

Brussels and Barcelona: two European cities



You might think that the only thing that Brussels and Barcelona have in common is that they both start with the letter B! However, a closer look **reveals** some interesting similarities as well as some surprising differences.

Geography

The region of Catalonia in Spain, where Barcelona is the capital, **covers** an area of 32,114 km², while the **whole** of Belgium is only 30,528 km².

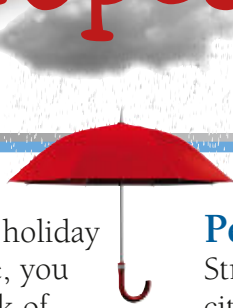
Both cities are part of a nation with a monarch: Albert II in Belgium and King Juan Carlos I in Spain.

Climate

If you dream of a holiday in a warm climate, you don't usually think of Brussels ... **unless** you like rain! The average annual rainfall in Brussels is 78 cm compared with only 58 cm in Barcelona.

Culture

Brussels is a business city with much of its architecture **devoted to** modern offices. On the other hand, Barcelona's urban architecture shows the artistic influence of Antoni Gaudí. The unfinished church of the Sagrada Família and the world famous Güell Park, are two examples.

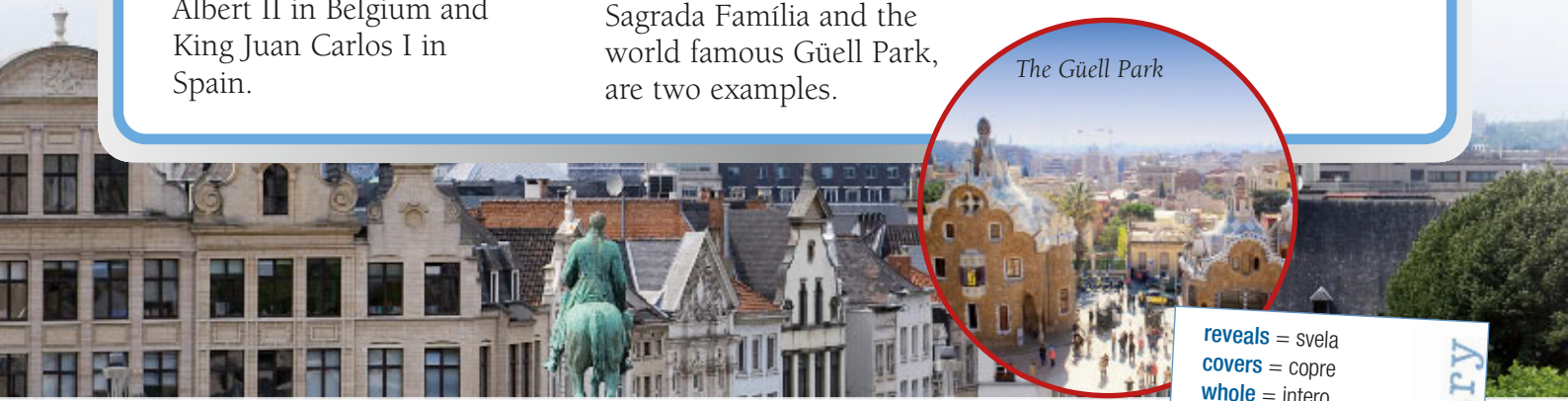


Famous Personalities

Strange but true: both cities were the homes of famous surrealist painters. Salvador Dali was born in Catalonia to the North of Barcelona in 1904 and René Magritte was born in Brussels in 1898.

Gastronomy

Christopher Columbus was the first to introduce chocolate to Europe in the 15th century but Brussels is famous for **turning it into** delicious pralines!



reveals = svela
covers = copre
whole = intero
unless = a meno che
devoted to = dedicata a
turning into = trasformarlo
up-to-date = aggiornato

glossary

1 Read the following statements and decide which city each one refers to.

- 1 There is a famous unfinished church there.
- 2 This city has a wet climate.
- 3 Albert II is the reigning monarch.
- 4 René Magritte lived there.
- 5 They make chocolate pralines there.

2 Mark the adjectives that refer to Barcelona.

- rainy
- Southern European
- modern
- artistic
- sunny
- architectural
- Northern European

Brussels or Barcelona?

B

Which city is better for you, Brussels or Barcelona?
Do the quiz and find out!

- 1 You are hungry in the afternoon and feel like having a little snack. You choose
- A something spicy or salty such as olives or cheese and salami.
 - B something sweet like chocolates.



- 2 You are meeting a friend in the evening. You decide to
- A meet in a café then walk around the city and watch the street artists.
 - B go and see a new play at your local theatre.



- 3 You are thinking about doing some summer classes in preparation for next year. You choose
- A art history.
 - B political science.

- 4 You're discussing ideas for a family holiday. You suggest
- A two weeks on a Greek island.
 - B a tour of the Scottish Highlands.



- 5 You prefer
- A hot sunshine and a dry climate.
 - B cool weather with a bit of wind and rain sometimes.



- 6 You want to give yourself a present so you buy
- A a new swimming costume.
 - B a subscription to "The Economist" magazine.

Answers

Mainly As

You are fun-loving and sociable. You like to be outside, enjoying the sunshine but you also like to keep **up-to-date** with art and culture. Book yourself a ticket for a weekend in Barcelona!

Mainly Bs

You are intelligent and motivated to succeed. You are interested in culture but also in commerce. Maybe there's a future for you in Brussels? Go for a visit and find out!

3 Take it in turns to complete the quiz above with a partner then check your scores in the Answers box.

4 Have you ever visited other European cities? Describe some of your impressions to a partner. Did you like the climate? Did you like the food? What famous monuments did you see?