

Manchester Central



Manchester Town Hall



Castlefield



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For high street brands like Marks & Spencer, Next, Topshop and H&M stroll over to Market Street and Manchester Arndale. Or try an alternative shopping experience and find fresh, local produce or continental deli treats at Manchester's many permanent and temporary speciality markets.

Manchester's compact city centre means it's easy to make the most of what's on offer. Old and new architecture sit side by side. For example, Manchester Cathedral is just around the corner from A-list celebrities Selfridges and Harvey Nichols. Iconic Urbis tells the story of modern urban life and sits next door to the former corn exchange, now the chic shopping centre, Triangle.

If you need some cinematic relaxation after all this retail therapy, Cornerhouse is the place for independent film and world cinema – it's also the perfect place to watch bustling Oxford Street go by. And just a few minutes away, Manchester Art Gallery boasts a world-class collection alongside prestigious international touring exhibitions.

Night

Eating out is a special occasion in itself and the food and drink scene in Manchester is constantly evolving. It has produced first-class dining experiences at places like Little Yang Sing, Panacea and the Northern Quarter Restaurant. Alongside these popular restaurants, you can also get superb value for money at Manchester favourites like Chinatown and the Curry Mile in Rusholme.

Ballet, opera, drama, classical performances and musicals are all on offer throughout the city in some of Manchester's grandest buildings. To name just a few,

check what's on at the Royal Exchange, the Library Theatre, The Bridgewater Hall, the Palace Theatre and the Opera House.

Ready for Manchester's legendary nightlife? Bars, café bars, traditional pubs and unforgettable clubs – Manchester provides something for everyone. The Printworks is a 24-hour entertainment complex, Deansgate Locks offers some of Manchester's most stylish socialising and, gay or straight, Manchester's Gay Village is one of the best nights out in the UK. The unique atmosphere and friendly crowd make a party atmosphere every night of the week.

Sunday

Manchester's superb transport links make it perfect to explore the region. Liverpool, European Capital of Culture 2008, is less than an hour away with Albert Dock, Tate Liverpool and the unmissable Beatles Story. The walled Roman city of Chester draws visitors from around the world with its splendid Cathedral and trademark half-timbered black and white buildings. Manchester is also close to some of the UK's favourite stately homes and country parks – Chatsworth House, Tatton Hall and Lyme Park are all around an hour away.

Alternatively, the Lake District is famous for its stunning scenery and beautiful countryside – all of which provided inspiration for William Wordsworth and Beatrix Potter. Discover quaint villages, antique shops and tea rooms or maybe try some outdoor activities. This breathtaking national park is less than two hours from Manchester and is not to be missed.