

# SO, YOU'RE HOSTING A STUDENT FROM BELGIUM.



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## Thank you for hosting with AYA!

We understand that this is not only a very exciting time for you, but you may also be feeling nervous. Fear not! **Here are some helpful hints to help make your year a successful one.** *(Please note: while this information is mostly typical of a culture, it does not apply to all students. Every personality is different, so keep that in mind!)*

## Please be Aware...

Belgium is a bilingual and bicultural country, and students from Flanders (Dutch-speaking) and Wallonia (French-speaking) may have different perspectives and habits. Avoid making assumptions based on language or location.

Belgian humor can be dry or ironic, and students may not always understand American slang or sarcasm right away. Be patient — they'll get there quickly!

## 1 Communication

Belgians may initially come across as reserved. Politeness and humility are valued, and teenagers might take time to open up. However, once they feel comfortable, they often become warm and humorous companions.

## 2 Modest Personal Space

Belgians tend to respect personal space and avoid overly expressive body language. A kiss on the cheek is common among close friends and family, but less so for new acquaintances. Expect more physical reserve than with Italian or Spanish students.

## 3 Academics

Belgian schools are demanding, with long hours, strict grading, and lots of homework. Teens may be used to formal classroom environments and may need support adjusting to the more informal, discussion-driven U.S. system.

## 4 Food Habits

Belgians value good food, and meals are often social, sit-down experiences — especially dinner. Many enjoy rich cuisine, including bread, cheese, chocolate, fries, and waffles, but also fresh and seasonal food. Breakfast may be light; dinner is often between 6:30–8:00 p.m.

## 5 Punctuality

Belgian teens are generally punctual and take schedules seriously, especially for school and appointments. Being late can be viewed as inconsiderate, so your student may appreciate structure and reliability in your household routine.