

Weekender LUXEMBOURG

Luxembourg may be tiny but it has plenty to offer, from secret tunnels and an elegant old town to vineyards and hearty cuisine

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LOCAL LINGO: LUXEMBOURGISH IS A GERMANIC LANGUAGE SPOKEN BY APPROXIMATELY 400,000 PEOPLE THAT MOST CLOSELY RESEMBLES DUTCH. SAY 'MOIEN' (HELLO) TO THE LOCALS, MOST OF WHOM WILL ALSO SPEAK GERMAN AND FRENCH

In a country of rolling hills, hearty cuisine and bountiful vineyards, why would you head underground? To see Luxembourg's most spectacular attraction — a true subterranean wonder.

Chiselled into the rocky foundations of the Montée de Clausen — the clifftop site of an historic fort — the Bock Casemates is a seemingly endless hidden network of nooks and tunnels, originally carved by the Spanish in 1644. It was here, among the craggy passageways that around 35,000 people sought shelter during the two World Wars, setting up temporary bakeries, workshops and slaughterhouses.

From there, grab a *Lëtzeburger grillwurst* (barbecued sausage) from the Saturday market, then amble along the Chemin de la Corniche, a winding walkway above the ramparts hailed as one of Europe's most beautiful balconies, with great views of both the historic Barrio Grund neighbourhood as well as Luxembourg's skyline-piercing EU buildings.

A series of zigzagging lanes take you from the Corniche into the heart of the Barrio Grund, where streets lined with pastel-hued houses cluster around the yellow and pink Saint Jean du Grund church. At weekends, Luxembourgers flock here, to the banks of the Alzette River, for a beer or two. At times like this, the city feels far more like a sleepy village than a European finance hub. Round things off with a trip up the recently opened glass Pfaffenthal Lift for one final, spectacular panorama.

Venture beyond the capital and you'll find Luxembourg so compact that its length can be driven in under 90 minutes. Head to the Moselle region — bordering Germany to the east and France to the south — for its meat-heavy, French-influenced cuisine and a chance to sample the country's much-loved sparkling wine, Crémant de Luxembourg. Then finish with a trip to the tiny village of Schengen, known for the 1985 treaty that bears its name as much as its wine and idyllic landscape.

ABOVE: Saint Jean du Grund church and the Bock Casemates

RIGHT, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Farmer's market at Place Guillaume II; grapes from Remich; Kaale Kaffi; *friture de poissons*, Koeppchen Bistro

Shop around

Locals rise early for the Saturday market at Place Guillaume II, the site of a former Franciscan monastery. Among the stalls selling fruit, vegetables and flowers are butchers, dishing out jokes along with their delicious, locally cured sausages. Nearby, the pickle stall does a great line in home-canned salted gherkins. Next, head to the Chocolate House of Luxembourg for a truly indulgent dessert. chocolate-house-bonn.lu

TOP THREE

Luxembourg bites

TO START WITH

You're in trouble if you don't like hearty food — even the locals' favourite salad, *féiertengsalot*, is made with brisket, egg and gherkin. Pop into Am Tiirmschen restaurant, in the Fëschmaart 'gastronomic island', to try this tasty dish. amtiirmschen.lu

VEGANS REJOICE

One of the few vegan cafes in Luxembourg, Beet is perfect for lunch. Sit back and people-watch over Place Guillaume II with an avocado burger, a side of fries and glass of Crémant. beet.lu

FISHING AROUND

Swing by Bistro Brasserie Koeppchen for *friture de poissons* (fried fish). koeppchen.lu



Coffee hour

Kaale Kaffi, on Rue de la Boucherie, is a cafe-bar that doubles as an antiques shop, where homemade cake and Turkish coffee is served amid vintage Persian rugs, works of art and piles of secondhand books. Expect to see people peering through the window as you settle in one of the retro sofas for a night of red wine and conversation.

✈️ Luxair flies to Luxembourg from London City Airport from £85 return. luxair.co.uk
Double rooms at Hotel Simoncini start from £125 per night. hotelsimoncini.lu
visitluxembourg.com

Out of town

Oenophiles should visit Remich, a pretty, cobbled riverside town south east of the capital that's famed for its sparkling wine. Afterwards, head to Caves St Martin for a tasting and a guided tour of its mile-long underground cellar. The 2015 Domaine St Martin Riesling is well worth a glass or two. cavesstmartin.lu

