

Settling Into Antwerp



1Stock image

More and more expatriates and companies are finding their way to the city which is most famous for its diamonds, Antwerp.

With its magnificent ancient buildings, squares, alleyways, and its rich and diverse culture, Antwerp is an appreciated city with tourists and city-hoppers. It has a population of 520.000 and is Flanders' largest city. It is now home to a diverse range of global citizens, with large numbers from the Netherlands, France, Germany, Spain and Italy. Most residents in Antwerp speak French and English, and the official language is Flemish (a variation of the Dutch language). As it has a policy of tolerance and trade, it has attracted many foreign merchants and bankers from all over Europe – resulting in a large number of expatriate communities living in this city.

By the first half of the 14th century, Antwerp had become the most important trading and financial centre in Western Europe. Historically, its reputation was based largely on its seaport and wool manufactories. In more recent times, Antwerp's other great mainstay became the diamond trade - busier than Johannesburg or New York - that takes place largely in the diamond district. 85% of the world's rough diamonds pass through this district annually, making it the global diamond trade's busiest centre. It is also Europe's second largest seaport, after Rotterdam. Antwerp sits on the upper end of the estuary of the Scheldt which has direct access to the North Sea. Antwerp's docks are connected to the inner land by rail, road, river and canal waterways and has attracted people of all origins and cultures.

Nowadays the city also hosts a lot of people who wish to settle here for other reasons than what the harbour has to offer, and it offers great appeal to expatriates of any lifestyle - families with children, singles, or those who need green space or plenty of fine art and dining.

Although many of Belgium's major institutions are based in Brussels, such as the European Commission and the NATO headquarters, Antwerp invests a lot in multinationals and international organisations, and companies like Exxon-Mobil, Bayer, Atlas Copco, have been based here for many years.

As in Brussels, a real community of expatriates and highly educated internationals are emerging from here. The city itself is also following this trend, bars, restaurants and events that are focused on the expat community are popping up more frequently.

The schools and universities here have an excellent reputation; state and private institutions alike. Education is both formal and free in Belgium and is compulsory from 6 to 18 years of age, and there are lots of choices for children of university age in Antwerp with 40+ university campuses throughout the city.

The healthcare system also enjoys a good reputation, and if you are living and working in Belgium, you will be entitled to subsidised healthcare.

What remains to be resolved though is the lack of temporary housing in this city. In order to answer the demand for quality corporate housing, more accommodation providers are building properties and apartments. The port was initially developed in the north of the centre, and the neighbourhood still features industrial marine architecture, now with newer accents, such as the angular, "out of this world" Port House.

Former warehouses have been transformed into modern lofts and apartments, making it ideal for young professionals or families looking to live in one of the trendiest areas of Antwerp. It is based near 'het Eilandje', an attractive and trendy quarter between the port and the city centre. Once a neglected neighbourhood of Antwerp, 'Het Eilandje' - which means "the little island" - it has grown into one of the city's most popular locations for expatriates and tourists.

Overall, Antwerp is an accessible, attractive and friendly city. It is becoming increasingly popular, as more and more companies and businesses look to moving here as a key European location and destination.



BBF SERVICED APARTMENTS

BBF set foot in Antwerp with Park Tower at the beginning of 2019. BBF offers here comfortable one and two bedroom apartments with amazing views on the city and harbour skyline. The apartments are really designed for the expat community who are looking for an affordable easy solution for temporary housing with that extra bit of comfort. During their stay, they will be able to enjoy the services that come with our standard rental package. This is the product that BBF has been providing since the start and which gives us a market leading spot in the industry of corporate housing in Belgium.

Together with our building promoter Candor, BBF is getting ready for Initium, a new project which is expected by the end of this year. Its location in the centre of Antwerp will certainly attract those who want a perfect base from which to discover the city by foot. This apartment complex will have 70 brand new serviced apartments and 60 underground parking spaces. We'll again be able to offer perfect solutions for short and long-term stays with a focus on corporate internationals and expats. But of course, these kinds of apartments are also an attractive solution for housing students with a higher budget or even short-term contractors. Practically all of BBF's apartment blocks offer underground parking making it that more attractive for people that are over here by car. Furthermore, public transport is always within walking distance for our carless residents. Tenants of Initium will also be able to enjoy a co-working space and a gym will also be made available. To make it even more compatible with the current high requirements it will have a lot of natural light, an inner garden and solar roof panels.

The arrival of BBF in Antwerp offers many companies a simple solution to accommodate their employees. Many relocation agencies for whom it is not always obvious to find suitable accommodation for a longer period in Antwerp are already looking forward to these opportunities. This expansion will not only strengthen BBF's leading market position, but it will also contribute to the credibility of serviced apartments as a product, on the Belgian market. Visit www.bbf.be for further information.




WORLDWIDE ERC
GLOBAL WORKFORCE SYMPOSIUM 2019
 Boston, MA USA 16-18 October



1,800+	50%+	50+
REGISTRANTS	FIRST-TIME CORPORATE HR ATTENDEES	COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

Early registration deadline: 12 July 2019
worldwideerc.org/GWS2019

PREMIER SUITES PLUS Antwerp 



PREMIER SUITES PLUS Antwerp offers luxurious serviced studios and apartments in the heart of Antwerp, at 3 minutes walking from Antwerp Central station. Our serviced studios and apartments are convenient for both short or long stay and offer a great alternative to the traditional hotel rooms, by having additional space, facilities and the comfort of a Home.

- ◆ 24/7 reception service
- ◆ 7th Heaven Food Café
- ◆ Parking next door
- ◆ Weekly cleaning service
- ◆ Majority of rooms with Balcony
- ◆ Amazing 7th heaven beds
- ◆ Fully equipped kitchenettes



Discover our **PREMIER SUITES Pet Policy, Wellbeing program and Lone Female Travel policy** on : www.premiersuitesantwerp.com