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5 best playgrounds in Brussels

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Katy Faye Desmond

Children Parks Activity 0

Five-year-old Heike Kelman has the skinny on the best playgrounds in Brussels



When this childless writer wanted to write on the best playgrounds in Brussels, she went right to the source. Heike Kelman, age five, of Forest shared her top picks of the finest jungle gyms, sand pits and, above all, slides in Brussels.

1. Georges Henri Park

Heike's top spot goes to the playground at Georges Henri Park in Woluwe Saint Lambert for being best all around. What's her favourite feature? "Well, you'd think it's the slides," she says, referring to the four blue tube slides, slope down a high dome like a spider's legs, "But actually it's climbing up the slides." She goes on to describe the variety of ways children can tackle getting to the top of the dome to ride down one of the chutes.

Besides the playground, Heike also appreciates some of the other features of the park, for instance, its grassy meadows as well as its workout area, so "you can get some exercise". Parents can rest on a shaded bench and there is a smaller playground from young children. "What I also like is that when you forget a water bottle that there's always a little fountain to drink out of," she adds.

End of Avenue Georges Henri, 1200 Woluwe-Saint-Lambert

2. Red Cloister

With its five ponds, marsh and a protected nature reserve, the Red Cloister, an old abbey nestled in the Sonian Forest, can be an idyllic day out for grown ups and kids alike. But for the latter, it also happens to have a couple of the best playgrounds in Brussels, according to Heike who considers herself an authority on the subject. "I've played on them all," she reports.

Some favourite features of the park are a fireman's pole, more slides and several rocking animals to ride, though she feels she "might be getting a little too old for" the latter. She also appreciates the an

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obstacle course found in one of the play areas: "You have to climb over strings and logs and stuff." And there is even a small zip line.

On the weekends, a café is open serving cold drinks and food.

Rue de Rouge-Cloître, 1160 Audergem

3. Porte de Hal

Next to the 14th-century tower of the Porte de Hal along Brussels ring road lies another 4000m² of play area for kids. Made entirely from wood, the Porte de Hal playground is among Brussels' most whimsical. It's in the shape of a large castle complete with swinging catapults and a giant maze. Heike likes the row of mini wooden houses, which lend themselves to the imagination to make up all kinds of stories.

Heike's father also adds that Porte de Hal is surrounded by a fence with a single entry point, which makes it easier for parents to relax and let their kids play freely without having to monitor them too closely or worry about them heading out to the busy road.

Runs along Boulevard de Waterloo / Avenue Henri Jaspar ring road, 1000 Brussels

4. Tenbosch Park

Another hit is Park Tenbosch, which offers a fairly typical playground and sand pit, but with a few special features. Heike most enjoys the climbing net, though laments that she's now outgrown it. "My head sticks out of it." Now she climbs on top of the upper wooden beam instead. "It's not really made to climb on, but I'm not the only kid that likes to do it." She also gives mention of a tepee and a separate area with a large sandbox.

Much of Tenbosch's appeal is its idyllic setting, says Heike. "There are footpaths with lots of rocks, they go up hill or down hill. And across from the playground, there's a really big patch of green." In fact, along Tenbosch's gentle slopes and delicately winding paths, there are plenty of patches of green begging for picnics and a bit of relaxation for parents.

Between Chaussée de Vleurgat and Rue des Mèlèzes and Rue Hector-Denis, 1050 Ixelles

5. Renier Chalon

Finally, an honourable mention in Heike's world of playgrounds is Renier Chalon in Ixelles. Quite near her school and just a few streets away from Tenbosch Park, Chalon lends some variety to her play schedule. For kids large and small, it host two quaint playgrounds, one for older children and one for toddlers, offering a host of playthings from an elephant-shaped slide and balancing games to rope bridges, climbing wall, seesaws, swings, as well as sports fields. Heike recommends trying the high balance beam leading to the slide: "It's a lot of fun."

Rue Renier Chalon 17, 1050 Ixelles

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