ports merged under a new name, Port of Antwerp-Bruges. It is now the largest European port for conventional cargo and the biggest European container port, with the widest range of value-added logistics and industrial services of any European port. Port of Antwerp-Bruges creates a total of

164,000 jobs directly and indirectly and adds economic value to the city of almost €21 billion. This accounts for more than six per cent of employment in Flanders, and almost four per cent of the total Belgian workforce. This makes Port of Antwerp-Bruges an important lifeline for the Belgian economy.

Smart People, Smart Port

Port of Antwerp-Bruges has always been a laboratory for industrial innovation and modernisation. To become smarter, safer and more efficient, the Port continuously collaborates with innovative partners and is itself an innovation platform. In the future, 5G will form an important part of the Port's digital nervous system, enabling real-time transmission and processing of images and

data from drones and cameras. Several pilot projects are currently underway, such as real-time video streaming between tugs, to achieve better and safer co-ordination on the water. With the help of a digital twin (digital copy of the port area), smart sensors or smart cargo inspection cameras and oil spill detection systems, as well as autonomous drones able to detect waste, the Port will be able to monitor all its activities digitally. The Port is also collaborating with partners and authorities to find solutions that enable more goods to be transported in a sustainable way. Semi-autonomous shipping is one example. Other innovations which monitor and improve port traffic

such as smart asphalt and digital applications like inland applications, will contribute to a more mobile port.

NxtPort, a subsidiary of Port of Antwerp-Bruges, contributes to smarter operations and efficiency by simplifying and working more transparently when it comes to sharing data. In this way, all players in the supply chain get the right information at the right time. Port of Antwerp-Bruges is also a proud founding father of The Beacon, a community of 100 companies devoted to advanced digital technology.

Sustainable Green Energy Hub

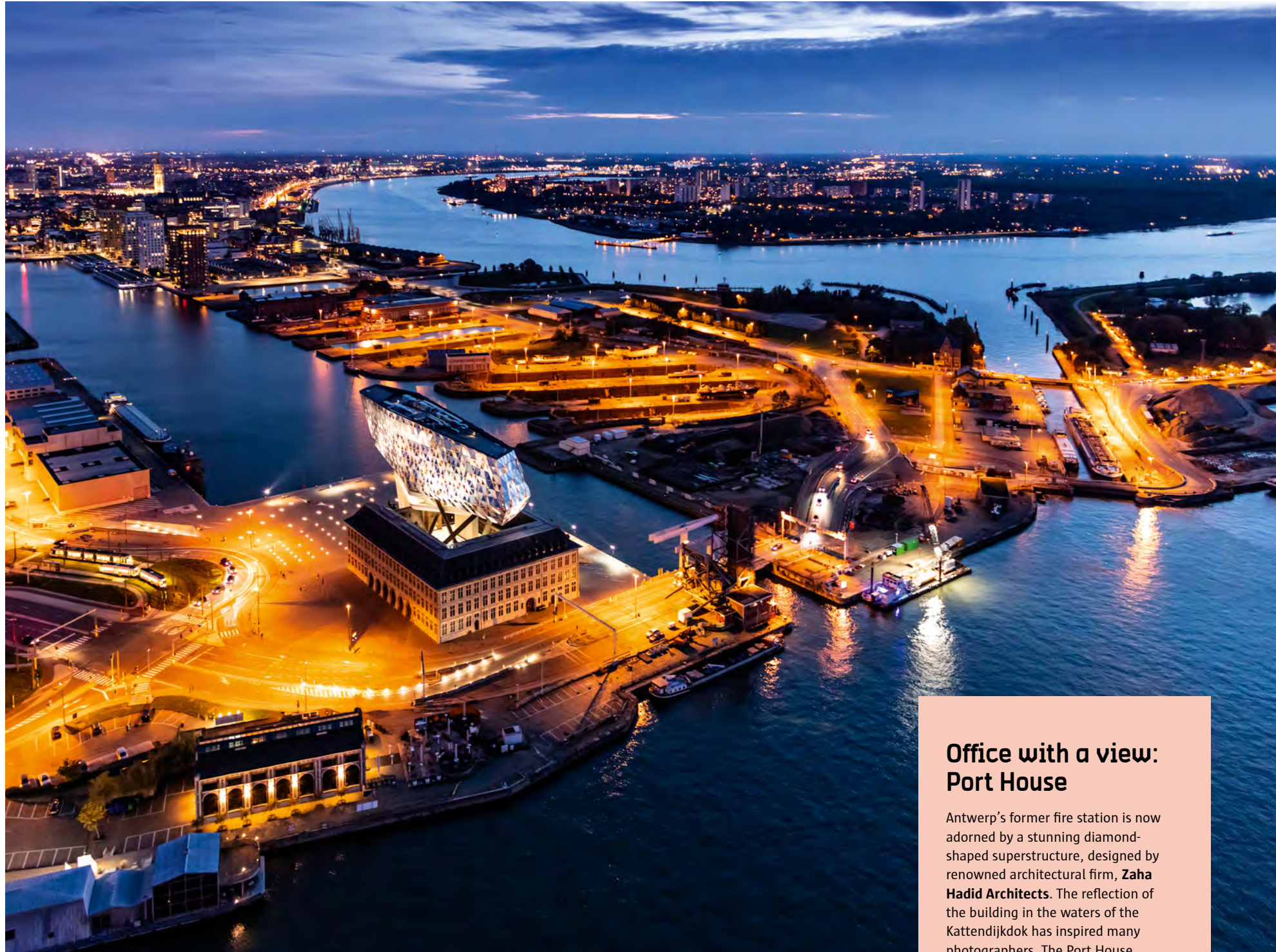
In collaboration with international and Belgian stakeholders, and in step with the global transition to a circular economy and major investments in energy transition, Port of Antwerp-Bruges aims to become climate neutral by 2050. With major investments in energy transition, the Port is already working on initiatives to reduce its CO₂ footprint of around 18 tonnes of carbon per year, mainly coming from its production facilities.

The leading chemical and energy companies also aim to make a significant contribution towards the climate

objectives of Belgium and the EU. These include numerous trailblazing projects such as the Antwerp@C carbon reduction programme, exploring how hydrogen and carbon capture and storage could be used to help lower emissions across the industrial cluster in Antwerp. The NextGen District, located close to the large integrated petrochemical cluster, is a hotbed of pioneers focussing on a cleaner and greener world. Entrepreneurial innovators with a clear vision on sustainability are invited to collaborate on projects such as marine fuels alternatives, like LNG, shore power and green hydrogen.

A world-class port





Evening view over the City of Antwerp with the Port House in front.

Office with a view: Port House

Antwerp's former fire station is now adorned by a stunning diamond-shaped superstructure, designed by renowned architectural firm, **Zaha Hadid Architects**. The reflection of the building in the waters of the Kattendijkdok has inspired many photographers. The Port House marks the end of the Eilandje and the beginning of the port.

GDP for Life Sciences and Health

Port of Antwerp-Bruges is the first seaport in the world to operate across the entire logistics chain in accordance with the EU Good Distribution Practices (GDP), which concern the handling of Life Sciences and Healthcare products.

Port of Antwerp-Bruges has 63,000m of warehousing compliant with these GDP guidelines, and almost 9,000 plugs and sockets for refrigerated containers (reefers).

Additionally, Port of Antwerp-Bruges:

- is the world's largest coffee & cacao storage port
- has the biggest indoor storage capacity in Western Europe
- is the European market leader for sugar traffic and importing steel

Port and City Scale-up

An ecosystem has been developed to strengthen and further expand the maritime sector. Maritime Campus Antwerp (MCA) is the beating heart of maritime Europe, an initiative developed by Compagnie Maritime Belge (CMB). With the aim of collaboration and innovation, it hosts diverse organisations, ranging from large companies to startups as well as educational and research institutions. Facilities such as coworking, project and R&D spaces together with labs and studios are available at MCA. A modest start was made in the current MCA labs, however there are plans for a bigger building.

Together with Port of Antwerp-Bruges, City of Antwerp, Euronav and DxC technology, CMB and MCA have succeeded in bringing the American accelerator Plug & Play to Antwerp to launch a Maritime Innovation Platform. With its headquarters in Silicon Valley, Plug & Play brings startups and scale-ups from all over the world to Antwerp. All stakeholders join forces for a sustainable and prosperous future for their companies, Antwerp and Port of Antwerp-Bruges.

Q&A

With more than 300 scheduled services and 800 destinations, Port of Antwerp-Bruges is the second largest European port and a truly international operation. CEO Jacques Vandermeiren shares his insights about the Port of Antwerp-Bruges current developments and plans for the future.

What are the key factors in the success of Port of Antwerp-Bruges?

Port of Antwerp-Bruges is an important lifeline not just for the Belgian economy, but for global trade. With its numerous international connections, focus on sustainable growth and global network of representatives, our Port is at the heart of international trade. Moreover, through our subsidiary Port of Antwerp-Bruges International, we offer other ports and terminals multifaceted support, including consultancy, management solutions and investment projects. Antwerp is also home to our maritime training centre APEC, which offers training to professionals from all over the world.

What challenges does the Port of Antwerp-Bruges face to remain a leading international seaport?

The last few years have been challenging for every port and company. Just think of the Covid crisis, congestion, geopolitical tensions, the energy crisis, inflation. We live in a volatile world where, more than ever, you need to be agile, resilient and flexible. In looking for answers to all the complex problems, you need to work laterally. Transparency and partnerships are of great importance. If you're able to provide that, you'll find yourself in a stronger position.

What is something Port of Antwerp-Bruges is proud of?

As Port of Antwerp-Bruges we fully invest in modernising our infrastructure ourselves. Examples include new quay walls or the NextGen District, which is known as our circular economy hotspot. Together with our companies, we're working towards becoming climate neutral. On top of that, we're getting everything ready to receive and transfer hydrogen carriers to the hinterland. We'd like to become the first world port to reconcile the needs of economics, climate, people and the environment.

What added value does Antwerp, as a port city, bring to the table compared to other world ports?

In the European context, no other port is as central as Port of Antwerp-Bruges. We have the fastest and most efficient connection to continental Europe. The port is also the most ecological solution. Two-thirds of the

Jacques Vandermeiren

CEO Port of Antwerp-Bruges

European consumer market is within a radius of 500 kilometres from Port of Antwerp-Bruges. In the last 20 years, the volume of goods, loaded and unloaded, has more than doubled to 290 million tonnes. We are home to 1,400 companies, including Europe's biggest integrated chemical cluster. Both directly and indirectly, we create a total of 164,000 jobs, as well as pumping added value of €21 billion into the economy, which is equivalent to 4.5 per cent of Belgium's GDP.

What do international entrepreneurs and investors need to know when wanting to do business in Antwerp?

In Antwerp, international companies are welcomed by our dedicated team. They take care of all the necessary permits, taxation and other administrative procedures. We co-operate with Flanders Investment and Trade (FIT), customs, the Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain (FAVV), VLAIO for the grants and others. The role we play as the single point of contact is very convenient for corporates, and it's a free service. Trade facilitation is very much part of our culture and services. Ports in other countries don't have the same approach. Many international guests are surprised by our pragmatic way of working and doing business here in Belgium. We really do have a Can Do-Will Do mentality. If there's a problem, we will look for a solution.

Check out my favourites

1. Museum Plantin-Moretus

This impressive museum is located within walking distance of my present-day home, as well as my childhood home. It's a wonderful case study on how progressive Antwerp used to be when it comes to book printing. **A very good example of entrepreneurship.**

2. Handelsbeurs

During the Antwerp Golden Century, this was the place where everyone met up. It was an absolute hotspot. This stunningly renovated historical building **shows how innovative Antwerp used to be in the past.** Nowadays, we still play that innovative role.

3. Instroom

A wonderful idea from the likeable top chef Seppe Nobels. At Instroom, Seppe serves **fusion cuisine 2.0 with the help of refugees and highly motivated people** who don't have Dutch as their native language. It's right next to my workplace, the Port House.

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"We would like to become the first world port to reconcile the needs of economics, climate, people and the environment."

Jacques Vandermeiren

ANTWERP
DIAMOND
CAPITAL

A city of brilliance



Antwerp is home to the most renowned diamond cutters in the world.

Going strong since the 15th century, Antwerp can proudly claim to be a Diamond Capital, thanks to the oldest and largest industry of pure diamonds worldwide.

Some refer to Antwerp as the Champions League of the diamond industry. Centuries of experience in diamond trading have given the city exceptional expertise in the field. Antwerp's combination of innovative technologies, sustainability, creativity and transparency makes it the centre of business in the global diamond industry.

How it started...

Over the eons, diamonds are formed in the centre of the earth. These precious gemstones are estimated to be between one and three-and-a-half trillion years old. The city's affinity with diamonds goes back a long way too. Documents have been discovered that would indicate that diamonds have been traded in Antwerp as

far back as 1447 AD. A century later, Antwerp was the New York of its era: a successful, international metropolis, with a shining role for the diamond industry.

... and how it's evolving

Today, Antwerp remains the centre of the global diamond trade. The Diamond District is literally situated in the centre of the city, close to the monumental Central Station. Within an area of less than one square mile, more than 1,600 registered diamond traders are active. No other city in the world houses four diamond exchanges, controls 86 per cent of the world's trade in rough diamonds and 50 per cent of the trade in polished diamonds. Each day, \$220 million worth of diamonds are traded, totalling an amazing

Why is Antwerp the diamond capital of the world

- **Oldest, largest and** most transparent and compliant diamond hub in the world
- Antwerp boasts **1,600 registered diamond companies**
- Antwerp has **four diamond bourses**, unique in the world
- **Unparalleled levels** of compliance and transparency



86%

of the world's rough diamonds
and 50% of all polished
diamonds are traded in Antwerp

The city houses four diamond exchanges.



Juwelenhuis Ruys is one of the
Antwerp's Most Brilliant Jewellers.



You will find many goldsmiths and jewellery
designers on Wijngaardstraat.

\$47 billion annually (ten-year average). The secret of Antwerp's success? An unparalleled, pioneering focus on compliance, transparency and innovation.

Innovation is King

Antwerp is used to combine ancient craft with innovative technologies. Antwerp is not only home to diamond wholesalers, traders and cutters but also to technical schools and research institutes. Startups in the city are inventing new technologies to maximise 'diamond brightness' from stones with the Antwerp Cut. In Antwerp, innovation is at the heart of the diamond industry. Clever initiatives with a focus on financing, automation, data-analytics, digitalisation, cross-industry networking and synthetic trade and production aim to make the industry future-proof. Startups introduce new business models and contribute to an ever-

increasing digitisation of processes. DiAntwerp, a newly developed online diamond trading platform illustrates how Antwerp diamantaires join forces and offer their high-end Antwerp products to international jewellery brand houses.

A Pioneering Role in Compliance

In Antwerp, state-of-the-art technology has been created to detect and screen lab-grown diamonds, to be able to distinguish them from natural diamonds. The establishment of the ASSURE-lab in Antwerp, an initiative of the Natural Diamond Council, is a prime example. Together, the University of Antwerp and the diamond industry are playing a pioneering role in compliance and the reliable verification of both natural and lab-grown diamonds.

The Global Leader in Transparency

Through the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, Antwerp has taken on a leadership role, setting the bar for consumer confidence. Antwerp firmly rejects diamonds originating from conflict areas. Working collaboratively with the Belgian federal government, all diamond imports and exports are physically controlled through the Diamond Office (DO), which serves as an example for diamond centres worldwide.

Certification is Everything

The Antwerp World Diamond Centre (AWDC) defends the interests of the Antwerp diamond sector and promotes Antwerp diamonds to the world. The expert gemologists of several global Certification Institutes are responsible for the grading and certification of polished diamonds.

One of them is the Antwerp-based HRD Antwerp (the Diamond High Council of Antwerp) which is also a reference for education. A diamond's quality is determined by the four C's: Carat (or weight), Colour, Clarity and Cut. Since every diamond is unique, determining the four C's ensures that a certified diamond can be identified anywhere, anytime.

Creative Entrepreneurs

Antwerp is known worldwide as a hub of creativity and innovative entrepreneurship. As a global diamond centre, it's no surprise that Antwerp's talented designers are skilled at turning precious stones and metals into unique and exquisite jewellery. Creative talents study at Antwerp's Royal Academy of Fine Arts, begin as jewellers and flourish within the city.

DIVA | Museum for Diamonds, Jewellery and Silver

To experience the close connection between Antwerp and diamonds, a visit to the diamond museum, DIVA, is highly recommended. DIVA is situated in the middle of the historic centre of Antwerp, a district that has been home to goldsmiths, jewellers and diamond merchants since the sixteenth century. Here, visitors can immerse themselves in the craft of silversmithing and Antwerp's amazing history of diamonds. In the comfort of your own chair you can already delve into DIVA's vast and rich online collections.

Antwerp's Most Brilliant Jewellers

Antwerp is a shopping paradise for jewellery and diamonds. Whether you're looking for authentic vintage jewellery, handcrafted jewels, pearls, engagement or wedding rings, Antwerp has it all. Across the city, you can find exquisite jewellery boutiques, with master craftsmen ready to advise. In Antwerp, you'll find recommended Antwerp's Most Brilliant Jewellers who meet rigorous quality standards for sustainability, safety, ethics, transparency, service and company stability. These are awarded the Antwerp's Most Brilliant label after an independent audit procedure, ensuring you can buy your 'pièce unique' with confidence.

“

“Whether in the latest Hollywood movie, on a celebrity's Insta page or in a luxury magazine... wherever a sparkling diamond catches your eye, there's one thing you can be sure of: the gem has travelled through Antwerp, at least once in its lifetime. The biggest and most unique stones always find their way to Antwerp to be polished by master polishers.”

”



Did you know?

The most popular diamond cut in the world, 'The Brilliant', was created in Antwerp in 1919 by Marcel Tolkowsky.

This diamond polisher was barely 19 years old when he discovered an ordinary mathematical formula by which a diamond could be cut to unlock its maximum light, brilliance and fire. Tolkowsky's calculations would serve as the basis for all future brilliant cut modifications and standards. Today, three-quarters of all colourless diamonds are cut in this brilliant, 57-faceted shape.

Q&A

International traders who are looking for unique 'run-of-mine' diamonds know the place to find the best gems: Antwerp. Bonas-Couzyn, founded in 1948, auctions rough diamonds imported from eight diamond mines in six countries on three different continents. Managing director Philip Hoymans explains why Antwerp is a world leader in diamonds.

What does Bonas-Couzyn specialise in?

We offer diamond companies original run-of-mine productions from eight different diamond mines, situated in Canada, Africa and Brazil. We sell our products by tender/ auction. Transparency and compliance are part of our DNA and every sale we close is monitored by a bailiff. Local traders and traders from countries like India, Israel and New York travel to Antwerp to inspect the rough diamonds in our fully equipped viewing rooms, with the intention to bid on them. The diamonds are then sent to the trader who placed the winning bid.

What is so unique about Antwerp, known as the diamond city?

It's well known in the international trade that Antwerp is the place to buy original diamond productions. While places such as India or Dubai are also popular when it comes to the purchase of diamonds, Antwerp offers many important advantages. One is transparency, ensured both by the Diamond Office and by the strict anti-money laundering policy. Belgium also enjoys a beneficial diamond tax policy and a politically stable economy. Additionally, Antwerp is well located between Asia and America. People like travelling to this part of Europe.

Is Antwerp a world centre for diamonds?

Beyond any doubt. The Antwerp Diamond industry and trade is brilliant and resilient, even though we only contribute a small percentage to the world's Gross Domestic Product. Nevertheless in Antwerp, we play at the highest level, let's call it the Champions League of diamonds. The presence of know-how, skill and professional ancillary services are unique in the world. Traders know that they will find the best products in Antwerp. But they also visit the city to enjoy its gastronomy and culture. One of the greatest advantages of the city is that you can get anywhere by foot. The diamond district is located close to the Central Station, an architecturally impressive building with international train connections to all the

Philip Hoymans

Managing Director Bonas-Couzyn

major cities in Europe. The journey to Brussels International Airport takes barely half-an-hour.

Which role does innovation play in this industry?

Innovation is of great importance, both in diamond mining and its processing. We are also focused on ensuring innovation within our field, the distribution industry. These days, major international brands and consumers want to know the origin of their diamond. We have the technology to create birth-certificates for the rough diamonds we sell. These certificates accompany our diamonds on their onward journey. This way, companies and clients will be able to link their diamond jewellery to the original diamond, the mine from which the diamond has been extracted and the place where it has been sold: Antwerp.

Check out my favourites

1. KMSKA

"A spectacular museum that recently has undergone a stunning renovation. Located in the lively Zuid district with lots of vibrant restaurants and bars."

2. Sir Anthony van Dijck

"This restaurant is an absolute hit with my international guests, every single time. Beautifully located in the historic Vlaeykensgang, a time machine transports you to the 16th century. On the menu are top-level Belgian classical dishes."

3. Belgian chocolate

"Just like diamonds, Belgian chocolate is known as a high-quality product. At DelRey, a family-run business, you will find refined chocolates and exclusive patisseries. A perfect souvenir."

More on page 98



"In Antwerp we play on the highest level, call it the Champions League of diamonds."

Philip Hoymans

FASHION

A city of fashion and shopping



Shopping at Zuid (the South).

As a city filled with headstrong fashion entrepreneurs, Antwerp is Belgium's favourite retail destination, standing among Paris, London, Milan and New York as one of the world's fashion capitals.

A well-known Master in Fashion

Antwerp owes its remarkable status within the international fashion industry first and foremost to its perennially popular Master in Fashion at Antwerp's Royal Academy of Fine Arts. The graduate fashion show is the highlight of the academic year and takes place each June.

Antwerp's Master's programme is considered one of the most prestigious and influential fashion degrees in the world. The success story of 'The Antwerp Six' (designers Ann Demeulemeester, Dries Van Noten, Walter Van Beirendonck, Dirk Van Saene, Dirk Bikkembergs and Marina Yee) inspire many

ambitious creatives to enrol. Every year, approximately 100 talented students from 40 different countries begin their education at the Academy. The focal points of the programme are creativity, an undeniable respect for craftsmanship, a healthy, critical take on fashion and a talent for innovation. Students who graduate from the Academy promote their roots and ensure Antwerp stays on the international fashion map by setting up their own collection or by launching their career at renowned fashion houses. A few examples: Pieter Mulier as creative director for Alaïa, Demna Gvasalia working at Balenciaga and Glenn Martens at Diesel, who also has his own collection, Y/project.



n°1
shopping
destination
in Belgium



Shopping at Dries van Noten in Het Modepaleis.

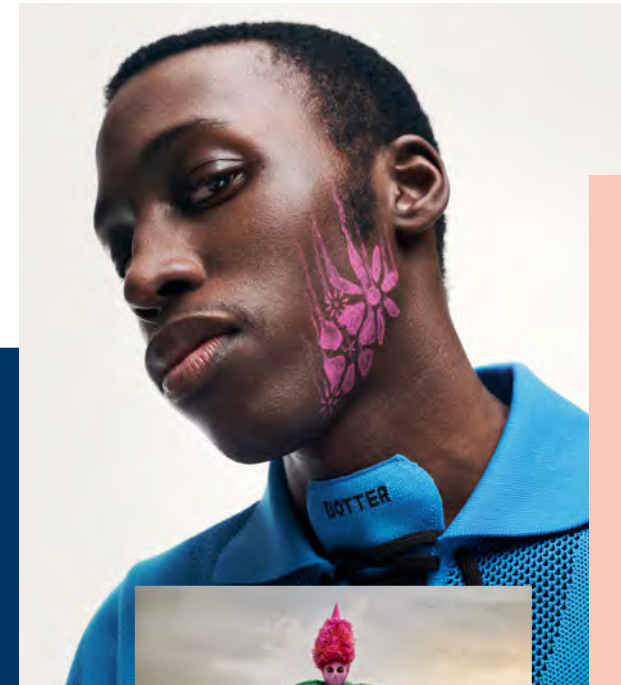


World-leading Fashion Museum in Antwerp

The second pillar of Antwerp's success story is MoMu, *the ModeMuseum Antwerpen*. This museum enjoys an enduring international reputation. Recently renovated and expanded, it remains the meeting point for everyone who wants to discover fashion. The collection comprises clothing, accessories and fabrics, with a focus on Belgian designers and alumni of the Master in Fashion at the Academy. Well-known names from the international fashion community are also represented.

A Scale for Success

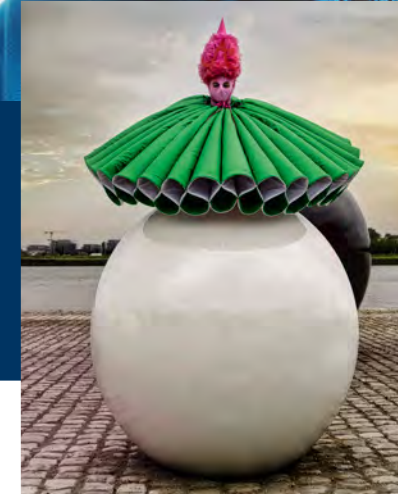
In Antwerp's bustling fashion eco-system, fashion entrepreneurs work hand in hand with students from the renowned Masters in Fashion. In this lively and diverse city, home to more than 170 nationalities, they meet and inspire each other, stylishly seizing opportunities to fulfill their ambitions. The scale of the city allows Antwerp's entrepreneurs to engage both clients and talent with ease. Antwerp is large enough to offer everything needed to achieve international success - professional competence,



Antwerp is a dynamic fashion hub and home to many designers from all over the world.

Highlights

- **11 million shoppers** annually on the city's busiest shopping street, the Meir (Belgium's 5th Avenue)
- **N°1 favourite retail destination** in Belgium (CBRE, Belgium Retail Survey)
- **Compact and walkable** retail area, with a diversity of shops
- **A tailor-made approach** to commercial urban development
- **Highly integrated retail**, food & beverage and hospitality sectors
- CEOWORLD magazine ranks the **Royal Academy of Fine Arts Antwerp** number 15 in its ranking of the best fashion schools of the world, and 9th in Europe (incl. UK) for 2022
- **MoMu in Top 7 best musea in the world** with the largest and most important collection in the field of contemporary Belgian fashion (Source: Condé Nast Traveler Hot List, 2022)



Re-opening MoMu, Fashion Balls.

networks, infrastructure and supporting organisations - and at the same time compact enough to make access easy. As a result, networking in the Antwerp fashion community goes quickly and smoothly.

Antwerp, Laboratory of Fashion

In the competitive world of fashion, differentiation is key. 'Antwerp fashion' defies easy categorisation, ensuring the whole world notices its latest creations. This unique approach is what connects Antwerp's entrepreneurs. Together, they insist on innova-

tion, change and growth, making Antwerp more than ever the laboratory of fashion. Antwerp inspires Flanders, Belgium, Europe and the rest of the world.

Driver of Economy

Fashion and retail are some of the drivers of Antwerp's economy, driving multiple crossover projects with other creative industries. Fashion designers, retailers and entrepreneurs within creative spheres such as production, photography, film, music, galleries or costume design make Antwerp

Antwerp, laboratory of fashion

With its vision for the fashion industry, the city looks ahead to the year 2030.

The city aims to **cultivate an environment of support for emerging talent and entrepreneurship** while strengthening Antwerp's brand image in fashion on a local and international level. Antwerp inspires the fashion industry to devise projects and programmes which focus on sustainability, local production, technology and digitalisation. Together with designers and entrepreneurs the city strengthens its position as an international top-listed fashion city and laboratory of fashion.



Antwerp boasts many home grown fashion labels.

an experimental hothouse, which many use as a launchpad for international operations. If you want to be visible in the fashion world, you need to be in Antwerp.

Belgium's Favourite Retail Destination

Antwerp consists of nine shopping areas, each with its own assets, vibe and character. Each area is within walking distance of its neighbour and attracts a specific type of business and visitor. As such you will find mainstream retail and hospitality businesses in one neighbourhood and more original, innovative concepts in another. *De Modewijk* (contemporary fashion district) is found on and around *Kammenstraat* and *Nationalestraat*. High-end labels can be found in the *Schuttershofstraat*. The Meir is the main shopping street, lined with national and international brands and in the historic centre, you find smaller boutiques and concept stores. *De Wilde Zee* is home to charming specialist shops and *Kloosterstraat* is a favourite location for contemporary fashion stores and sustainable concept shops. While *Eilandje* is popular for its culinary hotspots, *Botanique* is known as an area with specialist and antique shops. *Het Zuid* is home to exclusive design and interior businesses.

Antwerp Supports a Creative Eco-System

In fashion, international competition is fierce. For designers, it's a continuous struggle to stay afloat. Global challenges lie ahead, including radical revolutions, disruptive business models and the increasing power of major fashion conglomerates. That's why Antwerp is facilitating fashion entrepreneurs by supporting them with incentives, business opportunities and strengthening their ecosystem. Even more so, Antwerp invites the industry actively to collaborate in building an efficient network, because relationships are important.

Q&A

Jan-Jan Van Essche graduated from the Antwerp Fashion Academy in 2003. In 2011, he established his own boutique, Atelier Solarshop, near Antwerp's Central Station. Just as for so many others, the human collective culture is his endless inspiration. Jan-Jan is speaking the poetry of simplicity.

Why is Antwerp a leading fashion city?

Everything that's going on in Antwerp, especially within the fashion industry, tends to be trendsetting. The Fashion Academy and MoMu serve as focal points. The city is filled with creative people, finding their own way to fulfil their dreams. It's impressive. I felt that Antwerp needed more alternative stores, so my partner Piëtro Celestina and I launched our own boutique, Atelier Solarshop. There is room for more in Antwerp!

How does Antwerp inspire you?

In the past I was inspired by my travels. Travelling makes you receptive towards external influences, everything seems to be so fresh and new. Over the last few years, I didn't travel as much of course, so I thought deeply about my own city and its locals. Our boutique is located not too far from the Central Station, which is a huge advantage. All I need to do is glimpse through the window to see the world passing by. All the colours, all clothing styles and all the possible combinations. It's amazing.

Why Antwerp, rather than other fashion centres?

First and foremost, I am a product of the Antwerp Fashion Academy. It's possible I wouldn't even have started within the fashion industry without the stories and the context that these studies instilled in me. Of course my network, family and friends also live here in Antwerp. Plus, this city is easy when it comes to work. It's centrally located, not too overwhelming and you can easily get out of the city and into nature. Everything I need is here.

You're known as a designer who is doing his own thing, regardless of trends. Is that what characterises Antwerp?

I do recognise this characteristic among Antwerp's designers. That's what connects us. I try not to follow trends. I find it very important to stay as close as possible to my own values and beliefs. This is my tip for upcoming designers: you can't be caught in a lie if you're honest. You need to surround yourself with others who share a vision, because you can't do this on your own. I also

Jan-Jan Van Essche

Fashion designer

recommend having your own boutique. It's hugely important to be in direct contact with consumers. On top of that, you're in control of the entire process.

You work with people like Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui for Opera Ballet Flanders. Tell us about this collaboration.

It's a very nice bonus of my job. We both work with human bodies, in essence. To me fashion is not static. On the contrary, it's dynamic. Movement is very important. It's such a wonderful gift to see dancers perform in my creations. It's an honour to work with Sidi Larbi. I admire him endlessly. The fact that he puts his trust in me is amazing.

What do foreign entrepreneurs need to know if they want to do business in Antwerp?

The Belgian culture dislikes confrontation. It also helps to create an informal atmosphere. I often invite my guests over to my house to cook for them. That's how great conversations start. Also don't forget that what you see is what you get here in Antwerp. When it starts becoming fake, we drop out. We have very good bullshit-detectors. Just be yourself and everything will be fine.

Check out my favourites

1. MoMu, the fashion museum

"This is where I often take my guests. The MoMu has been renovated and expanded recently. Now it also offers a permanent collection, with a **spotlight on Belgian designers**."

2. Underpass de Voetgangerstunnel

"Everyone gets amazed by the authentic wooden escalators which take you down under the river. On the other side, you can enjoy a **fantastic view of the Antwerp skyline**."

3. Park Spoor Noord

"I really enjoy packing a picnic lunch and heading to Park Spoor Noord. Recently, we took a foreign guest of ours, a Japanese designer, to the Park Spoor Noord. When he saw so **many people from so many different backgrounds** all enjoying the park to walk, party and hang out he teared up!"

More highlights on page 98

"In Antwerp, I just need to take a glimpse through the window to see the world passing by."

Jan-Jan Van Essche

CHEMISTRY

A city of circularity and sustainability



BlueChem is situated on Blue Gate Antwerp, the first eco-effective, water-bound business park in Belgium.

Antwerp hosts the second-largest integrated chemical cluster worldwide. It's the perfect location for BlueChem, an exciting incubator for sustainable chemistry.

The Chemical industry is a Major Driver of the Economy

Port of Antwerp-Bruges is home to Europe's biggest integrated chemical cluster, the second largest worldwide. With over 300 different chemicals and 500 chemical companies, it has the most diverse portfolio in the world, connected by a state-of-the-art pipeline network which facilitates product interchange. Many of the world's top chemical companies are present in Antwerp and the cluster attracts significant global investment. Thanks to Antwerp's connectivity and high level of integration, the sector collaborates closely, supported by a stable business environment.

Sustainable and Circular

Sustainable chemistry plays an important role in the development towards a circular economy and a climate-neutral society. Chemistry provides crucial innovations and products which contribute to a successful approach to the climate challenge. It offers solutions for a better, cleaner and sustainable future.

Port of Antwerp-Bruges is transitioning to a circular economy, aiming to be climate-neutral by 2050. As an energy hub, the Port of Antwerp-Bruges is at the centre of the energy transition, where renewable energy such as hydrogen is being imported, gene-

rated and transported on a large scale. A second focus in this circular economy is the prevention and recovery of waste. Antwerp is home to a rich and highly diversified ecosystem of specialised waste processing companies, dealing in mass processing, over-processing of organic/ and biological waste, ship waste and hazardous/toxic metal waste.

BlueChem - Tomorrow's Sustainable Chemistry

In BlueChem, an incubator for sustainable chemistry, promising startups and large corporates exchange knowledge, experience and insights. BlueChem is located at Blue Gate Antwerp, the innovative, sustainable industrial hub in the port. It offers 3,300 m² of state-of-the-art lab and office space to startups, scale-ups and corporates with an innovation agenda. Companies in BlueChem are active in CO₂ conversion, enzymes for aquaculture, cultured meat, water cleaning, biochemical nanotechnology and more.

Guidance from A to Z

As an incubator, BlueChem offers the necessary infrastructure and support, providing promising innovations a wealth of opportunities. BlueChem offers a comprehensive approach with guidance from A to Z, allowing innovative sustainable and circular chemistry projects to scale up to industrial production. BlueChem provides everything from an early idea for a project to financial support for lab set-ups constructed by the city of Antwerp. Additionally, BlueChem is able to grant access to innovative projects through Catalisti, spearhead cluster for chemistry and plastics.

Unique Society

BlueChem is a unique, public-private partnership in Antwerp which unites these parties: essenscia (the Belgian Federation for Chemistry and Life Sciences Industries), the City of Antwerp, research organisation VITO and POM (the Provincial Development Agency). In essence, BlueChem brings together industry, academia and government with the common goal of helping startups and scale-ups grow and innovate. As a result, spontaneous cross-pollinations, innovation projects and collaborations emerge. BlueChem has become the place to be for progressive innovations, development and pioneering research.



Showcase: Peace of Meat

At BlueChem, **Peace of Meat grows cultured meat and fat in bioreactors**. They seek to improve the sustainability of food production, reduce the ecological footprint, and at the same, time prevent the slaughter of animals. As a business-to-business supplier of cultured meat, Peace of Meat works GMO-free and without antibiotics, but with a great taste.

The cultured fat of Peace of Meat improves alternative proteins such as plant based meats.

Key figures

- Eight of the top ten **largest chemical producers** in the world have a presence in Flanders (FIT)
- Belgium ranks as the **world's number one for chemicals and plastics sales** per capita, with an annual turnover of 73.8 billion euro – over two-thirds of which is generated in Flanders
- There are **1,000 kilometres of pipeline** and more than 48 different product pipelines in the Antwerp port area
- Since 2019, Antwerp's chemical industry has received more than **three billion euro in foreign investment**
- **Ineos announced a key investment** in the Antwerp port platform for 2024, the largest investment in the European chemical industry for more than 20 years
- In 2020 Antwerp was recognised as **Europe's largest chemical cluster** with a 'specialism award' at the fDi Strategy Awards

Sources: Port of Antwerp-Bruges;
Flanders Investment & Trade; essenscia - 2021 key figures

1,000 km

of pipeline and more than 48 different product pipelines in the Antwerp port area

Port of Antwerp-Bruges is home to the largest integrated chemical cluster in Europe.

Port of Antwerp-Bruges is the perfect transshipment hub for chemicals.

Ecosystem at Work

BlueChem operates within a broader ecosystem which gives opportunities from idea to production.

• BlueApp

This pre-incubator for sustainable chemistry is an open innovation and training hub for entrepreneurs and innovators from knowledge institutions as well as larger and smaller industries. BlueApp accelerates chemical innovations by providing infrastructure, expertise and technical services. It's an initiative of the University of Antwerp and accelerates chemical innovations by providing infrastructure, expertise and technical services. It is located right next door to BlueChem.

• Blue Gate Antwerp

Blue Gate Antwerp is the first eco-effective, shore-based business park in Belgium, reserved exclusively for innovative companies that are committed to linear growth by adopting circular business models. With a total project area of 63 hectares, it is expected to create at least 3,000 new jobs.

• NextGen District

NextGen District is an industrial site in the Antwerp port area where end-of-life products are given second or third lives, research into circular carbon solutions is undertaken and where experiments with renewable energy (such as hydrogen) are conducted.

• Innovation Circle and Innovation Fund

The Innovation Fund invests in innovative startups and companies active in the field of chemistry and life sciences. The Fund was created in 2015 with the support from major industrial companies. Their involvement brings added value to the supported projects. The success is huge and has even taken a step further with the Innovation Circle. This permanent structure of 13 former CEOs and academics of the chemical sector is offering startups and SMEs in the sector free assistance and mentoring.



Q&A

Barbara Veranneman is the right person to take us through the extraordinary story of sustainable chemistry in Antwerp.

How does BlueChem make a difference?

BlueChem offers a complete solution for every startup wanting to innovate in sustainable chemistry. We offer lab spaces and we provide startups with support such as a reception and security. Additionally, our strategic partners ensure that startups easily can access assistance such as legal advice and help to find opportunities for growth. Thanks to our support, startups can knuckle down and do what they love doing most, which is innovation and research.

How do startups interact with major companies?

The physical presence of major companies such as Exxon-Mobil and Ineos is very important. That's how a correlation between startups and the big chemistry industry is created. It goes both ways: major companies provide startups with advice on safety measures for example. In return, startups hope to sell their products to those major corporates. It's great to observe those interactions happening in real life. Essenscia plays a significant role in that process too. As a federation of the chemistry industry and life sciences, we are part of a big network that we can use easily to connect parties with each other.

How is BlueChem different from similar ecosystems elsewhere?

Our location in Antwerp hosts the second biggest petrochemical cluster in the world, which is a great asset. BlueChem can be considered as an incubator, allowing innovation to grow and flourish and leading to the development of solutions on an industrial scale. In Antwerp every place can be reached easily, especially compared with Houston, which is the largest petrochemical cluster. The support offered by the City of Antwerp is also of incredible value. Our neighbour BlueApp is a pre-incubator for sustainable chemistry. Some of the startups think that the NextGen District, which is the hotspot for circular economy, will follow this trend. Antwerp's ecosystem offers companies loads of opportunities.

What is circularity's added value?

Circularity and climate are important topics. We are aware of Europe's carbon reduction ambitions and as a chemistry

Barbara Veranneman

Chairwoman, BlueChem
Director international & legal affairs at essenscia

industry we can make a crucial contribution. That's why startups who want to co-operate with BlueChem must be able to prove their connection with circularity, producing more with less resources, recycling, water purification... We aim to enhance supply chain sustainability. One example of this process is a French company that is about to begin a collaboration with BlueChem. This company aims to convert CO₂ into a new resource through a chemical process. Other countries showing interest in Antwerp's facilities include Italy, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. Right now, we're thinking about expanding our building, it will soon be necessary!

What do foreign entrepreneurs or investors need to know when doing business in Antwerp?

Antwerp is a small city, which makes it very easy to meet people in person. In a building that is filled with state-of-the-art infrastructure, the coffee machine is the most important device at BlueChem. That's the place where conversations arise and collaborations between startups and major companies develop. In fact, you could see Antwerp as one big coffee bar. Antwerp does business in a very natural and human way.

Check out my favourites

1. The Port House

"A magnificent building, which I visit regularly. A few years ago, a **striking super-structure in the shape of a diamond** appeared on top of the old fire station. It was designed by the famous architectural firm Zaha Hadid Architects."

2. Kloosterstraat

"If you're fond of **antique, vintage and flea markets**, you need to visit Kloosterstraat. A cosy street with lots of nice items and beautiful furniture."

3. L'Amitié

"I often head to L'Amitié with my guests and colleagues. A nice **bistro with hearty cuisine**."

More on page 98

"You could see Antwerp as one big coffee bar. Antwerp does business in a very natural and human way."

Barbara Veranneman

DIGITAL INNOVATION

A city with dynamic ecosystems



The Rombit device is a distancing and contact tracing system.

Is Antwerp the ideal launchpad for innovative companies in Europe? A culture open to change: check. A solid consumer base: check. Strong ambitions: check. The city is building dynamic ecosystems, uniting small and large companies, knowledge institutions, government, venture capital, talent and innovation hubs.

Antwerp is just a city with a really big port? Think again. The urge to excel, a nose for opportunities and an impressive exuberance make Antwerp the ideal breeding ground for creative ideas and innovation. Antwerp has always been a city with an open view on the world, a city where experimenting is encouraged. Innovation is ingrained in its DNA.

Innovation Powerhouse

You don't have to take our word for it, let the numbers speak for themselves. When it

comes to international corporate networks and inventiveness, Antwerp ranks number 188 of 500 cities worldwide in the Innovation Cities Index 2018, which measures the potential of innovation performance. According to the European Innovation Scoreboard 2022, Belgium is one of the five innovation leaders, after Finland, Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands. In the latest Startup Genome report Antwerp is described as an "early globalisation ecosystem", with a value of €2,3 billion (*Dealroom*). That's an increase

International startup initiatives

- **Startups.be & Scale-Ups.eu** connect Europe’s most promising startups and scale-ups and is a fast track to innovation and collaboration with high-tech companies.
- Antwerp is part of SCALE.CITIES (the Startup Cities Alliance). **Scale Cities is a collaborative force for global cities** to facilitate, strengthen and connect the European startup ecosystem for entrepreneurs.
- Startup.Flanders, a new brand and open startup database, is a partnership between **Flanders Investment & Trade and Dealroom**, to promote Flanders’ startup ecosystem with entrepreneurs and investors internationally.

SkyeBase combines drones and AI to achieve safer, better and faster inspections in the industry.



of 77% in the last five years. Antwerp truly is an innovation powerhouse.

Focus of the Antwerp Innovation Strategy

Antwerp has always had the urge to progress and create making Antwerp the gateway to one of the world’s most prosperous regions and home to many highly innovative businesses. Today, the city is proud of its pioneering entrepreneurs beating climate change, building the port of the future, achieving a sustainable transition for the chemical cluster and making Antwerp a healthier city. In all of these priorities digital innovation is key. The port of the future will be digital (and sustainable). E-health will be part of the route to a healthier city. Digital solutions will help the chemical cluster to achieve its low carbon goals. The digital

platform ‘Smart ways to Antwerp’ provides a solid base for innovative mobility solutions which will lead to a better modal shift.

IoT and AI

Many industrial companies are entering a new era with Internet of Things (IoT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications. In these fields Antwerp is becoming the leading Belgian hotspot. At The Beacon, a business and innovation hub, the city collaborates with the University of Antwerp, Port of Antwerp-Bruges, imec - the world-leading research and innovation hub in nano electronics and digital technologies - the technology federation Agoria and Lantis. It’s a community of more than 100 companies and research institutions that collaborate in developing new digital solutions for ports,



In the Beacon digital innovators connect to solve the challenges of our cities, ports and industries.

cities and industry. It connects multinational IT corporations, local startups and a variety of high-potential digital companies.

There's also Dunden, Antwerp's flagship startup hub. In a historic building in the centre of the city, young startups, large businesses, mentors and investors connect to kindle economic expansion locally and abroad. Its nerve centre is De Serre, a stylish multifunctional event centre. Incubator BlueHealth Innovation Center has its Antwerp desk office and several upcoming health companies have an office in Dunden.

Startup ecosystem

Thanks to these initiatives Antwerp has become one of the most attractive cities for innovative international startups and scale-ups. Famous creative minds from all over the world have settled in the city, often after completing one of the unique and internationally-minded educational courses on offer. Antwerp's recipe for success? Here you find creative entrepreneurs, a highly-trained workforce and a consumer base which includes both early adopters and the tech-savvy. According to Dealroom, Antwerp is currently home to 658 startups, two thirds of them founded in the last ten years. It also boasts 12 incubators/accelerators, 4 innovation hubs, 100+ investors and more than 11,000 creative entrepreneurs. Is Antwerp the ideal launchpad for innovative companies in Europe? Yes, it is.



Supported by a strong digital network

To be an innovative city, you need a solid digital infrastructure.

At Nokia's Fixed Networks Headquarters in Antwerp, Nokia and Proximus have recently activated the world's fastest fibre network, with 25 Gigabit technology. Port of Antwerp-Bruges, along with the Antwerp police and fire brigade, have set up a joint 5G-network. In 2021, Orange opened its **5G Living Lab** in The Beacon.

Unmanned and crew-reduced vessels are managed and operated via the control centre Seafar.

Q&A

Michaël Geelhand de Merxem

General Manager, The Beacon

Pauline Van Ostaeyen

Co-Founder, Dockflow

The Beacon consists of a community of 100 companies dedicated to advanced digital technology. A joint interview with General Manager *Michaël* and *Pauline*, co-founder of *Dockflow*, a member of *The Beacon*.

How does The Beacon make a difference when it comes to digital innovation?

Michaël: “We consider community an important word. The Beacon is not comparable to other networks. We have 100 active members who are constantly engaged in digital innovation. We listen to their needs and develop ways to help them. This means that we keep ourselves busy organising events and managing the office space. The Beacon is so much more than just a building on the Scheldt with a stunning view. It’s a hub for our communities, a place where like-minded people meet, discuss all sort of topics, rent meeting rooms.

Pauline: “The ability to get in touch with major international companies in such an easy and approachable way is a huge benefit for us, whether it’s multinationals like Orange or startups and scale-ups who find themselves in a similar stage of life. We can learn a lot from each other. The love for technology connects us.”

How does The Beacon innovate?

Michaël: “We don’t serve up tepid recipes that have been used for years. We put an end to solely informing people as senders of communication. Currently we work in a very demand-driven way. If we organise something, it is always at the request of the community.”

Pauline: “The same goes for software-development. It’s of great importance to listen and co-operate with your users. There must be an added value for the user.”

What does Dockflow do?

Pauline: “We all know about tracking systems for online orders. Sometimes it goes well and sometimes not. Can you imagine placing 100 orders a day and tracking all of them? That’s a hell of a job. That’s why we came up with a solution. Thanks to our Logistics Enablement Platform, forwarders get a very clear idea of the location of their containers.”

How important is the proximity of Port of Antwerp-Bruges to Dockflow and The Beacon?

Pauline: “Antwerp is home to the second biggest petrochemical cluster of the world, which is an incredible market for us. Antwerp’s supply chain position is sort of an example to the world. Our location is simply perfect.”

Michaël: “It works like a flywheel. The industry attracts startups and new innovations, which makes the industry grow. They can then reinvest in new developments. In particular, most startups that fail do so because it costs more to sell their products than they are able to make from the sale. But Antwerp has a big market and that’s why startups from all over the country come to The Beacon.”

Check out my favourites

Michaël

1. Brewery De Koninck

“The **typical Antwerp beer is De Koninck**, which to this day is brewed in the city. The site has undergone a stunning renovation. Right next to the brewery you can find an artisanal bakery, a rock-n-roll butcher shop, a cheese shop... On top of that you can hire some of the cool venues in the brewery for your own events.”

2. Cycling along the Scheldt quays

“During the last ten years the city has seen **a fantastic evolution**. I’m especially amazed by the new Scheldt quays. It’s a place where people exercise, eat pizza, walk their dog, meet up with their loved ones... It’s truly magical to cycle along the quays at sunset.”

3. Child friendly city

“Antwerp is very child friendly. There are a lot of **little playgrounds, a fantastic ZOO**...and you can get everywhere by bike or by foot.”

More on page 98



De Koninck brewery.

How international is The Beacon?

Michaël: “The Beacon was founded three years ago. During that time, we focused mainly on Flanders. Now, we’re ready for more. For example, we are welcoming Dashdoc to The Beacon, a French company that has developed a transportation management system, and there is also a lot of interest in what we do in Singapore.”

Pauline: “In The Beacon we speak English. A lot of international founders and employees work here. As an international company you couldn’t be located in a better place, I think. In The Beacon you spontaneously meet people who are busy working on similar things. It is very easy to find advice here, which is quite important for people who don’t know Belgium very well.”

Michaël: “The Beacon is located on the crossroads between efficient northern Europe, and vibrant southern. Things are progressing well here, without losing sight of conviviality. Isn’t that the perfect combination?”

Check out my favourites

Pauline

1. MAS | Museum aan de Stroom

“I often take my guests to the rooftop of the MAS. **The view of the city, port and the river are spectacular**. The top floor of the museum is home to a three-star restaurant, the only one here in Antwerp.”

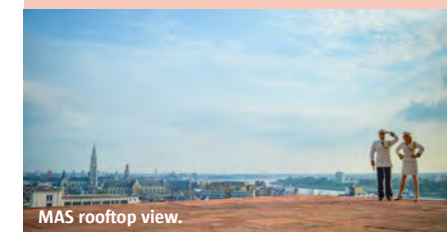
2. Gaarkeuken 110

“Something different, however still typical here in Antwerp: Gaarkeuken 110. An authentic brown **café in the middle of the port**, where employers and dock workers fraternize. The menu offers typical Belgian dishes.”

3. Axel Vervoordt

“Axel Vervoordt is known as one of the most influential art-dealers and interior designers in the world. People with whom he’s worked include **Robert de Niro, Madonna and Kanye West**. His gallery is located on the Canal site, a converted industrial distillery just outside of Antwerp.”

More on page 98



MAS rooftop view.

HEALTH

A city healthy to live in



The wearables of Byteflies make health care more accessible, personalized, and preventive.

Health is an vital innovation cluster for Antwerp, thanks to the presence of an extended hospital network of 28 campuses, top research institutions like the renowned Institute of Tropical Medicine (ITM), the University of Antwerp and the ethnically diverse population of the city.

Pandemic Preparedness & Response

Antwerp has a long-standing tradition of fighting pandemics. The Institute of Tropical Medicine specialises in this domain and Professor Pierre Van Damme of the University of Antwerp is a worldwide authority on the subject. Experts in infectious diseases of the University of Antwerp played an important role during the Covid-19 crisis. The city's eco-system of startups, businesses, public institutions and investors is a major catalyst for innovation in healthcare. Future planning in the sector includes a Medical Solutions and health incubator.

Institute of Tropical Medicine Antwerp

Antwerp's world-renowned Institute for Tropical Medicine promotes the advancement of science and health through innovative research, advanced education, professional medical services and capacity building amongst partner institutions in the global South. It has unique expertise in tropical diseases, HIV, tuberculosis, infectious diseases and addressing the weaknesses of healthcare systems in the world. The ITM's research activities are diverse and usually geared towards the discovery of new knowledge to tackle important health challenges.

Under the microscope: The Institute of Tropical Medicine

422
scientific publications

543
students and PhD researchers

33,029
patient consultations

19
institutional partners in
11 countries

29
clinical trials
requested by ITM



The Institute of Tropical Medicine
in Antwerp, Belgium.

Particular focus is placed on low-resource settings and vulnerable populations. The institute is recognised internationally for its medical services and expertise and is uniquely placed to advise national and international health authorities and organisations. Every year, more than 500 professionals continue their education at the ITM in expert short and postgraduate certificate courses, advanced master's courses and doctoral programmes.

Vaccinopolis

Located at the University of Antwerp's *Drie Eiken campus*, Vaccinopolis is an outstanding and innovative state-of-the-art, 6,000m²

facility for vaccine trials. As an important part of the research and development ecosystem, Vaccinopolis will contribute to the accelerated development of vaccines.

The Covid-19 pandemic proved beyond any doubt the value of this type and scale of facility. Vaccinopolis is part of Antwerp's growing ecosystem for pandemic control, enabling startups, scale-ups and corporates to engage and collaborate on new products and services for pandemic control. In this facility, critical tests regarding Controlled Human Infection Models are carried out.

E-health

Digital health is one of the fastest growing trends in international healthcare. Antwerp is addressing two major e-health themes in particular: integrating digital flows within hospitals and remote digital healthcare. Artificial Intelligence is also an important technology for digital health, as it supports medical decision-making, diagnostics, care planning and clinical workflows. Equally, patients are able to track their own health and wellbeing or be monitored by doctors remotely. There is also a greater focus on preventive health. The e-health ecosystem is bundled in the BlueHealth Innovation Center (BHIC).

The BlueHealth Innovation Center

The BlueHealth Innovation Center is a digital health incubator aimed at students, startups and care professionals. It is a public private partnership between cities, hospitals, research institutions and companies such as UCB Pharma, AstraZeneca and Roche to support digital transformation of the healthcare industry. The Antwerp branch of BHIC is located in Dunden, a unique site in the city centre, in the heart of Antwerp's startup movement. The centre's partners - Cronos, UCB, In4Care and Antwerp's academic hospital UZA - have established the BlueHealth Innovation Fund (BHIF) to



Hospital Network

Antwerp has a dense and constantly evolving hospital network of 28 campuses. The latest addition is Cadix ZNA, a hospital in the vicinity of Park Spoor Noord. Once again, innovation and digital technology are key focus at this hospital.



Vaccinopolis: a innovative clinical testing facility from the UA.

Droogdokkenpark.

provide seed funding for digital health companies. Thanks to the combined work of the BHIC and the BHIF, the number of e-health startups has grown from 20 to more than 50 in the last few years.

Urban Health

What if the city could make us healthier? What role will technology play in the health-care of the future? Health care is much more than hospital care. Urban health facilities are growing, such as doctor networks, fitness centres, healthy food centres and urban farming. Many of these are already present in Antwerp and plans for an urban health centre are on the drawing board.

Medical Devices

Many spin-offs developed at the University of Antwerp and Antwerp University Hospital (UZA) are in the domain of medical devices. A prime example is the Medical Solutions Accelerator, which was founded by the private company Verhaert in collaboration with the City of Antwerp, University of Antwerp and UZA to accelerate the growth of health companies.



Salvus Health: a platform that supports pharmacists to offer personalized preventive and pharmaceutical services.

Q&A

With its location in the middle of Antwerp, the Institute of Tropical Medicine is part of the DNA of the city. General Manager Ann Peters speaks about the importance of the Institute not only to Belgium but also to the world.

What does the Institute focus on?

In our case everything starts with our expertise in the field of tropical medicine, despite the fact that in these times of globalization and climate change the word 'tropical', which occurs in the name of the Institute, does not really have a significant definition. We operate on a global scale. Our three departments - public health, clinical sciences and biomedical sciences - have a very crosswise way of working. Over the last few years malaria, HIV, monkey pox and Ebola have been important fields for research for us, in addition to Covid. On the basis of our research, we care for patients and undertake clinical reference tasks for the World Health Organisation. Of equal importance is our role in educating international professionals, who often go on to hold influential positions in the health care sector in their own countries.

Why is ITM located in Antwerp?

The answer dates back more than 100 years when the ITM began receiving patients from the boats arriving here from Congo (now the Democratic Republic of Congo). A hospital located near the quays meant sick patients could be taken care of quickly. That history can be found in our building to this day. Our offices used to be hospital rooms. You can still see the serving hatches that were used to deliver meals to infected patients. I think it's important to remember our illustrious past. It should be merged with new developments, within our way of working. I think that's how a long-established city like Antwerp works. The city is full of history, but it is more than an open-air museum. Quite the opposite, Antwerp, is alive and kicking.

What is ITM's role in the health-ecosystem in Antwerp?

You cannot do research on your own. A researcher working alone with a microscope is a relic of the past. That's why we have a close collaboration with numerous institutions. For example, we coach PhD students at the University of Antwerp and co-operate with a diverse range of universities and institutes all over Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin-America. We also work with companies on applied research, both nationally and internationally. Over my 25-year career I've learned that proximity provides

Ann Peters

Institute of Tropical Medicine

added value in an eco-system. There are a lot of things you can do here in Antwerp. The city is not large, but the outcome of our work is great.

What is the role of the new clinical trial centre that you set up at ITM?

In a co-financing arrangement with the Flemish government, we've been conducting clinical trials for a very long time now, working with both academic partners and with pharmaceutical industry stakeholders, such as Johnson & Johnson. In this new centre we test new vaccines and also trial medicine and treatments against infectious diseases before they are launched for a wider audience. We're using science to improve global health in a way that confirms our position as an important player in clinical research.

What do internationals need to know when coming to Antwerp with their business?

It can be quite challenging to know where to turn for approvals or permits. My advice is to get in touch with Antwerp's well-established Invest Desk. FIT Flanders is also very helpful. I must add that even though the Belgian tax rate is high, business receives a great deal in return. Belgium has one of the best healthcare systems in the world and offers very high levels of education. We have international schools and of course Antwerp itself has much to offer culturally. Antwerp is an amazing city to live in and it's much cheaper than other international cities.

Check out my favourites

1. l'Entrepôt du Congo

"This charming brasserie is the perfect place to enjoy **honest Belgian cuisine**, such as tomatoes filled with shrimps and stewed meat."

2. Antwerpen-Centraal Railway Station

"When I told my friend who lives in Antwerp that I'd be working in Antwerp, he said: 'Wow, that means that every time you take the train you'll arrive at **'the Railway Cathedral'**."

3. Scheldt Quays in the South

"Every night you see Antwerp **coming alive along the water**. Families, students, hikers...everyone is attracted by the open space and the view of the wide river."

More on page 89

"The city is not large, but the outcome of our work is great."

Ann Peters

FUTURE CITY

A city that's green and modern



The Big Link: normal and open-cut tunnels will be connected.

Infrastructure projects and ambitious climate plans will result in a futureproof city, with lots of space for greenery, water, recreation and many smart mobility options.

Discover the City of Tomorrow

The city of Antwerp is diving into the future. Already an attractive city to live and work in, local authorities are exploring a broad range of developments to improve quality of life in Antwerp even further. The city is focused on challenges that demand long-term perspectives and actions with more green areas, strong climate plans, renewed neighbourhoods and smart mobility. Antwerp has been playing a pioneering role in city development processes for decades. Now, it's taking giant steps towards becoming a truly smart, sustainable city, linking its historic character with modern day adaptations.

The Big Link: Reconnecting Neighbourhoods and People

One of Europe's biggest 21st century infrastructure projects is being undertaken in Antwerp. Thanks to the *Oosterweel* link and significant developments the Antwerp ring road is coming full circle. Several traffic interchanges around the city will be connected by both normal and open-cut tunnels with the aim of improving mobility and life in and around Antwerp. In order to free up space above ground and create more green zones, the city of Antwerp has drafted an integrated policy plan – The Big Link – aiming to make Antwerp a modern, vibrant

Antwerp Meatpacking District

Since its closing in 2012, Antwerp's municipal abattoir, a large site in the north of Antwerp called *the Slachthuis* (Dutch for abattoir) sat mainly unused. **New plans for its redevelopment mean a gigantic boost to this entire neighbourhood.** Antwerp is creating *the Groene Poort*, a new urban district with housing, services, leisure and business activities. The project will be finished by 2040.



A future view of the Meatpacking District.

and sustainable metropolis for the coming decades. The project is on the drawing board and involves roofing Antwerp's R1 ring road. It is an ambitious co-creation between expert engineers and planners, residents and local stakeholders. By connecting existing and new neighbourhoods inside and outside the ring road, Antwerp once again will be united. With the appointment of architect Alexander d'Hooghe, a partnership was forged between the City of Antwerp, the Flemish regional government, Port of Antwerp-Bruges and major civil society groups, resulting in the ratification of the Treaty for the Future.

Bottom-Up and Co-Creation

With The Big Link, Antwerp is forging an international reputation as a forerunner in innovative infrastructure projects and achieving a vibrant city in which to live, work, play and visit. Through hundreds of workshops and thousands of working sessions, this massive co-creation

process involving experts, policy makers, citizens and stakeholders ultimately led to 18 new infrastructure projects, clustered into seven ring road parks and a cycling/walking bridge over the river Scheldt. All ring road projects have been awarded to contractors, with a total project cost of €4,5 billion. Construction works started in 2018, with final completion scheduled for 2030.

Ambitious Climate Goals

To remain an attractive and lively city in the future, an agreeable and healthy living environment is key, together with a reduction of carbon dioxide emissions. Antwerp's ambition here is on two fronts. First, the city wants to reach a 50-to-55 per cent reduction of carbon dioxide emissions by 2030. The goal is to reach climate neutrality and climate robustness by 2050. This includes also making sure that Antwerp is well adapted to meet the other consequences of climate change, such as heatwaves,



On the futuristic Parkbrug, you will see a different play of light and shadow each time.

Palazzo Verde is an example of how nature and the city can go hand-in-hand.



Star project New South

Palazzo Verde was designed by **Stefano Boeri**, the world-famous Italian architect known for his '**vertical forests**': plant- and tree-covered buildings characterised by cascading facades, staggered balconies and lush vegetation. Other features include clean lines and high-quality finishes. The collective roof gardens and large private outdoor spaces guarantee tranquility, relaxation and quality of life.

droughts and floods. The Climate Plan 2030 focuses on collective, systemic and infrastructure measures to reach larger groups of people.

Heat Networks

One of the climate control measures is the roll-out of a district heating network in *Nieuw Zuid* (New South), a sustainable brownfield development of an old railroad yard. A heating plant supplies heat to all new buildings in the neighbourhood, helping to cut greenhouse gas emissions. In the long term, the system will be connected to residual heat supplied by nearby industry.

Renewal of the Historic Waterfront

Reducing climate change is a top priority of the city. The focus will be on floods, droughts and heatwaves. The renewal of the seven kilometre long historic waterfront is a major project in Antwerp. This is not only an

urban design boost for the right bank of the city, the project also integrates flood dikes and vast new public spaces. The project started in 2010 and will be finished in 2030. The left bank will be addressed in the future as well, by raising the banks, a new, green pedestrian promenade will be created. This project, is a unique combination of infrastructure, architecture and public space where people can stroll, exercise and unwind. The project is selected as a pilot for a European subsidy programme concerning Climate Change. In that way *Linkeroever* becomes a lab for future sustainability projects.

Renovation of the South Docks

To protect the city against drought, Antwerp is making plans that deal with water-related adaptation challenges. It's also seen as an excellent opportunity to make the city even more livable. Antwerp's Water Plan focuses on increasing the capacity of sewage systems via smart

rainwater storage. The plan aims to turn Antwerp into the ‘water city’ it was in the past. The South docks are a good example. Not so long ago, this was a grey part of the city full of parked cars. Soon this place will be transformed into a new park. Cars can be parked underground while rain gardens, wadis, mirror ponds and an emergency water buffer will feature above.

Future and Smart Mobility

Smart mobility is a key aspect of the City of Antwerp’s smart city policy. The aforementioned Big Link aims to achieve a 50/50 ‘modal shift’ through investments in road and cycling infrastructure, new tram lines and extending the suburban rail offerings. This modal shift means that no more than half of all movements in the city will be done by car. The ‘Smart Ways to Antwerp’ website helps people to find the best way to get to Antwerp. This data platform combines data from several mobility stakeholders, providing a solid base for innovative mobility solutions. Smart mobility along with green and spatial planning interventions will connect (or reconnect) and reinvigorate

new and existing neighbourhoods, turning Antwerp into a smarter, more sustainable metropolis, while linking its historic character with contemporary adaptations.

Mobility is Changing

Antwerp values the opinions of its citizens, partners, local authorities, stakeholders and companies about how to commute and travel in smart and efficient ways. Surveys measuring travel behaviour show that between 2010 and 2020, the use of cars in Antwerp for commuter travel dropped from 51 per cent to 35 per cent, in favour of using bikes. Foldable, electric and cargo bikes are all becoming more and more popular.

During the pandemic technology and hybrid working changed traffic significantly. The increasing popularity of shared mobility is likely to go on for many more years and the availability of new multi-storey car parks outside the city centre is a motivator to use public transport for the last leg of the journey. There will be less need to drive into the city. A bike is a far better option, especially as Antwerp continues to invest in safe bike lanes.



With the construction of the Scheldt quays, the city is restoring its connection with the river.



Fuels of the future: Ammonia and Hydrogen

The Antwerp region has everything in place to build a strong hydrogen economy and has the ambition of becoming a European leader in this field.

The city is looking at the important role that hydrogen can play in greening the energy system and in industry sustainability. With its participation in the **REVIVE project**, featuring hydrogen-powered bin lorries, the City of Antwerp wants to gain insights into fuel cell and hydrogen propulsion to make the urban fleet more sustainable. In step with the City, Port of Antwerp-Bruges has ordered **the construction of a hydrogen-powered tug**, the first in the world. Additionally, Compagnie Maritime Belge (CMB) has built the world’s first multimodal Hydrogen Refuelling Station in Antwerp. In addition, ammonia is also being considered as a replacement for fossil fuels.

A total of 9 major projects make up the immense project, The Big Link.



Hydrogen-powered tug, the first in the world.

Q&A

Alexander d'Hooghe

Architect of the The Big Link

Manon Janssen

CEO of Ecorys

Antwerp prepares for the future with the help of everyone living here: citizens, companies, institutions and governments. Everybody joins forces to build tomorrow's world. An interview with Alexander d'Hooghe and Manon Janssen.

Alexander, in your work you focus on large-scale contemporary design problems. How would you describe The Big Link infrastructure project in Antwerp?

Alexander: "We transformed the project from a being solely a mobility challenge which sought to close the ring road in Antwerp, into a project that also focuses on city liveability. By covering parts of the ring road, we'll create more open spaces. We're also making Antwerp more resilient to climate change. Why the name 'The Big Link'? Well, we're not only linking the roads, we're also linking people and neighbourhoods. Seven ring parks will act as one large green ecological corridor."

Manon, you are an ambassador for Antwerp's climate policy. Sustainable infrastructure like The Big Link is probably not the only strategy in the fight against climate change?

Manon: "The goal is to reach climate neutrality and climate robustness by 2050. We're making sure the city is

well adapted to meet the challenges. Antwerp is focusing on renovating large apartment buildings. They emit significant amounts of carbon dioxide and are therefore a major opportunity. Antwerp left bank is a good example of this. On the river Scheldt's left bank, the city is offering financial support for a climate-friendly renovation of 15 old buildings, representing 173 housing units. That will mean significantly less energy consumption once the renovation is completed."

Speaking of the left bank of the river Scheldt, discussions on reclosing the ring road in that part of the city have been going on for some time. Alexander, how did you accomplish this breakthrough?

Alexander: "When I arrived here, I could sense how desperate the issue had become. The challenge attracted me! We worked to create an agreement among all stakeholders: governments, action committees, citizen movements. Together, we decided on a common vision for the future. You know, Antwerp has a long tradition of discussion and disagreement. It's part of the city's tradition of tolerance and openness. All opinions matter. I find it very powerful that all these people from various walks of life have agreed on something, without denying their differences in the way they look at life."

"We are creating the city of tomorrow and I believe we are setting an example for the rest of the world."

Alexander d'Hooghe

"By connecting large buildings like hospitals to heat networks, we can save up to 80,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions per year. That's major."

Manon Janssen

The Big Link and Linkeroever are promising projects that will shape Antwerp's future. Manon, what else can Antwerp do to reach the climate goals of 2050?

Manon: "An interesting example is what we call heat networks. These networks replace fossil fuels that are used today with residual heat from geothermal energy or waste water, which would otherwise be lost. By connecting large buildings like hospitals to these networks, we can save up to 80,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions per year. That's major."

What about the important urban renewal project Master Plan Scheldt Quays?

Manon: "The city will focus on floods, droughts and protection against heatwaves. Master Plan Scheldt Quays focuses on protecting the city from both sea level rise and fluvial floods. At the same time, quays are being renovated, transforming this area into one of the most prominent public spaces in the city. To manage drought, a master plan to collect water is developed. The renovation of the South docks is a good example, featuring rain gardens, wadis, mirror ponds and an emergency water buffer. Regarding heatwaves, we will focus on greening the city further and providing many cooling spots, resulting in an attractive, lively and sustainable city."

The city has sustainability on every agenda. What's the role of the citizens for example in The Big Link?

Alexander: "We're designing everything together. We invited citizens to the table and created designs from the bottom up. To me this is a new definition of urban

innovation: rethinking the basic infrastructure and how it can serve us. I work in many places around the world, in the US, Africa and Europe - but I don't see this happening anywhere else. It's a bit like building a cathedral in the Middle Ages. People didn't exactly know where it would end. I consider The Big Link to be a rolling programme. In the end, we will have a large park system in a densely populated area, a new cycling bridge over the river Scheldt, we will have fewer health issues and many more mobility options. We're creating the city of tomorrow and I believe we're setting an example for the rest of the world."

TALENT



A city of opportunities



At the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, students are supervised individually.

Antwerp is home to more than 50,000 students, eight higher education institutions and more than 200 specialisations. Additionally, many renowned academic programmes connect with industry clusters of the Antwerp economy.

A Skilled and Highly Productive Workforce

Future talent feels at home in Antwerp. The city welcomes more than 50,000 students annually to its numerous institutions of higher education. Antwerp differentiates itself with its unique concentration of academic programmes within a relatively small area (204,5 km²). Students can choose from over 200 courses offered by the city's institutions of higher education in various disciplines such as economics, engineering, medical sciences and many more. However, what makes Antwerp truly extraordinary is the additional range of often internationally renowned programmes in knowledge domains specific to the clusters of the Antwerp economy, like logistics, fashion and technology.

Shape the Future

Thanks to these academic programmes, the Antwerp region and its international business community benefit from a large pool of highly trained and specialised talent that helps shape the future of the economy.

Managers within companies often recognise a flexible, internationally focused mentality among the talent in Antwerp that, combined with their multilingualism and professional training, facilitates high performing teams in an increasingly dynamic, global context. The workforce of Flanders and Antwerp is multilingual, highly educated and committed. In addition, it's also one of the most productive labour forces in the world.



You can study at unique locations in Antwerp.

50,000

More than 50,000 students are enrolled in Antwerp's higher education institutes



The University of Antwerp has campuses all over the city.

Highlights

- **Forty-one per cent** hold a tertiary degree compare to the EU27 average of 33 per cent
(Source: City in numbers, 2022, Eurostat 2022)
- **More than 50,000 students** are enrolled in Antwerp's higher education institutes (academic year 2021-2022)
(Source: Education in Flanders, 2022)
- Eight higher education institutions offer **more than 200 academic specialisations**
(Source: City of Antwerp, 2022)
- **Ranked the no. 1 MBA** in Benelux (University of Antwerp) and **ranked the no. 1 Executive MBA** in Benelux (Antwerp Management School)
(Source: Financial Times Business School Ranking, 2021)
- **Flanders ranks fifth worldwide** for the most productive workforce, ahead of major economies such as the US, France, Germany and the UK
(Source: US Conference Board 2020)

Entrepreneurial Talent

Entrepreneurial talent has every opportunity to flourish at an early stage in Antwerp. For example, TAKEOFFANTWERP, an initiative organised by the Antwerp University Association, City of Antwerp, VOKA Chamber of Commerce Antwerp-Waasland and student organisation SINC, offers various forms of support to new starters. They can get a specific status as a 'student entrepreneur', which offers many benefits. TAKEOFFANTWERP is located at the GATE15 site (Kleine Kauwenberg 15), where students from all of Antwerp's universities and university colleges work and study together.

Start Me Up

The city of Antwerp contains a lively startup scene and a remarkably young, creative and IT-savvy population of early adopters. Multiple incubators and accelerators connect venture capital investors with promising entrepreneurial pursuits, and several local government programmes provide support in the form of affordable office space and expert advice. As a testing ground for innovative ideas, Antwerp provides young companies from all areas - the Internet

of Things, artificial intelligence, health, energy, data management, design, advertising and fashion - with valuable feedback that prepares them for the global stage.

Come to Antwerp, Change Your Mind

World-famous creative minds have settled in Antwerp from all over the world, often sticking around after completing one of the unique and internationally-focused educational courses on offer. Having so many students of diverse nationalities helps keep the Antwerp spirit young and broad-minded. The student body is a tight-knit community, transcending courses and institutions. This young and highly educated population makes Antwerp the ideal breeding ground for the startups and spin-offs that are revolutionising literally hundreds of professional areas. The fast-growing University of Antwerp, various globally respected colleges, business incubators and knowledge and competence centres all co-operate closely with the rest of the exceptionally productive local economy. The secret? A solid network of universities and colleges offering world-class education and research, paired with a positive, proud and dedicated work ethic.

World-Class Education

With campuses all over the city, **the University of Antwerp** is famous for its high quality and excellent innovative research. A brand-new postgraduate course, The Internet of Things, is a unique programme training course on the Internet. A new generation of computer science experts is leading the Smart City of Antwerp into the future.

AP University of Applied Sciences and Arts Antwerp

welcome their students into a recently renovated, high-tech campus with facilities including a fully functioning operating theatre for aspiring healthcare professionals.

Karel de Grote University of Applied Sciences & Arts prides itself on gathering diverse talents to create a multidisciplinary way of thinking and working. Its varied programmes include unique Multimedia Technology training with practical innovation for 3D, 4D, virtual reality and more.

Creativity goes hand-in-hand with healthy and reliable business insight, the best of which is developed at the Financial Times-ranked **Antwerp Management School**.

The Maritime Academy offers training to a student body hailing from 26 different countries. More than-one-third of the Academy's students are international students.

As pioneers in today's progress on HIV/AIDS research, Antwerp's **Institute of Tropical Medicine** changes lives via education, medical services and improved health systems for developing countries. Antwerp's scientists were the ones to forge some of the biggest breakthroughs against vast threats like zika, ebola and malaria.

The prestigious Fashion Department at the **Royal Academy of Fine Arts** Antwerp is considered one of the world's most important and influential fashion schools. Alumni and faculty include powerhouse designers such as Walter Van Beirendonck, Dries Van Noten, Martin Margiela and Demna Gvasalia.

Q&A

Silvia Lenaerts explains the role of the University of Antwerp in the city's innovation ecosystem. She highlights the importance of talent in the city.

How does the University of Antwerp make a difference?

Our university takes responsibility for delivering talent that matches the needs of the labour market. Furthermore, we aim to deploy talent, together with companies, citizens and policymakers, to engage in co-creation and co-development. I like to think of us as an entrepreneurial university that helps to build the future. Our way of working is multidisciplinary and we're able to shift quickly, since we're a relatively small university. We're also deeply imbedded in the city and the Port.

How do you encourage talent to be innovative?

We want to be high impact by focusing primarily on three fields. Everything related to the city, from mobility to logistics and smart city, is undertaken in the community of The Beacon. That way, we take our researchers out of their comfort zone and we give them the opportunity to interact with companies and other partners. Sustainable chemistry and materials belong to the second field. This field faces an enormous challenge to become more sustainable. As a university, we'd like to help face this challenge. With our pre-incubator BlueApp, researchers and entrepreneurs are getting critical support when it comes to the labs, equipment and knowledge that will help to bring their ideas to the market faster. Finally, the last field is dedicated to infectious diseases, which has always been an important field in Antwerp, even before the Covid pandemic. With the support of (diagnostic) data, we aim to improve ways of working in the healthcare sector. The focus lies on enhancing the speed of processes, disease prevention and personalisation of working routines.

Do you engage in international collaborations?

Yes, Europe is interesting for us since it offers a lot of resources. We also own a research fund ourselves in order to support companies. We hope to attract international players that way. Antwerp has many assets of interest for an international collaboration. In compact Antwerp everything is located nearby and we're also a city with great diversity. If, for example, a company aims to find a solution for the Internet of Things and faces resistance from the public, we can link social researchers to the project. It will be their responsibility to examine how to gain more public support. We're aware that Belgium can be a complicated country

Silvia Lenaerts

Vice-rector University of Antwerp

when it comes to business. As a university, we gladly offer a helping hand by using our knowledge to assist companies in an independent and critical way.

Are there any other assets international entrepreneurs and investors can benefit from?

The presence of talent in a city where everyone knows each other. We collaborate with other institutes of higher education in Antwerp since they're full of young talent. In Antwerp, everything is connected to everything else. International guests that I walk around the city with are always surprised by the number of leading lights and experts I bump into. I know a lot of people and I'm not even that outgoing. Ecosystems are a fashionable topic. Antwerp, however, is a living, breathing network. Our Burgundian culture plays a big role in this. We love to combine everything that is useful with all that is enjoyable. An important fact to know: Antwerp is by no means an island. The city is very welcoming and many are willing to help whenever you need something. I always consider today's problems as challenges. You can only come up with solutions and apply them if you have good connections in your network. On top of that, an open attitude is handy.

Do you have any project that is very close to your heart?

The Big Link that will be outlined and built over the next few years. This project unites the Oosterweel connection (the completion of the Antwerp Ring Road) with the parks situated near the Ring and the Scheldt bridge. The Big Link will have an incredible impact on the city's livability. There is still plenty of room for innovation and entrepreneurship in Antwerp. This city is a work in progress...

Check out my favourites

1. Luddites Books & Wine

"An idea that should be a feature of every international city: **a wine bar and a bookstore**, all in one."

2. Plantin-Moretus Museum

"Here you'll find the **oldest printing presses**, thousands of books and a stunning art collection."

3. Den Brandt Park

"Den Brandt Park is well-known for its collection of sculptures and it's the **perfect place to exercise**."

More on page 98



"We love to combine everything that is useful with all that is enjoyable."

Silvia Lenaerts

FOOD & CULTURE

A city you'll love to live in



Belgian beers are world-famous.
Antwerp is an excellent place to taste them.

Brilliant museums, stunning architecture, theatres, galleries, a funky music scene, top-class restaurants, Belgian beers, lively neighbourhoods, a shopping paradise, child-friendly, low cost of living... Life is good in Antwerp!

A Glorious Past

In the 16th century, Antwerp was the New York of its time. You can read all about it in Michael Pye's widely lauded book *The Glory Years*. The city, built on the banks of the river Scheldt, was a successful international metropolis and a remarkable hub for trade and business. As a trading centre, the city was ahead of its time. Its wealth and luxury seemed unparalleled. The city bustled with business and banking activities and people from all over the world visited with their wares. They all wanted to be in Antwerp. The great port exposed the city to numerous

cultures, creating a metropolis that embraced new ideas, products, flavours and opportunities. Antwerp still has a palpable cosmopolitan buzz, pulling in people from all over the world and venturing out to learn from the best and share its own valuable assets, knowledge and talent with other continents. Antwerp painter and diplomat Peter Paul Rubens, the most important Flemish painter of the 17th century, was part of the city's economic and cultural success. After the renovation in 2027 it is again possible to visit his 'palazzo', where he lived with his family and created his world-famous paintings.



Middelheim Open Air Sculpture Museum.



Chocolate Nation, the history of chocolate making.



Coffee and drinks from dusk to dawn on Antwerp terraces.



Jöran De Backer, chef at Sir Anthony Van Dijck.

Culture with a Capital C

A cultural walk around Antwerp will bring you to major historical landmarks such as the Central Station, het Steen, the Cathedral of Our Lady and the impressive Town Hall which was completed in 1564. There is nostalgia in the old and magic in the new. Many renowned architects build inspiring buildings such as the Museum Aan de Stroom (MAS), the Port House, the Court of Justice and the Queen Elisabeth Hall with its superb acoustics. The vibrant art and cultural scene in Antwerp draws many artists and designers to the city so there is no shortage of inspiring modern art exhibitions and galleries. Cross-pollination of creative pursuits make it a city of great expression. Antwerp lives, eats and breaths fashion, design, culture and gastronomy.

International Gastronomy

Antwerpenaars, that's what natives of the city are called in Dutch, have long had a reputation as connoisseurs and makes of inventive food. With the Port as the primary gateway, food, drinks, herbs and spices from all over the world have influenced the city's gastronomy, since the 16th century. Antwerp offers a wide range of European, exotic and, of course Belgian restaurants.

These include restaurants with Michelin stars and Gault Millau ratings, multicultural cuisine in north Antwerpen, Chinese restaurants and supermarkets in Chinatown and Jewish kosher eateries in the area around Central Station. Belgian beers are world-famous and not to be missed. A visit at De Koninck Antwerp City Brewery for an introduction, is recommended. Or go to one of the many typical old-fashioned Belgian pubs called 'brown cafés'. In a vibrant, friendly and relaxed atmosphere choose from one of the dozens, and in some cases hundreds of Belgian beers on the menu. Besides beer, Belgium is also known for its delicious chocolate. Discover the magical history of Belgian chocolate in the world's largest Belgian chocolate museum. Taste and experience no less than ten different flavours of chocolate. Room for more sweets? Try *Antwerpse Handjes*, literally 'Antwerp Hands', they refer to the legend of a giant who chopped off the hands of mariners who refused to pay the toll to cross the river Scheldt.

Great Place for Children and Students

Antwerp is a great place to raise children. Flemish education ranks among the best in Europe, local sporting clubs are open to everyone and with every passing month the

bike lanes of the already bike-friendly inner streets of the city are constantly being extended. The city is home to many international and domestic students who enjoy an unforgettable student experience in Antwerp's numerous student bars, nightclubs and restaurants.

An Eclectic Experience

Antwerp is a must for everyone who loves fashion. It's home to many well-known fashion brands, as well as the newest labels and independent designers. The shopping offer is as diverse and unique as Antwerp fashion itself. Major fashion houses, local jewellery boutiques, unique concept and vintage stores, design and interior shops are not to be missed.

A Metropolis on Human Scale

Everything in the city can be reached by foot or by bike. Every district has its own vibe. From north to south, these are Antwerp's neighbourhoods.

Het Eilandje: Transformation of the Port Neighbourhood

Antwerp is what it is today thanks to its location by the river Scheldt. The Antwerp waterfront is a constant

source of enrichment for the city, all of which is visible from het Eilandje. When the docks were built at the request of Napoleon, het Eilandje was the oldest port area of the city. Today, het Eilandje is known as one of the hippest districts of Antwerp. The maritime atmosphere remains, together with repurposed warehouses, sheds and characteristic cobblestones.

The MAS|Museum aan de Stroom, designed by Rotterdam-based firm Neutelings Riedijk Architects, is an eye-catcher. The Red Star Line Museum is another architectural masterpiece, designed by the American firm Beyer Blinder Belle. Not to mention the magnificent Port House designed by Zaha Hadid. All are situated on the border between the city and Port of Antwerp-Bruges. The Red Star Line Museum and the Port House emphasize the city's connection with the waterways.

Historical City Centre

Het Steen is a centuries-old fortress which houses a visitor centre, cruise terminal and experience centre, 'The Antwerp Story'. Together, they introduce the city perfectly. Nearby, the Grote Markt breathes history.

An unbeatable quality of life in Antwerp

Ninety-three per cent of citizens like living in Antwerp, and the city scores well above EU average of eighty-nine per cent.

(Source: Eurostat, Report on the Quality of Life in European Cities 2019)

Antwerp's population is on the rise. In recent years, young families have been flocking to the inner city, boosting **new urban developments all over town**. Antwerp is a true cultural capital. It's nightlife is vibrant, with plenty of theatres, music bars and restaurants to explore. Unwind in one of the parks or visit the Middelheim Open Air Sculpture Museum, a wonderful 30 acre sculpture park.



The Grote Markt. The town square in the heart of the old city and filled with numerous guildhalls and the recently renovated Town Hall.

Admire the renovated Town Hall and the guild houses on the Grote Markt and make your way to the Cathedral of Our Lady, the largest Gothic building in the Lowlands. Step inside and marvel at the rich interior, home to four impressive paintings by Peter Paul Rubens. In Museum Plantin-Moretus, on the UNESCO World Heritage List, the history of books and book printing comes alive. Thanks to a collaboration with Google, part of the collection will soon be available on Google Books. In the DIVA Museum for Diamonds, Jewellery and Silver, discover the centuries-old connection between diamonds and Antwerp.

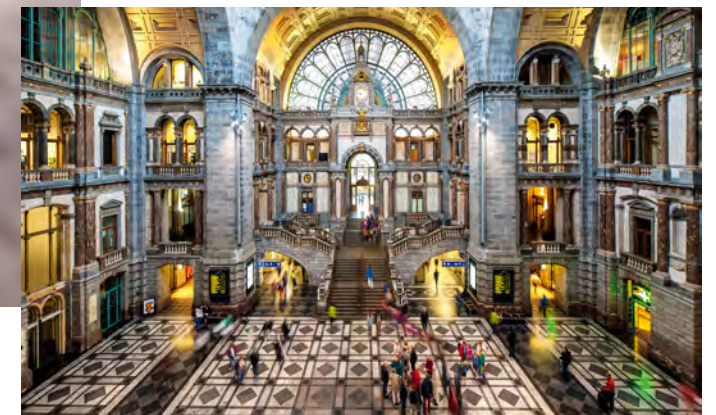
Fashion and Theatre District: all about leisure and creativity

For decades Antwerp has sustained a remarkably high status within the international fashion world, standing among big names such as Paris, London, Milan and New York. The well-known Antwerp Fashion Department of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts and the strong international reputation of Antwerp's Fashion Museum are key ingredients to this success, notwithstanding the creativity and innovative spirit of the fashion designers in the so called *Modewijk* (fashion district).

Antwerp's Theatre District is the home of many directors, actors, dancers and musicians. In the cafés and bars, you can almost hear the creativity bubbling away. During the day too it's worth visiting the many fashion, antique and interior design shops in the area, as well as two small but beautiful museums: the Maiden's House Museum and the Museum Mayer van den Bergh. *Theaterplein* also has a fun market in the square on weekends.

Central Station and Diamond Square Mile

In this district of Antwerp, in the faces on the street and in shops, cafés and restaurants, you encounter the whole



Antwerp-Central Railway station is also called the Railway Cathedral.

International Media about Antwerp:

“A hidden gem. Famed for its diamond district. Flanders’ biggest city reflects a multicultural past and present, where forward-thinking and age-old tradition are woven together. It’s an attitude, not just of the people, but reflected in the cuisine too.”

Food&Travel, Clarissa Hyman, October 2022

“An arresting clash of old-world grandeur and industrial power plays out across Belgium’s unpretentious second city, home to historic dockyards, award-winning cuisine, captivating museums and some of the country’s best beer.”

National Geographic, by Daniel Stables, October 2022



There are beautiful murals and stunning graffiti art on several Antwerp facades.



Lots of charming brasseries in Antwerp.



Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp.

world. From chic to ordinary, from historical to modern, this district has it all. At its heart is the majestic Central Station, one of the most beautiful train stations in the world. Nearby is the ZOO Antwerpen, one of Europe’s oldest and a peaceful haven in the middle of the city. At its centre, you can organise unforgettable events, the Flanders Meeting and Convention Center Antwerp is a unique venue that aims to support the partnership between meeting and conservation and cherishing nature in a sustainable way. The stunning Queen Elisabeth Hall at Astridplein is a concert and event venue with superior acoustics. On the other side of Astridplein, you can learn all about Belgian chocolate at Chocolate Nation. The diamond district is also just around the corner.

The diamond district or Diamond Square Mile is home to countless international diamond workers, jewellers and diamond merchants. Right in the middle of the diamond district is the Sephardic Synagogue, one of 30 active synagogues in Antwerp.

Groen Kwartier, a New Hotspot in Town

Groen Kwartier is a new hotspot in the city of Antwerp. Nowadays, this old military district serves as a car-free green space to live and work in. Two-star restaurant The Jane is located in the stunning chapel of its former military hospital. PAKT is known as a sustainable heart of the Groen Kwartier. It’s the perfect place to enjoy locally produced coffee and dishes in a unique setting, surrounded by wonderful roof gardens. On Antwerp’s largest rooftop farm, you can grow fruit and vegetables, as well as practice aquaculture and poultry farming, under the guidance of professional farmers.

Zurenborg: Sublime Architecture

Zurenborg is a hidden gem with belle époque magnificence. Antwerp houses many types of architecture: Art Nouveau, Neo-Gothic and Neoclassicism. However, the pièce de résistance in all of these Art-Nouveau-facades, elegant streets and atmospheric squares is the Cogels-Osylei, which features sublime architecture dating

from the turn of 19th century. *The Dageraadplaats*, in the centre of Zurenborg, is one of the most beautiful squares in the country. With a playground for kids and many cafés, it’s a fun place on a Saturday afternoon or somewhere to enjoy a romantic al fresco diner under the stars.

Het Zuid: a Treasure of Museums and Galleries

Characterised by wide avenues, stately mansions, wonderful squares, an extraordinary range of shops and some of the best museums, *Het Zuid* is also one of Antwerp’s most chic neighbourhoods when it comes to eating and drinking well. The stunning Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp (KMSKA) is the eye-catcher in the Zuid district. In this stunningly renovated building, visitors can admire an impressive art collection, now being displayed in a completely new scenography. In the historical parts of the museum, you can find the works of Rubens, Van Dyck and Van Eyck. Stand face-to-face with the gorgeous Madonna van Fouquet. Discover the largest James Ensor collection in the world, the artworks

of Rik Wouters, Magritte, Modigliani and many more. This neighbourhood offers museums including Photomuseum FOMU and contemporary art museum M HKA, art galleries and concept stores. The recently restructured river Scheldt quays are just around the corner, providing playgrounds, sport facilities and great views over the water. A perfect destination for a stroll after dinner.

Nieuw Zuid: Neighbourhood of the Future

The word ‘urban development’ becomes very clear in Nieuw Zuid (the New South). Over the past few years, a green neighbourhood has arisen between Antwerp South and the Scheldt. Residential towers designed by top architects, a park and numerous new facilities make it a vibrant place to live. The new Court of Justice and the renovated former freight terminal of the Bank of Breda have the status of ‘new place to be/work/play/live’, to having the largest park in the city and the largest private heating network in the land.

Q&A

The internationally awarded chef Seppe Nobels became very successful thanks to his restaurant located at Graanmarkt 13. He has cooked for celebrities like Jay-Z and Adele. Today, he is the inspirer of Instroom (or Inflow, in English): a restaurant and training centre for newcomers in Antwerp.

At Instroom, I train trainees who have been selected by me and who come from shelters for people who move to Belgium. The only criterion I require is a passion for food. Skin colour, origin and religion do not matter to me. I usually combine the typical recipes of these foreign-speaking newcomers with our local products, such as Antwerp specialties and local vegetables, like broccoli, cauliflower, asparagus, chicory and brussels sprouts. When the four-to-eight month training period is complete, the trainees start working in another restaurant.

To what extent does Antwerp, as a cosmopolitan city, inspire you?

Antwerp has been a port city for a very long time. All the foreign influences and cultures have such a great impact on our city. They make our city strong and fuel the economy. What I love about Antwerp is the multicultural atmosphere, the multilingualism and of course, all the delicious food from diverse cuisines.

What makes Antwerp a culinary city for you?

Antwerp now has way more Michelin-starred restaurants than, let's say, 20 years ago. But it is the mid-range that makes the difference. Whether you like street food, vegan dishes or Belgian classical dishes, in Antwerp you'll find lots of really good restaurants which serve delicious dishes at affordable prices.

What does innovation mean to you?

One of the first things I ask my trainees to do is prepare the most memorable soup they've ever eaten. Usually, they prepare a soup based on an old family recipe. Not only do we get to taste fantastic flavours, we also hear some very interesting stories. By combining these recipes with local products, we end up with something new and surprising. I hope that within five years there will be many restaurants in Antwerp where you can eat pita or tagine with Antwerp vegetables. I'm convinced that this

Seppe Nobels Chef

is the way our city will stand out from other big cities, where the big chains are gradually taking over.

What surprises foreign guests when they visit Antwerp?

I know a lot of international top chefs and whenever they visit Antwerp, I ask them where they'd like to open a restaurant. Often they tell me: 'We really like Antwerp'. They are impressed by our craftsmanship and our personal approach. In Antwerp, you're never just a number, even though we're a fast-growing international city. That's what leaves an impression on them.

Check out my favourites

- 1. De Zwarte Panter Gallery**
"In the country's **oldest active gallery**, you can discover excellent art originating from the eighties until today. While visiting the old monastery, you experience a magical moment of peace."
- 2. Sifa**
"The northern part of Antwerp is known for its multicultural atmosphere, with good fish and vegetables shops. In Sifa you will discover insanely **delicious Turkish dishes**. I often go here with my children."
- 3. Stormkop**
"A **rebellious sanctuary for children and youth**. This is where they learn how to improve the world, by fishing plastic out of the Scheldt, for example. Instroom is a proud neighbour of Stormkop."

More on page 98

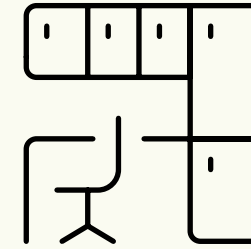
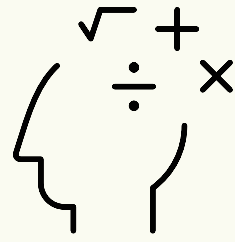


"What I love about our city is the multicultural atmosphere and all the delicious food from diverse cuisines."

Seppe Nobels

Antwerp facts & figures

41% holds a tertiary degree
Vs. 32.8% EU27 average.



2,300,000 m² office space
± 50% of all office space in Flanders.

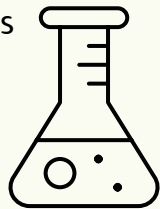
±750 ha industrial space
is developed or has development potential.

21 Michelin stars and Michelin recognized restaurants
More than **100 Gault Millau** recognitions.



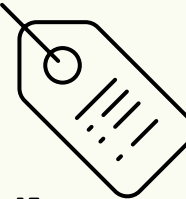
VACCINOPOLIS

Unique vaccine research center in Europe with laboratory technicians and the ability to conduct **Controlled Human Infection Model studies**.



n°1 Favourite retail destination in Belgium

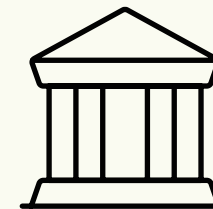
Purchasing power in the city of Antwerp is 45% higher than average in Europe.



UNESCO world heritage

The Antwerp City Hall is the only building on the UNESCO World Heritage List that still retains its original function.

Plantin-Moretus Museum: the first museum to be on the UNESCO world heritage list.



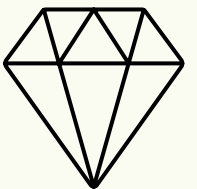
Unbeatable quality of life in Antwerp

93%

of citizens are satisfied with living in Antwerp, and the city scores **well above the EU average** (89%) in all categories.

OLDEST PUREST AND LARGEST diamond industry

It comprises 14% of Belgian export to non-EU countries.



A global city of the future

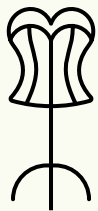


Antwerp was a **7th place** for **economic potential** in the category of cities up to 2 million inhabitants.

fDi Intelligence's prestigious 'Global Cities of the Future 2021/2022'-rankings

And a **second place** for best large city for connectivity.

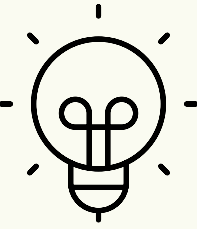
fDi European Cities of the Future 2022/2023



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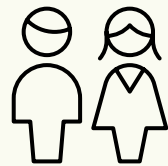
is in the **TOP 7** best museums in the world with the largest and most important collection contemporary Belgian Fashion.

Innovation powerhouse



Belgium is 1 of 5 innovation leaders after Sweden, Finland, Denmark and The Netherlands.

Flanders is **N°1 in Europe** for R&D spending relative to GDP.



YOUNG POPULATION

22.5%

are younger than 17 years
16.3% are older than 65 years.

The Big Link

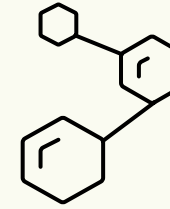


The transformation of Antwerp's ring road

Connecting people and neighbourhoods with **6 new motorway covers**, **7 ringparcs** with **270 hectares extra open space**, more than **160,000 cubic meters extra water buffering**, **1 new cyclebridge** above the river Scheldt, **1 tunnel**.

BELGIUM RANKS
AS THE WORLD

n°1

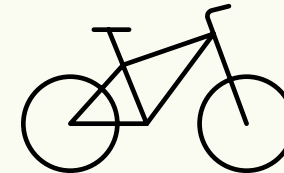


for chemicals and plastics sales per capita, with an annual turnover of 73.8 billion euros- over 2/3 of which in generated in Flanders.

Forerunner position in Europe:

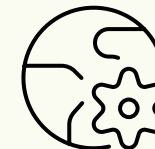
69.1%

of household waste was collected selectively (2020).



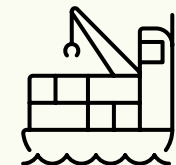
MOBILITY

- The **use of cars for commuter travel** dropped by 15,6% between 2010 and 2020 (from 51% tot 35,4%).
- **Bicycle use** had risen by 8,8% (from 21,1% to 29,9%).
- Travel behaviour of residents in free time:
40,8% cyclists compared to **28,8% car drivers** in 2020.



Flanders ranks **5th** worldwide for most productive workforce

1. LUXEMBOURG
2. NORWAY
3. IRELAND
4. DENMARK
5. **BELGIUM (FLANDERS)**
6. SWITZERLAND
7. US
8. FRANCE
9. NETHERLANDS
10. GERMANY



World-class Port of Antwerp-Bruges

2nd largest port in Europe and **1st for conventional cargo**

- **289 million tonnes** of goods handled yearly.
- **5 billion euro** of investments attracted since 2019.
- Home to the largest integrated chemical cluster of Europe.
- **164,000** direct and indirect jobs.
- **±21 billion euro** added value.

Antwerp, a pocket-sized metropolis

Doing business in Antwerp?
Find out all there is to know.



531,862
INHABITANTS

173
NATIONALITIES

53,516
STUDENTS

50,679
COMPANIES

Business in Antwerp

Central location

Thanks to Antwerp's central location within Europe, the city connects your business with the world. fDi Intelligence, a specialised division of the *Financial Times*, ranked Antwerp the second best large city for connectivity in its fDi European Cities of the Future 2022/23 ranking, ahead of cities such as Glasgow and Hamburg. Companies in Antwerp are highly interconnected with the world. The fDi award for connectivity reflects the city's excellent cooperation opportunities and highlights how accessible the city is for its residents and visitors.

Brussels nearby

Antwerp combines the best of all worlds. It's home to the busy Port of Antwerp-Bruges and its international trade opportunities. It's the cultural capital of Flanders and it's close to the administrative city of Brussels, the capital and beating heart of the European Union, with thousands of lobbyists and many international HQs. Brussel is the home of NATO and the world's second most important location for international media.

Business & finance

Antwerp has been a business hotspot for over five centuries. All administrations actively contribute to its business-friendly investment climate. Those authorities include the Belgian federal government, the Flemish regional government as well as the Antwerp city council. If you want to know more send an email to: invest@antwerpen.be

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Strong financial sector

There are many different types of funding in Flanders including crowdfunding, WIN-WIN loans, bank and non-bank financing, venture capital and mezzanine financing. For more information:

invest@antwerpen.be
www.flandersinvestmentandtrade.com,
www.antwerpen.be

Grants & Incentives

There are various grants and incentives for strategic transformation projects, eco-friendly projects, R&D projects for example. These incentives are mainly supported by VLAIO (Flemish government): www.vlaio.be

Tax Incentives

This includes innovation tax incentives for R&D projects, corporate income tax reform, gradual reduction of the corporate income tax rate. National Interest Deduction and benefits for companies with a headquarter in Flanders. For more information send an email to: invest@antwerpen.be

Social Security Incentives

For new companies and R&D personnel. This site can be consulted in English: www.belgium.be

Legal Certainty

There are many ways in which Flanders offers legal certainty. People living in Flanders enjoy trade-friendly customs legislation, extensive business, intellectual property protection, clear-cut environmental regulations and clear business legislation. If you would like to

find out more about legal certainty in Flanders and thus in Antwerp, visit this website:

www.flandersinvestmentandtrade.com/invest

Venture Capital

Antwerp offers funding for innovative ideas and upcoming projects or find yourself an investor for long-term business development.

• Public venture capitalists:

PMV (fund management) is shaping this Flemish future by providing tailored financing solutions for any promising business project, from their very start, through the various growth stages and even on to operating internationally.

• Private venture capitalists:

According to Dealroom, Antwerp is home to twelve venture capitalist companies, but many more are investing in Antwerp startups.

• Business angels:

Business Angels Network (BAN) Flanders is one of the main go-to organisations. This network is the result of a fusion of four Flanders-based BANs and has the support of the government of Flanders. Overall, BAN Flanders coordinates interactions between anonymous informal investors and promising companies. It also provides venture capital to young, starting and growing enterprises that are not in the retail, catering or project development industries.

Mezzanine Financing

Mezzanine financing is a mix of debt and equity financing suitable for established companies. The government of Flanders offers two types of mezzanines financing: one for small enterprises and another for rapid-growth, extremely innovative companies. For more information send an email to:

invest@antwerpen.be

How can the city of Antwerp help you?

City of Antwerp, Business & Innovation

Antwerp is a trusted partner in developing projects, building ecosystems and matchmaking with new partners. Antwerp is 'open for business'.

Let **Investdesk** support you and:

- link you to Antwerp's innovation hubs and ecosystems;
- help you find the right business location;
- provide soft landing services to welcome your international workforce;
- help you find the right talent in Antwerp;
- advise you on grants, incentives, tax rulings and funding;
- guide you through the permit application process;

- boost your product or service launch through our customer channels;
- help your employees achieve the modal shift;
- support you in taking actions for climate transition;
- provide you with spatial economics and planning policy;
- we support you doing business in the diamond industry of Antwerp: antwerpsmostbrilliant@antwerpen.be

For inquiries send an email to:

invest@antwerpen.be

Find the Right Talent

We help you find the right talent in Antwerp and answer questions about social employment: work@antwerpen.be. We support you with resource matters around Article 60 employees: info.werkveraringsklant@antwerpen.be

Retail and Hospitality

We assist retail and hospitality entrepreneurs: detailhandel.horeca@antwerpen.be

Food Surplus

We help you when you want to donate food surpluses: foodsavers@antwerpen.be

Modal Shift

We help your employees achieve the modal shift: smartwaystoantwerp.be



City Diplomacy

External Relations & International Affairs

The City of Antwerp is connected to the whole world. External relations and international affairs is your point of contact for networking, diplomatic relations, and partnerships. Its core objective is to improve Antwerp's international reputation. The department acts as an ambassador for the city on a local, national and international level. It organises networking and cultural events, liaises with diplomats, fosters existing partnerships and builds new ones.

external.affairs@antwerpen.be

Affordable business space

COMPETITIVE PRICING

Looking for a suitable business space? Antwerp offers some of the lowest prices per square metre for offices, logistical and industrial space, and retail locations – outshining nearby cities such as Amsterdam, Frankfurt, London and Paris.

Office Space

- Total office space 2,300,00 m² +/- 50% of all office space in Flanders.
- Rental price 100-185 euro/m²/ year
- 140,000 m² new office projects

Industrial Space

- Upper rental limit for industry is 65 euro/m² per year,
- Upper rental limit for logistics is 53 euro/m² per year.

Retail Space

- 1.2 million m² of commercial space
- Rental prices for a triple A location average around 1500-1750m²/year
- 54,000 m² available retail space

All mentioned prices are indicative and may vary

Coworking Space

Antwerp has a lot to offer in terms of coworking and maker spaces. Choose your way of coworking and get on board. Antwerp has comfortable coworking spaces near great restaurants and cultural experiences. All creative individuals are invited to use a so-called maker space. It's a creative place where you can use different sorts of machines. For more information and places: www.antwerpen.be

Meeting, Incentives, Congress, Events

Antwerp & Partners Convention Bureau (A&PCB) is happy to help with anything concerning meetings, congresses, incentives and events. They know the best places in town. As the impressive home of the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, the Queen Elisabeth Hall concert venue dazzles its guests. Flanders Meeting and Convention Center Antwerp (FMCCA) is an ideal meeting venue alongside Antwerp Central Station and the famous ZOO. Organising a conference in Flanders? See for more information: www.antwerpconventionbureau.be, www.meetinflanders.com or www.aroomwithazoo.com

Hotels & Restaurants

Antwerp is a vibrant mix of medieval and café-filled cobbled lanes, a modern fashion and entertainment scene, rewarded restaurants and one-of-a-kind hotels. Unwind and relax in front of an open fire-place in a stunning, stylish modern or art nouveau decor. Guests will soon recognise Antwerp's welcoming atmosphere, high quality gourmet kitchen and top-notch service. Botanic Sanctuary Antwerp is a new five-star superior hotel, crowned by a remarkable landmark property.

For must see & must do in Antwerp, check the Insiders' Guide on page 98.

Business Etiquette

Like in any country there are essential attitudes and values that highlight their implications for business practice.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Attitudes to environmental issues have evolved rapidly in Belgium over the last 20 years, both at the level of public awareness and in terms of government intervention. Sustainability is on everybody's agenda.

Greeting

When greeting a Belgian businessperson, a handshake is appropriate for both men and woman. Gender equality is the norm: men and women are treated equally in business and society.

Punctuality

Belgians are generally good timekeepers. Punctuality in business is usually regarded as a virtue. In the case

of social events, attitudes on the right time to arrive may vary according to community and class.

Gift Giving

Gift giving is not really an aspect of business relations in Belgium. If you decide that some sort of gesture is appropriate, make the gift a reasonably modest one and make sure it is logo neutral. Nothing should be given with the company logo, or with your business card attached. If you are offered a gift, open it right away and show your appreciation. If you have the honour of being invited into a Belgian home, take a gift for the host: flowers, chocolates, a bottle of wine or a present from your home country. The rules on flowers are the same as for most other European countries. A handwritten note of appreciation the following day will also always be welcome.

Business Dress Code

It is normal to wear a jacket, the younger high-tech companies may happily tolerate an open-neck shirt and jeans. Colour has no particular significance, though it may be preferable to avoid looking too jazzy. The quality of clothing is of only marginal importance in a culture that shows relatively little class-consciousness. Women may wear trousers, or trouser suits. When in doubt about the dress code for a particular business event, it is advisable to be well dressed rather than under-dressed.

Bribery and Corruption

Under-the-table payments, by potential suppliers to company buyers, were not an unusual feature of the Belgian business scene as recently as 30 years ago. But the practice has since largely been

stamped out. Bribing foreign officials is a criminal offence in Belgium.

Closing Deals

Closing a deal? Celebrating a new contract? Invite your business partners to a good restaurant. People from Antwerp are by nature 'bon vivants', so it's not unusual to talk business and closing deals during lunch or to host a diner party for clients.

Living in Antwerp

Living and working in Antwerp? The work-hard-play-hard culture prevails in the city, but there is a healthy work-life balance. Antwerp is a family friendly city with excellent international and domestic schools. The city is known for numerous opportunities for social, cultural and sport activities. The cosy cafés and phenomenal gastronomy contribute to a necessary relaxation after a long working day. See for more information: www.visitantwerpen.be

Visa

You should apply for your visa in person at the Belgian embassy or consulate which is competent for your country of residence. There you will be asked to state your destination and well as the reasons for your travel. If you want to know more about this, please contact the relevant embassy or consulate. www.diplomatie.belgium.be

Language

Belgium has three official languages: Dutch (Flemish), French and German. Antwerp is in the Flemish part of Belgium, where Dutch is the lingua

franca. To really appreciate and enjoy your stay in Antwerp, why not take a Dutch language course. It is fun, and it will make you understand Belgium culture better. Dutch can make your life a bit easier though most people speak English too.

Housing

Where to live in Antwerp? Where do you feel at home? Near a park, the city centre or on the banks of the Scheldt River? The cost of living is lower than in other European cities so buying or renting a place in Antwerp might be of interest. Always check commuting time to offices, the city centre, the port or other important places. See chapters *Culture & Food* for a description of the Antwerp districts and suburbs. Consider living in one of the greener areas outside the city centre as the cost of housing are considerably lower.

Healthcare

If you live and work in Belgium, you typically receive coverage by state Belgian healthcare if you carry out the compulsory registrations. The helpful guide on www.expatica.com explains how to access healthcare in Belgium for expats, including getting health insurance as well as using services.



World-class education

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

Antwerp has four international schools, which include a nursery school, high school and college. There are schools that offer the US curriculum.

Antwerp Management School

This is an autonomous business school with sound business acumen. Antwerp Management School is listed in the Financial Times Rankings.

www.antwerpmanagementschool.be

The University of Antwerp

With campuses all over the city, Antwerp is world-famous for its qualitative and innovative research. A brand-new postgraduate course, The Internet of Things, is a unique programme training a new generation of computer science experts in leading the Smart City of Antwerp into the future.

www.uantwerpen.be

Artesis Plantijn University College

The University College welcomes its students into a recently renovated, high-tech campus whose facilities include a fully functioning operating theatre for aspiring health care professionals.

www.ap.be

Karel de Grote University College

This University College prides itself on gathering many different talents to create a multidisciplinary way of thinking and working. Its varied programmes include a unique *Multimedia Technology training* with practical innovation for 3D, 4D, virtual reality and more.

www.kdg.be

Thomas More

Thomas More is the largest university of applied sciences in Flanders. It is offering over 30 bachelor degree programmes and postgraduate courses taught in Dutch as well as several taught in English. In addition to that, Thomas More offers exchange programmes in English, for students from partner universities.

www.thomasmore.be

Antwerp Maritime Academy

Choosing a maritime education means choosing a strong career, a unique sector, an excellent network and an endlessly fascinating world. The degree programmes are among the best around the globe and the campus is the epicenter of European shipping.

www.amacademy.be

Student Entrepreneur

To strengthen the link between business and education further, students can

apply for the official status of 'student-entrepreneur'. This status grants them a special consideration during exams, additional coaching and access to specific facilities and events, all to help student combine studies with budding business aspirations.

TAKEOFFANTWERP is an initiative that supports students during their first steps in the world of startups and independent entrepreneurship. You can find TAKEOFFANTWERP at the GATE15 site, where students from all Antwerp universities and university colleges work and study together. GATE15 is a unique structural alliance between the city of Antwerp, its higher education institutions, and the students.

www.takeoffantwerp.be/international

Mobility in the city

Antwerp is a compact city and easy to explore on foot. The signing for pedestrians that guides you through the city's various districts is very helpful. To discover the city by *velo'kes* (Velo city bikes) and Blue-bikes, kick scooter or scooter, you can use one of the city's various sharing mobility systems. The city's P+R (Park and Ride) are open 24/7 for visitors who come by car and take public transport for the last leap of the journey into the city centre. Quick and sustainable

travel is also possible with the *Waterbus*. Commuting with the *Waterbus* over the Scheldt River and Albert Canal can be relaxing after a workday!

Smart Mobility

Smart mobility is a crucial aspect of the City of Antwerp's city policy. The 'Smart Ways to Antwerp' website and multimodal routeplanner helps people find the best way to get to Antwerp and move around the city. The platform combines data from several mobility stakeholders, providing a solid base for innovative mobility solutions.

Check out car sharing, scooter sharing and step-bikes.

smartwaystoantwerp.be

Are you an entrepreneur using ships for transportation? There is also an intelligent route planner that might be of interest:

www.portofantwerpbruges.com/en/business/plan-your-route

Antwerp City Card

With the Antwerp City Card you travel for free throughout the city, using trams and bus. Are you planning on visiting attractions and museums in Antwerp? Buy an Antwerp City Card and discover the best of Antwerp for free or with a significant discount.

Bicycle

For longer bike rides, you can use the services of a bike rental company such as *Fietshaven*, *Freewieler*, *Cyclant* or a *velo'ke*. Don't feel like cycling yourself? Then take a seat in a bicycle taxi from Blue Sky.

smartwaystoantwerp.be

Public Transport

The buses, premetros and trams of *De Lijn* will take you wherever you want to go. Buy your ticket at a newsstand, at the ticket machines at the stops or in the Visitor Centers. Did you park your car at the park-and-ride in Merksem, Luchtbal or Linkeroever? Then it's very easy to take a bus or a tram to Antwerp's city centre.

www.delijn.be

Taxi

Need to get from point A to point B quickly? A taxi will bring you to your destination in a fast, safe and affordable manner. You pay a fixed tariff, controlled by the city and shown on the taximeter in the car. There are always drivers at the Central Station waiting to take you where you need to go.

smartwaystoantwerp.be

By Car

If you come to Antwerp by car, use one of the P+R parkings together with shared mobility to move around quickly in the

city. Bear in mind that the city centre and the Left bank have a low-emission zone. To improve the local air quality, the most polluting vehicles are banned in Antwerp. What you should also keep in mind when visiting the city centre is that many streets are car-free. On top of that, parking facilities are limited. If you are not sure whether you can enter the city with your car, check the following website:

smartwaystoantwerp.be

By Train

Arriving in Antwerp's Central Station is quite the experience as it's one of the most beautiful train stations in the world and located in the city centre. There are direct train connections between different European capitals such as Brussels, Paris, Amsterdam and London.

Antwerp Airport

Antwerp Airport - a mere 7-minute drive from the historic city centre - connects travellers directly to destinations across the globe, allowing passengers to avoid the typically long queues and check-in procedures of the larger airports. Brussels Airport is about 30 minutes by train. Eindhoven (90 km), Rotterdam (110 km), Brussels South Charleroi Airport (115 km), Amsterdam (160 km) and Düsseldorf (190 km).

Insiders' Guide

This Insiders' Guide is solely based on tips from the local internationals and the interviewees. This listing of very best things to see and do is only a sneak preview, yet full of inspiration! Enjoy the city and make your own list of favourites.



Eat & Drink Like a Local

RESTAURANTS

Rush Rush

Rush Rush is a place where people feel welcome, a place of sharing knowledge and stories but mostly a place for things that taste really good.

Lange Altaarstraat 29, 2018 Antwerp, www.rushrush.be

Witzli-Poetzli

People from Antwerp are very loyal to their local pubs. Witzli-Poetzli, next to the Cathedral, is one of the pubs to discover.

Blauwmoezelstraat 8, 2000 Antwerp

Humm

Humm offers Middle Eastern food that is plant based, sustainable and healthy.

Dageraadplaats 33, 2018 Antwerp, www.humm.love

Mooy Bakery & Lunchroom

MOOY is feasting in style. From extraordinary teas and colourful drinks to healthy indulgent dishes. Everything is home-made with lots of love.

Lombardenvest 19, 2000 Antwerp, www.mooyantwerp.be

Food Club Plein Publiek

Plein Publiek regularly invites other chefs and food designers to take over their restaurant.

Zonnestroomstraat 2A, 2020 Antwerp, pleinpubliek.be/food-club

L'Entrepôt du Congo

Time seems to stop in this charming brasserie. It's the perfect place to enjoy honest Belgian cuisine, such as tomatoes filled with shrimps and stewed meat. Like the Institute of Tropical Medicine, this warehouse also has a connection with the boats from Congo that used to dock in Antwerp.

Vlaamsekaai 42, 2000 Antwerp, www.entrepotducongo.be

Restaurant Veranda

Early 2016 Davy Schellekens and his team relocated their restaurant Veranda to the old meatdistrict in the North Antwerp, nearby the concert venue Sportpaleis. His seasonally inspired cuisine is crafted into a classic, single menu.

Lange Lobroekstraat 34, 2060 Antwerp, www.restaurantveranda.be

Shuk

In 2020, Ika and Molly opened Shuk to bring their take on the street food of the markets of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem to Antwerp. Looking for the best sabich outside of Israel? Go to Shuk.

Minderbroedersrui 64, 2000 Antwerp, www.shuk.be

Gaarkeuken 110

Gaarkeuken 110 is something totally different but still typical in Antwerp. An authentic brown café in the middle of the port, where employers and dock workers fraternize. The menu offers delicious typical Belgian dishes.

Vosseschijsstraat 21, 2030 Antwerp, www.gaarkeuken110.be

Sir Anthony Van Dijck

This restaurant is an absolute hit for a business lunch with international guests. Beautifully located in the historic Vlaeykensgang, a time machine transports you to the 16th century. On the menu are top-level Belgian classical dishes.

Oude Koornmarkt 16, 2000 Antwerp, www.siranthonyvandijck.be

L'Amitié

L'Amitié is a nice bistro with real terroir-food and an extensive wine list. Food is served in small portions to let you enjoy a lot of different flavours.

Vlaamse Kaai 43, 2000 Antwerp, www.lamitie.net

Mey Bistro

Mey Bistro has a fantastic organic wine list and it serves surprising dishes. Some say that 'their meat is the best I've ever had'.

Cadixstraat 5, 2000 Antwerp, www.meybistro.com

Bar Ami

Bar Ami in the historical city centre serves exquisite tacos, quesadillas, nachos and the like.

Sint-Katelijnevest 59, 2000 Antwerp, www.bar-ami.be

Mesa Bar & Restaurant

The food & cocktails are inspired by the 'Tastes of the World' cuisine of Tomorrowland with typical and delicious flavours from all corners of the world.

Kloosterstraat 99, 2000 Antwerp, www.mesa.world

Jean Sur Mer Harbor Cafe

This street food restaurant in Antwerp is offering fish burgers and shrimp croquettes. Some say they are the best in town.

Groenplaats 15, 2000 Antwerp (temporary location), www.jeansurmer.be

Otomat

Otomat is a pizza restaurant with a unique and very Belgian twist. Adding Duvel beer yeast to the pizza dough as well as some surprising toppings of the highest quality makes up for a great experience. Beer pairing of course!

Van Schoonbekeplein 11, 2000 Antwerp, www.otomat.be

Picniq

It's all about flavour at this very small but exquisite Korean restaurant near the lively Mechelseplein.

Sint-Jorispoort 12, 2000 Antwerp, www.picniq.be

Black Smoke

Black Smoke mixes American BBQ traditions with local influences. The restaurant offers both yankee-style 'low and slow' BBQ dishes on wood burning smokers, and 'hot and fast' grill classics on a unique Argentinian parrilla grill.

Boomgaardstraat 1, 2018 Antwerp, www.blacksmoke.be

Victor

Pure products and top combinations. Before opening her own place, ladychef Victor Avonds worked as a souschef in Seppe Nobels' kitchen.

Sint-Paulusplaats 25, 2000 Antwerp, www.restaurantvictor.be

The Jane

The Jane offers a unique combination of top-notch gastronomy made accessible for a broad audience. The two-star restaurant is located in the former chapel of the Military Hospital.

Paradeplein 1, 2018 Antwerp, www.thejaneantwerp.com

Fiera

A unique restaurant in the renovated Handelsbeurs, what used to be the first stock exchange in the world.

Lange Nieuwstraat 14, 2000 Antwerp, www.fiera.be

Instroom

At Instroom, renowned chef Seppe Nobels serves fusion cuisine 2.0. He works together with people from all walks of life.

Droogdokkenweg 4, 2030 Antwerp, www.seppenobels.be/instroom

Sifa

The northern part of Antwerp is known for its multicultural atmosphere, with good fish and vegetables shops. At Sifa you will discover insanely delicious Turkish dishes.

Lange Stuivenbergstraat 58, 2060 Antwerp, www.sifa-eethuis.be

SNACK BARS

Antwerp is the city of fries. 'Frituur' refers to deep-fried (snack)food served with fries.

Frituur 't Stad, they offer great dishes such as croquettes, beef stew and fries.

Melkmarkt 1, 2000 Antwerp, www.eethuis-frituurtstad.be

Frites Atelier, by Michelin chef Sergio Herman serves fries with decadent toppings. The menu is seasonal.

Korte Gasthuisstraat 32, 2000 Antwerp, www.fritesatelier.com

Chips, a heaven on earth for vegans. They offer vegan fries, snacks and dipping sauces too.

Sint-Antoniusstraat 35, 2000 Antwerp

TERRACES

Al fresco dining everywhere. Coffee and drinks from dusk to dawn. These terraces offer a breathtaking view of the city's various must-see places:

- **Hopper** - www.cafehopper.be
- **Ferre** - www.cafe-ferre.be
- **M HKAFF** - www.muhka.be/visit/practical/m-hkaffe
- **Plaasj Kaffee** - www.plaasj.be
- **Museumcafé MIKA** - www.mi-ka.be
- **Café batavier/ Café STORM** - www.cafe-storm.com

Hendrik Conscienceplein

This square is named after the 19th-century Flemish writer Hendrik Conscience, who stand statue on the square. There are many bars and restaurants. The ideal location for al fresco dining.

Hendrik Conscienceplein, 2000 Antwerp

Dageraadplaats

The Dageraadplaats in the Zurenborg district is one of the cosiest squares in Antwerp. The entire Dageraadplaats is filled with cafés and restaurants.

Dageraadplaats, 2018 Antwerp



Enjoy Like a Local SHOP

Locals will readily remind expats that the city was home to great painters such as Rubens and Van Dyck. This proud artistic heritage is still vibrant, especially in the local fashion and jewellery industry. There is no shortage of antique shops and galleries. There are countless boutiques and designer stores for all who enjoy lifes finer things. Antwerp is known as a shopping walhalla. People from Antwerp are leisure spenders and bon vivants!

Most shops are open from Monday to Saturday from 10 AM to 6 PM. On Sundays, visit the shops in Hoogstraat and Kloosterstraat. Every first Sunday of the month all the shops in Antwerp are open: De Keyserlei, Meir, Wilde Zee, Schuttershofstraat, Huidevettersstraat, Kammenstraat, Groenplaats, Zuid, Diamond and Fashion district.

TIP! Annual sales in January and July

Diamond Square Mile

The *Diamantwijk* (Diamond Square Mile) is known for its three small streets where diamantaires typically meet and discuss business on the street, in the diamond bourse and in the offices. Pay a visit to qualitative and reliable jewellers, officially certified *Antwerp's Most Brilliant*. www.visitantwerpen.be

Kloosterstraat

The Kloosterstraat is a cosy street with a lot of antique stores, vintage shops and 'indoor' flea markets. Shops are open on Sundays.

Kloosterstraat 2000, Antwerp, www.kloosterstraatantwerpen.com

Antwerpse handjes – biscuits and regional products

When in Antwerp, you really must taste and buy Antwerpse Handjes, literally 'Antwerp Hands'. These biscuits or little chocolates are one of the city's best known products. The little hands refer to a legend of giant Druon Antigoon. The giant used to chop of the hands of the mariners that refused to pay a toll to pass the river Scheldt.

Sjokolat Hoogstraat 33, 2000 Antwerp, www.antwerpse-handjes.be Phillips Biscuits, Korte Gasthuisstraat 39, 2000 Antwerp, www.philipsbiscuits.online

Belgian Chocolate - DelRey

Diamonds and Belgian chocolate go hand-in-hand. In DelRey, a family-run business, you will find refined chocolates and exclusive patisseries. A perfect souvenir. *Appelmansstraat 5, 2018 Antwerp, www.delrey.be*

Luddites Books & Wine

This is an amazing place that should be a feature of every international city. It's a wine bar and a bookstore, all in one. There's a nice selection of English books that can't easily be found in average bookshops.

Hopland 34, 2000 Antwerp, www.luddites.be

Vegan Shopping

Veganism is so much more than eating plant-based food. Vegans do not use any product of animal origin, not even in their clothes, shoes or accessories. www.visitantwerpen.be

- **Captain Cork.** Cork is the leather of the 21st century. Discover cork bags, accessories and all things yoga.

- Hoogstraat 63, 2000 Antwerp, webshop.captaincork.be*
- **Supergoods Eco and Fair Fashion** is a sustainable concept store. *Kloosterstraat 38, 2000 Antwerp, www.supergoods.be*
- **Stay Gold Boutique** is a unique little vegan concept store in Antwerp that offers a carefully curated range of cruelty-free products. *Zwartzustersstraat 42 2000, Antwerp, www.staygold.boutique*

MARKETS

There's always a neighbourhood market with many interesting items, such as antiques, bric-a-brac, comics and books.

Weekly markets

- **Exotic market** | Oudevaartplaats, Theaterplein and vicinity | Saturday: 8 AM–4 PM (including public holidays)
- **Bird market** | Oudevaartplaats, Theaterplein and vicinity | Sunday: 8 AM–1 PM (including public holidays)
- **Antique market** | Lijnwaadmarkt | Saturday: 9 AM–5 PM (not on public holidays)
- **Antique market** | Sint-Jansvliet | Sunday: 9 AM–5 PM (not on public holidays)
- **Vrijdagmarkt** | Auctioning of old household contents | Friday: 9 AM–1 PM
- **Bioplein** | Falconplein | Sunday: 8 AM–4 PM

Monthly, annual markets

- **Lambermontmartre** | *Lambermontplaats, Leopold De Waelplaats* | May-September (every last Sunday): noon–5 PM
- **Comic and book square** | *De Coninckplein* | all year round, third Sunday of every month: 10 AM–4 PM

- **Brocantwerpen** | *Grote Markt* | April-October: 10 AM–6 PM, www.brocantwerpen.be
- **Rubensmarkt** | *Grote Markt and vicinity* | 15 August: 8 AM–10 PM

CULTURE

Opera Ballet Flanders and the Bourla Theater are both hubs of performing arts in the city. Antwerp's buildings range from medieval to postmodern, making the city a real treat for architecture lovers.

www.operaballet.be/en and www.bourlaschouwburg.nu

Antwerp Art

Antwerp Art offers an overview of the art galleries and museums in the city, as well as emerging art initiatives and pop-up exhibitions.

For more information visit: www.antwerpart.be

Axel Vervoordt

Axel Vervoordt is known as one of the most influential art-dealers and interior designers in the world. People with whom he's worked include Robert de Niro, Madonna and Kanye West. His gallery is located on the Canal site, a converted industrial distillery just outside of Antwerp.

Kanaal, Stokerijstraat 19, 2110 Wijnegem, www.axel-vervoordt.com

De Zwarte Panter Gallery

Experience magical moments of peace in the old monastery. In the country's oldest active gallery, excellent art originating from the 1980s until today is on display.

Hoogstraat 70-72-74, 2000 Antwerp, www.dezwartepanter.com

Nello & Patrasche

Nello and Patrasche are the main characters in the 1872 English novel 'A Dog of Flanders' by Marie Louise de la Ramée, alias Ouida. The novella is set in Antwerp. It is a story about Nello, a poor orphan boy who lives in a poor farming village on the outskirts of the city of Antwerp with his dog Patrashe. The story of their friendship is world-famous and the pals can now be admired at Handschoenmarkt.

Handschoenmarkt, 2000 Antwerp

Street art in Antwerp

There are beautiful murals of cartoon characters and other stunning graffiti art on several Antwerp facades.

www.streetartantwerp.com

Het Eilandje

Het Eilandje is a former port in the north of Antwerp. It is home to the MAS Museum, the Red Star Line Museum, the Port House, a marina and many cafés, bars and restaurants.

Eilandje, 2000 Antwerpen

Cogels-Osylei in Zurenborg

The belle époque architecture in this street is phenomenal. There are so many details in the facades of the elegant houses.

Cogels-Osylei, 2600 Antwerp

Handelsbeurs

During the Antwerp Golden Century, this was the place where everyone met up. It was an absolute hotspot. This stunningly renovated historical building is testament to Antwerp's innovative past and present.

Twaalfmaandenstraat 9, 2000 Antwerp, www.handelsbeursantwerpen.be

Antwerpen-Centraal Railway station

Some call the central station 'the Railway Cathedral'. Every passenger who arrives in Antwerp by train is blown away by the stunning architecture of this monument.

Koningin Astridplein 27, 2018 Antwerp

The Court of Justice Antwerp

Commonly known as the Butterfly Palace, is a law court building located in the southern part of the city. The building was designed by the well-known Richard Rogers Partnership, VK Studios and Arup.

Simon Bolivarplaats 20, 2000 Antwerp

Port House

A magnificent building. A striking superstructure in the shape of a diamond balances on top of the old fire station. It was designed by the famous architectural firm Zaha Hadid Architects.

Zaha Hadidplein 1, 2030 Antwerp, www.portofantwerpbruges.com

De Singel

De Singel is a welcoming arts house, a meeting place for art without borders in a changing world. In a unique building on a multifaceted arts site.

Desguinlei 25, 2018 Antwerpen, www.desingel.be

Snijders&Rockox House

The houses of aristocrat Nicolaas Rockox and painter Frans Snijders have since 2018 formed one museum. The Snijders&Rockox House is dedicated to Antwerp's second heyday from the first half of the 17th century. In the museum you can discover an unexpected collection of bizarre works of art.

Keizerstraat 10, 2000 Antwerp, www.snijdersrockoxhuis.be



Rubens House

World famous painter Rubens lived in this palazzo, now called the Rubens House. The museum has an interesting painting collection but also shows visitors how the master lived and worked. The museum is currently closed, but from 2027, it will again be possible to visit Rubens' home.

Wapper 9-11, 2000 Antwerp, www.rubenshuis.be

Museum Plantin-Moretus

The Museum Plantin-Moretus has been proclaimed UNESCO-world heritage. Here you'll find the oldest printing presses in the world, ten thousand different books and a stunning art collection.

Vrijdagmarkt 22, 2000 Antwerp, www.museumplantinmoretus.be

Museum Mayer van den Bergh

The Museum Mayer van den Bergh immerses visitors in a very special, intimate, home-like atmosphere. There, you will discover a grandiose art collection, of which Pieter Bruegel's world-famous painting the 'Dulle Griet' of 'Mad Meg' is the masterpiece.

Lange Gasthuisstraat 19, 2000 Antwerp, museummayervandenberg.be

KMSKA

Royal Museum of Fine Arts KMSKA has undergone a stunning renovation. In an amazing building a collection that bears testimony to Belgium's incredibly rich cultural legacy, amazing art is on display.

Leopold de Waelplaats 1, 2000 Antwerp, www.kmska.be

MoMu

The Fashion Museum MoMu has in recent years been renovated and expanded. It offers a stunning permanent collection, with a spotlight on Belgian designers. See the website for more information about temporary exhibitions.

Nationalestraat 28, 2000 Antwerp, www.momu.be

MAS | Museum aan de Stroom

The MAS aims to be an international and pioneering museum about the global connectedness between people and collections from different cultures and environments. The view of the city, port and the river from restaurant Zilte are spectacular. This three-star restaurant, the only one in Antwerp, offers a gastronomic experience of unprecedented quality.

Hanzestedenplaats 1, 2000 Antwerp, www.mas.be

Red Star Line Museum

The Red Star Line Museum is an attraction located in the old port area, surrounded by water. The museum is dedicated to the history of the Red Star Line. It also tells a universal story of hope, dreams and the quest for happiness, based on personal stories of 20th-century emigrants.

Montevideostraat 3, 2000 Antwerp, www.redstarline.be

M HKA

M HKA is a museum for contemporary visual art, film and visual culture. It is an open meeting place of and for art, the artist and the public. The M HKA aspires to a pioneering role in Flanders and an international profile building on the Antwerp avant-garde tradition.

Leuvenstraat 32, 2000 Antwerp, www.muhka.be

Chocolate Nation

Chocolate Nation is a museum of experiences where you can taste no less than ten different flavours of chocolate. discover the chocolate traditions, history, products and innovations during the tour through the museum.

Koningin Astridplein 7, 2018 Antwerp, www.chocolatenation.be

De Koninck Antwerp City Brewery

Belgian beers are world-famous, and Antwerp is an excellent place to taste them! De Koninck beers are possibly the most popular in the city. Since the year 1833 beer brewery De Koninck has been brewing the beer of Antwerp city. The beer *Bolleke* is still brewed according to the original recipe, with the best ingredients and in ideal conditions within the walls of the city brewery. Go on an interactive brewery tour.

Mechelsesteenweg 291, 2018 Antwerp, www.dekoninck.be

Antwerpse Brouw Compagnie

The Antwerpse Brouw Compagnie is a small, local brewery in Antwerp. The brewery uses state-of-the-art brewing technology and they combine technology with traditional beer methods, an open-minded brewing spirit and a never-ending quest for the best quality. In 2012 the brewing company re-launched a historic regional beer, called Seef or Seefbeer. It is a cloudy blonde beer with a spicy flavour.

Indiëstraat 21, 2000 Antwerp, www.seef.be

PONTI

PONTI aims to be a sanctuary for young artists, regardless of the medium they use to express their artistic urges.

Wolstraat 23, 2000 Antwerp, www.pontispace.com

ANTWERP CITY CARD

With the city pass you have 24, 48 or 72 hours of free access to public transport, museums and churches. Nice bonus: you get at least 10 or 25% discount on attractions, sightseeing, bike rental and offers of Antwerp products such as chocolate and beer! More information: www.visitantwerpen.be



CITY WALKS

Park Den Brandt

Alongside the beautiful parks of Vogelzang and Middelheim, Den Brandt Park is well-known for its impressive collection of sculptures. This long green piece of nature in the south of Antwerp is the perfect place to exercise.

Beukenlaan, 2020 Antwerp

ZOO

Next to Antwerp's Central Station. Antwerp ZOO is one of the oldest and most famous zoos in Europe. Step through the gate and enjoy an oasis of calm in the heart of the city with beautiful gardens, characterful listed buildings and, of course, animals.

Koningin Astridplein 26, 2018 Antwerp, www.zooantwerpen.be

City Park

The City Park is the most famous park in Antwerp. It is a green oasis in the city centre. *Rubenslei, 2018 Antwerp*

The Historic Scheldt Underpass

Everyone gets amazed by the authentic wooden escalators which take you down under the river. Go for a walk on the left side of the river and enjoy a fantastic view of the Antwerp skyline.

Sint-Jansvliet, 2000 Antwerp, www.visitantwerpen.be

The Beguinage

The Beguinage on Rodestraat dates from the 16th century. The premises consists of a beautiful green courtyard garden surrounded by cobblestone streets and picturesque beguinage houses.

Rodestraat 39, 2000 Antwerp, www.visitantwerpen.be

Park Spoor Noord

Head to Park Spoor Noord for a walk, a picnic, a party or simply unfold your towel

and relax in the grass. Travel smoothly from Park Spoor Noord to the Eilandje and vice versa by using the Park Bridge. With its uncommon shape, the bridge is a striking gateway to the north of the city (Italiëlei 9).

Ellermanstraat, 2060 Antwerpen, www.visitantwerpen.be

Scheldt Quays in the South

The refurbished Scheldt Quays in the southern part of town are a favourite hotspot for many. It's a large area overlooking the river Scheldt. Ideal to unwind and relax after a long day at work.

Noord Jordaenskaai, 2000 Antwerp

Antwerp gardens from the Baroque period

Peter Paul Rubens, Mayor Nicolaas Rockox and Christophe Plantijn and the Moretus family had their love for gardening in common. All of them had houses with dazzlingly beautiful gardens. Lovely oases of peace, right in the city centre of Antwerp. www.visitantwerpen.be

Botanical Garden

Den Botaniek is in bloom in all seasons. Nowhere else in Antwerp will you find so many species of herbs and plants together.

Leopoldstraat 24, 2000 Antwerp, www.antwerpen.be

Hobokense Polder

The Hobokense Polder is the largest piece of nature in Antwerp City. Nature was given free rein here and a valuable and beautiful nature area was created, with a wide variety of landscapes and an enormous wealth of plant species.

www.hobokensepolder.be

Nachtegalenpark

Expats moving to Antwerp with children will be pleased by the variety of attractions. The three parks of Nachtegalenpark offer lots of opportunities to play: a playground and a small animal park,



two war bunkers and a castle. Admire a surprising collection of sculptures in the Middelheim open air museum. Feel free to bring your picnic.

Beukenlaan, Middelheimlaan, 2020 Antwerp, www.visitantwerpen.be

JOOKS

Jogging or walking? Distances vary from 5 to 15 kilometres. www.jooks.app

Routeyou App

A free app with pre-mapped cycling and hiking trails. The app offers the Velo Highlight Tour along almost 40 of the city's nicest places and even includes a wheelchair-friendly route.

www.routeyou.com

HOLIDAYS

- New Year's Day: January 1st
- Easter Monday
- Labour day: May 1st
- Ascension Day
- Pentecost Monday
- Celebration of the Golden Spurs (Day of the Flemish community): July 11th
- Independence Day: July 21st
- Assumption Day: August 15th
- All Saint's Day: November 1st
- Armistice Day: November 11th
- Christmas Day: December 25th

Colophon

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www.propaganda.be

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