

48 hours in Manchester

Manchester offers a wealth of activities in a compact city centre. It's easy to see so much of Manchester simply by foot, but if you need a little help getting started, read on...

Friday

Afternoon

A short break needs the right accommodation and thankfully, there's a superb variety in Manchester. Jurys Inn or Premier Inn offer reliable quality at great value. If you're looking for something extra special, check out places like the Lowry Hotel or Stayingcool.com.

The Northern Quarter is a great place to start exploring and a treasure trove of independent galleries, boutiques, shops, restaurants and bars. It's the place for creative and artistic minds and unique places like Affleck's and Manchester Craft & Design Centre.

Night

Try modern British cuisine at the homely Market Restaurant while the Northern Quarter offers good food and drink with a bohemian feel in its many cafés and bars. It's also a hub for musicians and live music with venues like Night & Day and Roadhouse. For a more relaxed atmosphere, Matt & Phred's offers live jazz music until the early hours.

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Saturday

Morning

Jump on a Metrolink to The Quays, Manchester's unique waterfront destination. It's home to the most famous football stadium in the world, Old Trafford. Visit this holy ground of football and re-live Manchester United's triumphs at the museum and peep behind the scenes on the stadium tour. Manchester City also welcome visitors to their museum and spectacular City of Manchester Stadium tour on the other side of town.

Also part of The Quays and a short walk from Old Trafford, the fascinating Imperial War Museum North explores how lives are affected by conflict. Just over the footbridge, The Lowry brings together art, music and theatre with an extensive collection by renowned artist LS Lowry and an award-winning theatre and arts programme. Across the plaza, The Lowry Outlet Mall stocks designer outlet bargains from the likes of Marks & Spencer, Nike, Molton Brown and Karen Millen.

Back on the tram to the city centre, stop off at G-Mex for historic Castlefield. This is where MoSI (Museum of Science & Industry) tells Manchester's story from its Roman fort origins (literally across the road) to international pioneer as the world's first industrial city.

For lunch, why not try authentic Japanese food at Sapporo Teppanyaki or fish 'n' chips at The Fish Hut. Either way, it's hard to miss Manchester's most noticeable building, the tall, sleek and slender Beetham Tower.

Afternoon

A walk north along Deansgate brings you to the magnificent John Rylands Library. Rylands is one of Manchester's finest gothic buildings and now part of the new Spinningfields district. You're also just round the corner from King Street and some of Manchester's most exclusive shops. Vivienne Westwood, DKNY, Armani Collezioni/Emporio Armani and several other designer labels await.