

### **BOATS & SEAGULLS**

You are now on the edge of the island called Muide. Well, actually it lies a bit off the map, to the north. When you've crossed the railway track, turn left and look for a spot near the water. Dangle your feet over the edge and take a deep breath. Mmm, that wonderful harbour smell of diesel and seagull sweat. Indeed, this area is on the edge of the Ghent harbour, which is three times the size of the whole city centre. he Muide is a lively neighbourhood that has changed a lot over the years. Young alternative couples with money are slowly moving into new lofts, but the area is still quite rock 'n roll. After your walk around, stop over here at the corner of Sassekaai and the city ring for a perfectly tapped Stella. BAR OSWALD is a bar with a century of history, still in good hands with Elewout and Linne. They renovated the toilets using Lego and beer kegs and they installed a confession

## Amadeo (23) beer geek

(Tue to Sun 11:00 - 23:00) "DOK BREWING COMPANY is not your average brewery. For one thing, I cannot tell you what they serve there because they don't like to make the same batch twice. When they go crazy, they even experiment with flavours like chilli or chai. Last time I went, they did something with a Christmas tree... If choosing from 30 taps stresses you out, just ask Joeri for advice. He'll bar is next to looong tables, where you can order food from any of the other places at Hall 16."

### EAT, DRINK, DANCE, REPEAT

(Closed on Sun / lunch and dinner) AMIGO is our kind of restaurant; eat and drink upstairs, party downstairs. The food is spicy Mexican and colourful Middle Eastern. The club is nice and dark under a low ceiling with no windows, so let's hope the corona crisis is really over.

time. Statues of crying angels, the grave of a fallen soldier, stones overgrown with moss, well-placed benches and the occasional flower blossoms drifting over the grass field... I know this is not Père Lachaise, but I think this place deserves your visit." (to get there, walk 5 minutes from here along

### MUSEUM OF INDUSTRY

/ Sat, Sun and holidays: 10:00 - 18:00 / free under 19 / €2 under 26 / €8) From the Middle Ages till well into the see is what you get (around €9 for a meal + salty Ayran 20th century, Ghent was famous for its textile industry. yoghurt drink). This street is the heart of Turkish Ghent, The factory chimneys you can still spot on the edges of with a soundtrack of jingling trams, yelling children and the city are a silent witness to our industrial past, but pimped out BMWs. It's always alive except in summer, on the third floor of the INDUSTRIEMUSEUM you see it because loads go to Turkey on holiday, usually to their in live action. Be prepared for loud cloth-spinning (free grandparents' birthplace Emirdağ. It's from this small city earplugs) or talk to the experts who use the plants from that almost all of the first Turkish immigrants came in the the museum garden to dye cloth. On the fourth floor, it's 1960s, to work in the rough Ghent textile industry. Today, all about printing. Designers and print enthusiasts still use some guys of the third generation have a juicier Ghent that impressive Linotype machine for real as well. It's hard accent than most locals. to predict when they will be working, but on most days at least somebody will be making noise!

NERDLAB you're welcome to see and try digital technologyin action: laser cutting, 3D printing and electronics. GENT GLAS does live glass blowing demonstrations on Friday night. All of them are pretty open to visitors in general.

### **TURKISH PIZZA**

Some say it's AKDENIZ, some say it's GÖK PALACE, some say GÜLHAN: every student has his favourite but (Closed on Wed / Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri 09:00 - 17:00 you can never go wrong with any of the cheap pizzerias in Sleepstraat. The menus are full-colour and what you

### **BEAUTIFUL WILLOWS**

LIEVEKAAI is the most romantic place to chill with a bottle of wine on a warm evening. Sit under the beautiful willows with your legs dangling over the water. But don't bring your ghettoblaster please, and if you break up, do it nice and quiet. It's just that the locals don't want this to become a second Graslei 38.

## WHERE ONLY LOCALS GO

My ex told me to find a new hobby and I chose the movie club at DE KOER. Everybody can pick their favourite movie, so the selection goes anywhere. I know this sounds mellow, but that place feels like my second home. I've become a more social person in the bar and at their wild nights. When you find your shoes all red the next morning from the painted dance floor, you know it was a good party. If you want to avoid that, it's best to dance on the tables. Concerts are real good too." (just off the map, Meibloemstraat 86)

Covid year, the old tradition flourished again. Older people, who went to visit a relative at the nearby hospital or retirement home, regularly dropped by with fresh roses-Rita's favourite flower-or they bought a religious trinket in the shop. The candle room was always hot, even during the darkest winter months. The chapel of Saint Rita is in the corner of SINT-STEFANUS CHURCH, across from the entrance. Keep it quiet and do not feed the fish. (Yes, Rita has an aquarium too.)

### SIGN LANGUAGE SOUP

(Wed to Sat / lunch) Soup bar SORDO is run by Christophe, who happens to be deaf. So this may be your first attempt at sign language—but pointing works too. The three daily soups range between €3 and €4,50. You won't find cheaper lunch in the historical centre!

MEDIEVAL STREETS Until the 1980s, this medieval labyrinth was still notorious for its poor housing, its anarchists and drunken artists. The PATERSHOL neighbourhood is all cleaned up now, full of protected monuments and touristy restaurants. However, the charm of the little streets is still very real. Just put away this map and get lost for a while!

### **CANDY WITH A STORY**

(Wed to Sat / Cash and Payconia only-no cards) It has been in the newspapers and travel guides for years and years. The 'cuberdons', our purple coneshaped candies, have led to a war between street vendors. First it was funny, then it became sad, and now it's just fake news. The candy wars in Ghent are over! Cuberdons are on sale everywhere and they're usually the same price and quality. Just make sure you buy them fresh, because they dry out after a week or so. Ask TEMMERMAN. They managed to preserve a fairytale-like candy shop with other local specialties too, like 'vuile talluren' (dirty plates), 'lutsepoepen (trembling asses) and 'nonnebillen' (nun's buttocks).

### PRESIDENTIAL WALLPAPER

(Mon to Sat) "Schools, hospitals, mental institutions... They all have painted walls. Paint, paint, it's always paint. In a house, though, you need to show some personality. For that you need wallpaper!" That's what Ivan (83) and Marie-Thérèse (80) have been saying at PRIEM since forever. With hundreds of old designs, no catalogues and no webshop, this is the kind of store that you feel nostalgic about, even when it is still there. Rumour goes that a White House delegation once came to select paper here. The

### QUEER FEMINIST SAFE SPACE (Every day) BLOND is the queer feminist safe

space, where you are absolutely 100% welcome funless if you're a sexist homo-trans-xenophobic Kackscheisse'. The bar is quite alive with open mics, concerts, karaoke nights, bingo evenings and a community kitchen. No wifi means: get sociable!

### JACOB WHO?

This is JACOB VAN ARTEVELDE. He's our big hero and you see him on all the postcards. But here's a challenge: try to find a local who knows anything about him. Good luck!

### WANNA DANCE WITH SOMEBODY (Tue to Sun) The strange thing about VENTURA is that they are just as popular with 20-, 30- and 40year olds. Usually, they are all pretty people with good dental hygiene. Even though it's too small to dance inside, that's what always happens. The neighbours of BAR LUME host five concerts per week (Sun to Wed at 21:00, mostly acoustic). Ghent's gipsy jazz dinosaur Koen De Cauter has his fixed gig there on Sundays at

THE HEART OF THE GHENT FESTIVAL (Every day / Mon free concert) In 1968, folk singer Walter De Buck put up a few concerts on a wooden stage at TREFPUNT. He and his long-haired friends only had some barrels of beer, acoustic auitars and smelly sandals, but the vibe was good. Over the decades, that small-scale hippie gathering has grown into the Gentse Feesten; one of Europe's biggest city festivals in the second half of July, with a million visitors spread over ten days. In 2020, corona happened. It felt so god-damned quiet in Ghent when the festivities were entirely cancelled. The terrace of Café Trefpunt was one of the only places where some folkies authored for spontaneous jams-just sitting at the table, because all concerts on stages were forbidden. It felt right, in a way, to still have them here. (At the time of writing, we still don't know for 2021...)

### **PARTY SQUARE** The little square Vlasmarkt is the epicentre

of alternative party life in Ghent. Ask anybody between 18 and 50 about their best CHARLATAN story, and they will proudly confess their worst. It's still the ultimate place where we get sucked into at the end of the night, like moths attracted to the flame. How strange it was, in 2020, to see our house of sin closed or-perhaps even stranger-to see it become a summer terrace when only that was allowed. Anyway, we have all saved up our worst intentions and are ready to get back to it. Nobody goes to Charlatan all night, by the way, you always mix it with some talking and appetizers (BAR DES AMIS, JOS, GLORIA), a free concert with earplugs (KINKY STAR), a party with vodka shots (ZEPPOS) or a mix of all of those (AAP and GIRAF). The bars on the other side of Sint-Jacobs church have their own fixed posse as well. The king of the row, over there, is AFSNIS. Some of the regular customers have originated from its walls, like fungus. They will never die but just reincarnate into new

### MORE GOING OUT If your Fear Of Missing Out is acting up on a

Friday or Saturday, do like the rest of us and go back and forth between the bars at Vlasmarkt 277 and this square. You can pick from Latin vibes, club life or funky parties, depending on the door you choose. BAR BROOS does free concerts on Tuesday. But the true local classic on the Beestenmarkt is DYNASTY, run by a former billiards champion and his hot-blooded wife

### **ABSURDITY & ROMANCE** (Closed on Tue) Bar STEEN is a combination

of absurdity and romance. They host activities like Nintendo music nights and old school slideshows that will extend your definition of art. But when there are no events going on, you can just snuggle under a blanket with your sweetheart in the candle-lit grandma furniture upstairs.

### **GRAFFITI STREET**

Nobody knows the name 'Werregarenstraat'. We all say 'graffitistraatje'. When the new university museum 7 opened in 2020, they painted the whole street white as an ode to the scientist's fundamental doubts. That caused a bit of a scandal, but it was much ado about nothing. After all, this street is just a legal testing ground for everybody and it's not a gallery. The paint is always fresh, as it should be. If you want a piece of the real action, head out to Kapow o and the streets around. Stunning big walls there.

### **DUNKIN' DUMPLINGS**

(Wed to Sat, lunch and dinner) The setting is a beautiful renovated building (the stairs to the toilet!) with furniture in funky colours. No wonder the owners are a graphic designer and a visual artist. They travelled around the world and caught a dumpling obsession. In STEAMY WINDOWS you'll find exactly that. Order five different kinds and share them as an excuse to try the whole menu.



SPICY SOUVENIR

mustard may be stronger, but TIERENTEYN just has more flavour. They have been making mustard and pickles since 1867 and they're quite firm about the company secrets. Nobody is ever allowed into the basement where the liquid gold is made and pumped up straight to the wooden barrel in the shop. The pot of 90ml (€2) is the only one you can take in hand luggage on the plane, otherwise we recommend a litre for the brave (€12,10). Expert note: Tierenteyn from the supermarket is made by a different company (long story about a family fight), this is the only real one from Ghent.

(Mon to Sat) Eat your heart out, Dijon! French

WELL-HIDDEN JAZZ (Every day, free concerts at 21:00) Find the little alley and walk to the back. HOT CLUB GENT takes jazz music seriously. Monday impro night, Tuesday international musicians, Wednesday avantgarde, Thursday local heroes jam, Sunday swing & bop. The terrace is year-round-with heated seats!-and the beer selection is very decent too. You're welcome.

### THE OLD HARBOUR

We know summer's here when GRASLEI is full. Not. just the terraces, but the cobblestones by the water too. On some nights, the riverside feels like a festival without a stage-including the leftover cans and burger boxes. It's hard to imagine this was a hard-working harbour 700 years ago. Back then, the labourers were destroying their backs while they pulled out one big bag of grains after another from the ships. (And what is also hard to imagine: that cars could still park here until the 1990s.) One of the houses that dates back to the Middle Ages is the old grain warehouse called Spijker (now Manhatt'ns burger bar). Have you noticed that the building slants forward just a bit? Looks like it might be falling over after eight centuries. Don't worry, it was built that way, so the heavy sacks of grain wouldn't scratch against the stones when they were hoisted up. Smart, huh? Anyway. Local tip if you can't resist the waterside: buy some fries at Filip's old shack on Groentenmarkt-that guy is still the real deal and he refuses to charge tourist prices.

**BECOME A GENTENAAR IN** JUST ONE DAY.

### [] Go for an early swim at Van Eyck [7] (Mon, | Gill (alternative plan) Brought your running Wed or Fri). Make sure you're out of the pool by 08:30, because that's when the school kids jump in. Buy local newspaper De Gentenaar and eave it lying on any table for the rest of the day as if

Line up with the locals for coffee at Mokabon 40. The magic moment is when the rolling shutters go up and the regulars all move to their own

Bike challenge. Zigzag across the tram rails at Korenmarkt. Rain makes them twice as tricky. Knock over a tourist for bonus points.

: Now ride on for the uphill challenge, starting Coupure 53, all the way up Sint-Kwintensberg to the Book Tower 70 📘 On Saturday, see the children's choir at 58. Their songs in Ghent dialect are impossible for you, but 'Rosalie' contains so little words that you should

In for a culinary challenge? Have some Pas de Bleu cheese by Hinkelspel described in Lousberg beer. Today, nobody will kiss you anymore. Rent a kayak at 39, and take a trip down the notorious waterslide at 22. Or just stand there and watch. That's local too.

### shoes? Run around Watersportbaan 52, the favourite track of many a local. It is exactly 5 km long.

Go to Café Folklore and press C6 on the jukebox. That's 'Louise' by Zeeraar. Another Ghent

| Pick any bar and practise the Ghent R with a local. Try 'préparé', 'bruudruuster' en 'zwoarer uitvijzer' to reach the top level.

Thursday? Stick to a veggie meal. It's a Ghent tradition, and most people like it that way. Veggie Thursday even became a thing in other cities. ersial topics for long bar discu Try these controv

[] Go to a night shop. (We Belgians laugh at our neighbour countries, where night shops close so early that they should be called evening shops.) Buy whatever you need, but also a roll of blue PMD bags.

at Graslei 38 and complain about the young people of today. And complain about tourists too, because you are now officially a local.

### JENEVER IS BETTER THAN GIN

(Every day) 'T DREUPELKOT is a traditional jenever bar. Since forever, this place has taught nnocent souls to drink the stuff in more than 100 varieties. Forget about the vanilla, plum or pepper versions, though, Real Flemish ienever is made from grain and nothing else, at around 40% alcohol. It's the father of the British gin, a worthy drink that's more than just a shot to get drunk. Try the Balegemse and

### 35 THE CASTLE

(Every day 10:00 to 18:00 (last ticket 16:40) / €2 under 19 / €7 students under 26 / €12) Our GRAVENSTEEN (Castle of the Counts) partly dates from the 12th century. After the counts moved out, it became a court, a prison and a coin press. By the 19th century, it hardly looked like a castle anymore when it was taken over by a cotton factory with plenty of poor houses built in and around it. Not a place the people from Ghent loved very much. There was even talk of destroying the whole thing. Luckily, city architects decided to revamp our past and restore this rare monument. They used their imagination to the fullest (some more water, some extra towers) so today the castle looks a bit more medieval than it did in the Middle Ages. But damn, it's still impressive. It will soon be renovated again with a new pavilion that everybody is arguing about. We only hope one thing: that they will one day bring back the torture room that we all loved so much when we were kids. Pretty please?

Opinions are like assholes: we all have one. Circulatieplan, LEZ, Gravensteen, Gentse Feester with corona.

🛂 🗄 With your new bag, pick up the empty cans

# FEED YOUR INSTAGRAM

This bridge was only built a good century ago, when Ghent was preparing for the World Fair of 1913. This is also when we renovated many of the facades on Graslei in Gothic Revival style. So a lot of what you see is not much older than a century!The city council just under stood that our grey industrial city had enough quality to attract some travellers too—and right they were. The whole centre got a makeover, from the Counts' Castle 35 to the new Sint-Pieters train station 82 SINT-MICHIELS BRIDGE became the best spot for a perfect view of the three towers in a row: Sint-Niklaas church, the Belfry 4 and Sint-Baafs cathedral 45. Since 1913, not much has changed this is still a hotspot for tourists to take selfies. Our tip: walk up from the side of Sint-Michiels church on a misty Sunday morning. Much more quiet then, and much better pictures. Even for us the view is still jaw-droppingly beautiful.

### **GHENT COFFEE, OLD STYLE**

(Mon to Sat) Forget about the sad American freehly around coffee Try the cannuc exist in Ghent. Most coffees are around €2,50

### multinational selling expensive coffee in cardboard cups on the corner. The only legendary coffee house in Ghent is tiny MOKABON. Rich ladies, old Turkish guys and students all share a table and drink the house brand of cream, from times when the word 'barista' did not even

### ① TOURIST OFFICE

Oude Vismijn, opposite the castle 35 Open every day from 10:00 - 18:00 • Closed on 1/1 and 25/12 • If you're older than 26 and planning to visit a lot, the CityCard may be a good idea. Gives entrance to most museums, a guided boat tour, a rented bike for one day and unrestricted use of public transport. €38 for 48 hours, €44 for 72 hours. • visit.gent.be for more museums and opening hours

### **OPENING HOURS**

ost museums close on Wednesday. Many bars and restaurants close on Monday. Student bars (around 777) close on Sunday.
Most shops are open Monday to Saturday fr around 10:00 - 18:00. First Sunday of the month Shopping Sunday.

Most restaurants stop serving food at 22:00 (in Belgium people eat early). After that: frietjes! See the icons.

### **PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

Ghent is small enough to do on foot or by bike, but tram 1 is handy between the station and the historical centre. No tickets for sale from the driver! €2.50 for a ticket from a machine, or pay contactless on the tram (if your credit card or bank card has a

**AGENDA** facebook.com/gratisingent = no-nonsense calendar for free events—it's in Dutch but they respond to messages in English too.

### **FREE CONCERTS**

Sometimes they don't—during summer holidays for example. If you want to be sure: check FB gratisings

### 42 42 27

### SHOP TO HEAL THE WORLD

Janne (24) eco-enthusiast (Tue to Sat) "When I walk into H&M, I know the world is going down the drain. But then a shop like JUST HAZEL gives me hope again. When bought a ring there, I also got a card of the person who literally made it. The clothes they sell are made in Europe and they have zero-waste gadgets like a bamboo toothbrush or reusable coffee filters. Fair fashion is really a thing in Ghent. LA FILLE D'O has a shop further down the street with beautiful lingerie. Every year I get myself a birthday gift there. The stuff she makes is fabulous and lasts forever, well worth the price. And boobs are politics too!"

**DESIGN MUSEUM GENT** (Closed on Wed / Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri 09:30 -

17:30 / Sat and Sun 10:00 - 18:00 / free under 19 / €2 under 26 / €6) The designer we are most proud of in Ghent is Maarten Van Severen (1956-2005). His 03 chair was even produced by Vitra, where he joined the likes of Eames, Gehry and Saarinen. Whatever the expo is at DESIGN MUSEUM GENT, they will always honour our great minimalist who hated the word

### WWW.USE-IT.TRAVEL

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Portici











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### TRAIN STATIONS

has direct connections to Antwerp and Bruges, for other destinations you'll have to switch at Sint-Pieters. The Flibco shuttle bus to Brussels South Airport leaves from the backside of Sint-Pieters, international buses leave from Dampoort.

## A taxi ride costs a minimum of €9 (with 3 km

# www.uitingent.be for events and tickets

### Here's a list of bars that host free live music. MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN

# 28

# THE ROYAL VEGAN Jasmin (23) organic wine pixie

# **GHENT'S JUKEJOINT**

good for stomping.

spark some controversy! The haters are still not over it. Fans call it an architectural masterpiece. Most locals have accepted it by now, although we're still not entirely sure what it's there for. It is a pretty roof for when it rains, that's for sure. And when the first sunbeam hits town, we flock together in the wonderful tiny park beneath.

19 / €2,70 students under 27 / €8) Imagine hearing Kraftwerk, Daft Punk or MGMT from a medieval city tower. That's what we got composed some new tunes for the bells of the BELFORT (Belfry). None of those made it to the fixed playlist, but we can soon vote for our top songs again! The new music will then be inserted into the 17.600 holes of the copper drum that you can see up in the tower. The mechanism (like a giant music box) is 360 years old and it still does the trick. Make sure you stay until it turns, which happens steps for the panorama. The view from here is as breathtaking as the 256 steps you just climbed. By the way, the Belfry is not a church like many tourists think, but a typical Flemish ver, built as a symbol of power of the city during the Middle Ages. The city charters were kept there and the dragon on top

**FOUND A MISTAKE? WE LOVE LETTERS!** → ghent@use-it.travel

Gent Sint-Pieters is our big station. Gent Dampoort

### TAXI! included), minimum €10 between 19:00 and 06:00. There is Uber in Ghent too, but it's not much cheape

### (Tue to Sun, lunch and dinner) "I say you recognise a real vegan-for-the-animals when they don't stick to healthy salads, but know the best greasy Indian. In Ghent, I would go for ROYAL INDIA, right here in the centre. It's kitsch all the way, but they're super nice. Ask for the vegan menu and they give you this 'wink wink' look, getting you another menu with zero graphic design and more than 80 vegan options."

(Every day) MISSY SIPPY single-handedly put blues and roots on the map of Ghent. With four to five free shows per week, Tiny Legs Tim, Reena Riot, LouisLou and the likes gathered their own scene of young musicians with old rusty souls. Jam on Wednesday, Local Heroes on Thursday, boogie on Friday, but any day is

### SHEEP BARN

The STADSHAL was built in 2012 and boy, did it

### CITY BELLS & PANORAMA (Every day 10:00 - 18:00 / €1,60 under

in 2020, when our local heroes 2manydj's every 15 minutes. After that, walk up the final became our city mascot.

**DID YOU LIKE THIS MAP?** 

### (Ghent Altarpiece: Mon-Sat 10:00 to 16:30, Sun 13:00 to 16:30 / €12,50 to see only the painting / €15 with augmented reality tour through the crypt) The eyecatcher in SINT-BAAFS CATHEDRAL is the Adoration of the Lamb, aka the Ghent

THE GHENT ALTARPIECE

Altarpiece, finished in 1432 by Jan van Eyck. Look

at the reflection in an angel's jewellery, at the dust

on the pilgrim's shoe or at the petals of a lily flower,

and you'll understand why this painting ended up

in all the art history books. Our Flemish Master had

an impressive eye for microscopic realism. There is a

realness to Adam and Eve that feels like they could

step out of the painting (for many older locals, this

was also the first nude they ever saw). Running up

to the Van Eyck year 2020, most of the painting

was restored. All of a sudden, the original colours

appeared again after centuries of damage and

overpainting. And it was not just in some details.

Even the face of the Lamb had been heavily

overpainted. The restorers were stunned themselves

to see the original appear after almost six centuries.

Don't believe the internet memes! Van Eyck did

know how a sheep looked. The strangely human

face of this Lamb fits the theological content,

because it represents Jesus. If you want to compare

the two versions in a billion pixels: closertovaneyck.

city would the keys of a major medieval monument,

right next to the cathedral, be given to a bunch of young

people with a lot of ideas but no fixed plan? We never

knew what to do with our Gothic DUIVELSTEEN: it has

been a knight's mansion, a gun depot, a monastery, a

prison, a madhouse and an archive. Now it is the creative

youth house of the future, called BROEI. So what's

going on? Can't tell. Could be a toy hacking workshop,

experimental dance, a concert in the crypt (stunning

place!), fungus from coffee beans, refugee architecture,

aquaponics, a drawing class... Just come, have a drink in

memories of their first kiss in Cinema Majestic and the

ballroom of the Ancienne Belgique in Veldstraat. Today,

it's nothing but chain stores like Zara and H&M. One

after the other, the old shops (with bourgeois ladies

speaking French to their poodles) have disappeared. But

here are two tips. One: look up when walking through

our shopping street, because the upper floors still look

grand. Two: on Saturday and Sunday, walk into HOTEL

D'HANE STEENHUYSE (14:00 to 18:00, free). The splendid

city palace gives you an idea of how the Ghent upper

class lived the life in their private ballroom and Japanese

Some of our oldest grandparents still cherish

(Wed to Sun) Rhetorical question. In which other

**JUST GIVE US THE KEYS** 

kikirpa.be.

the bar and talk to people.

**BOURGEOIS BEAUTY** 

salon—and how the personnel had to

(Apr to Nov / Sat and Sun 14:00 - 18:00 / free) Here, where the rivers Schelde and Leie meet, Ghent was born. The SINT-BAAFS ABBEY helped shape the city as we know it from the 7th century onwards. The ruins are overgrown with plants, making it look like a fantasy, but these are truly some of the oldest walls in town. The stones and ceiling of the beautiful refectorium (dining hall) breathe history. The local volunteers who reopened the abbey will happily tell you some more. By the way, if you look up the site on Google Maps satellite view, you can see the trees and plants in the park are actually in the shape of the old abbey church. Now you know. On Saturday mornings, a local children's choir rehearses Ghent folksongs at HERBERG MACHARIUS (the white gate). Come in, buy a coffee, and just listen, from 11:30 till 12:30. It does not get more local than this.

**RIVERS AND RUINS** 

They also have all-in wicker baskets there in summertime, so you can go and picnic in the beautiful little park next to it.'

### PLANT-BASED FOR EVERYONE

Ghent is the self-proclaimed progressive capital of Flanders. And in this street, Brabantdam, right next to our red-light district, you can really feel it. MADAM BAKSTER (Wed to Sun) does her brunch and cakes sugarfree, glutenfree, vegan if you want. LOKAAL (Wed to Sat / lunch and dinner) is all about equality and ecology: all staff members get the same paycheck, everything is local and fairtrade and no plastic is used. O'YO (closed Wed / breakfast and lunch) quotes Hippocrates: "Let food be thy medicine, and medicine be thy food."

### RED LIGHT DISTRICT

'T GLAZEN STRAATJE (the little glass street) is a typical 19th-century art nouveau shopping gallery with a glass and metal ceiling. Today it's got ladies sitting behind windows, trying to attract customers. The sex workers aren't allowed to dress too naked anymore, but if you are from Poland or Spain-or most parts of the world, really—be prepared for a culture shock.

### AN EVENING BY THE WATERSIDE

# in 2021. Join us prepare the meals in the

630 Amandus from France tries to bring Christianity to Ghent, but we throw him in the water. He insists and founds the abbeys of Sint-Pieters 76 and Sint-Baafs 58 . 1180 Cloth trading has made Ghent rich. But now the ich guys want too much independence, so Count Philip builds the Ghent castle 35. Not to keep out invaders, but to keep an eye on the locals. 1432 Jan Van Eyck finishes the last hair on the Ghent Altarpiece 45. 1540 The local noblemen refuse to pay the exorbitant taxes, so emperor Charles V humiliates them by having them march in their underwear with a rope around their neck, as if they were about to be hanged. Today, the rope is still a popular Ghent souvenir. Don't ask why. **1800** Thanks "All immigrants from Bruges should wear headscarves!" to a thief (or a spy, if you wish), industry is booming. Lieven Bauwens steals an English spinning machine (cutting-edge technology at the time) and starts using it in Ghent. In no time, thousands of people are working in cloth factories. 1877 The first city explodes. Buffalo. Buffalo.coo. 2017 A new Belgian Socialist Party is founded in Ghent circulation plan for cars is introduced in the centre. to defend the rights of the starving factory

After four years it's still a good conversation workers. The workman's palace of Vooruit will be the culmination. **1913** The World Exhibition makes Ghent go crazy. Our architecture goes Gothic

### Revival instead of modernist because city marketeers for tourism. STUDENT BAR

(Tue to Sat) Want to know what we call a 'brown bar' in Ghent? That's a place where the owner calls the shots. Without him, the bar would not be the bar. He decides on the records, calls you by your name, decides when you've had enough to drink and basically is boss. Meet Tijl, welcome to FATIMA. When the bar burnt down a few years ago, the regulars crowdfunded the new interior. It was a bit clean at first, but the wall is now nicely filled with illustrated beer coasters from the art students again. Free garage rock,

### blues or whatever on Saturday.

**WORLD KITCHEN CHURCH** (Mon to Fri / lunch) Have a cheap, healthy meal (with local products) in a beautiful 19th-century Franciscan church, Every day, poor locals, poor students. poor university professors and poor backpackers enjoy the view over a daily special with soup (€9 / €6 for students) in this social restaurant called PARNASSUS.

### **EVELINE BAKES AT HOME** (Mon to Fri / 11:00 - 18:00) Eveline bakes her pies

in the magnificent house where she grew up. The interior is more home than hipster: high ceilings, flowery pink wallpaper and old furniture. It feels like having tea and pie at your granny's. Even Saint-Bernard dog Joske fits the picture perfectly. That's HUSET for you–summer terrace included.

### **HAVE BEER WHILE YOU WAIT**

(Mon to Thu, dinner) Rumour has it that Chris hates capitalism and has therefore never raised his prices. That's a lie, but €8 for spaghetti and €2,5 for a Chouffe beer is still ridiculously cheap. The SPINNEKOP bar deserves its legendary status among all those who refuse to comb their hair. If you have to wait long for the lasagna, just realise that we all mean nothing in the eternal light of the cosmos.

### OUR NEW SKATEPARK Mayli (28) human lightning bolt (every day 10:00 - 22:00, free) "What's nice about our skate communit is that you can totally mess up. Everybody loves to share and help out with improving your tricks. The new SKATEPARK BLAARMEERSEN is apparently one of the biggest in Europe. Not sure, but it's definitely big. There's more space to ride and the bowl is for

woollies in real time.

ection Blaarmeersen)

**CITY SHEEP** (May to Sep) See the sheep? They're official city employees. The slopes next to the Coupure canal are so steep it's easier and more ecological to let the sheep do the hard work. Shepherd Hamdi always accompanies them, to prevent drunk students from pushing them into the water. They graze on other spots too, of course. Want to know where? One of the sheep is wired! Search for 'schapen' on data.stad.gent and you can track the

real too. We didn't have that in Ghent yet, so yeah,

we're happy. And you're welcome to join!" (to get

there, take bus 38 or 39 from Korenmarkt 42

### **HAPPY TUMMY, HAPPY SOUL**

(Wed to Sun, dinner / weekend brunch) Make comfort food colourful and you'll get HOMBLÉ. Ann gets her meat and vegetables from farmers around the city (all options, even gluten-free). The open kitchen and her laughter give you that cosy feeling of eating at home without having to cook yourself (as if you ever do!). If you can afford it, order a soup or lasagna for someone who can't. Ann is our ambassador of the Enchanté project that offers 'postponed meals'. **FOUR BARS** 

Here's four good bars. JAN VAN GENT is the place for a spontaneous dance on Friday and Saturday. They just pimped their backyard terrace too, for added pleasure. The jukebox at music bar HET ZWARTE GAT only has the song 'Born to be Alive'. So better count on the barkeeper to select the vinyl (and rare Belgian beers). At DE LOGE, Jos and Mieke serve food until midnight (spaghetti €9,90) and on Monday evening the drinks come with a free 'boterham mee préparé'. Free concert on Wednesday. BAR BEENHOUWER is the new kid on the block with 15 taps of rotating special beers. And by special David means special. Try an old geuze, you won't find this where you live.

(every day / breakfast, lunch and dinner) FAJA

LOBI is a small bistro-restaurant with Surinamese cuisine.

### When the sun's out, the terrace is perfect for people spotting after kayaking on Ghent's canals.

SURINAME SUNSHINE

**ART DECO POOL** (Every day / €3,60 under 26 / €6,50) VAN EYCK SWIMMING POOL dates back to 1886, which makes it the oldest covered swimming pool in Belgium. Best to swim on your back to enjoy that art deco ceiling! Come outside of school hours, because then the pool is reserved for noisy kids. Open until 22:00 on weekdays.

### PICNIC LIKE A LOCAL Mahdieh (33) flower-loving goat (Mon to Sat) "What I adore about cities like Barcelona or Rotterdam is the bustling marketplaces, where you get everything you need under one roof. In Ghent, we have that at LOUSBERGMARKT: a vegetable market, a local cheese shop, a bakery and a lunch place.

Now that Graslei 38 is a bit passé, we need a better place to spend our evenings by the waterside. There are a few options, but the first spring evenings seem to say that the stairs next to the library might be winning the competition

because locals don't want to do the night shifts anymore. Today, their children and grandchildren are still the largest group in town with foreign roots. 1969 After long, boring years when everybody preferred hanging at the seaside during summer, the new Gentse Feesten are kickstarted by folk singer Walter De Buck and his long-haired friends at 26. 1999 Cars are no longer allowed on Graslei 38. It is one of the signs that our old sleazy city wants to become more attractive, and indeed boomed in the past two decades. 2008 Ghent becomes It's all a joke, but thousands of people actually show up on independence day. **2015** After trying for 115 years, KAA Gent, our local soccer team, wins the Belgian Championship for the first time. Ever. The opener (if you have the time), because the other neighbourhoods are now also being included. 2020 No Ghent festival. No Ghent festival. No Ghent festival. The suffering was real. And at the time of writing, we're not

63 LIBRARY **WITH A VIEW** (Closed on Sun) DE KROOK is our new library and we love it. We like to think that the layered shape looks like an uneven pile of books and magazines, no? For the official 'moving in' ceremony in 2017, locals formed a human chain, transferring the books one by one from the old library that was across the square. A wonderful thing! De Krook is more than its bookshelves. Children are gaming downstairs, students study upstairs, romantic souls play the public piano, pensioners with oceans of time come to read all the papers (some international ones too). And you? You might just go there for the nice view on the top floor or for lunch in the café. If you want to

use the public computers, ask for a 'passantenkaart'

(Tue to Sun) WORLDS' END for all you geeks!

### at the entrance. **BOARD GAMES**

sure yet for 2021. Our revenge will

be sweet though, you can

This board game bar and comic store is located in what looks like a medieval cellar, staying right in theme. You can go for drinks, or to play one of the board games with the regulars. NOT JUST ANY BEER (Mon to Sat) No, they don't have more than

20 taps. No. they don't have a beer list that looks like

a telephone book. But HUZAAR does have Wim and

Dimi, who will serve you a geuze from 3 Fonteinen or an Oudbruin from 't Verzet and will take the time to tell you something about Belgian beer. Have a dry sausage with that! **VAJAYJAY TREE ART** 

We still don't know who's behind the vaginas



ARTSY HOTSPOT DE BIJLOKE used to be an abbey and a hospital. After many years of restoration, the site gradually became the centre of creative education. The buildings host a conservatory, a concert hall, the famous dance company 'Ballets C de la B' and an art school. KIOSK organises exhibitions by the students and KASKCINEMA does screenings of student films and other movies (Tue, Wed, Thu / students €3 / €5). The good thing about art students is that they are always pretty and always have time. So KASKCAFE may be a good place to make local friends (Mon to

Google Map with ALL

a selection of 15 other

beloved local shops.

Because this piece of

to tell you everything.

the Ghent vinyl shops and

paper just isn't big enough

### **CITY MUSEUM** (Closed on Wed / Mon to Fri, 09:00 - 17:00 / Sat,

Fri. affordable lunch).

Sun and holidays: 10:00 - 18:00/ free under 19 / €2 under 26 / €10) We're proud of where we live. So much so, that we happily bought the air pictures of Ghent. at STAM per square metre when they were renovating in 2020 (serves nicely as a coffee table!). The new ture is still a public fa chunk that did not even fit on the floor? That's the Ghent harbour. We always forget we have it, but it's a motor of our industry and economy. STAM shows the history of our town, always with a link to contemporary city life. If you're in a hurry, skip the parchment and ancient stones and go see the abbey refectory. The wooden ceiling and the 14th-century murals don't need any computer visuals, they're spectacular just the way they are. After that, some stick to the beautiful pictures by Michiel Hendryckx or the towers in Lego, others delve deep into the medieval guilds, the worker's movement, the painted city maps...

### THE NEW FRIES IN TOWN

(Mon to Fri) Fries are potatoes, right? So fries are vegetarian, right? Nope. Traditionally Belgian fries are baked in animal fat. But at CHASSE PATAT they use vegetable oil. For the snacks, apart from the regular meatfest, they added vegan burgers and sauces. There's even vegan 'stoverij'. Yes, that's our meat stew but with jackfruit instead. Beware: portions are huge!

### **BOOK TOWER**

This is our university's main library, built in 1935. with around 35 km of books. Architect Henry Van de Velde elegantly mixed Art Nouveau and functionalism, building it high enough to deserve the title 'fourth tower of Ghent' (after the three historical ones). At the turn of the millennium, our beloved BOEKENTOREN (book tower) was in a really bad shape, but today it's prettier than ever after the renovations. In 2022, we will finally be able to take the elevator to the top floor Belvedère-which used to be a billiard room reserved for professors—for a million-dollar view.

### SUNSTORMS AND STARS

(Wed at 20:00 / free) If you're in town on a Wednesday, why not go where even most locals haven't gone? At the sky observatory VOLKSSTERRENWACHT ARMAND PIEN, enthusiastic volunteers talk about meteorites and astral storms as if they were family members. The amazing 19thcentury telescope on top of the creaky stairs looks like it's straight from a Jules Verne novel, but its intricate mechanism still works perfectly.

### WHAT'S IT CALLED AGAIN?

(Every day) OK, we're not sure how to call this place anymore. It still says VOORUIT in huge letters on all sides of the building, but that name is going to change soon. How to explain... OK, we'll try. Vooruit (meaning 'Forward') was built in 1913 as a palace for ordinary people, with money from the socialist party. There was a theatre, a ballroom and a concert hall. all meant to empower the working classes through art. Beautiful! In the 1960s and later, the socialist movement lost some of its momentum, and when the organisations left one by one, the building was left to slowly rot away. There were even plans to demolish it. Luckily, some young artists said enough is enough and they took control in 1982. The most beautiful building in Ghent deserved better. They cleaned up the dirt, restored the café and blew life into all corners again. Today, Vooruit is a big centre for the arts. If you haven't been to a party or a concert there, you're just not from Ghent. It's not a political thing anymore. But! In 2020, the Flemish socialist party decided to change the name of the political party to... Vooruit. Our own Vooruit was not amused, but they decided not to go to court. They're temporarily called Voo?uit now, but are looking for something else. Come and

### **BEST BREAD, BEST PIZZA**

(Wed to Sun for dinner / bread some days) Gentenaars are sometimes labelled as Flemish Hipsters \*bites sourdough pizza crust\* but we're not sure why. This one came from a star chef who wanted to open a pizzeria slash bakery but didn't know how to ... bake bread. He hired two girls who did and DE SUPERETTE was born. Dinner is not cheap, but it's worth every penny, from the scrumptious appetisers to the dessert.

discuss the alternatives in the bar or on the terrace.

### BEGUINAGE

The SMALL BEGUINAGE is a beautiful chillout spot, but don't even think of a barbecue. This place has been protected by UNESCO as World Heritage since 1998. (But psssst: there's a lawn n the back where you can picnic.) Since the 13th century, beguines lived their religious lives here. These women were quite independent, some even call them the first feminists. The last Ghent beguine died in 2008, and now the little houses-almost 100 of them-are occupied by regular people. It's an oasis of calm in a busy part of the city.

The lovely MUINKPARK is what remains

of what used to be the Ghent Zoo. Notice the

street names around the park: Tijgerstraat,

Zebrastraat, Leeuwstraat,... Olifantstraat has a

particularly sad story behind it. When the zoo went

### bankrupt in the early 20th century, all animals were sold by auction. The popular elephant Jack was sold to a guy who wanted to take it to the London

**NO MORE ZOO** 

says that we then ate his meat in a big barbecue. That's not true, Jack was turned into sausages in the Netherlands. We actually ate the bear instead. The newspaper report spoke of 60 dinner guests, 120 bottles of wine and 75 bottles of champagne. 76 BEST PICNIC GARDEN (Tue to Sun, 10:00 to 18:00, entrance sometimes

Zoo. But London snapped out of the deal and Jack

### via Kantienberg) The garden of SINT-PIETERS ABBEY is the loveliest in Ghent. With the vineyard, the raspberry plants, the herb patch and the old ruins, it feels like you're in the South of France. Well, not really.

But still. There is no better picnic spot.

**STUDENT** WALHALLA Geneviève (20) studies journalis This corona year really made my heart bleed I normally go to OVERPOORT like two times per week, on Tuesday and on Thursday when it's real busy. And then in 2020: nothing! But when it's all open again, we'll start with cheap wine at our student flat—lose each other along the way-dance-move from bar to bar-dance some more-hang from a street pole-then find pictures of random new best friends on our

### phone the morning after. Feels like a different world right now... Can't wait!"

THE TWO ART MUSEUMS (Mon closed / Tue to Fri 09:30 to 17:30 / Sat, Sun and holidays 10:00 to 18:00 / free under 19 / €2 under 26 / €10 MSK / €12 S.M.A.K.) Two museums, two neighbours in the wonderful Citadelpark. MSK, the Museum of Fine Arts, is for the art buffs. The big Belgian names include Magritte, Ensor, Spilliaert and Delvaux. Across the street, S.M.A.K. is the one for contemporary art. Expect installations and video art by living artists (mostly Belgians, but we've had Richter too). Don't forget the cabinet dedicated to Belgian icon Broodthaers. He is the guy who made

art out of a pot of mussels and perfectly knew how

robots next to an ancient wooden pole from New

Guinea. The museum is not organised by time or

space, but in categories like 'chaos' and 'doubt'. It's all

about science, yes, but the message is that you don't

get anywhere without imagination. For example, it

takes a creative mind to see that the kind of fly that

(Closed on Wed / Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri 09:30 -

to combine poetry, conceptualism and a good joke.

### 17:30 / Sat, Sun 10:00 - 18:00 / free under 19 / €2 under 27 / €8) At the new GUM (Ghent University Museum), it's quite normal to see a swarm of micro-

THE MUSEUM OF DOUBT

flies around a corpse can also tell you how long it's been dead and decomposing. Wonderful stuff. **BOTANICAL GARDEN** (Mon to Fri 09:30 - 17:30 / Sat, Sun 10:00 to 18:00 / free) The name Amorphophallus Titanum means something like 'giant misshapen penis', but that's not its only problem. When the gigantic flower blooms (2 metres high), it smells like rotten eggs. This only happens very rarely, and you cannot predict when. In 2015, it attracted thousands of visitors to the hothouse of our beautiful BOTANICAL GARDEN, everybody pinching their noses. And then it

bloomed again, in May 2020. Due to the pandemic,

### nobody could come and smell the show. Sorry, Amorphophallus!

CHRIS' PLACE (Mon to Sat) MONOPOLE looks like any other Belgian old people's bar. But this one is slightly different. The audience is a mix of retired university professors, Ghent's nighthawks, philosophical neighbours and connoisseurs who have a half hour to kill before the next train comes. And it's Chris who calls the shots. The most special feature might be her living room in the back. There's a television there for your viewing pleasure, if you want to see the game. Welcome to Ghent, Belgium!

You'll notice we are a student city from the

thousands of bikes around GENT SINT-PIETERS. And

there's thousands more underground! The station

### is being renovated but it's not easy to fit a Gothic Revival building into the future. We've been trying since 2010. Like many things in Belgium, this takes time. By 2027 it should be finished, but we're not

**KOMPASS, PLEASE** 

100% sure yet.

**UNDER CONSTRUCTION** 

DON'T LEAVE! Jules (29) Ghent nightlife councillor "We really hope KOMPASS KLUB can stay in Ghent. We just don't know where yet, because had to leave the old tempor Their style? It's not just one thing. It goes from dry hard techno on the Rimbu nights to people like Amelie Lens, Bonobo or Bicep. But fourteer hour parties are not an exception, so they really mean it with that slogan 'sleep is overrated'. The open-air events, in full sunlight, also opened the club to a new crowd. So it's not just for the ravers

### Design by Edouard Schneider (LETTERLIK)

and the troopers, you know. Love it."

### Thank you, we love you too!