

E4U National Reports: introducing Belgium

My Area

My school and home are located in Mechelen, Mechelen is a city and municipality in the province of Antwerp, Flanders, Belgium. Mechelen is one of the most prominent cities of historical art in Belgium. During the renaissance lots of artist were attracted to Mechelen's patrons. Most cities in Flanders have a mock name for their inhabitants. Since 1687, for their heroic attempt to fight the fire high up in the Saint-Rumbold's Tower, where the gothic windows had shown the flaring of only the moon between clouds, Mechlinians have been called "Maneblussers" (moon extinguishers).

The climate here in Belgium isn't one of the best, in Mechelen it's often cold and rainy. Belgium is a small country with a total area of 30,528 km² or 11,787 sq mile. In and around Mechelen you can find lots of recreation centres, like our cinema, "De Nekker" and "Blosos" and lots of other parks.

Family Life

Family life here isn't really anything special, you don't often see really big households, most of the time people only have one or two kids.

People don't tend to live together with their grandparents.

Most teenagers in Belgium don't really spend a lot of their free time with family either.

School life

In Belgium kids normally start going to school around the age of three.

Over here you finish primary school at the age of 12 and then you decide what you want to do.

After primary school you can decide between 3 main type of schools, you have ASO (which means a lot of studying and almost only theoretical work), you have TSO (this is where you have a mix of theoretical and practical work) and the last one is BSO (this is where people study to do practical work right after they finish high school).

After all of these however you can still go to college or university.

Most students don't like to go to school because they think it is boring, but everyone in Belgium has to until they hit the age of 18.

Traditions

Christmas in Belgium is celebrated with mostly family or good friends, we sit together and have dinner and after we unwrap our presents just like most other places.

Some popular dishes around Christmas are rabbit, stew and lots of others.

In Belgium most people aren't really religious anymore, most of us don't go to church anymore.

Social habits and customs

In Belgium we greet each other by either giving kisses on cheeks or shaking hands, if you meet someone which is another sex than you you kiss them on the cheeks and when you meet someone who is the same sex as you give them a handshake.

When you see someone you know you usually just shout "Hey" at them.

In Belgium there really isn't a lot of taboo, most people just do what they want without thinking about the rest. We mostly wear casual clothing when we go to school, almost everyone wears sneakers here.

Food

This is my favourite part, the Belgian cuisine isn't one of the most complicated cuisines. The Belgian cuisine is actually quite basic, but I myself think that the simplicity of the food is the thing that makes it the best.

The foods Belgium is known for are fries, chocolate, beer and many others. Most of the food here isn't that healthy, most people (including me) don't mind that though. My favourite Belgian foods to eat are: fries with stew, food from the "frietkot", ...

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