



THE ROUGH GUIDE TO GREAT BRITISH CITIES

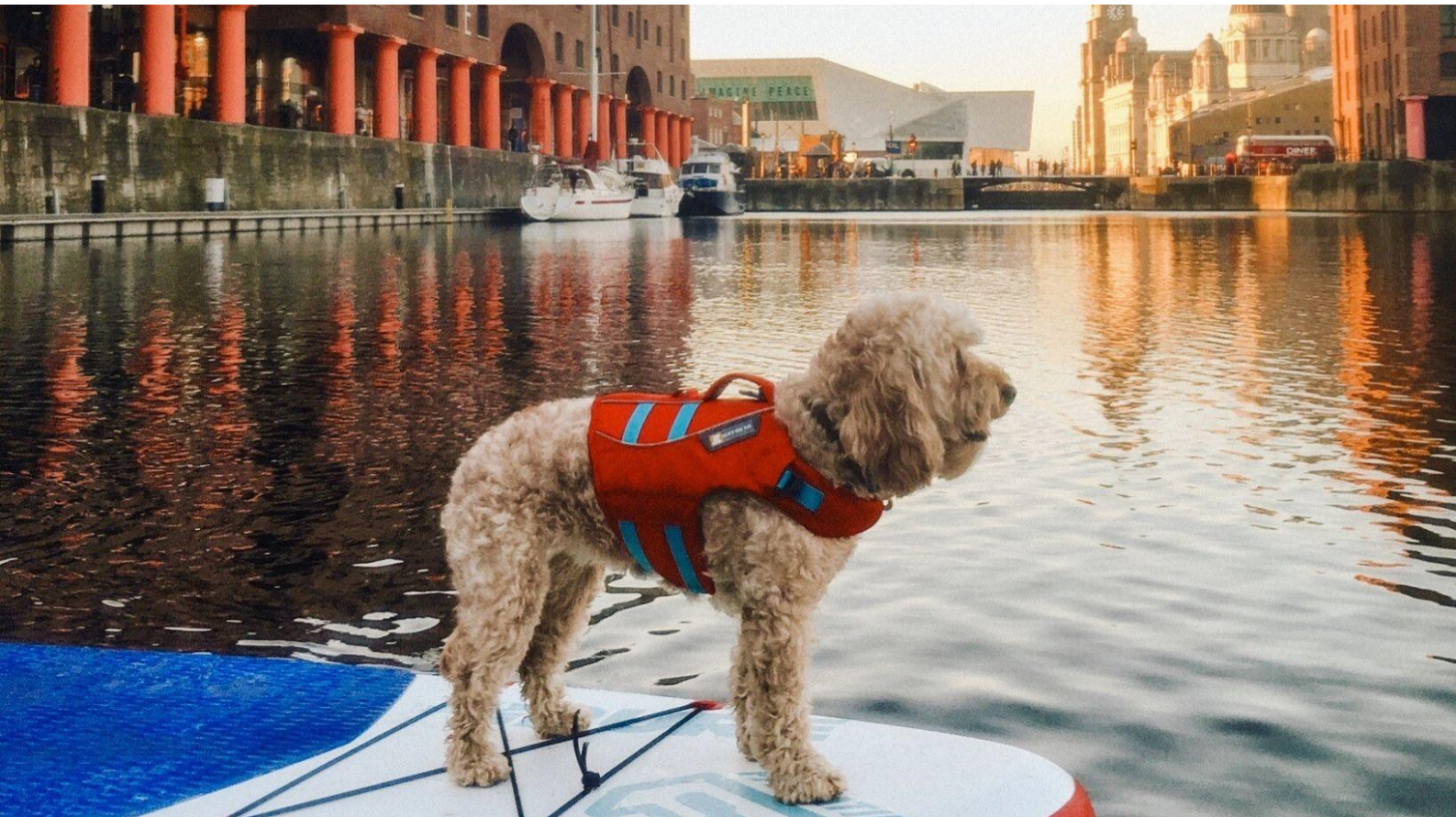


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INTRODUCTION: SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY



For a small island, Britain is undeniably big on creativity, big on diversity, and big on never standing still. As a result, from top to bottom, east to west, Britain's cities offer once-in-a-lifetime experiences of the kind that don't get forgotten in a hurry. Like the coronation of a new King, for example — visit London on 6th May 2023 to witness exactly that.

Then there's the grand finale of the world-famous Eurovision Song Contest, which will be held in Liverpool on 13th May. How's that for an incredible celebration of events in a single month?

Major events aside, Britain's heritage-rich cities are stacked with experiences that defy expectation, from iconic landmarks that have been reimaged into vibrant cultural spaces for art, theatre and food, to outdoor adventures in the most unexpected of places — who'd have thought you could go whitewater rafting in London, or trek with alpacas on the edge of Manchester?

In short, if you're thinking of visiting Britain, you can expect a warm welcome, and expect to be exhilarated. Above all, though, you can expect to be surprised by cities that never stand still, and there's no better time to visit.

THINGS NOT TO MISS IN 2023



Coronation of King Charles III, London

6th May will see London stage the coronation of King Charles III in Westminster Abbey following a grand procession from Buckingham Palace.



Eurovision Song Contest final, Liverpool

With a fan park and city-wide events, everyone can join the Eurovision Song Contest party in Liverpool on 13th May.



Edinburgh festivals

From the [Beltane Fire Festival](#) on 30th April to the International Festival, Fringe Festival, and Mela Festival in August and September, Edinburgh is ablaze with events.



Oxford Artweeks

Explore Oxfordshire while enjoying the UK's oldest, biggest open studios and exhibition event – Artweeks runs across 400+ venues from 6th – 29th May.



Manchester International Festival

Mainly staged in the pioneering new [Factory International](#) complex, [Manchester International Festival](#) (29th June – 16th July) will present an extravaganza of music, art and theatre.



Centenary of the Flying Scotsman, York

Visit York's [Railway Museum](#) 1st – 23rd April to celebrate the 100th birthday of the world's most famous steam engine.



Brighton Pride and TransPride

Brighton's Pride festival (4th – 7th August) never fails to exhilarate, and 2023 sees TransPride Brighton celebrate its 10th anniversary.



Bath festivals

From the Jane Austen Festival (8th – 17th September), to the Great Bath Feast (22nd – 24th September), early autumn sees this elegant city come alive with events.



GREAT BRITAIN AT A GLANCE

Distances from London by train	
Brighton	- 75km
Cambridge	- 79km
Oxford	- 83km
Bath	- 152km
Birmingham	- 163km
Bristol	- 170km
Cardiff	- 208km
Manchester	- 262km
York	- 280km
Liverpool	- 287km
Edinburgh	- 534km
Glasgow	- 555km



LONDON



If London's been calling, now's the time to answer that call, with 2023 seeing this dynamic city host the coronation of King Charles III in Westminster Abbey on 6th May. In short, London's having a party and everyone's invited.

Into cutting-edge contemporary culture? Prepare to be exhilarated. One of the best examples is east London's [Village Underground](#) arts venue, which hosts pioneering exhibitions and events in a turn-of-the-century warehouse.

Love theatre? Thanks to its Michelin-starred chef and theatre shows, you'll be dazzled by [The Windmill Soho](#). Alternatively, board a plush double-decker [Bustronome](#) to see top sights while enjoying 360-degree views and top-notch nosh.

London also offers unparalleled opportunities to elevate eating to spectacular heights, quite literally in the case of the [Sky Garden](#), an oasis for green-loving gourmands.

Or how about heading to immersive steampunk town, [Phantom Peak](#), replete with boat rides, eateries and 100+ stories to play a part in?

It'll come as no surprise that you don't have to settle for the norm when it comes to getting around London, either. Catch a [cable car](#) across the river. See iconic sights from an iconic [Mini Cooper car](#). Race down the river on a [Thames Rocket](#). And (wait for it), you can even [whitewater raft in the Lee Valley](#).



Altered icons – novel ways to experience London landmarks

Go underground

Enjoy a [Hidden London Tour](#) of the Tube network before scooting to [Cahoots](#) cocktail bar, a super-stylish, 1940s-style speakeasy in the depths of a disused Underground Station.

Get your game on at the O2

Courtesy of its [roof-climbing experience](#), the iconic O2 arena offers fresh views alongside fresh entertainment experiences like [TOCA Social](#) – a football-themed food venue with opportunities to play the beautiful game.

Dance with dinosaurs

The [Natural History Museum's Silent Disco](#) delivers an exhilarating opportunity to boogie away in the handsome Hintze Hall.

Beef-up your Tower of London tour

Discover the Tower of London in the company of a [Yeoman Warder guide](#) (aka Beefeater) – no one knows it better.

Explore Hyde Park on horseback

Given that Hyde Park has been one of England's most famous equestrian spots for 300+ years, what better way to see its green expanse than from the [heights of a horse](#)?



Be electrified by an entertainment powerhouse

Gorge on global grub and shop 'til you drop at [Battersea Power Station](#) – an iconic landmark reinvented as one of the world's most innovative, repurposed heritage sites.

Take tea with the Bard

Combine two English icons in one by touring [Shakespeare's Globe theatre](#) before taking a 'Romeo and Juliet' [afternoon tea at The Swan](#), where a timeless tradition is served with theatrical twists.

MANCHESTER



Being the largest metropolitan area in the north of England, and a constantly-evolving, cosmopolitan cultural hub, there's no question that Manchester is an exhilarating city that defies expectation. A place to mix things up, embrace the new and never sit still.

For example, after spending a morning touring [Old Trafford](#), or exploring the [National Football Museum](#), you could find yourself [paddle-boarding Bridgewater Canal](#) or heading to historic [Heaton Park](#). Covering a whopping 600 acres, the park boasts a boating lake, animal centre and tram museum, with a diverse events programme presented in and around elegant Heaton Hall throughout the year.

If you *really* want to mix things up, head out of town for an [alpaca trekking](#) adventure. If that wasn't enough, with a host of hotly anticipated re-openings and launches on the horizon, 2023 is an especially exciting time to visit Manchester.

First up, [Manchester Museum's](#) innovative "hello future" transformation has just been completed and sees one of the UK's biggest university museums now host a [creative community space](#) alongside world-class exhibitions. Uniquely, the museum's [vivarium](#) houses a collection of live amphibians and reptiles. How's that for defying expectation?

Another major Manchester event will take place in June 2023 with the launch of [Factory International](#). This brand-new arts, music and culture space will become the home of the [Manchester International Festival](#).

Then there's [Co-op Live](#). Set to open in December, this cutting-edge, large-scale music venue and entertainment hub has pledged to put the planet and local community first.



Eat outside the box – cool ways to eat, drink and make merry in Manchester

Take traditional tea with a twist

From glamorous “High Tease” Burlesque shows, to Mad Hatter’s tea parties starring Manchester’s finest drag queens, [Richmond Tea Rooms](#) events are nothing but wildly inventive and fabulous fun.

Enjoy next level dining

Spectacularly sited on the 19th floor of No. 1 Spinningfields, the stylish [20 Stories](#) restaurant boasts 360-degree views, a vast rooftop terrace and exceptional cocktails.

Live life as a cabaret

Shimmy to [Sonata](#) to experience Berlin and New York-style cabarets with a warm Mancunian welcome. Expect classic cocktails, cabaret acts and live jazz.

Master gin-making

Head to [Manchester Gin](#) to tour the distillery, taste award-winning gins, and craft your own brew after selecting botanical pairings that are perfect for your palate.

Visit world-class vegan eateries

Whether you fancy devouring Asian cuisine at [Lotus Plant Based Kitchen](#), tasty Italian classics at [Purezza’s](#), or locally-sourced, sustainable fare at [The Allotment](#), Manchester’s vegan food scene has a distinctly global flavour.

Chill out in cool coffee houses

From [Ancoats Coffee Co](#) and [ManCoCo](#), where they roast their own beans, to cool cafés like [Idle Hands](#), touring Manchester’s indie coffee houses is a great way to get to know the city. Top tip: [Pot Kettle Black](#) in beautiful Barton Arcade is a must-visit if you love coffee and Victorian style.

Swig through 300 years of history

Revealing 300 years of drinking history during a tour of classic pubs, the [Manchester Pub Walkabout](#) is a thoroughly entertaining way to see the city and soak-up British pub culture.



LIVERPOOL



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Party like it's 2023

May 2023 sees Liverpool host the Eurovision Song Contest semi-finals (9th and 11th May) and grand final (13th May). With a fan park and events across the city, expect the party to last into the wee hours.

Twist, shout and shake it up

If the Fab Four have lured you to Liverpool, a UNESCO City of Music, visit [The Beatles' childhood homes](#) and the legendary [Cavern Club](#). For a full flavour of the city's many musical maestros, take a [Music Icons tour](#).

Discover cutting-edge art

10th June – 17th September 2023 will see [Tate Liverpool](#) host [Liverpool Biennial](#), the UK's biggest festival of contemporary art, with more exhibitions across the city's public spaces, historic sites and art venues.

Set sail to a state-of-the-art science centre

[Ferry across the Mersey](#) to see Liverpool's waterfront landmarks from a fresh angle before visiting [Eureka!](#), a fun, family-friendly centre for science and discovery.

Add Latin American flair to afternoon tea

Housed in a converted church, [Alma de Cuba](#) restaurant and bar exudes Liverpool's dynamic spirit through [Brazilian Samba afternoon tea](#) and vibrant [voodoo shows](#).

Devour Liverpool's maritime legacy

Based in buzzy Duke Street Market, [Barnacle](#) serves delicious local produce through an inventive menu themed around Liverpool's maritime heritage.

Experience entertainment, as you like it

Housed in a timber-framed Shakespearean theatre, the [Shakespeare North Playhouse](#) presents theatre, music, comedy and workshops for all ages, including [baby bards](#).

Be inspired by beach art

Unforgettably haunting, Anthony Gormley's Another Place sculptures at Crosby Beach present 100 life-size figures along the shore and out to sea.

BRISTOL

Go global in Wapping Wharf

Wapping Wharf's cool [Cargo](#) development serves the likes of craft beer, local seafood and authentic tapas from stylish, converted shipping containers.

Unleash your inner street artist

Thanks to local boy Banksy, Bristol is famed for its street art, so there's no better place to take a [graffiti workshop](#). Before picking up a spray can, take inspiration from a [walking tour of Banksy's murals](#).

Banquet and boogie on a barge

Bristol's Floating Harbour is awash with barges that have been converted into beautiful [restaurants and bars](#). There's no better place to soak up Bristol's vitality and history.

Surf on the edge of the city

Head to [The Wave](#) to enjoy exceptional surfing on a purpose-built lake set amid green fields. Just 20 minutes from Bristol city centre, it's an inspired union of adventure, tech and nature.

Awaken your senses

[Wake the Tiger](#) – the world's first amazement park – is an immersive experience that conjures multiple worlds through soundscapes, installations, illuminations and stories. Expect secret passages, psychedelic forests and surprises galore.

Take flight

Forgo the usual bus tours and see the region from a new perspective (and new heights) on a [hot-air balloon ride](#) that takes off from Ashton Court, site of the [Bristol Balloon Fiesta](#).

Walk on the wild side

Committed to conservation, the [Wild Place Project](#) offers 50 acres of nature trails, outdoor adventure activities and animals, including bears, wolves, lynxes and lemurs.

Be part of the Bristol Beacon party

Showcasing Bristol's creative spirit, [Bristol Beacon](#) is one of the UK's most ambitious arts regeneration projects. The Housewarming in autumn 2023 will deliver live music events in a revitalised historic hall.



EDINBURGH



Majestic, dynamic and steeped in history, when it comes to visitor-attracting events, Edinburgh is best known for its [New Year Hogmanay](#), [International Festival](#), [Fringe Festival](#) and [International Book Festival](#).

But beyond those (rightfully) world-renowned magnets, the city hosts tons of other festivals that are nothing but inspired, and surprising.

Take [LeithLate](#), for example — the energetic, multi-arts charity behind the LeithLate Festival. Running 30th June – 2nd July 2023, the festival programme promises a richness of events and installations from 2D artists, 3D artists, spoken word performers and musicians.

Then there's the extraordinary [Beltane Fire Festival](#) — a blazing reinvention of a Celtic Iron Age ritual that will take place on Calton Hill on 30th April 2023.

Mention must also be made of Edinburgh Mela, a multicultural gathering (“mela” means “gathering” or “to meet” in Sanskrit) showcasing everything from flamenco dancing and bhangra, to African drumming, plus there's a glorious global food village. Dates vary, but it's usually held in late August/early September.

Staying with the food theme, if you're expecting a focus on Scottish staples, think again. While plenty of places serve traditional national dishes, expect fresh takes on old classics and fresh global flavours. Stroll along The Shore, a picturesque promenade in Edinburgh's harbour area. Home to two of the city's four Michelin-starred restaurants ([The Kitchin](#) and [Restaurant Martin Wishart](#)), plus excellent vegan eateries, seafood joints, welcoming bistros and buzzy bars, there's no better place to experience Edinburgh's unique union of old-town ambience and contemporary cool.



Extraordinary outdoor experiences in Edinburgh

Hike historic Holyrood Park

Volcanic cliff faces. Mini lochs. Ancient hillside ruins. Arthur's Seat peak. [Holyrood Park](#) is a heavenly haven for hikers and history buffs, and all this mere minutes from Edinburgh's Old Town.

See the city on a cheese crawl

For a scrumptiously satisfying experience, uncover Edinburgh's top attractions on a two-hour [Edinburgh Cheese Crawl tour](#) — think fine wine, fizz and plenty of cheesy goodness.

Encounter witches and ghosts

With its eerie underground vaults, witchy legends, and ghost-sightings galore, Edinburgh's plentiful [spooky tour options](#) befit the city's atmosphere and history.

Find well-being through wild yoga

Want to feel healthy while appreciating Edinburgh's natural beauty? [Adventure Yoga Edinburgh](#) offers invigorating classes in the great outdoors.

Be happy beside the seaside

Boasting a pretty promenade, Portobello Beach (nine minutes by train from Edinburgh) has plenty to keep the whole family happy, with its [Art Walk Party Festival](#) (September) presenting local talent.

Be inspired by a sculpture garden

Showcasing site-specific sculptures in 100 acres of meadow and woodland, including works by Antony Gormley, award-winning [Jupiter Artland](#) is a place to be stirred by nature and art in one fell swoop.

Ski above the city

With two main slopes, three nursery slopes and a jump slope, [Midlothian Snowsports Centre](#) is set up to ensure all abilities will enjoy an exhilarating experience.

Watch wildlife

Rising above Edinburgh's western suburbs, and dominated by its 150-year-old memorial to Sir Walter Scott, [Corstorphine Hill](#) is a wildlife-rich nature reserve, with a restored walled garden and orienteering trails.



GLASGOW



Take an afternoon tea tour in vintage style

Combine two British traditions on a [Red Bus Bistro tour](#) — you'll see the city's top sights aboard an iconic vintage Routemaster bus while relishing traditional afternoon tea.

Roam the Riverside Museum

The ultra-modern [Riverside Museum](#) brings Glasgow's history to life in fine style. The same is true of the [Tall Ship Glenlee](#), a Victorian vessel laden with mystery.

Follow in Rennie Mackintosh's footsteps

Taking a [Mackintosh design tour](#) is a rewarding way for art and design aficionados to see the city and the extraordinary work of Glasgow's most famous son.

Drink and dine at Drygate brewery

Located in a converted box factory, fun and friendly [Drygate brewery](#) offers unique experiential drinking and dining, with its seasonal menu paired with the beer.

Funk things up at SWG3

Inventive exhibitions. Wild warehouse parties. Edgy fashion shows and gigs — former industrial yard [SWG3](#) delivers all this and more, including [Yardworks Festival](#), one of Europe's top celebrations of urban art.

Discover a sustainable distillery

North of the city, backed by the Loch Lomond mountains, [Glengoyne Distillery](#) produces award-winning single malts, with tasting tours revealing its eco-credentials.

Go for gold at Glasgow's velodrome

Though an elite-standard venue, everyone's welcome at the [Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome](#) — new rider sessions show beginners how to get to grips with this high-octane sport.

Get your wild on at West End Adventure

From canoeing and kayaking, to abseiling and bushcraft, [West End Adventure](#) offers exhilarating outdoor activities and expeditions for all ages.

CARDIFF

Be wowed by living Welsh history

Enjoy a warm Welsh welcome at [St Fagan's National Museum of History](#) – an open-air, free entry, 100-acre site with forty original historic buildings and hands-on workshops.

Get crafty in Cardiff Bay

Occupying an old maritime warehouse, [Craft in the Bay](#) champions Welsh craftspeople, with workshops covering everything from screen printing and printmaking to weaving and woodturning.

Relish a right royal banquet

Fine food and entertainment in a 15th-century cellar – [banqueting in Cardiff Castle](#) is fun, unforgettable and a feast for all the senses.

Watch world-class shows

Swathed in Welsh slate, wood and stone, the [Wales Millennium Centre](#) celebrates Welsh creative talent and stages thrilling theatre and music events, with its intimate new [Cabaret venue](#), hosting the best Burlesque, drag and comedy.

Eat international

Cardiff's food scene is as mighty as the dragon on the Welsh flag. Top haunts include Michelin-recommended [Nook](#), and Westgate Street's trio of Spanish joints, [Asador 44](#), [Bar 44](#) and [Curado](#).

Go to gin school in a castle

Uncover history while drinking down gin crafted by your own hands – [South Wales' first full-scale gin distillery](#) runs a lively gin school in handsome Hensol Castle.

Be invigorated by a bay walk

Running from Cardiff Bay to Penarth's seaside, the circular Cardiff Bay Trail takes in historic landmarks (the [Norwegian Church arts centre](#)), modern masterworks (the [Senedd](#)) and buzzy bars.

Enjoy thrills and spills at White Water

From whitewater rafting and tubing, to kayaking and off-site [gorge-walking](#) in the scenic Neath Valley, [Cardiff International White Water](#) is awash with adventure activities for the whole family.



BATH



Soak up Roman history in style

Discover Bath's rich history at the [Roman Bath summer evenings](#), where champagne flows as torchlights glow.

Immerse yourself in famous thermal spas

The [Thermae Spa Twilight](#) experience delivers sublime views while you relax in mineral-rich waters, and it's all the more magical come dusk.

Go Gothic at the House of Frankenstein

Famously, Mary Shelley wrote *Frankenstein* in Bath, and the interactive, multi-sensory [House of Frankenstein](#) conjures her life, work and Frankenstein's monster himself across four floors of eerie installations.

Relish Bath's Regency heritage

From embracing your inner Jane Austen on an immersive tour of [No. 1 Royal Crescent](#) to indulging your love of *Bridgerton* on [themed experiences](#), Bath is blessed with rewarding ways to uncover the Regency era.

Enjoy a bird's-eye view of Bath's beauty

For breathtaking views of the city and countryside, head to Royal Victoria Park and hop into a [hot-air balloon](#).

Adventure on the River Avon

Surprisingly, Bath boasts plenty of pulse-quickening [activities](#), including kayaking, paddleboarding and raft-building.



Bath Brewhouse

Hosting entertaining brewery tours and "be a brewer for a day" experiences, [Bath Brewhouse](#) serve their signature cask beers (other tipples available) and classic British pub grub in exuberant, welcoming style.

Go gourmand at the Great Bath Feast

Celebrating the best food and drink in Britain's Southwest (and beyond), the [Great Bath Feast](#) (22nd – 24th September 2023) blends professional chef demos and masterclasses with all the fun of an artisan food village and street events.

BIRMINGHAM



Be enthralled by a 1920s theatre bar
Magic, burlesque and quirky comedy in an intimate, 1920s-styled venue – [Smoke & Mirrors Boutique Pub and Magic Theatre](#) makes for a decidedly different night out.

Uncover culture at the Custard Factory
Formerly the HQ of Bird's Custard, the colossal [Custard Factory](#) complex continues to exude creative enterprise, thanks to its indie boutiques, bars and off-the-wall entertainment spaces.

Up your game while downing cocktails
Into arcade games and classic consoles? You'll love [NQ64](#). Located in the Custard Factory (where else?), this cool drinking hole is packed with retro games, and offers an inventive menu of cocktails and craft brews.

Bike Birmingham's canals
With over 50km of Birmingham's towpaths resurfaced, there's no better way to see the city from a different angle than cycling [six rewarding routes](#).

Enjoy Brummie curry in the Balti Triangle
Thanks to the Pakistani Brummie restaurateur who invented the [balti bowl](#) in the 1970s, Birmingham is the birthplace of Balti. Eating in (at least) one of the [Balti Triangle's](#) curry houses is essential.

Embrace urban art in Digbeth
Birmingham's Digbeth district has long attracted local artists, and now garners global buzz. Be floored by its flamboyance on a [self-guided graffiti art tour](#).

Get back to nature in an urban eco-park
Offering inspired events and wildlife-rich nature trails, [BirminghamEcoPark](#) is an unexpected oasis of natural beauty.

Move up a gear in an iconic Land Rover
For the ultimate high-octane adventure, [Land Rover Solihull](#) offers thrilling off-road experiences through challenging terrain. Take your pick from sixty-minute taster sessions to full-day drives of a lifetime.

BRIGHTON

Celebrate Brighton Pride and TransPride

With [Brighton Pride](#) (4th – 7th August) never failing to exhilarate, and [Brighton Transpride](#) celebrating its 10th anniversary, 2023 will see the city salute its LGBTQ+ community like never before. While you're here, take a [Piers and Queers walking tour](#).

Get a fresh culture fix at Brighton Festival International

Inclusive and inspiring, the [Brighton Festival](#) (6th – 28th May) presents a diverse, multi-venue jamboree of music, theatre, film, art and literature.

Eat, drink and shop The Lanes

A lively labyrinth of alleys in which latter-day vegan eateries and organic ice-cream makers rub shoulders with traditional pubs and jewellers, Brighton's [Lanes](#) are a treasure trove.

Enjoy cutting-edge cabaret

With booze, banter and bingo promised by [Proud Cabaret's](#) Bingo Bonanza and [The Ironworks](#) offering comedy, classic burlesque, all-male circus burlesque and drag shows, Brighton boasts an abundance of exuberant entertainment options.

Take a magical tea masterclass

In true Brighton style, [Bird and Blend](#) have transformed a quintessential English staple into something entirely unexpected through their masterclasses in tea cocktail mixology and magical potion brewing.

Explore Sussex vineyards

Proving that Britain is nothing but surprising, the countryside around Brighton is blessed with award-winning vineyards. To feel like you've been transported to Tuscany, and taste fine British wine, take a [Sussex vineyard tour](#).

Experience next-level adventure

If you have a head for heights and a hankering for adventure, [Brighton Zip](#) will glide you along Brighton Beach. More high-octane action can be had from climbing or abseiling the 138-metre-high [BA i360 pod tower](#).

Ride a record-breaking railway

At 135 years old, [Volks Electric Railway](#) is the world's oldest electric railway, and a fun way to travel between Brighton Palace Pier and the marina.



OXFORD



Take a punt

Whether you sit back and sip fizz while a chauffeur does the hard work, or opt to handle the pole yourself, [punting](#) the Cherwell is a classic Oxford experience. For something different, take a [kayak](#) tour.

Discover original art

[Oxford Artweeks](#), the UK's biggest open studios event, will see 2,000 artists showcase their work around the region from 6th – 29th May, with a focus in Oxford from 20th May.

Make merry on a Mad Hatter masterclass

Embrace English eccentricity and an Oxford literary icon on an exhilarating [Mad Hatter-themed cocktail masterclass](#).

Walk a literary woodland trail

Steeped in atmosphere and academia, it's little wonder that Oxford is the setting for countless classics of literature. Alongside touring literary locations, explore the Literary Woodland in the [Oxford Botanic Garden and Abbotorium](#). This oasis inspired the likes of Lewis Carroll, Tolkien, Evelyn Waugh and Philip Pullman.

Be awe-struck by Evensong

Everyone's welcome at [Magdalen College Chapel's Evensong](#). Derived from the 16th century, the service presents a variety of hymns, anthems and psalm chants in majestic surroundings.



Tour taverns to take in history

For a fresh perspective on Oxford's rich history, plus opportunities to try local ales, [tour the city's oldest taverns](#).

Be floored by fairy-tale theatre

Celebrating the nourishing necessity of stories, and promising surprises around every corner, Oxford's [Story Museum](#) offers immersive experiences for all ages, including [fairy-tale theatre shows for grown-ups](#).

Dine like a super-hero

Comic book chic and classic diner dishes are on the menu at [Atomic Burger](#) – a friendly joint serving juicy burgers and shakes.

CAMBRIDGE



See future stars fledge at Footlights

Given that the likes of Dudley Moore, Stephen Fry and Olivia Coleman first trod the boards at [Cambridge Footlights](#), there's no better place to enjoy live shows. You might just find yourself in the company of a future Oscar winner.

Marvel at modern art

Harmonising with the spirit of the city, the university's [Kettle's Yard](#) gallery is elegant and inventive, with a permanent collection and surprising seasonal exhibitions.

Shop vintage

Celebrated for its fine academic vintage, Cambridge is also a treasure trove of clothes and curios with history. Vintage must-visits include [The Old Chemist Shop Antique Centre](#), [Jemporium](#) and [Market Square](#).

Indulge in offbeat ice cream

Serving extraordinary flavours like absinthe, sweet potato and Japanese whiskey, plus classics like strawberries and cream, [Jack's Gelato](#) is an ice cream shop par excellence.

Enjoy unique punting experiences

Spice up a traditional punt on the River Cam by [punting with your pooch](#), taking a [cheese punting tour](#), or discovering Cambridge history with a student guide.

Cycle stunning scenery

Given that Cambridge has been hailed [Britain's cycling capital](#), hire a bike to explore the city, see the beautiful [Backs](#), and ride rewarding out-of-town routes to wild woodlands and [country estates](#).

Feast on fabulous street food

Popping up around the city every Tuesday–Saturday, [foodPark](#) is a cool collective of local street food traders. Expect fresh takes on fish and chips, and global grub served from smart trucks.

Dance 'til you drop at a first-rate festival

27th – 30th July will see thousands gather at charming Cherry Hinton Hall Park for the world-esteemed [Cambridge Folk Festival](#). Celebrated for its diverse programming, it's been blazing a unique trail since 1965.

YORK

Shop The Shambles

One of Europe's best-preserved medieval streets, [The Shambles](#)' winding warren of cobbled alleys and ancient buildings will have you thinking you've stepped onto a movie set. It's easy to see why this is said to have inspired JK Rowling's Diagon Alley.

Time travel to a 10th-century Viking village

Courtesy of its Time Ride experience, [Jorvik Viking Centre](#) showcases York's history in exhilarating style. Add to that a cutting-edge reconstructed village, plus thousands of remarkable and rare artefacts, and you're looking at a fascinating day out.

Savour sustainable spirits

Scenically located to the north of the city, [Cooper King Distillery](#), England's first carbon-negative distillery, delivers a feast of forward-thinking tech, tradition, and top gin and whiskey tastings.

Stroll England's longest city walls

Walking [York's medieval city walls](#) is the best way to see the city while absorbing history – at 3.4km, these are the longest and most complete of their kind in England.

Take a gourmet cookery class

Want to up your gourmet game? Experts at [The Cookery School](#) in York's Grand hotel deliver lively classes covering artisan bread-baking, British classics, French brasserie feasts and Goan curry.

All aboard to celebrate a railway icon

1st – 23rd April 2023 sees the world's most famous steam engine, the Flying Scotsman, celebrate its centenary with a pioneering new virtual reality experience at the [Railway Museum](#) and stacks of scenic rail rides.

Get active in Britain's biggest maze

Famed for its massive living Maize Maze, [York Maze](#) also boasts an activity-packed Jurassic maze, exploratory mineshaft maze, and interactive musical maze.

Watch movies by moonlight

Summer sees [outdoor film screenings](#) in York Minster's Dean Park take alfresco film-watching to Hollywood-level heights – think tasty refreshments and comfy seats in a stunning setting.

