

Manchester

Extend your Rugby World Cup trip to Manchester into a city break and immerse yourself in the sporting heritage, museums and shopping of this vibrant Northwest city.

Cosmopolitan Manchester <http://www.visitmanchester.com/> lies in the Industrial Revolution's heartland, where old working canals now sparkle with quayside cafés and contemporary museums. A short stroll from the city's central transport hub, Manchester Piccadilly, find live music in the trendy Northern Quarter venues and dine on dim sum in neighbouring Chinatown. After rugby games, fill your lungs with fresh air on the Peak District's rolling moors and rugged tors, a short ride away on the scenic Hope Valley railway.

Don't miss

You can almost hear the crowds chanting as you emerge from the players' tunnel on visits to Manchester United's **Old Trafford Museum and Tour Centre** <http://www.manutd.com/en/Visit-Old-Trafford/Museum-And-Stadium-Tour/Welcome.aspx>. Step behind the red-brick warehouse façade at the **Museum of Science and Industry** <http://www.mosi.org.uk/>, and get up close to tanks and harriers at the vast **IWM North** <http://www.iwm.org.uk/visits/iwm-north>, while arty gems such as Pre-Raphaelite paintings and Henry Moore sculptures are on display in the grand, neo-classical **Manchester Art Gallery** <http://www.manchestergalleries.org/> on central Mosley Street.

Great for families

A wealth of marine life is on display at **Sea Life Manchester** <http://www.visitsealife.com/Manchester/> aquarium, from sharks lurking above the underwater tunnel to starfish and rays in the shallow pools. Nearby, at **Legoland Discovery Centre** <http://www.legolanddiscoverycentre.co.uk/manchester/>, guilty pleasures include a nostalgic Star Wars mini world and colourful Lego factory – for the young and 'not so young' alike.

Go shopping

Splash out on the likes of DKNY and Armani at **The Avenue** <http://www.theavenuemanchester.com/> at the shiny Spinningfields development. The **Manchester Arndale** <http://www.manchesterarndale.com/> shopping centre is a bargain hunter's paradise with over 240 well-known brands and a food court under one roof. A few miles west of the city find the huge **Trafford Centre** <http://www.traffordcentre.co.uk/>, brimming with everything including luxury brands, high street favourites and department stores.

Explore the area

For open space – and lots of it – head just outside the city centre to rolling **Heaton Park** www.heatonpark.org.uk. Here, take in views of England's backbone, the Pennine hills, experience the championship parkland golf course and paddle across the serene boating lake. Just 30 minutes from Manchester centre are the fascinating National Trust country parks and gardens of **Dunham Massey** <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/dunham-massey/> and **Quarry Bank Mill** <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/quarry-bank-mill/> – perfect for a spot of gentle rambling.

Get active

Perfect your slalom skills on the 180-metre, real snow piste at **Chill Factor** <http://www2.chillfactor.com/>, or try out the likes of Extreme Carving, Extreme Sledging, Airboarding, Tubing and the Luge Ice Slide. Next door, experience indoor skydiving or 'body flying' without any extreme heights in the wind tunnel at **Airkix** <http://www.airkix.com>.

Did you know?

Bustling Manchester celebrates its industrial past with a 'busy bee' logo. Look out for bees on lampposts and benches throughout the city. The bee also features on a mosaic inside Manchester Town Hall and on the city's coat of arms.

Where to stay

- Budget: Holiday Inn Express Manchester Cc - Oxford Road <http://www.hiexpress.com/hotels/gb/en/manchester/mchor/hoteldetail>
- Moderate: Roomzzz <http://www.roomzzz.co.uk/manchester-city/>
- Luxury: The Lowry Hotel <http://www.thelowryhotel.com/>
- Accessible: The Midland <http://www.qhotels.co.uk/hotels/the-midland-manchester.aspx>

Where to eat

- Budget: Tampopo <http://www.tampopo.co.uk>
- Moderate: The Mark Addy <http://markaddy.co.uk/>
- Luxury: Aumbry <http://www.aumbryrestaurant.co.uk/>
- Accessible: The Northern Quarter Restaurant and Bar <http://www.tnq.co.uk/>

Events

Try to coincide your trip to Manchester with one of these great events:

- Manchester Literature Festival <http://www.manchesterliteraturefestival.co.uk/>
- The Manchester Weekender <http://www.creativetourist.com/articles/festivals-and-events/manchester/the-manchester-weekender-2012/>
- Manchester Science Festival <http://www.manchestersciencefestival.com/>

Getting there and around

- Air: The nearest major airport is Manchester Airport <http://www.manchesterairport.co.uk>. Around-the-clock train services connect the airport to central Manchester Piccadilly station in 20 minutes. Buses and taxi are also available.
- Rail: Manchester Piccadilly station is just over two hours from London Euston Station.
- Road: Manchester is within easy reach of the M6 and M62.

Find more inspiration for your trip to England at www.visitengland.com