

Walking the Ypres Salient

Tour Style: Rail Adventures

Destination: Belgium

Trip code: BULBT

Trip Walking Grade: 1



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Explore a corner of Belgium that witnessed many of WWI's fiercest battles. From our base in historical Ypres, the City of Peace, we'll follow in the footsteps of those who fought in The Great War. With the help of a local guide, we'll walk parts of the Ypres Salient and experience the poignant Last Post ceremony – a tribute to the fallen. We'll also enjoy a guided tour of the medieval squares and canals of UNESCO-listed Bruges – one of Europe's best-preserved cities.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return rail travel from London to Lille and transfers
- Fully escorted travel with an HF Holidays Tour Manager
- 5 nights' accommodation in Ypres
- 5 breakfasts and 5 dinners
- Visit to the Ypres Salient and Battlefields sites
- Entrance to In Flanders Fields Museum and Hooze Crater Museum
- Expertise of a local guide for Battlefields visits
- Visit to Bruges with a guided tour
- All sightseeing and entrance fees (as per itinerary)

- All in-destination transport

HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Walking the Ypres Salient
- Witnessing the Last Post ceremony in Ypres
- Learning about WWI with a local battlefields guide
- Exploring Bruges, a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Visiting the Hooze Crater Museum and In Flanders Fields Museum

ITINERARY

Day 1: ARRIVAL DAY

Meet your HF Holidays Tour Manager and fellow travellers at London St Pancras International railway station. After check-in, baggage checks, and passport control, we'll wait in the departure lounge for our Eurostar to Lille. Once we've made it to Lille, there's a coach transfer to Ypres in Belgian Flanders.

This afternoon we'll have time to have a wander around Ypres and get our bearings before dinner.

Day 2: SOUTHERN YPRES SALIENT & LAST POST CEREMONY

Our day begins with a visit to the In Flanders Fields Museum (entrance included), located in Ypres' magnificent Cloth Hall which was destroyed during World War I and meticulously rebuilt.

In the afternoon, we'll meet our local guide and transfer to the southern Ypres Salient. We'll walk following the front line, taking in the Bluff, Ravine Wood, Hill 60, and the Caterpillar Crater. We'll walk to what was known as no-man's land taking in the landscape clearly marked by war. After dinner, we'll watch the poignant Last Post ceremony at the Menin Gate.

Distance: 2.5 miles (4km)

Day 3: NORTHERN YPRES SALIENT

This morning we'll transfer with our guide to the northern Ypres Salient. We'll follow a section of the old front line which remained virtually unchanged between 1915 and 1917. Here we'll discover Klein Zwaanhof, Colne Cemetery, Caesar's Nose, and the Yorkshire Trench and Deep Dug-Out, which contains an underground shelter which served as a headquarters for two battalions.

We'll leave the Ypres Salient and continue by coach to Essex Farm, where John McCrae who wrote the poem In Flanders Fields is buried. We'll then visit Tyne Cot Cemetery, the largest commonwealth cemetery in the world in terms of burials and the German Langemark Cemetery.

Distance: 1.5 miles (2.8km)

Day 4: EASTERN YPRES SALIENT

This morning we'll transfer with our guide to the eastern Ypres Salient where we'll discover two of the most important wartime heritage sites: the grounds of Hooze Chateau and Bellewaarde Ridge. We'll firstly visit the Hooze Crater Museum, which contains reconstructions of a number of wartime scenes, together with a collection of artifacts, documents, and photos. Bellewaarde Ridge held a position of strategic importance due to the panoramic view it offered over Ypres and was the scene of heavy fighting.

Once we return to Ypres you'll have the afternoon to explore at your leisure.

Distance: 2 miles (3.5km)

Day 5: BRUGES

Today we'll take the train to Bruges, a medieval gem. A guided walking tour will show us the highlights before you have free time to explore and sightsee some more. We'll return to Ypres for our farewell dinner.

Day 6: DEPARTURE DAY

After breakfast, we'll take the opportunity for a final stroll around Ypres before joining our coach late morning for the transfer to Lille. Here we'll board the Eurostar for our journey back through Northern France to London.

ACCOMMODATION

Novotel Ypres Centre - Belgium

The Novotel Ypres Centre is superbly located in the historic old town, a short walk from the Menin Gate and other points of interest. All 128 rooms are contemporary in style, with air conditioning, tea and coffee making facilities, Wi-Fi, and TV. There's also a bar and a gym.

Food & Drink

Our hotel, the Novotel Ypres Centre does not serve meals in the evening. We will therefore have breakfast in the hotel restaurant but enjoy dinner in local restaurants in Ypres.

TRAVEL DETAILS

Address

Novotel Ypres Centre

Sint Jacobsstraat 15

8900 Ypres

Belgium

Tel : 00 32 (0)57 42 96 00

USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

Joining Instructions (With Rail)

Book your holiday 'with rail' and travel on Eurostar with the group. If you choose this option we automatically include return transfers between Lille Europe station and the hotel. The coach transfer takes approx 50 minutes.

Notes For Rail Travellers

Rail travel will be from St Pancras International Station, London to Lille Europe.

Your group meeting point at St Pancras will be the Sir John Betjeman statue on the upper level of the station 2 hours before departure time. Here you will join the rest of your group and meet your HF Tour Manager who will guide you throughout your journey. You will then make your way to the ticket gate as a group.

A suitcase with wheels is strongly recommended as you will be responsible for carrying and lifting your luggage on all parts of the journey. All luggage will be scanned at the departure gate and needs to be clearly labelled. You will need to be responsible for your luggage and belongings at all stages of your journey so it's advisable to have it within eyesight when travelling on the trains and be extra vigilant when moving through busy railway stations. Please refer to the website below for the latest information on luggage requirements for your journey and trip information: <https://www.eurostar.com/uk-en>

Joining Instructions (Without Rail)

Alternatively, tailor your journey to suit you by booking your holiday 'without rail' allowing you the freedom to book your own travel.

If you choose this option, transfers are not included in the price.

You can still purchase a seat on our shared group transfer but it is your responsibility to arrive at the railway station prior to the main group. All train times are subject to change and if your arrival and / or departure time changes and no longer fits our shared group transfer, we will be unable to delay departure for you. Should this occur we will refund you the cost of the transfer and you can either make your own way to the hotel or we can book a private taxi transfer for you (at your expense). HF Holidays cannot be held responsible for your onward travel if you are unable to meet the transfer coach.

If you have made your own travel arrangements and have booked a place on the HF Holidays shared group transfer to the hotel, please meet your Tour Manager and fellow travellers at Lille Europe station by the Information Point in Hall 3, close to the Boulevard de Leeds exit.

Essential Information

It's best to be prepared for all weather conditions. To make it easier, here is a list of items you should consider packing.

Essentials

- Walking boots
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Insulated jacket/top
- Walking clothing
- Walking socks (plus spares)
- Sunhat
- Gloves/mitts and warm hat
- Water bottle (minimum 2 litre capacity)
- Headtorch
- High-factor sunscreen (minimum SPF 30)
- Sunglasses with a dark lens
- Rucksack (15-30 litres)
- Mobile phone
- Personal first aid kit (containing your medication, blister plasters, etc.)
- Passport
- Visa (if applicable)
- Copy of your travel insurance policy
- UK Global Health Insurance Card (**formerly known as EHIC**)

Recommended

- Collapsible walking poles
- Swimwear and travel towel
- Snacks
- Dry bags
- Rubbish bags

- Insect repellent

Optional extras

- Camera
- Sit mat
- Flask for hot drinks
- Durable lunch box
- Gaiters
- GPS device

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred.

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

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