



### 2 JULY TO 22 AUGUST 2010

#### BRUSSELS BEACH

Eh... a beach? In Brussels? OK, it took us some improvising with trucks full of sand, plastic coconut trees and cocktail cabanas, but this comes close to a summer beach, right next to the canal and with a skyscraper skyline. It's probably the only event in Brussels where really everybody comes, from a Moroccan family to a Russian macho to a sexy Brazilian silhouette. Brussels beach is also popular with the male gay community - all those oiled naked upper bodies playing beach volley! Big disappointment: you're not allowed to swim in the canal, and you already have to leave between 22.00 and 23.00.

Free (closed on Monday) / [www.bruxelleslesbains.be](http://www.bruxelleslesbains.be)

### 20-21 JULY 2010

#### THE NATIONAL HOLIDAY

It's like the 4th of July, but with good beer instead of stars and stripes. To celebrate the fact that we've had a crazy and wonderful independent country since the 21st of July in 1830, we have spectacular fireworks and a military parade. But every Brusseleir knows the real party happens a day before (20 July), when locals get drunk, dance and sing to Belgian classics like 'Nicole & Hugo' and 'Lange Jojo' on the marketplace in the Marolles. If you're lucky, it rains, because only then it's really Le Bal National.

### 26 JULY - 5 SEPTEMBER 2010

#### VISIT THE ROYAL PALACE

You can only visit the Brussels Royal Palace during summer. Every seat, every ceiling and every mirror is more decorated than a wedding cake. No entry allowed on bare feet or flipflop sandals. Well, of course, it's a palace, you see. The special treat is that Belgian artists were allowed to decorate some of the rooms. The mirror hall by megalomaniac artist Jan Fabre is the biggest attraction: 1.500.000 glowing green dead beetles carefully pinned to a ceiling. You'll never forget the image.

[www.monarchie.be/en/](http://www.monarchie.be/en/)

### 13-22 AUGUST 2010

#### BRUSSELS SUMMER FESTIVAL

There's too many summer festivals in Brussels. From May to August, no weekend goes by without a festival. Strangely, the name 'Brussels Summer Festival' was not taken yet, so now we have this one too. Good time to discover young Belgian bands like Ghinzu or Amute in open air. 20 euro

for ten evenings, and most of the famous classic museums are included in the price - so you don't get bored during daytime.

[www.brusselsummerfestival.be](http://www.brusselsummerfestival.be)

### 23 TO 27 AUGUST 2010

#### MUSIC IN THE PARK

Pissing in the bushes, groups of blowing dreadlocks, ear damage after nine hours in the techno tent. How we love the big festivals! But if you also feel like something else once, you might enjoy 'Boterhammen in het park' and 'Feeërieën' in Brussels. During lunch hours, local bands play in the park next to the Royal Palace, and when it's getting dark, more international bands take over the music kiosk from 1841. The music stays intimate (singersongwriters, weird country, electronic dub, ambient pop) which explains the title Feeërieën - something like magic fairy time.

[www.boterhammeninhetpark.be](http://www.boterhammeninhetpark.be) / [www.feeerieen.be](http://www.feeerieen.be)

### 19 SEPTEMBER 2010

#### SUNDAY WITHOUT CARS

If you just come from Bruges or Amsterdam, you'll notice the difference: where are the bikes? Nowhere. In Brussels, people take their cars to go to the baker, even if the car is parked further away than the baker. There is only one exception to the crazy traffic in this city: the Sunday Without Cars. Suddenly, you can hear a bird whistle. It's one of the most beautiful days in the year, biking downhill on the biggest boulevards.

### 28-29-30 OCTOBER 2010

#### BATARD PERFORMANCE FESTIVAL

Bâtard means bastard, but in a good way. This festival shows what Brussels is all about, with an international mix of young (mostly under 25) dancers, photographers, musicians, and actors. They do not only perform in a theatre, but also on a basketball field, in an old school or at a supermarket entrance. You have never heard of any of these artists before, but everyone with the right sense of adventure feels right in his / her place. You start the night at a meeting point, but then it's a total surprise where they'll take you in the neighbourhood.

[www.batard.be](http://www.batard.be)



## **26 FEBRUARY 2011**

### **MUSEUM NIGHT FEVER**

For one night, it's young people who call the shots in 20 Brussels museums. Expect stuff like a fashion show in the Museum of the National Bank or a breakdance battle in the old Hallepoort tower. While the concerts and performances go on, art students do guided tours (in Dutch and French, but English and Spanish too). Goes on until 1 o'clock, with a famous afterparty in BOZAR Museum.

[www.museumnightfever.be](http://www.museumnightfever.be)

## **7-19 APRIL 2011**

### **BRUSSELS INTERNATIONAL FANTASTIC FILM FESTIVAL**

"Bukarest Fleisch", "Reykjavik Whale Watching Massacre", "Zombies of Mass Destruction". Most people who come here agree that chainsaw massacres, live burials and brain eating are just a good laugh. The science fiction and horror festival presents both new big releases and B-films in an old industrial site with over a 1000 seats. Nobody stays quiet during the movies. Special yearly tradition = big dressed-up vampire ball.

[www.biff.org](http://www.biff.org)

## **MAY 2011 precise date to be confirmed**

### **LES NUITS BOTANIQUE MUSIC FESTIVAL**

Plants and music, just what we need in springtime. Les Nuits Botanique lasts for ten nights in the pretty botanical gardens, with a selection of the big names in the indie scene (like Trans Am, Cocorosie and Black Rebel Motorcycle Club) and unknown young gods (who often become big names the year after). From rock to jazz, electronics and reggae, and some dj's in the bar to end the night.

[www.botanique.be](http://www.botanique.be)

## **6 MAY > 28 MAY 2011**

### **KUNSTENFESTIVAL DES ARTS ART FESTIVAL**

'Kunstenfestival des Arts' is a typical double name in the two official Brussels languages (Dutch and French). But don't worry about languages. Most of the performances are from other countries, with subtitles in English. That's what it's all about: showing some of the best Europe had to offer on stage during the past year. This festival has built an international reputation over the years. For those who know

Avignon theatre festival: you could say that Kunstenfestival des Arts is like a small version of that one. Tickets can be expensive, but the free outdoor stuff is often worth a trip, like when people in a big apartment block turned the lights in their living rooms on and off to create a live animation.

[www.kfda.be](http://www.kfda.be)

## **APRIL / MAY 2011**

**precise date to be confirmed**

### **VISIT THE ROYAL GREENHOUSES**

Each spring, king Albert II opens the gates of the royal domain in Laeken so that everyone can come and have a look at his palace. You cannot shake hands with the king, but what you get is better: the Royal Greenhouses. Built in Art Nouveau style by his great-great-uncle (king Leopold II), they are a world apart with 15.000m<sup>2</sup> of flowers, plants and art nouveau glassworks and even palm trees which were brought here from the former colony of Congo more than 100 years ago. Funny: the whole thing is so popular that you stand in a queue from the ticket booth to the exit, as if everybody was standing in line on one big conveyor belt.

[www.monarchy.be/en](http://www.monarchy.be/en)

## **MAY 2011 precise date to be confirmed**

### **BRUSSELS JAZZ MARATHON**

You can run a marathon, or run for 3 days between 50 venues for 125 concerts. Big Belgian names play on the Grand Place or the other city squares, while students and rising stars just perform in bars. There aren't enough jazz bars in Brussels, so they'll do it on a few beer crates if necessary. Most concerts are free - check the programme online.

[www.brusselsjazzmarathon.be](http://www.brusselsjazzmarathon.be)

## **JUNE 2011 precise date to be confirmed**

### **FÊTE DE LA MUSIQUE MUSIC FESTIVAL**

8 o'clock. You stand right in front of the Royal Palace, with the evening sun shining from behind the stage, and listen to the Apache Break by Grandmaster Flash (and wonder if the King would like it too). You'll love this city if you had moments like that one. Like most Brussels festivals, this one is free, featuring pop, jazz, hip-hop, salsa and French chanson - well, let's say anything except grindcore metal and minimal tech.

[www.fetedelamusique.be](http://www.fetedelamusique.be)