

Metropolitan England



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MANCHESTER

Revitalised City With A Twist

Hailed as the world's first industrial city, Manchester has come a long way from its gritty 'Cottonopolis' roots, and is a revitalised city steeped in history but with a contemporary twist.

While the city's history is well documented—it's Manchester's recent redevelopment that has seen it become the UK's third most visited city by international travellers.

Today it's a cosmopolitan city offering something for all tastes, from sports fans and culture vultures to those seeking to sample Manchester's extensive nightlife (think theatre, orchestras, clubs and local live acts).

The city too has also undergone something of a culinary revolution—with options for every budget and palate, as well as boasting a plethora of shops ranging from high end to the eclectic boutiques of the Northern Quarter.



Manchester was the world's first modern city, home to the world's first railway station. It's where Kiwi Sir Ernest Rutherford split the atom and, of course, it's the location of the UK's most successful football team, Manchester United.

That's not to mention the wide range of museums such as the National Football Museum, Imperial War Museum North, The Tate Manchester, The Museum of Science and Industry (a must see for those really looking to understand Manchester's pivotal place in history).

Manchester is an ideal add-on as a part of a wider UK/Europe itinerary and there's so much to see and do in close proximity for those looking to explore the city.

MAN For Free

Entrance to the majority of Manchester's many museums is free, and coupled with three free Metro-Shuttle bus routes around the central city, it's a great value for money destination for clients.

In addition, visitors to the city can access 30 free minutes of Wi-Fi daily via the council-sponsored _Free-BeeMcr network and unlimited access to public sector websites (including Visit Manchester). For details [CLICK HERE](#)

Industrial Insight

The Museum of Science and Industry offers an insight into Manchester's role at the world's first industrial city. It's the largest museum in the city and visitors can see what it was like in a cotton mill, stand on the platform of the world's oldest railway station—and the brave can even recreate life in a Victorian sewer—as well as much, much more. Entry is free and the museum is open daily 1000-1700. See mosi.org.uk

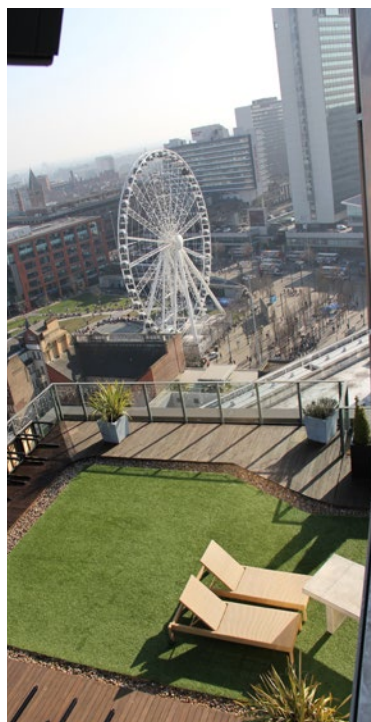
Retail Therapy

Manchester has earned the moniker of the shopping capital of the north. There's a store to suit all tastes in the compact city, and visitors can easily explore the city's key shopping precincts on foot (or on the free metro shuttle buses). Look out for footballers WAGS and take in the designer stores along Spinningfields' King St in the city centre. Exchange Square and New Cathedral St are home to Selfridges and Harvey Nicols; and Market St, from Piccadilly Gardens to St Ann Square, is a popular pedestrian shopping boulevard filled with high street brands. Nearby, Manchester Arndale mall features 240 stores for serious shoppers.



Alice High Tea

For a different insight into the local culture the Richmond Tearooms offers a delightful escape in to an over the top world of fantasy and fine tea. Patrons step right into a Victorian Alice in Wonderland-style setting and there's a delectable array of tea and cakes, afternoon tea and a full brunch and all day menu. The back room is charming but urge clients to wait to be seated in the front Alice themed parlour. The tea rooms are located in the city's Gay Village. See richmondtearooms.com



Prime Location, Great Views

The Light ApartHotel offers 63 apartments located on the edge of Manchester's hip Northern Quarter. The apartments feature fully-equipped kitchens and views over the city and are said to be a popular choice with celebrities and visitors alike. Options range from studios to eight penthouses, two of which include private roof terraces and hot tubs. As well as 24-hour reception, free on-site gym and Wi-Fi The Light offers free morning coffee and croissants Mon-Fri in the hotel's swanky reception. There's an on-site French restaurant (hotel guests get a 10% discount) and a supermarket next door.

The hotel makes an effort to ensure its rooms are available to international guests arriving earlier than the standard check-in time, subject to availability. See thelight.co.uk

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Coronation Street: The Set Tour



Fans of the long-running television show *Coronation Street* have a chance to visit the hallowed cobbles of the set in a new tour of the show's former Manchester studios—but bookings are filling fast. The tours are running for six months from 05 Apr and the famed

street itself will be the highlight for fans of the show who will be able to explore the set and get their photo taken outside the Rovers Return, Roy's Rolls or the Kabin.

Show enthusiasts will be able to visit indoor sets as part of the behind the scenes tour, and get insights into the series' production and secrets as well as a peak into one of the dressing rooms.

Filming took place on the central Manchester set for 53 years until production moved out to a new facility at Salford Quays.

The original site is to be redeveloped into a retail area—but there are rumours tours may open at the new studios in the future.

Tickets went on sale last week and some dates have already sold out, so book interested clients ASAP. See ticketmaster.co.uk/coronationstreet



Colourful Canal St

Canal Street is home to Manchester's renown Gay Village. Located along the Rochdale Canal, the area is a popular place on a sunny day and it's a whole different experience by night, loaded with bars, restaurants and pubs. The annual Manchester Pride event (which this year celebrates its 25th anniversary) is staged in the area, along with a host of events. See canal-st.co.uk

Getting There

Emirates operates daily flights into Manchester which connect in Dubai with the carrier's AKL services. For clients flying into London, Manchester is a two-hour train ride from Euston Station with regular departures throughout the day. Alternatively it's around a three-hour drive from London.

Sky High Views

Cloud 23 located on the 23rd floor of the contemporary Beetham Tower offers panoramic views over the city—and it's also said to be the best place to get a sneak peek into the former *Coronation Street* set, cobbles and all.

The sky high bar is known for its extensive cocktail menu themed around Manchester's roots, from the industrial revolution and Corrie to a bittersweet symphony (*The Verve*). Bookings recommended. See cloud23bar.com

Walking Tours

Manchester is a flat, compact city, making it easy to walk around the city's highlights. But for those looking to scratch the surface of the city's gritty past, suggest a walking tour.

Enthusiastic guides bring the history to life, adding another dimension to the museums and local landmarks. Introductory Discover Manchester tours operate Sat and Sun at 1300 (GBP7pp) and there's also a timetable of themed walks.

Private tours are available and worth the cost for those short on time but looking for a real insight to the city. See manchesterguidedtours.com



Local Cuisine

Mr Thomas' Chop House (pictured) is hailed as 'pure Manc' fare for those looking to dine like a local. The narrow Victorian pub is an experience in itself, with tiled walls and local craft beers.

The homemade corned beef hash is a Mancurian speciality, and its Sun night roasts are popular.

For another slice of traditional cuisine, head to the red pleather booths of Koffeepot, a traditional greasy spoon with a twist (said to be a favourite of local musician Guy Garvey from Elbow).



Literary Cathedral

Said to be among the world's best, the John Rylands Library is a spectacular memorial to an industrial revolution magnate.

It's a must-see for those with even just a passing literary interest, with huge vaulted ceilings and church-like stained glass windows.

Stand in the reading room and be awed by the ambience of this Gothic cathedral of books. Entry is free, tours are available and there's an on-site café.

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Manchester Theatre Of Dreams

One of Manchester's top attractions is a tour to the hallowed turf of Manchester United's home ground Old Trafford—and the club is anticipating a spike in Kiwi bookings around next year's RWC 2015 games in the city.

The so-called Theatre of Dreams is a mecca for sports fans, with an increasing number of visitors making their pilgrimage annually.

There is a museum, ideal for hardcore supporters, but the Stadium Tour (GBP12 with tours departing every 30 mins) adds another dimension for even just the mildly curious.

The behind-the-scenes tours are around two hours and include anecdotes, and insights into England's most successful football club. There's even a chance to run down the players' tunnel (complete with cheering and a commentary) plus a visit to the pitch and home dressing room. There are photo stops along the way and enthusiastic guides share their anecdotes about the players and the fans. Pre-booking is recommend-



ed, and for trade bookings e-mail toursenquiry@manutd.co.uk

... Man City

There are, of course, two Manchester football teams—and rival club Manchester City also operates its own stadium and club tours. The 90-min. Etihad Stadium tours operate regularly and include visits to the press room, changing rooms, dug out and players' tunnel. The cost is GBP14, and legends tours (with

a former City player and lunch) are from GBP200. For details see mccf.co.uk/tours

What's On

Manchester's expanding events calendar offers new reasons for Kiwis to visit. Later this year the city's annual gay pride festival celebrates its 25th anniversary, and in Jun the popular two-day Parklife music fest is back. For a list of upcoming events see visitmanchester.com

Hotel Football

To complete the experience Manchester's first football hotel is scheduled to open in Oct, featuring its own five-a-side rooftop football pitch, and located on Old Trafford's doorstep. The 139-room hotel will also have the Café Football Manchester on site. See hotelfootball.com

Rice And Three

The Curry Mile in Rusholme is a 10-min bus ride or five-min taxi ride from the city centre. The area is said to have the UK's biggest concentration of 'Asian restaurants' (Indian, Pakistani etc) —with over 70 to choose from. In addition, numerous restaurants around the city offer rice and a selection of three curries for around GBP5—locals say the best spot is 'This & That'.

Something Arty

Corner House, an art-house cinema, cafe, art gallery and bar in one, is popular with arty types. The galleries are open until 2000, and it's also a popular place for Sun brunch, ask for a window seat. See cornerhouse.org

National Museum

The National Football Museum is also located in Manchester. Spread over four floors there's a collection of FIFA memorabilia, interactive exhibits and more. See nationalfootballmuseum.com



Hipster Haven

The Northern Quarter precinct is a maze of laneways and independent stores. Rich in character the edgy urban area is lined with street art and local colour. Must-sees for visitors to the area are the alternative multi-level Afflecks Palace and the Manchester Craft & Design, see craftanddesign.com Peppared with independent shops, restaurants and bars, the Bohemian area comes alive at night via a host of live music venues. For real ale, which comes with the option of artisan cheeses, try the Marble Brewery on Thomas St; Port House beer house is the pub of the year; or for a quiet tippie Bakerie is a wine bar which bakes its own bread.

The precinct boasts an array of influential music venues and every night of the week there is something unique to discover, urge clients to head out and explore.

Exploring History And Arts At Salford Quays

A new precinct gaining popularity is Salford Quays. Easily accessible by tram from the central city, the quayside is located in the former industrial docks area. Visitors can take in the Imperial War Museum North (free entry, open daily 1000-1700 showcasing how war and conflict have shaped people's lives from 1900 to now); The Lowry (a theatre and concert venue as well as an art gallery) and BBC North has also moved into the area (tours five days a week for those aged nine and up). The area's also within walking distance of the Manchester United ground, Old Trafford.



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LIVERPOOL

Liverpool's Cultural Renaissance



Known globally as the home of The Beatles, the Merseyside city of Liverpool in England's north offers an eclectic collection of history, culture, sport—and of course music. The city was revitalised after being named Europe's Capital of Culture in 2008 and hasn't looked back, with over

GBP5 billion of investment in the city ensuring the momentum continues for visitors and the locals alike. Repeatedly voted the UK's friendliest destination by travel bible Conde Nast travellers, the amiable scousers (as the locals are known) are only too happy to help and are now incredibly proud of their city (like the taxi driver who turned off the meter to take me on a free city highlights tour). The Beatles play a big role in the city's tourism offering, and there's a host of tours and experiences on offer—but it's not just about the Fab Four.

Liverpool has more galleries and museums than any other UK city region outside of London—including the Museum of Liverpool, said to be the world's first national museum devoted to the history of a regional city. The dockside city was awarded UNESCO Heritage Status in 2004, in acknowledgement of the city's heritage and cultural relevance—and recommend spending an hour or even a day exploring the revitalised Albert Dock area which is steeped in maritime history. Sport too has played an important part in the city. Liverpool is home to two well-known football teams (Liverpool and Everton), St Helens Rugby Club (said to be the world's oldest), and its Aintree racecourse is where the annual Grand National is held.



Liverpool Like A Local

Legendary Liverpool footballer John Aldridge shared some of his top tips for Kiwis visiting the city. Top of the list (of course) is to take in a local football game or stadium tour, 'even Everton if they have to' he quips. Alternatively Aldridge suggests visitors head to the First National pub to take in a match. "It's big, there's a huge screen and a great atmosphere to watch a game," he adds. A trip to the revitalised Albert Dock (museums, the Mersey and maritime history) is also on Aldridge's must to do. The footballer recommends the San Carlo restaurant or the Restaurant Bar & Grill (located in a Victorian Bank building) for dinner.

LiverpoolONE

Shopping is a popular pastime in the city, with many people heading to the waterfront LiverpoolONE area, which features 160 shops, restaurants and bars, as well as a movie theatre and an indoor golf park. It's essentially an outdoor mall with all the main high street brands and leads on to other central shopping points. A number of events feature at the complex and at its shops, see liverpool-one.co.uk

... Apartments

For those looking to stay close to the shopping and dining action, the Bridge Street Apartments are ideally located in the heart of the development, which is also next to the waterfront. See bridgestreetliverpoolone.com

Canal Experience

It is actually possible to travel from Manchester to Liverpool along the Manchester Ship Canal for those looking for a unique way to get between the cities. It's a six-hour scenic journey one-way. See merseyferries.co.uk

Ferry 'Cross The Mersey

Pier Head on the waterfront adjacent to Albert Docks lets visitors recreate that well-known song 'Ferry 'Cross the Mersey'. There's 50 scenic cruises which operate through the day. For details see merseyferries.co.uk

Local Story

Along the waterfront near the Albert Docks area is the recently-opened Museum of Liverpool, offering an insight into the city's milestones, from historical roots to contemporary culture. Entry is free. See liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

Cultural Quarter

Heart of Liverpool Tours offers GBP7.50 walking tours of the city's sights and heritage every Sat at 1030 including an end of tour drink. See visitliverpool.com

Summer Arts Fest

This year the city is staging the Liverpool Biennial, a 10-week contemporary arts festival 05 Jul-26 Oct. There will be art installations in galleries and public spaces across the city. For details, see biennial.com



Step In To Maritime History

With a past forged largely around its port, and trading (both slave and textiles) as well as the departure point for those bound for 'the new world' Liverpool's Albert Docks area is now a riverside cultural hub. Museums such as the Tate Liverpool, the Maritime Museum (learn about the city's links to the Titanic), and the sobering International Slavery Museum are all located in the precinct along with bars, restaurants and the ubiquitous souvenir shops. The Beatles Story is also located there (see tomorrow's issue for more Beatles details).

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LIVERPOOL

On The Trail Of The Fab Four In Liverpool



Taking in some aspect of Beatles history is a must-see for visitors to the city—and there's everything from themed hotels and bus tours to the official Beatles Story museum and tribute bands at the renowned Cavern Club on offer.

While the city is so much more than the Beatles, the story of the Fab Four is key to the city's past—and future. The best place to start is at the Beatles Story museum, located in the Albert Dock area. The attraction takes visitors on a unique tour through the band's meteoric rise and includes memorabilia, recreations of the Casbah, Cavern Club and Abbey Road Studios and an audio tour provides anecdotes from those close to the Beatles. There's also a white room dedicated to John Lennon and

an interactive family area. For avid fans there's also a new photo area where visitors can dress up in iconic Beatles costumes with famous backdrops for the ultimate souvenir. The on-site Starbucks offers free Wi-Fi, and urge clients to visit early to avoid the queues. Entry is GBP15.95 and includes a 4D Beatles experience at Pier Head. See beatlesstory.com



Football: England's 'Other Religion'

Football is all but a religion in England—and even if clients aren't into the game itself, the stories behind it offer an insight into popular culture. Liverpool Football Club runs regular stadium tours and on selected dates there's a chance to join the club's former footballers on 'legends' tours, which are popular with locals and personalise the experience for visitors.

All options include the stadium's legendary Kop end, press room, dressing room and players tunnel. See liverpoolfc.com/tours

Late last year a museum also opened at Anfield stadium, with an audio tour (included in the GBP8.50 entry) and interactive exhibits telling the story of the team and historical footage.

Liverpool Cathedrals

There's two cathedrals in Liverpool, the contemporary looking Catholic Church and the majestic Anglican cathedral.

With huge gothic arches reaching toward the heavens, clients can even take two lifts and climb 108 stairs to the roof of the cathedral for amazing views over the city and across the Mersey.

Last entry for the tower tour is 1730. Thu evening twilight tower tours are also available over the summer months. For details see liverpoolcathedral.org.uk

Beatles Week

The annual International Beatles Week (yes there is such a thing) is 20-26 Aug this year.

The Liverpool event, a must for Beatles fans, attracts bands from across the world and includes a convention, memorabilia sales and much more. Packages are available. For details see cavernclub.org



The Cavern Club

No trip to Liverpool would be complete without a drink at the legendary Cavern Club. Hidden off the road not far from the central LiverpoolOne precinct, the underground club is hugely popular with tourists making their own Beatles pilgrimage. A recreation of the stage that the Beatles made famous is in the front part of the club, which is open from 1000 daily. There's also live music from mid-afternoon through to the evening daily.

... Singalong

For those there on a Sat, a Beatles tribute band plays a theatre-style show in the Cavern Live Lounge at the back of the club. The Cavern Club Beatles show (highly recommended) starts at 2030 but seating is limited so urge clients to be there when the doors open at 2000. Beatles fans young and old add to the ambience of the show which is essentially a lively and entertaining sing along.

Hard Day's Night Hotel

Real Beatles fans can stay in a Beatles-themed property, the Hard Day's Night Hotel. Located around the corner from the Cavern Club, the hotel features rooms with Beatles-inspired artwork, and themed suites including the McCartney and Lennon suites. Creative Holidays has packages staying at the themed hotel from \$379pp, including three nights in a luxury room, full breakfast daily and Wi-Fi connectivity, for sales to 31 May and travel to 30 Nov.

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