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Birmingham City Guide, Including Birmingham Hotels

By Ms Maria Williams

Britain's second biggest city after London is Birmingham. Birmingham is the cultural centre of the

West Midlands and offers the casual visitor an enormous range of exciting opportunities and things to do. Offering an unsurpassed range of shops and shopping centres, and literally hundreds of activities and things to do, Birmingham is the ideal tourist destination; a city that is always guaranteed to keep you occupied.

As a city, Birmingham is packed with places to visit, enabling you to get a real taste of the city's culture. Just a few of the places include:

Birmingham Cathedral: Built in 1725, this is one of the city's most beautiful historic buildings, complete with four Pre-Raphaelite stained-glass windows.

The Royal Air Force Museum: Treat yourself to a stunning display of aviation history and witness over seventy aircraft situated within three separate wartime hangars. You'll see Spitfires, Hurricanes, Vulcans and more.

Cadbury's World: One of the country's biggest and most popular museums. You'll find out about the history of chocolate, and how it originated in South America, as well as seeing a genuine production line. Of course, a visit isn't complete without sampling the produce...

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery: Witness a huge variety of exhibits that range from spooky Egyptian mummies to a wooden toy collection for the kids. Treat yourself to some culture and examine the largest collection of Pre-Raphaelite paintings in the world.

Birmingham Botanical Gardens: An astonishing fifteen acres of beautiful gardens are available for exploration, as well as four glasshouses containing exotic plants.

When it comes to finding something to do, you'll find that Birmingham has it covered. Some ideal places for pursuits include:

The Ackers: If your family's into sport, then enjoy taking part in a variety of activities including climbing, canoeing, skiing, snowboarding and more. Occupying over seventy acres and located just two miles from the city centre, The Ackers couldn't be more convenient.

Second City Canal Cruises: Enjoy cruising down the Birmingham canals and buy gifts from the souvenir shop.

The National Sea Life Centre: Witness over sixty displays of exotic marine life, and find yourself enthralled by the undersea world. See giant turtles, reef fish and sharks too.

Newbrook Farm Experience: Visit a working farm and keep an eye out for the many rare breeds of animals that include cattle, hens, pigs, ponies and goats.

Woodgate Valley Country Park: The perfect place for walkers, with mile upon mile of tracks to explore.

There's something for the kids too, with a farm, play area and a fun pony-trekking centre.

If you're feeling hungry after touring Birmingham, you'll discover that Birmingham is renowned for its culinary diversity - meaning that you'll find the right meal, no matter what variety of food you're looking for. Within the city, home-cooked traditional British food goes hand-in-hand with exotic cuisine from India and China, and all of Birmingham's eateries are in easily accessible locations. Whichever end of the scale interests you - whether it is a simple takeaway or a slap-up three-course meal at a Michelin-starred restaurant - Birmingham has it covered. Here's a small selection of the city's eating-places:

City Café Birmingham: Service, style and ambience are on the menu at this top-rated restaurant that offers a la carte menus, a famous Sunday lunch buffet and a vegetarian garden. Enjoy a live Jazz band every Thursday evening.

Metro Bar & Grill: Free-range meats are the order of the day here, along with a comprehensive fish board that changes daily. Metro also serves a range of sandwiches and simple snack foods if you're looking for something quick.

Peppers: Birmingham's top-rated Indian restaurant has every kind of Indian dish imaginable, and you'll be spoilt for choice when you see the menu. The restaurant's ethos is value for money. **San Carlo Ristorante:** Authentic Italian food is what this restaurant offers, with many of the ingredients imported directly from Italy. The chefs and the management bring real individuality to the menu.

Opus Restaurant: Seasonal and regional are the keywords for this eatery's menu, which offers genuine British meals with the ingredients locally sourced.

When it comes to finding somewhere to stay in Birmingham, the only problem you'll experience with Birmingham is the amount of options available - so many, in fact, that you'll be spoilt for choice! Short breaks and long stays are catered for in hotels and guesthouses in the city centre or on the outskirts. Further, the prices range from the immediately affordable to more expensive and luxurious rooms. If

you're looking for an alternative, then you'll find that Birmingham has plenty of options ranging from campsites to self-catering accommodation. There are also special packages available, such as the spa break, where you'll find yourself pampered into luxury.

When you've finished exploring Birmingham by day, you'll discover that the city comes alive at night with some of the coolest pubs and nightclubs around. Whether you're looking for a relaxing sit down and drink, or want to party away the small hours, you'll doubtlessly discover the ideal venue. The Nightingale Club, located in the heart of the city centre, has three levels incorporating numerous bars, discos, a restaurant and a games room. Meanwhile, The Jam House is a nightclub supported by music maestro Jools Holland, and holds up to 600 people. Alternatively, Rick's Garden Café & Bar in Birmingham offers you the opportunity to enjoy Mediterranean cuisine under the stars.

The above information should give you some idea of just what Birmingham has to offer as a city. There's something to keep you occupied whatever your interest, with a whole range of different cultural activities. If you're traditional, you'll enjoy visiting the city's many museums and art galleries, and learning about Birmingham's history. If you're part of a family, you'll discover attractions that have proved to be popular with thousands of children while in Birmingham. Eating, shopping, seeing and doing... all four bases are covered when you come to Birmingham.

Hotels in Birmingham

Birmingham NEC/Airport Premier Travel Inn City Inn Birmingham Campanile Hotel – Birmingham Copthorne Hotel Birmingham Birmingham Great Barr Hotel Holiday Inn Birmingham Airport The Norfolk Hotel Portland Hotel Ye Olde Station Guest House Birmingham, Shustoke Days Inn Birmingham East Britannia Hotel Birmingham Macdonald Burlington Hotel Best Western The Westley Hotel Central Guest House Express by Holiday Inn Birmingham Castle Bromwich Heath Lodge Hotel Express by Holiday Inn Birmingham NEC Novotel Birmingham Airport Hagley Court Hotel Apollo Hotel Corus hotel Birmingham South Bridge House Hotel Fairlawns At Aldridge(Best Western) RAMADA BIRMINGHAM (FORMERLEY DAYS HOTEL) Express by Holiday Inn Birmingham Oldbury M5, Jct. Novotel Birmingham Centre Paragon Hotel Thistle Birmingham City Birmingham Edgbaston Jurys Inn Birmingham Premier Apartments Birmingham The Edgbaston Palace Hotel

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Biography: Maria writes for Sleep UK – providers of discounted uk hotels.

Do A Sporting Stag Do In Birmingham

By Brett Danielson

If you're planning a stag do in Birmingham, you'd almost have to include some sporting activities. After all, Sport England has awarded Birmingham the title National City of Sport. Situated just west of the center of England, this sporting city offers a wide range of stag do activities for the bachelor party that's looking for something a bit unique and a lot active.

While no one is suggesting that you leave off the traditional naughty doings that have been a part of the pre-wedding festivities since early Greek times, these days the stag do is more often a full-bodied stag weekend with activities planned for day and night. A Birmingham stag do gives your party the chance to take in a day at the races, compete in races of your own, bust a gut laughing at some of the finest comedy in the UK, and then get up in the morning to head out for a full day of off-road karting, paintball tournaments, quad biking or whitewater rafting.

If you're looking for a Birmingham stag do activity that will provide some unusual souvenirs for the lucky stag, how about an afternoon at the Birmingham greyhound track? In addition to giving him (and the rest of your lot) a chance to pad your pockets before a night out with the lovely strippers, you can name a race to commemorate his last hurrah. By making arrangements in advance through a UK tour operator, your stag do can boast its very own greyhound race, complete with private box and bar, race cards printed with the name of your race and a photo of the cup for your race being presented to the winner. That's a Birmingham stag do deal that's tough to beat and impossible to forget.

Your own greyhound race in Birmingham is just one example of a fun stag do activity that a professional tour operator can help you arrange. If you're looking for more unique ideas for stag dos in Birmingham or any other city, contact a tour operator that specialises in unique and unusual stag nights, bachelor parties and stag weekends.

Brett Danielson works for

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, a tour operator specialising in unique and

unusual stag weekends and stag parties to UK and European cities.

