

Information for International travellers – Covid-19

Coming to Flanders

Trends continue to be positive with declining numbers of Covid-19 cases.

As from **15th June 2020**, Belgium opened its borders for travels to and from the European Union, and other European countries including the UK and the four other Schengen countries (Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Iceland and Norway).

It will be up to each country to decide whether or not to open its borders, so we advise you to consult the travel advice for your country whether International travel is allowed.

The government has set rules to stop the spread of coronavirus. Follow these rules. This way, you will avoid becoming ill or making others ill. Thank you for respecting these.

Be safe in Flanders

Most activities and trips are permitted as of June 15th 2020, but a number of restrictions on travel and social contacts will continue to apply.

Cultural activities with an audience will be allowed again as of July 1st, with social distancing; sporting activities have restarted as of June 8th; hotels, restaurant and cafés have reopened on June 8h.

You can use any means of transport for all journeys, including public transport, taxis, rental cars, shared cars, shared scooters and shared bicycles.

The federal government recommends avoiding displacements during peak times if possible.

Wearing a mask on public transport (train, tram, bus or metro) is compulsory from the age of 12.

On the website of [Belgian Rail \(NMBS/SNCB\)](#), [De Lijn](#), [STIB-MIVB](#) you will find more information about the corona measures and the adjusted timetables (opens in new window).

City information sites

Antwerp: <https://www.visitantwerpen.be/en/coronavirus-information-measures>

Bruges: <https://www.visitbruges.be/en/coronavirus-covid-19-update>

Ghent: <https://visit.gent.be/en/additional-measures-against-spread-coronavirus-covid-19>

Leuven: <https://www.visitleuven.be/en/coronavirus-covid-19>

Mechelen: <https://visit.mechelen.be/coronavirus-latest-news-2>

Prevention & measures

We advise you to keep a close eye on your own state of health and to remain alert to the rules imposed by the Belgian government. Use your common sense and thus take care of your own safety and the safety of others.

The necessary measures have been taken to avoid the further spread or new flare-ups of the virus as much as possible, and to ensure the best possible safety and health for employees, visitors and suppliers. What is accessible is corona-proof!

Together with the tourism sector and the various professional organizations, **VISIFLANDERS** has drawn up protocols as a tool and guidance for safety & security for tourists.

YouFlanders

A smooth restart of the tourism sector requires a good distribution in time and space of tourism. And the YouFlanders application helps with that. Both visitors and operators provide information about the real-time activity of the tourist offer to make sure you can safely go out and about.

YouFlanders is a mobile application that gives an overall view of the Flemish tourist offer. The app contains a pressure barometer in which visitors and tourist operators indicate how busy it is in a tourist operation. The app also indicates in a simple way which COVID-19 measures are applicable, both in general and for a specific tourist offer.

The app will be available in English as of 1st of July.

Some of the rules we ask you to respect:

- Follow **on-site instructions** regarding applicable safety precautions or personnel instructions;
- **Social distancing**: always keep at least 1.5 meters away from others, also in queues;
- Always carry a **mouth mask** with you. Cover your mouth and nose with the mask where social distancing is difficult to apply or whenever you are asked;
- **No physical contact**: do not shake hands, avoid direct physical contact and avoid touching objects, devices or surfaces with a risk of contamination as much as possible;
- **Hand hygiene**: wash your hands regularly with soap and water, especially after touching objects, appliances or surfaces with a risk of contamination;
- **Cough hygiene**: if you cough or sneeze, do it safely in a disposable tissue or in your elbow;
- **No cash please**: pay as much as possible contactless

We'll take good care of you

Flanders offers some of the highest-quality health care services in the world. The national health care system provides benefits for hospital, medical, pharmaceutical, some allied services and ambulance during your stay.

The Belgian State health care system provides in free emergency care for visiting EU citizens, under the same terms as locals, using the European Health Insurance Card, EHIC (formerly E111).

Anyone else requires private health insurance - for tourists, as part of their travel insurance - if you want to be able to recoup the possible costs, and EU citizens should have this too, to cover non-emergency care plus, if they want it, repatriation etc.

What to do when you get ill?

If you have any of the following symptoms (cough, respiratory problems, fever, aches and pains, fatigue, loss of smell or taste, diarrhoea)

- Stay at the accommodation / holiday residence / hotel ... (even if your symptoms are mild)
- Inform the owner/manager who will call a general practitioner (GP) and report your symptoms.
- Don't go to the GP or to a hospital accident & emergency unit
- The GP will tell you on the phone what to do. E.g. to go to your GP practice or a triage centre for a test.
- Make a list of all the people you came into close contact with.
- Did you test positive? Then contact tracing will start

<https://www.info-coronavirus.be/en/if-you-are-sick/>

Testing Procedure

If the GP suspects that you have Covid-19, they will test you or refer you to the local triage centre. The test will be sent to the lab for analysis that same day.

Stay at the accommodation / holiday residence / hotel ... as long as you haven't received the test results. In the meantime, your GP will ask you to make a list of all the people you came into contact with up to two days before your symptoms began. This list will only be used if your test is positive, as part of the contact follow-up.

You will always receive your test results, regardless of whether the outcome is positive or negative. Did you test positive? Your health condition will be closely monitored and you will be prescribed the necessary treatment. The contact centre will take the necessary steps to inform the people close to you and your contacts that they may have been exposed to a Covid-19 carrier.

<https://www.info-coronavirus.be/en/testing/>

Contact Tracing

In order to avoid COVID-19 once again spreading throughout the population, we are performing contact tracing.

If somebody falls ill due to the virus that causes COVID-19, we ask that sick person for the names of people he has been in contact with. It is, after all, possible that those people are infected with the virus.

We then phone or visit those contacts. We provide advice on what they should do to prevent them infecting other people in their immediate vicinity. The more infections we can avoid in this way, the better.

<https://www.info-coronavirus.be/en/contact-tracing/#symptoms>

Links and additional information

Coming to Flanders

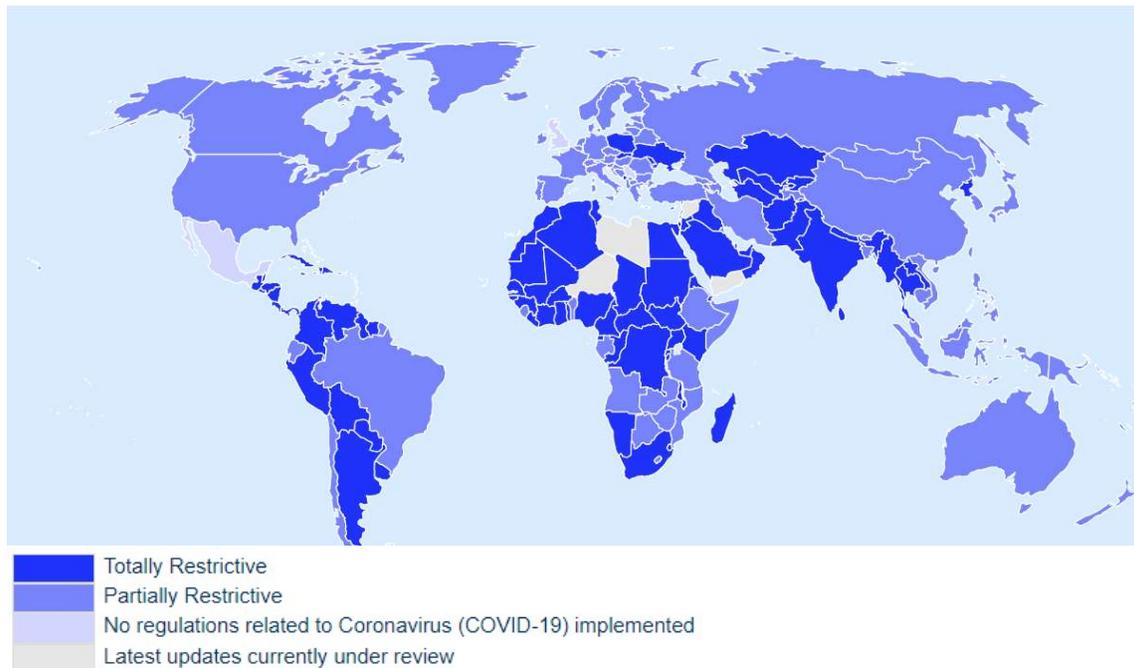
Schengen Visa Information

<https://www.schengenvisainfo.com/news/belgium-to-open-borders-for-travel-from-eu-schengen-countries-and-uk/>

Belgium government: COVID-19 impact

<https://dofi.ibz.be/sites/dvzoe/EN/Pages/Travel-to-Belgium.aspx>

Interactive Coronavirus (Covid-19) Travel Regulations Map



<https://www.iatatravelcentre.com/international-travel-document-news/1580226297.htm>

National guidelines in the source markets

Health advisory by governments in source markets

- USA: The Department of State advises U.S. citizens to **avoid all international travel** due to the global impact of COVID-19. In countries where commercial departure options remain available, U.S. citizens who live in the United States should arrange for immediate return to the United States, unless they are prepared to remain abroad for an indefinite period.
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/ea/travel-advisory-alert-global-level-4-health-advisory-issue.html>
- UK: As countries respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, including travel and border restrictions, the **FCO advises British nationals against all but essential international travel**.
<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/belgium>
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-residents-visiting-the-eueea-and-switzerland-healthcare>
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus# covid-19-exceptional-travel-advisory-notice>
- France: Déplacements essentiels sont autorisés sur production de justificatifs de et vers la Belgique, jusqu'au 8 juin inclus.
<https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/conseils-aux-voyageurs/conseils-par-pays-destination/belgique/#>

- Nederland : Reis de komende periode niet meer naar het buitenland, tenzij strikt noodzakelijk.
<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/coronavirus-covid-19/verkeer-vervoer-en-reizen/reizen-buitenland>
- Deutschland: The Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community is urging citizens to refrain from all non-essential travel.
<https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/kurzmeldungen/EN/2020/03/corona-ein-und-ausreise-en.html>

... each OA to check info in their respective markets, or at least mention that travellers might want to check this

Be safe in Flanders

All up to date info about Covid-19

Multilingual information (posters, information sheets and audio) about Covid-19. The available information is organized by language.

<https://www.info-coronavirus.be/en/translation/>

<https://www.integratie-inburgering.be/corona-meertalige-info#engels>

Hygiene & Safety regulations accommodation & recreation

Sector-specific protocols and guides, relevant for tourism entrepreneurs. The generic guidelines are customized for all different sectors with a concrete translation for the sector-specific context.

<https://www.toerismevlaanderen.be/overzicht-protocollen>

We'll take good care of you

Coronavirus COVID-19 - What is the government doing?

a glimpse into and behind the scenes of the National Crisis Centre (NCCN) where many people are working hard to achieve a successful outcome.

<https://www.info-coronavirus.be/en/what-is-the-government-doing-about-it/>

Can I Safely return to my home country when I have been to Flanders?

That will depend on regulations established by your home country. Please refer to the website of the department of External Affairs.

A few examples below:

France

Au retour en France, il convient de :

- Adopter les mesures barrières et les bonnes pratiques d'hygiène : se laver les mains régulièrement ; tousser dans son coude ; utiliser des mouchoirs à usage unique.
- Se conformer strictement aux mesures décidées par le gouvernement dans le cadre de l'état d'urgence sanitaire.

<https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/conseils-aux-voyageurs/conseils-par-pays-destination/belgique/>

UK

When you return to the UK from a flight from another country, go straight home, avoiding public transport where possible. If you can, wear a face covering if you need to use public transport, and see safer travel guidance for passengers. Only people living in your household should collect you on arrival.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus#covid-19-exceptional-travel-advisory-notice>

other country regulations to check

Is it safe to travel to Belgium?

Belgium has recorded no "excess mortality" since 11 May ! Meaning the number of deaths is no higher than it would ordinarily have been at this time of year.

How does Belgium manage the pandemic?

Belgium has **one of the best surveillance systems** in the world, and counts much more thorough than other countries. We also have **one of the best health systems**. Even at the peak, intensive care units were at 58% capacity. Everyone was able to receive the care they needed.