



The Belgian Café at the Intercontinental has been open for a few months now and claims to offer a little piece of old Brussels right in the Heart of Abu Dhabi. Belgian cuisine means steaming pots of mussels, chunky fries and creamy mayonnaise; and the Belgian Café certainly delivers in terms of décor – plenty of dark wood and pale walls, authentic antiques and old signs, a huge bar well stocked with a wide variety of traditional Belgian beverages.

Friendly Head Chef Yves Bas has worked in Michelin starred kitchens all round Europe and ran his own restaurant in Belgium for 10 years so we are expecting good tasty authentic Belgian fare – we're not disappointed.

We start with pan-fried goose liver on a cherry compote and a grey shrimp salad. The goose is beautifully smooth and perfectly cooked; the shrimp is lovely and fresh, whetting our appetites nicely as we prepare for the main event and what most people will be coming here for – the mussels.

Flown in five times a week, fresh from the North Sea near the Belgium/Holland border, the 'Prins & Dinghamse' mussels are absolutely superb. Each kilogram portion is served in a steaming pot with a good selection of sauces to choose from. While rich, the savoury Roquefort sauce we selected perfectly complements the mussels, which are just bursting with flavour.

The desserts are also worthy of a mention – we recommend the Belgian chocolate mousse with vanilla cream and the traditional Brussels waffle with chocolate sauce (what else?).

The only negative is that the prices are slightly high – think top-end restaurant prices. Chef Bas justifies this with the expense of flying in the best ingredients from Europe (even the potatoes and mayonnaise are imported) and who are we to argue when the food tastes so good.

We like the Belgian Café – why not head down after work on a Thursday to join the loosened-tie crowd, or while away a lazy afternoon over fine fare and a newspaper (or Abu Dhabi Week).

What? Belgian Cafe

Where? Intercontinental, Abu Dhabi

Cost: Average price (starter, main, side and dessert excl. drinks) AED250-300 per person

Why: The best moules-frites in town

Why not: A little on the pricey side

We say: A must for mussel-lovers

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