

# Travel the Benelux

## Dinant: Experience Meuse river jewel

by **Tim Clark**

USAG Benelux Public Affairs Office



*A saxophone, the church and the citadel icons of Dinant.*

The small town of Dinant enjoys one of the most beautiful settings in Belgium. Located on the east bank, this jewel on the Meuse is dominated by the Collegiate Church of Our Lady with its iconic onion-shaped dome and the Citadel on the impressive cliffs above the town. Home of Leffe beer and Adolphe Sax the inventor of the saxophone, Dinant is also famous for couques de Dinant, hard honey-based cookies.

The Church of our Lady is a fine example of 13th century Gothic architecture. Church of Our Lady features many large-colorful stained-glass windows.

The Citadel, built in 1820 on the site of earlier fortifications, played an important role in fighting the invading German troops in 1914. A magnificent view of the city and the river is your reward for climbing the 400 steps to tour the fortress. You can ride a funicular up or drive if you are not interested in making the steep climb.

Beer connoisseurs the world over know Leffe, one of Belgium's famous abbey beers. Brewed by the monks of the abbey of Leffe starting in 1240, today Leffe is produced industrially to meet international demand.

Adolphe Sax was born in Dinant in 1814 to parents who were both instrument makers and designers. He moved to Paris in 1841 to pursue his career in music. Sax patented the instrument that bears his name, the saxophone, in 1846. La Maison de Monsieur Sax ("House of Mr. Sax"), located in a building on the site where Sax was born takes visitors through the invention of the saxophone.

Made of flour and honey, the couques de Dinant are a sweet treat that's very hard to eat, so hard that they often

come with warning labels. Couques de Dinant come in many shapes and sizes with often very detailed patterns stamped into the treats. The cookies can best be enjoyed by dunking them in your coffee to soften them or by breaking them into small pieces and letting them melt in your mouth.

Many restaurants line the river, much fun can be had watching the waiters cross the busy road with full trays of food and drinks to serve patrons at the riverside tables. Cruise boats ply the Meuse river, another great way to view Dinant.



Dinant 5500  
From:  
Mons: 117 km  
Brussels: 105 km  
Schinnen: 149 km



### Freyr offers lovely gardens

Named after the Scandinavian goddess of beauty, Freyr is located 5 km south of Dinant. Owned by the Beaufort family since 1421, the Chateau has been classified as one of Wallonia's major heritage sites. The large formal garden in 18th century French style has hedge mazes and an orangery with 350-year-old trees that are taken inside in the winter.

