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YOUR GUIDE TO

Birmingham



NIA Birmingham

22nd & 23rd Sep 07

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INTRODUCTION TO THE CITY AND REGION

Birmingham is the regional capital of the West Midlands with a population of nearly 1 million people. From its origins as a medieval market town, it became known in the nineteenth century as the city of a thousand and one trades and was the meeting place of the Lunar Society, whose leading members, James Watt and Matthew Boulton, perfected the steam engine and pioneered the Industrial Revolution throughout Europe.

Birmingham is now a thriving international centre for business and leisure tourism, professional and financial services with a world class cultural scene, superb shopping, top attractions, fantastic nightlife and easy access to some of England's most beautiful countryside.

You will find stunning civic squares, fountains and pedestrian areas, with tranquil walks along the award-winning canalside development and all within easy walking distance of the National Indoor Arena.



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SELFRIDGES AT THE BULLRING

SHOPPING

Recent surveys have placed the city second only to London's West End when it comes to shopping and this is thanks in part to three years of major investment in the city's shops and department stores. This includes the opening of the £500 million Bullring which has over 160 of the most imaginative and desirable shops to explore and more than 25 restaurants to relax in.

Bullring also incorporates the iconic Selfridges building with its metallic honeycomb exterior – an architectural recreation of Paco Rabanne's iconic 1966 chain-mail dress.

The city's major investment in retail has also included a top to toe £30 million refurbishment to House of Fraser and the creation of this store's mouth-watering World of Food emporium.

Add to this the fabulous Harvey Nichols store in the Mailbox and new brands that have chosen to make the city their home, including luxury label Louis Vuitton and trendy department store Urban Outfitters, then it is easy to see why dedicated followers of fashion have been flocking to Birmingham in their millions.

CULTURAL SCENE

Birmingham has one of the most dynamic and wide-ranging cultural scenes in the country. Listen to jazz by the canals, rock and pop in the parks, or classical music in one of the world's finest concert halls. Visit Birmingham's art galleries and museums, see a movie on one of more than 60 screens or enjoy the dance, musical and plays, all on offer in Birmingham's diverse theatres and venues.



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Reflection of the ferris wheel at Birmingham Symphony Hall

SOME HIGHLIGHTS

It is 120 years since Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery first opened its doors. You will find everything from Renaissance masterpieces to 9,000-year-old Middle-Eastern treasures. The museum also boasts the largest collection of Pre-Raphaelite paintings and drawings in the world.

Symphony Hall opened in 1991, instantly acknowledged both as the UK's finest concert hall and one of the best in the world. Its 2262-seat auditorium is a model of modern concert hall design with a moveable canopy that can be raised or lowered to achieve the optimum sound, a 6000-pipe Symphony Organ as well as being home to the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

The Ikon Gallery features temporary exhibitions over two floors with a variety of sound, film, mixed media, photography, painting, sculpture and installation.

Birmingham has been described as the 'dance capital of Britain' largely thanks to the Birmingham Royal Ballet, with a mixture of favourite classics and ground-breaking new pieces which entertain, stimulate and challenge audiences old and new. It leads the world in the creation of new and innovative popular ballets, choreographed by a host of international choreographers and by David Bintley, the house director.

People enjoy some of the finest productions in the world at the Birmingham Hippodrome, which lays claim to the highest regular annual attendance of any single theatre in the country. This year, shows such as High Society, Simply Ballroom, Madam Butterfly and Swan Lake on Ice welcome the crowds.

The Custard Factory, originally built to produce custard for Sir Alfred Bird, is Birmingham's revolutionary new arts and media quarter. Home to the dynamic creative community of 500 artists and small creative enterprises with a theatre café, antique shops, dance studios, holistic therapy rooms, art galleries, the stylish Medicine Bar and the electrifying Code nightclub.

Thinktank, Birmingham's science museum, the Planetarium and the IMAX Cinema are housed at Millennium Point, Curzon Street, open seven days a week, the city's activity hotspot for children and adults alike.

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TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION

Arrival by Air

Delegations that choose to arrive at Birmingham International Airport must visit the Great Britain Judo World Cup 2007 Welcome Desk and Information Point which is located on the Ground Floor next to the Airport Information Desk between Terminal 1 and 2. This desk will be in operation on selected days leading up to and during the event and further information including operating times will be released shortly. If you arrive on the Friday or Saturday and provide us with your flight details, you will be met by a driver who will take you to the Crowne Plaza Hotel, the official tournament Hotel.

Arrival by Train

If you choose to arrive by train and provide information on your arrival time, you will be met by a driver adjacent to the First Class lounge after the ticket barriers.

Departure and Checking out procedure

Upon departure please remember to settle any extras at the hotel front desk before leaving.

Delegations will be collected from the Crowne Plaza Hotel and will be transported to the departure location by car. Information regarding transportation to the Birmingham International Airport will be provided for each delegation prior to their departure.

HOTEL INFORMATION

Crowne Plaza

Holliday Street, Birmingham, B1 1HH

Tel: + 44 (0) 870 400 9150

www.cpbhamcity.com

The Crowne Plaza Birmingham City is a 4 star deluxe property, conveniently located in the heart of Birmingham City Centre. Birmingham New Street Station, The ICC, NIA and new shopping developments are just a short walk away. The hotel has 284 spacious bedrooms with a variety of amenities including en suite facilities, air conditioning, in room dining, satellite TV and refreshment making facilities as standard. Guests can relax and enjoy the fitness facilities.

A full English/Continental breakfast buffet is included in the accommodation and served in the hotel restaurant daily between 7:00am and 10:00am. Dinner is served between 7:00pm and 10:00pm.



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TASTE THE WORLD IN ONE CITY

Whether you have a taste for the Orient, a passion for the Italian life, or looking to spice things up in the Balti Triangle, lovers of international cuisine can taste the whole world in Birmingham with a diverse range of award winning restaurants, markets, foodhalls and cookery courses.

Here is just a selection:

Peppers, Birmingham's first pan-Asian restaurant and Bollywood Champagne bar, is the first of its kind outside London. Peppers combines cuisine served in a non-smoking art gallery-themed restaurant upstairs with the vibrancy of Bollywood in the downstairs bar.

Leading fine-dining Indian restaurant Itihaas scooped two prestigious awards at this year's 2007 Cobra Good Curry Awards for Best UK Indian Restaurant and Best in Midlands.

The Radisson SAS Birmingham is home to the Filini Restaurant which blends traditional Sardinian-inspired Italian cuisine, with a contemporary approach to cooking and presentation.

The Mailbox is home to some of the city's leading venues for eating out including Malmaison's Brasserie, The Oriental serving Malaysian, Thai and Chinese cuisine, Strada, Lazeez Signature and Kinnaree Thai Restaurant serving authentic Thai cuisine alongside a striking 12 foot golden dragonboat.

Birmingham is home to two Michelin star restaurants, Simpsons Restaurant with Rooms and Jessica's Restaurant.

Opus restaurant, which scooped 'Best Newcomer' at the Taste of Birmingham event last year has just launched its new take home patisserie range with Belgian chocolate tarts and spiced carrot cake.

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NIGHTLIFE – OUT ON THE TOWN

Birmingham is Europe's youngest city and with more students than any other UK city outside London, it's not surprising that Birmingham's club scene is one of the liveliest in the country. Whether you are after the bustle of the bars and clubs on Broad Street, some of the city's hippest nightspots in The Mailbox or the newest restaurants in Brindleyplace – all are within easy reach of the city centre.

You'll be spoilt for choice when it comes to nightlife in Birmingham. Rub shoulders with the rich and famous at Apres and Mechu on Summerrow. These cool bars and restaurants are a regular haunt of celebrities including the city's Premier League footballers and the England cricket team when they are in town. It also plays host to the stars who perform at the NEC with recent diners including the Little Britain boys, Take That, Jamie Cullum and Birmingham's own Ocean Colour Scene.

CITY AND COUNTRY FACTS AND FIGURES

Birmingham Fact Sheet

Location	Birmingham United Kingdom
Date	22 – 23 September 2007
Stadium	NIA (National Indoor Arena)
Population	Approx. 1 million people
Local Time	Greenwich Mean Time – (GMT)
Language	English
Currency	Pounds Sterling
Electricity	230v (3amp fuse)
Telecommunications	British Telecommunications (BT)
Country Code	+44
Birmingham Area Code	0121
Water Quality	Tap water safe to drink
Weather in September	Generally fair and dry
Mobile Phone Networks	Vodafone, Orange, Virgin, O2 and 3
Driving	Left hand side
Health	Vaccinations are not necessary

Further Information:

Local travel and weather visit: www.bbc.co.uk/Birmingham

World Cup website:

The official website for the GB World Cup 2007 is
www.britishjudo.org.uk/WorldCup

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