



Versatility in Hospitality Industry around the Globe to Study and Understand the Culture and Cuisine of Belgium

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Abstract: Belgium, officially the Kingdom of Belgium, is a country in Northwestern Europe. The country is bordered by the Netherlands to the north, Germany to the east, Luxembourg to the southeast, France to the southwest, and the North Sea to the northwest. It covers an area of 30,689 km² and has a population of more than 11.5 million, making it the 22nd most densely populated country in the world and the 6th most densely populated country in Europe, with a density of 376 per square kilometre . The capital and largest city is Brussels; other major cities are Antwerp, Ghent, Charleroi, Liège, Bruges, Namur, and Leuven Belgium is a country with culture, cuisine and several specialities Cultures and Cuisines in Belgium.



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I. INTRODUCTION

Famous elements of the Belgian culture include gastronomy (Belgian beers, fries, chocolate, waffles, etc.), the comic strip tradition (Tintin, the Smurfs, Spirou & Fantasio, the Marsupilami, Lucky Luke, Largo Winch, etc.), painting and architecture (the Art Nouveau, the Mosan art, the Early Netherlandish painting



Belgium's contributions to painting have been especially rich. The Mosan art, the Early Netherlandish the Flemish Renaissance, and Baroque painting are milestones in the history of art. While the 15th century's art in the Low Countries is dominated by the religious paintings of Jan van Eyck and Rogier van der Weyden, the 16th century is characterised by a broader panel of styles such as Peter Breughel's landscape paintings and Lambert Lombard's

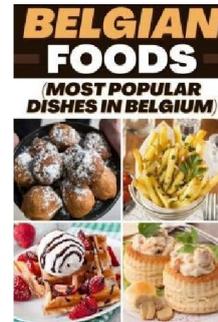


representation of the antique. Though the Baroque style of Peter Paul Rubens and Anthony van Dyck flourished in the early 17th century in the Southern Netherlands, it gradually declined thereafter and not all cultures need to be a part of the countries history it can also be a influence of the present and Since modern culture is more than ever related to languages (theatres, media, literature, etc), the modern Belgian cultural life has tended to develop in each linguistic community (with common elements however). Members of each of the two main linguistic groups generally make their cultural choices from within their own language community, and then, when going beyond, the Flemish draw intensively from both the English-speaking culture (which dominates sciences, professional life and most news media) and the Netherlands, whereas French-speakers tend to focus more on cultural life in France and elsewhere in the French-speaking world even though the English-speaking culture is more present in French-speaking Belgium than in France.[1]



Belgium Cuisine

A countries cuisine is as big a part of its culture than any other. Ingredients typical in Belgian dishes include potatoes, leeks, grey shrimp, white asparagus, Belgian endives and local beer, in addition to common European staples including meat, cheese and butter. Belgians typically eat four meals a day, with a light breakfast, medium lunch, a snack, and a large dinner.



Though Belgium has many distinctive national dishes, many internationally popular foods like hamburgers and spaghetti bolognese are also popular in Belgium, and most of what Belgians eat is also eaten in neighbouring countries. "Belgian cuisine" therefore usually refers to dishes of Belgian origin, or those considered typically Belgian. Belgian cuisine was influenced by that of the Roman Empire, and later that of France, Germany and the Netherlands.[3]



Little is known about early Belgian cuisine. It can only be assumed that it was similar to that of other early European tribes. The ancient Belgians probably foraged, kept animals like sheep and cattle, grew root vegetables, hunted for animals such as the wild boar, fished and foraged for berries and herbs. Beer was brewed as well, although not with



hops (that was a later discovery). It was probably brewed with barley instead. Later, under the Roman Empire, many more foods were presumably introduced to Belgium, such as cabbage and other brassicas, as well as many fruits such as apples, pears and grapes. Belgium was known to be a large supplier of ham and pork for many cities in the Roman Empire.[1]

Belgian Chocolates

How can one forget about Belgium chocolates when mentioning its culture and specialities. Belgium has a long tradition of chocolate making. Belgian dark chocolate will have a classic fudge like earthy flavor and no sourness, fruitiness or lingering floral flavors usually.[3]

What differentiates it from the rest?

The age old tradition of chocolate making. Belgian chocolate couverture and baking chocolate are characteristically more buttery, medium sweet with medium bitterness. Filled Belgian chocolates such as truffles and molded pralines are very often in a fanciful shape and filled with butter creams or ganache. The fillings are often times whipped to be lighter and more airy. Chocolatiers think of Belgian chocolates as being in the middle range of flavor profile with not too much of a range in flavor extremes. Belgian milk chocolate for example has a classic milk flavor and not so much fruitiness or sourness you might find in other milk chocolate varieties. Belgian dark chocolate will have a classic fudge like earthy flavor and no sourness, fruitiness or lingering floral flavors usually. The popularity of the Belgian chocolate taste is because it is comforting and forward without too many distractions. This classic taste is derived from the unique African cacao companies in Belgium source as an ingredient. West African cacao, the type Belgian chocolatiers use, is world famous for having a classic cocoa taste. This straightforward taste is the cornerstone of the chocolate. Probably the most famous Belgian chocolates found in the USA come from the chocolatier Neuhaus. Maker of the classic solid chocolate bar and moulded shape Belgian chocolates, Neuhaus chocolatier is the perfect example of traditional European chocolate making



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II. SUMMARY

Belgian cuisine is widely varied with significant regional variations, while also reflecting the cuisines of neighbouring France, Germany and the Netherlands. It is sometimes said that Belgian food is served in the quantity of German cuisine but with the quality of French food. Outside the country, Belgium is best known for its chocolate, waffles, fries and beer.[2]

Belgium is famed for its high quality chocolate and over 2,000 chocolatiers, both small and large. Belgium's association with chocolate goes back as far as 1635 when the country was under Spanish occupation. By the mid-18th century, chocolate had become extremely popular in upper and middle class circles, particularly in the form of hot chocolate, including with Charles-Alexander of Lorraine, the Austrian governor of the territory. From the early 20th century, the country was able to import large quantities of cocoa from its African colony, the Belgian Congo. Both the chocolate bar and praline are inventions of the Belgian chocolate industry. Today, chocolate is very popular in Belgium, with 172,000 tonnes produced each year, and widely exported.[2]

III. CONCLUSION

In conclusion Belgium's long and rich cultural and artistic heritage is epitomized in the paintings of Pieter Bruegel, the Elder, Jan van Eyck, Hans Memling, Dieric Bouts, Peter Paul Rubens, René Magritte, and Paul Delvaux (see also Flemish art); in the music of Josquin des Prez, Orlando di Lasso, Peter Benoit, and César Franck; in the dramas of Maurice Maeterlinck and Michel de Ghelderode and the novels of Georges Simenon and Marguerite Yourcenar (see also Belgian literature); in the mapmaking of Gerardus Mercator; and in the many palaces, castles, town halls, and cathedrals of the Belgian cities and countryside which makes this country a piece of art and needs to be visited to absorb its culture and experience its tradition

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