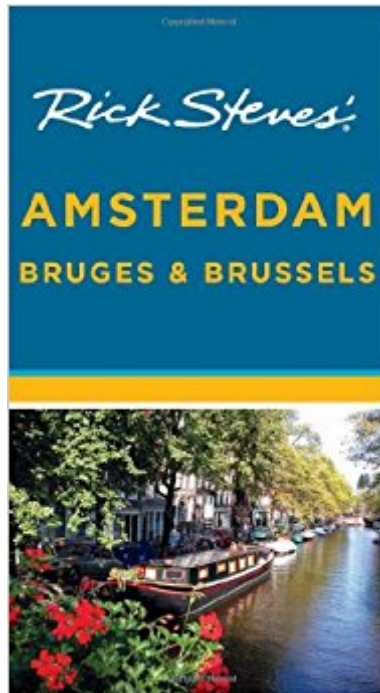




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Rick Steves' Amsterdam, Bruges & Brussels



Synopsis

You can count on Rick Steves to tell you what you really need to know when traveling in Amsterdam, Bruges, and Brussels. The self-guided tours in this book will lead you on bike rides over cobblestone streets and on cruises through charming canals. Stop to smell the tulips as you hike past whirring windmills. Get inspired by the work of the Dutch Masters and visit the ultramodern European Parliament. When it's time for a break, sample fine chocolates or sip local beers—each served in its own distinctive glass. Rick's candid, humorous advice will guide you to good-value hotels and restaurants. You'll learn how to get around the Low Countries by train, bus, or car, and discover which sights are worth your time and money. More than just reviews and directions, a Rick Steves guidebook is a tour guide in your pocket.

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Customer Reviews

Steves preaches a low-cost, low-to-the-ground style that not only saves money, but gets you closer to the real Europe, the way Europeans experience it. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Rick Steves has spent 100 days every year since 1973 exploring Europe. Rick produces a public television series (Rick Steves' Europe), a public radio show (Travel with Rick Steves), and a podcast (Rick Steves' Audio Europe); writes a bestselling series of guidebooks and a nationally syndicated newspaper column; organizes guided tours that take thousands of travelers to Europe

annually; and offers an information-packed website (ricksteves.com). With the help of his hardworking staff of 70 at Europe Through the Back Door¹⁵¹; in Edmonds, Washington, just north of Seattle¹⁵¹; Rick's mission is to make European travel fun, affordable, and culturally broadening for Americans. Gene Openshaw is a writer, composer, tour guide, and lecturer on art and history. Specializing in writing walking tours of Europe's cultural sights, Gene has co-authored eight of Rick's books and contributes to Rick's public television series. As a composer, Gene has written a full-length opera (Matter), a violin sonata, and dozens of songs. He lives near Seattle with his daughter, and roots for the Mariners in good times and bad.

My husband and I always use Rick Steve's books when traveling abroad. This book was very helpful, but not my favorite. Positives: 1. The walking tours are a great way to get acquainted with the city and pick and choose what you want to do as you go along. You can have a half to whole day of informative touring while spending very little cash or having to pay for a tour. 2. The tips about prices and what days to visit things are helpful. 3. His hand drawn maps are always great to follow. 4. Background info about history and different sites is interesting. 5. Take his advice about using cash instead of credit! I didn't believe him, but he was spot on. Negatives: 1. He focuses too much on art and art museums which can get a bit tiresome. 2. He talks down about some of the more touristy sites which are actually quite fun (Madam Troussands, Heineken Experience, Zaanse Schans). 3. The sections about food and restaurants are really focused on saving money rather than eating well. I don't want to eat in a mall food court just because it's cheap. 4. The TV version of this book is also one of his more boring episodes. I would suggest using this for the walking tours and supplementing with Lonely Planet.

Rick writes very helpful guides. He gets hands on, and tries everything himself. The guides aren't beautiful, but the paper quality and lack of color glossy pictures keeps the weight down. We did however get a bit tired of his penny pinching. We aren't looking for luxury meals and lodging, but we are not college kids either. We don't want the drab hotels, and cafeteria style steak and fries kind of meals that he seems to favor. We want to discover a local place that has the kind of traditional multicourse meals Europe was known for. Unfortunately, too many all over Europe have become cheap food factories, that aren't very cheap after all. So the guides are still invaluable for their personal insights. But we now know that you have to calibrate your expectations of what Rick recommends.

This book is great, and you can combine it with the podcasts on his web site to get even more information. We listened to the podcasts about the Netherlands, including the city tour podcast, and subsequently, while in Amsterdam two weeks ago, we followed exactly his city walk. It was well planned and thorough. The next day we followed his walk of the Jordaan District. Again, it was great. We were fortunate to be there on a day with the open-air market was open, so got to have both raw herring and Dutch pancakes on one meander through the market. Our hotel was near the Matterhorn stop on the tram, and his explanation of how to use the tram was perfect. (The tram driver doesn't sell tickets - there is another person in the rear of the car who does that.) With this book, you really don't feel like a total dummy while doing "routine" (to the locals) things for the first time in a new country. We went to a restaurant he named for rijsttafel, and had a great dinner. (Now my wife is collecting leftovers and at the end of the week she says she's going to put them on rice and call it rijsttafel!) We took one of the side tours he mentioned - to the Zuider Zee Museum, and were captivated with that experience. A very worthwhile trip. After Amsterdam we went to Bruges, but only had one day there, so did a paid city tour instead of trying to follow the guidebook. In general, the Rick Steves guides are absolutely top notch. Highly recommend. (FWIW, my wife has now decided she likes Amsterdam better than Paris, because of how bike-friendly and walking-friendly it is.)

Good information. I only wish we could have used the information in the book. We made the mistake of going to Brussels on May Day (a National holiday in Belgium) and in the old part of the city we really wanted to see, were packed in like sardines. There is good information on Bruges, but word of warning: do not go during the height of tourist season! I thought Brussels was crowded until we went to Bruges. When you cannot see anything or get around because of crowds, you are there at the wrong time! Bruges is gorgeous. However, if at all possible, wait until the offseason to go. The weather may not be as nice, you may be cold, but you will be able to take pictures and appreciate its beauty. The book appeared to have good information, we just could not take advantage of it because of the crowds in both places. I only gave it four stars, because I was not able to fully tell how accurate it was.

Per usual, Rick's guide provided us with excellent insights into both the commonly known, and little seen beauties, points of interest or curiosity, and bargains available. Bruges is not to be missed, and Rick gave us more than sufficient understanding of why this is so. We were not disappointed - his guidance greatly enhanced our visit.

I used this book on a recent trip to Brussels and Amsterdam. This book actually talks about other areas in the BeNeLux region, including Delft, Flanders Fields, Ghent, The Hague, etc., so it's probably worth at least a look if you're not necessarily going to the cities named in the title. This book is up to the usual standards. I am a big fan of Steves' work. Any mistakes I make in my travel usually come from deviating from his advice and instructions. Rick and his partners clearly love and respect these areas and go out of their way to help tourists really experience them. The history sections are always well written and enjoyable. The tips on traveling and getting tickets saves time, time I can spend enjoying the sights. The walkthroughs on museums and cities are really helpful and flesh out the experience. I can honestly say this book enhanced my vacation and that's exactly what I want it to do. That's how I used this book. I didn't use it so much for restaurants and hotels. But for everything else I find them extremely useful and enjoyable to read. If anything, this one just gave me motivation to go back!

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