

CUT-OUT-AND-GO GUIDE | AUTUMNAL ANTWERP



EAT

● Spicy street food
FALAFEL TOF (Mains about £4)
 Because: This Middle Eastern cafe draws the crowds with its bold, spicy flavours and fresh falafel. **Traveler's tip:** If you don't want to queue, get in at midday before the lunchtime rush. Hoogstraat 32. @

● Flemish specialities
GRAND CAFE DERODENHOED (Mains about £17)
 Because: Flemish cooking goes up a notch at this city-centre award-winner: the waterzooi (stew) of guinea fowl cooked in beer is a juicy delight, the croquettes crunchy and creamy. **Traveler's tip:** When you book, ask for one of the tables that come with cosy armchairs. Oude Koormarkt 25; 00 32 3 289 0909; derodendhoed.be. @

● Fishy business
DOCK'S CAFE (Mains about £20)
 Because: Down on the waterfront, this place is an attractive mash-up of one-off designs. Dishes feature fish, as well as meat reared on the cafe's farm, and there's a glittering oyster bar. **Traveler's tip:** Ask for a table upstairs and you'll be rewarded with views of ships gliding along the Scheldt. Jordenskaal 7; 00 32 3 226 6330; docks.be. @

● Industrial fusion
HET POMPHUIS (Mains about £27)
 Because: Far Eastern and Flemish influences are letting the leash at this one-time pumping station in the harbour area. If lunching, order indoors but eat outside on the terrace overlooking the river. **Traveler's tip:** If industrial architecture is your bag, nip down to the basement and look at the old machinery, which is still in situ. Siberiastraat 2/n; 00 32 3 770 8625; hetpomphuis.be. @

● Fine-dining hot spot
THE JANE (Tasting menu £85)
 Because: Treats such as Iberico pork flavoured with aubergine have proper Michelin-star dust. **Traveler's tip:** The Upper Room Bar has more affordable dishes and inventive cocktails — but you need to book a month ahead. Site 't Groen Kwartier, Paradeplein 1; 00 32 3 808 4465; thejaneantwerp.com. @

DRINK & SHOP

● Gin alley
DEVAGANT
 Because: It's a down-to-earth bar specialising in Jenever gin, with more than 200 flavours, such as Belgian chocolate, coconut and cactus. **Traveler's tip:** No food, but you can bring dishes in from the partner cafe across the road. Reyndersstraat 25; devagant.be. @

● Beer haven
BILLIE'S BIERKAFETARIA
 Because: This cosy bar has a massive selection of Belgian and international craft beers. Sip Troubadour Westkust, a potent brew that'll warm up an autumn night. Billie is the French bulldog holding court. **Traveler's tip:** Try the pub grub — the stoofvlees (beef stew) is an absolute standout. Kammenstraat 12. @

● Sales pitch
VRIJDAGMARKT
 Because: Every Friday morning Vrijdagmarkt square hosts a second-hand auction — TVs, books and even booze. **Traveler's tip:** Not buying? Rock up for the entertainment as sellers harangue the crowds. Vrijdagmarkt. @

SOMELIKE IT HOT

Falafel Tof's owner cautions all newcomers about how hot the chilli sauces, but don't laugh it off — it truly is a palate-scorcher

ASK THE LOCAL



Luc de Raedemaeker has lived in Antwerp all his adult life and works in the drinks industry

Antwerp is a pocket-sized metropolis that's easily walkable. At weekends I like to wander around it with my family. We stop for a beer at Oud Arsenal (Maria Pilpelincxstraat 4; @), which sells unusual beers, and for which we pop into Bakkerij Goossens (Korte Gasthuisstraat 31; @), an artisanal bakery — they give free cookies to kids! I love reading and 't Stad Leest (Sleenhoudersvest 16; @) is the best bookstore in town. It has a great selection of English and Flemish books. I love the Middelheim Open Air Sculpture Museum (Middelheim museum.be; free; @) — it's a lovely place to relax in if the sun's shining.

MUST TRY THIS DISH...

Frogs' legs and mussels with coconut-curry cream sums up the ethos — and it's delicious

HOLY ORDERS

If you think there's an air of spirituality about the Jane, you're right: it was originally a military chapel and the open kitchen is where the altar was



STAY

● Budget bolthole
TRYP ANTWERP HOTEL (Doubles from £50, room only)
 Because: It looks like a Post-Modernist barracks from the outside, but within, there's a comforting mix of old and new, with classic Flemish paintings contrasting with hip minimalism. **Traveler's tip:** A tenner more buys a room on the 8th floor at the rear: the views of old Antwerp are worth it and you escape traffic noise at the front. Plantin en Moretuslei 136; 00 32 3 271 0700; trypantwerp.com. @

● Parksider bargain
LEOPOLD HOTEL (Doubles from £75, room only)
 Because: Opposite City Park's verdant spaces, this is a great place for runners and strollers. The slothful will be just as happy, what with the richly coloured rooms and reasonable rates. **Traveler's tip:** Breakfast is a bit steep (£15), so head instead to nearby Esco Bar. Quinter Matsijslei 25; 00 32 3 231 1515; leopoldhotels.com/antwerp. @

● Modern relaxation
LINDNER HOTEL & CITY LOUNGE (Doubles from £99, room only)
 Because: In the centre of the Diamond Quarter, this cube-shaped hotel sparkles. Cool, neutral decor puts you at ease and the higher you go the better the views (with prices remaining the same). **Traveler's tip:** After booking, register for the hotel's email offers, which have in the past included free zoo admission or a two-course meal. Lange Kievitstraat 125; 00 32 3 227 7700; lindnerhotelantwerpen.nl. @

● Kooky charmer
HOTEL LES NUITS (Doubles from £123, room only)
 Because: Quirkiness rules in this sleek boutique hotel, where each of its 24 rooms has a different style, including Japanese white decor, chrome bath fittings, glacial white decor, chrome bath fittings, Japanese prints and bare brick walls. **Traveler's tip:** Smart decor can make for hard-to-find light switches — check where they are before it gets dark! Lange Gasthuisstraat 12; 00 32 3 225 0204; hotellesnuits.be. @

Double take: clockwise from above, two houses make one Hotel Julien; gin joint De Vagant; the outdoor terrace at Het Pomphuis; boutique Hotel Les Nuits; home-reared meat at Dock's Cafe

ART ON THE DOORSTEP

Right next door to De Witte Lelie, the Rockox House (rockoxhouse.be; £7) is a small but fab collection of 17th-century paintings — look out for Rubens' *Christ on the Cross*

● The Old Town hideaway
HOTEL JULIEN (Doubles from £167, room only)
 Because: Two 16th-century houses have been hitched together to make this boutique hotel in the Old Town. The mood is a mix of modernist with traditional touches, such as bare oak beams. **Traveler's tip:** Rooms are a good size, but spend about £40 more for loft room No. 11, which has breathtaking views of the sun setting over the cathedral. Korte Nieuwstraat 24; 00 32 3 229 0600; www.hotel-julien.com. @

● The deluxe den
HOTEL DE WITTE LELIE (Doubles from £258, room only)
 Because: It's a swish 17th-century pile of 10 rooms with rich, sensual colours that highlight exposed beams, marble fireplaces and high ceilings. An inner courtyard is a must for benign autumn evenings. **Traveler's tip:** Light sleeper? Pass on the inner-courtyard garden room — guests tend to enjoy alfresco late-night drinks. Kelzerstraat 16; 00 32 3 226 1966; dewittelle.be. @

GET ME THERE
GO INDEPENDENT
 Eurostar (eurostar.com) has return fares to Antwerp from London St Pancras, from £70 (change at Brussels). CityJet (cityjet.com) flies from London City to Antwerp, with return fares starting at £99. Or try KLM (klm.com).

GO PACKAGED
 Expedia (020 3564 4853; expedia.co.uk) has a three-night stay in Hotel Les Nuits from £264pp, room only, including London City flights. Railbookers (020 3327 2440; railbookers.com) has a three-night stay in the Lindner Hotel from £229pp, B&B, including Eurostar travel.

FURTHER INFORMATION
 The Antwerp City Card includes free admission to the city's museums and churches, free use of public transport and reductions on cycle hire (visit antwerpen.be/detail/antwerp-city-card-en; £34 for a three days). See also Antwerp's official tourism website visitantwerpen.be.

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