

Where the young people are in Ghent

by Bart Tembuysen

The youth service of the city of Ghent

If you go to the 1st European Youth Work Convention in Ghent at the beginning of July you won't have much time to fool around in the city. But it's always good to be informed, just in case you do manage to find some spare moments.

For those of you who will not be in the area at all, Ghent is a fun-loving city with a lot of young people enjoying their holidays in July and August. Check it out! •

Daytime

During the day, young people stroll around in the historic city centre and different shopping areas like Veldstraat and the shopping mall near De Zuid (Woodrow Wilsonplein). You can spot skaters and bikers nearby. There's a large skate hotspot in the public park behind De Zuid. Others go to the different public parks in Ghent to enjoy the summer breeze in a natural setting. Talking about cooling down, why not head to the large recreational area called De Blaarmeersen? You can take a swim at the beach (indeed, we have a beach) or play tennis, football or other outdoor sports. If you prefer to sit or stretch out in a more relaxing atmosphere, you should definitely check out one of the many public parks. The Tourist Information Office (located underneath the Belfry, Botermarkt 17) can provide you with a detailed map. If you decide to relax in the park, Keizerspark (Brusselsesteenweg) is worth a visit. If you want you can use the barbecue, just bring your own food and charcoal.

Evening/night

In the evening or at night, de Korenlei en de Graslei (two streets beside the canal in the historical city centre) become one giant open patio. You can relax and sip a drink from one of the night shops or bars, while enjoying the crowded but relaxing surroundings. During the weekends you can go to the very hip Culture Club (Afrikalaan 180), go clubbing at Decadance (in the Overpoorstraat, the student quarter of Ghent) or the more alternative De Charlatan (Vlasmarkt). In general, there won't be a lot of concerts at the time of the convention because the student population will have left Ghent for the summer and the city will be preparing for the 'Gentse Feesten' the following week. This is known as Europe's largest popular culture festival. If you want to stay up to date on things to do, just grab a magazine





'Week-Up' or 'Zone 09' to see what's going on during that week (music, party, film, exhibitions). Ghent has two fantastic art house cinemas where you can find the better European movies and one large cinema complex for the more commercial work. Just check 'Week-Up' for all the details.

Culture

While you're here, why not enjoy a little bit of culture with a capital 'C'? A complete list of all the museums and things to see can be found at the tourist office. S.M.A.K., the local museum of contemporary, art is definitely worth a visit. In July and August the permanent collection is rearranged into 'Xanadu' by Hans Theys. Check it out on www.smak.be.

Youth workers at work

Although the summer period is very busy for youth workers, maybe you can spot some of them at Jeugdwerknet (Smidsestraat, near the Gent-St-Pieters railway station) keeping up to date with the digital revolution. If you want to see some youth workers in action, the site (in Flemish only) www.jeugd.gent.be/wordanimator has all the locations of 'Speelpleinwerk' (playground activities), which is a form of youth work where the children can play while guided by an adult supervisor.

In general

If you want to have other tips on where to eat, things to see and what to do in Ghent, just download the map 'Use It' (for young travellers) at the following website: www.use-it.be/ghent/. The official tourist information website is www.visitgent.be. For the participants of the Convention: look inside your convention bag!

