

Travel the Benelux

Visit Belgian Royal Palace this summer

by **Tim Clark**
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In what has become an annual tradition, the Royal Palace in Brussels is open to visitors for a limited time. From now until Sept. 6, from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday, the palace can be visited. Best of all it's free.

The palace was first opened to the public in 1965 for a major exhibition devoted to King Leopold I. Its success paved the way for the annual open house each summer.

The official palace of the King of the Belgians isn't used as a royal residence, the king and his family live in the Royal Palace of Laeken on the outskirts of Brussels. "The palace is where His Majesty the King exercises his prerogatives as head of state, grants audiences and deals with affairs of state," according to the website of the Belgian Monarch at www.monarchie.be.

This unique opportunity to see an

invaluable collection of art works (mostly portraits of royals) and decorations (think glittering chandeliers and classic furniture) make it worth your while.

While parking is always an issue in central Brussels some parking is available across from the palace and on the surrounding streets. However consider taking the train; you can easily walk to the palace from the Brussels central station.

Outside the gate



Artist Jan Fabre created "Heaven of Delight" a fresco on the ceiling in the Hall of Mirrors out of more than a million glowing shells of jewel beetles in 2002.



The grand staircase is the first thing you see on the tour. Visitors enter the palace by the same route that foreign diplomats take during the ceremonial presentation of their credentials to the king.



One of the many chandeliers in the palace, seen from below.



A gold plated door knob with an ornate design.

For your GPS: Place des Palais Brussels Belgium 1000	From: Mons: 77 km Schinnen: 120 km
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