

# WILD PHOTOGRAPHY HOLIDAYS



## BRUGES BELGIUM

### A MEDIEVAL ROMANCE

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- Impressive Renaissance and medieval architecture
- Charming cobblestone alleys
- Urban wildlife, the famous swans of Bruges
- Iconic, chocolate box pretty location of world heritage Beguinage with carpets of daffodils.
- Plenty of street life. (people, horse carriages, boats etc)
- Early morning slow shutter speed and sunrise photography
- Stunning reflections along the canals
- Charming hotel in the heart of the historic centre
- Easy access to all the locations
- Gorgeous Belgium cuisine and beer!

#### INTRODUCTION

Often dubbed the 'Venice of the North', the photogenic waterways and fairytale architecture make Bruges one of the prettiest cities in Europe, here is a city that will capture your heart. A well deserved Unesco World Heritage site retaining the mysteries of the Middle Ages and unashamedly exuberant, Bruges has been an international metropolis for centuries. The city of Bruges boasts impressive medieval architecture mixed with some marvellous 19th-century buildings. There is a wide range of photography subjects: street photography, architectural details, amazing canal reflections and urban wildlife i.e. the famous swans of Bruges. Early morning sunrise sessions will give us opportunity to photograph empty

streets before they are filled with tourists. Wandering around cobblestone streets we will emerge ourselves in one of most beautifully preserved medieval treasures of Flanders. Bruges is often referred to as Venice of the North – you will appreciate the intricate web of city canals with stunning reflections early in the morning and busy boats traffic during the day. We will also have a chance to savour local cuisine – famous Flemish stew, mussels, waffles, chocolate and – last but not least – a great many types of Belgian beer.

#### PHOTOGRAPHIC TUTORS

This workshop will be led by [Polina Plotnikova](#) a talented and creative photographer who believes...



*“They say that a photographer is either a picture taker or a picture maker... I am firmly in the picture makers’ club. While fully appreciating the what you see is what you get approach, I am much more interested in chasing an ever-elusive image that appears in my mind’s eye, an image that conveys my feelings and emotions, rather than remains a mere statement of fact.”*

Polina is an ambassador for [Lensbaby](#) who have produced award-winning DSLR and mirrorless camera lenses that enable creative effects for inventive photographers. Polina will give a Lensbaby familiarisation tutorial for any interested guests.

*Martin Sammtleben* of WPH originally built his own business as a photographer and graphic designer, mainly for clients in the architecture and tourism sectors. His lovely and thoughtfully created images reflect this early background. Additionally he is an expert on post processing and image management.

*Geraldine Westrupp* co-owner of WPH will take care of the day to day organisation on this workshop.

## DAILY ITINERARY

### Day 1: Arrival in Bruges

There are many different ways to travel to Bruges depending upon where you are travelling from. Our charming 4-star hotel is located right in the historic area of Bruges. Early evening we will gather together for introductions and a trip briefing followed by dinner at a local restaurant. No doubt we will take the opportunity to admire Rozenhoedkaai, the most photographed spot in Bruges. It is magical at night, with light reflections in the dark waters of the canals.

Accommodation Hotel

### Day 2: Medieval Architecture and Reflections

We will start the day early at the same spot we admired on the previous evening – the famous Rozenhoedkaai. Sunrise will light up the tips of the medieval buildings and will gradually reach the water. Moving along the canal will allow us to photograph eye catching reflections and all before the tourists are awake. Back at the hotel we will have time to catch our breath and have a delicious breakfast. The day will continue at the Burg, a



place of great importance to this city. One of buildings The Palace of the Liberty of Bruges was the headquarters of local government from the Late Middle Ages up until 1795. There will be an opportunity to focus on wider angles including the impressive fourteenth century city hall and old Court of Justice, a rare example of Renaissance architecture in Bruges. There are lots of choices for close-up architectural details, and a chance to pop into the Basilica where a relic of the Holy Blood is kept. Moving on to the Markt – the heart of Bruges – we encounter many Medieval-style buildings with stepped gables. Proceeding along smaller streets we will taking in the atmosphere before enjoying lunch. The afternoon will focus on photographing horse carriages in narrow streets, boats on the canals around city centre and generally soaking up the ambience of this historic city.

Accommodation Hotel

### Day 3: Lakes, Swans and Canals

We will start bright and early again with a pre-breakfast photo session at one of the rare wider spots on the



Bruges canals, the Spinolarei Vista. Here are great opportunities for slow shutter speeds and canal reflections. Following a delicious breakfast back at the hotel we will proceed to Begijnhof a World Heritage site once home to the Beguines, emancipated lay-women who nevertheless led a pious and celibate life. Today it is inhabited by the Sisters of the St. Benedict Order. Photographically there will be lots of various options – wider angles to take in all the white houses and the trees, a carpet of daffodils that cover the inner court at this time of year. There will also be good opportunities for some in-camera creative techniques (ICM and multiple exposure.) Heading for the Begijnhof we will have an excellent opportunity to capture courting swans, one of the reasons that this time of year is such fun for photographers. Following lunch we will take a long walk around a small lake called ‘Minnewater’ or Lake of Love before proceeding to Godshuis De Meulenaere, a smaller Beguianage and one of the charitable dwellings that were built from the 14th century onwards. Here we will enjoy the small yet picturesque garden with its white-painted façades. Strolling back to the hotel we will have time to take a look at our images before heading out to the town for dinner.

Accommodation Hotel

#### **Day 4: The Romantic City**

We will take it easy this morning with a leisurely breakfast and a creative tutorial with Polina. Inspired we will head to Jan Van Eyck Square to photograph this picturesque spot that once was the old harbour of Bruges, where ships loaded and unloaded. Before lunch we will explore the streets and a few churches in the north-west part of the city including the beautiful St James' Church.



There are lots of less known romantic and photogenic spots in this part of the city. The small bridges providing excellent opportunity for water reflections. During lunch we will discuss which locations the group would like to return to for the afternoon photo-walk. Early evening we will enjoy an image presentation before heading out for a final celebratory dinner.

Accommodation Hotel

#### **Day 5: Departures**

Following breakfast we will say our goodbyes and depart take our various modes of homeward transport.

#### **WHAT'S INCLUDED**

- 4 nights hotel with breakfast
- 4 dinners
- Tuition and tutorials
- Guided photography walks

#### **WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED**

- Lunches
- International flights, transfers, trains, taxis
- Travel insurance
- Alcoholic drinks
- Snacks and beverages except included meals

#### **TRAVEL TO BRUGES**

Bruges is an easy city to travel to from all parts of Europe. Here are a few options. You will need to arrive at the hotel by no later than 18:00 on the first day of this workshop/break.



### Flying to Bruges

The closest airport to Bruges is Brussels Airport which is located northeast of the Belgian capital, approximately 110km (68 miles) to the east of Bruges. Airlines offering direct flights to Brussels from the UK include British Airways, Brussels Airlines and easyJet. From the USA to Brussels, there are direct flights with Brussels Airlines, Delta, Jet Airways and United.

### Coaches

De Lijn (tel: +32 70 220 200; [www.delijn.be](http://www.delijn.be)) operates regional bus services to and from Bruges – scheduled direct routes connect the city with Ostend, Zeebrugge, Ghent and other destinations, while regular daily connections between Bruges station and Brussels South Station take around two hours.

### Journey Times to the City

From London – 4 hours 30 minutes; Brussels – 1 hour 30 minutes; Paris – 3 hours 30 minutes; Amsterdam – 2 hours 50 minutes; Cologne – 3 hours 10 minutes.

### Travel by Rail

#### Services

The central station in Bruges is a short walk from the town centre and stands on the main Ostend-Brussels Intercity line, which connects to the major international *Thalys* services ([www.thalys.com](http://www.thalys.com)) for Paris and Amsterdam and *Eurostar* services ([www.eurostar.com](http://www.eurostar.com)) for London at the Gare du Midi station in Brussels. Trains to and from Bruges also connect with cross-channel ferry services at Ostend and Zeebrugge, both a short distance from the city.

#### Operators

*Belgian National Railways* - SNCB/NMBS (tel: 70 797 979; [www.belgianrail.be](http://www.belgianrail.be)) operates rail services to and from Bruges.

*Eurostar* (tel: 3432 186 186; [www.eurostar.com](http://www.eurostar.com)) runs from London to Brussels Midi in 2 hours. If you select 'Any Belgian station' when you book, your Eurostar ticket allows a connection to anywhere in Belgium as long as you make the journey within 24 hours. Trains from Brussels to Bruges take around 1 hour.

### Journey Times to the City

From London – 3 hours 20 minutes (including connection); Brussels – 1 hour; Paris – 2 hours 50 minutes (including connection); Amsterdam – 3 hours (including connection); Cologne – 3 hours (including connection).



### Taxis

It is a short taxi ride from the Railway Station to our hotel in the historic city.

### ACCOMMODATION

We will stay in a charming 4-star hotel offering good access to our chosen photo-locations.

### FOOD

Bruges has long been celebrated for its delectable food and selections of delicious beers. We will eat our evening meals together in a city restaurant and breakfast will be at our hotel. Lunches will be taken in town and are not included. Please ensure that any special dietary needs are mentioned on the booking form.





### **ALCOHOL**

Alcohol in Bruges is European prices and there is a bar in our hotel and the restaurants.

### **SPENDING MONEY**

Belgium is part of the Eurozone and cash can be easily obtained at the airport ATM machines. There will be opportunities to buy presents and souvenirs in the city. Credit cards are accepted in most shops and retail departments.

### **TRAVEL INSURANCE**

Please ensure that you have adequate travel insurance that includes repatriation in case of accident, as well as equipment and personal belongings cover.

### **PASSPORT AND VISA REQUIREMENTS**

A passport valid for at least three months beyond length of stay required by all except nationals of Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden who are only required to produce national identity cards is-

sued by the authorities in their countries of origin. Visas are not required but a return ticket will need to be shown by Australian, Canadian and USA nationals. Other nationalities please enquire before booking.

### **LANGUAGE**

The official language in Bruges is Flemish, a similar language to Dutch.



## CLIMATE

This is Spring in Northern Europe and it could be a bit chilly with temperatures anything between 6–15°C with a possibility of rain, although together with April, March is statistically the least rainy month.

## CLOTHING SUGGESTIONS

Just the normal clothes for what could be a chilly spring day or maybe a little warmer. Bring a pair of shoes that are comfortable for walking and a raincoat! If you have any questions feel free to contact us at any time before the trip.

## PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT & INFORMATION

- Camera bag or backpack such as the Flipside or Trekker series designed by LowePro.
- A camera with interchangeable lenses such as a digital SLR or a mirrorless system camera.
- A set of lenses to cover the whole range from wide-angle to telephoto, for example...

For full-frame cameras: 16–35mm wide-angle, 24–105mm mid-range and a 70–300mm or longer tele zoom. For crop format cameras: 10–20mm wide-angle, 17–50mm mid-range and a 70–200mm or longer tele zoom.

- Lens for close-ups & details – that could be a mid-range zoom with a short minimum focusing distance or a dedicated macro lens.
- Spare camera (highly recommended)
- Sturdy tripod – not only useful for low light photography but also for accurate framing and composition of landscape and close-up images.
- Cable release – mechanical or electronic remote to avoid shake on long exposures.
- Neutral density, graduated filters and polariser, if you use these. At least a neutral density filter in the range of 4–6 stops would be a good addition to your kit.
- Lens cloth
- Sensor cleaning device (optional)



- Lightweight 'trekking' absorbent towel for drying cameras and equipment
- Rain cover for camera and camera bag.
- Sufficient memory cards for the whole holiday as it may not be possible to buy more during the trip.
- Film users should bring enough film, as it may not be possible to buy in many places.
- A laptop with the image editing applications of your choice, essential for checking and presenting images during the trip and for one-on-one sessions with the tutor.
- Backup storage device (optional)
- Spare batteries and chargers
- All the electrical sockets are European two-pin, so you might need a travel plug adapter.

## PARTNERS

Although this is primarily a photography holiday, non-photographer partners will be very welcome as there are



many options and interesting possibilities in addition to taking photographs.

### **OUTDOOR TRAVEL**

This is an outdoor travel holiday and the itinerary is dependent on the weather, local conditions and other variables. Wild Photography Holidays may use their discretion to change the itinerary should conditions dictate this. Your health, safety and enjoyment will always be our primary concern when making such changes.

### **MORE QUESTIONS?**

We hope that this information has answered some of your questions about the holiday, It doesn't hope to answer everything. If you have any questions please get in touch.

### **BOOKING THIS HOLIDAY**

Fill in the [online booking form](#), or give us a call on +44 (0)1270 440222.

### **LINKS**

View [images and information for this tour](#) on the website.

Read about [our approach to teaching photography](#)

### **IMAGE CREDITS**

All images are by Polina Plotnikova.

