

Arts & culture

World-class museums and a rich artistic heritage make England an enthralling destination for culture enthusiasts. Find superb contemporary galleries across the country, breathtaking sculptures scattered across Yorkshire parkland and join flamboyant Caribbean celebrations at West London's vast street party.



> Cambridge © VisitBritain



> Imperial War Museum North, Manchester © VisitBritain



> Willy Lott's Cottage, Suffolk © VisitBritain

1 Constable Country, Essex/Suffolk

The stretch of rolling countryside straddling the Essex-Suffolk border in the east of England so captivated the English artist John Constable that he honoured its soft rural scenes in his acclaimed landscape paintings. Explore this peaceful lowland scenery and visit Constable's favourite spots across Dedham Vale and the Stour Valley, such as Flatford Mill and Willy Lott's Cottage.

www.constablecountry.co.uk

2 Tate St Ives, Cornwall

The curving white walls of the Tate St Ives present an exemplary collection of contemporary art. Sat beside the sand and surfers of lively Porthmeor Beach, the gallery is a celebration of the rich pool of talent to come from the area. Refuel on the roof terrace with Cornish produce and enjoy spectacular views over the beach and St Ives.

www.tate.org.uk



> Tate St Ives © VisitBritain

3 The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Paintings, pottery, manuscripts, sculpture and more fill this comprehensive museum in central Cambridge. The Fitzwilliam Museum's displays of art and artefacts span centuries. Browse Egyptian sarcophagi and medieval coins, admire French impressionism and marvel at Italian masters – all for free. The museum also holds many musical events, and on the first Saturday of the month children can take part in fun activities.

www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk



> Yorkshire Sculpture Park © VisitBritain

4 Imperial War Museum North, Manchester

Reflect upon the devastating impact of war at the Imperial War Museum's waterside Manchester location. The three sections of this striking building, from architect Daniel Libeskind, represent fragments of a world destroyed by war; inside find wartime stories and objects, and hear the voices of those affected by conflict at the Big Picture Show film viewings. A viewing platform offers far-flung views of Manchester.

www.iwm.org.uk

5 Yorkshire Sculpture Park

Intriguing forms sit amid fresh Yorkshire air and garden greenery at this open-air sculpture gallery. The Yorkshire Sculpture Park in West Bretton shows pieces by home-grown and international talent, such as revered English sculptors Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore. The sculptures are set against the parkland of Bretton Hall, encompassing fields, hills, woodland, lakes and gardens.

www.yssp.co.uk

Arts & culture



> Notting Hill Carnival © VisitBritain



> Angel Of The North , NewcastleGateshead © VisitBritain



> Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool © VisitBritain



> Chinatown, London © VisitBritain

6 Turner Contemporary, Margate

Sit by the beach in the seaside resort Margate, this new gallery offers a changing stream of contemporary pieces. It takes its name from the beloved English painter JMW Turner who went to school in Margate and returned to it many times. Gaze out through one of the gallery's huge windows to the sea that inspired so much of his work.

www.turnercontemporary.org

7 Angel of the North, NewcastleGateshead

See English sculptor Anthony Gormley's mighty steel angel looking out from a hilltop in Gateshead. At 20 metres high and with a wing span of 54 metres, this towering piece of public art is a truly arresting sight. Visitors can walk up to the Angel for a close-up, or get a passing view when driving along the A1 into Tyneside.

www.newcastlegateshead.com

8 Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool

Meet great masters of yesterday and today at Liverpool's Walker Art Gallery. The gallery spans sculpture, decorative art and a wide selection of paintings – from Pre-Raphaelite classics to a bold acrylic by David Hockney – with some pieces dating back to the 13th century. Children's gallery Big Art for Little Artists caters for art fans aged eight and below.

www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

9 Notting Hill Carnival, London

For two days at the end of August, West London transforms into a vibrant party encompassing streets, parks and open spaces. Feast on spicy jerk chicken and fried plantain, sip rum punch and dance to a medley of calypso, samba and steel pan tunes. Take children on Sunday for the more relaxed Kid's Day, and see the main parade on Bank Holiday Monday.

www.visitlondon.com

10 Chinese New Year

Large parties commemorate Chinese New Year on the streets of several English cities. In London, bustling Chinatown fills with lavish decorations and colourful stalls, and Trafalgar Square and Leicester Square see large crowds enjoying festive dancing and vibrant costumes. Manchester puts on popular celebrations in its Chinatown and Albert Square, and Liverpool and Birmingham also get into the party spirit.

www.visitlondon.com

www.visitmanchester.com

www.visitliverpool.com

www.visitbirmingham.com

11 V&A, London

This stunning museum of art and design is a world leader. The Victoria and Albert Museum in the London borough of Kensington and Chelsea holds a vast collection that leaps across continents and harks back centuries. Prize items include the 16th-century High Renaissance Raphael Cartoons commissioned by Pope Leo X, exquisite emeralds Napoleon gave to his adopted daughter and a new photography gallery.

www.vam.ac.uk



> V&A Museum, London © VisitBritain

Arts & culture



> Morris dancers © VisitBritain



> Diwali © VisitBritain



> Crosby Beach © VisitBritain

12 Bradford Film Festival

A rich cinematic heritage saw Bradford become the world's very first UNESCO City of Film in 2009. Head to the Yorkshire city in the spring for its acclaimed International Film Festival: a film extravaganza applauding both new and familiar films from across the globe. The festival is hosted by the city's National Media Museum – an extensive cutting-edge museum exploring creative media.

www.nationalmediamuseum.org.uk



> Bradford © VisitBritain

Hidden Gems

13 Diwali Festival in Leicester

The Midlands city of Leicester is home to the biggest Diwali the Hindu festival of lights – celebrations – outside India. Thousands join the city's large Asian community and flock to the city's Golden Mile on Belgrave Road to see it illuminated with colourful lights. The large crowds are treated to music, dancing, singing, vibrant costumes, delicious dishes and a firework finale.

www.goleicestershire.com

14 The Potteries, Stoke-on-Trent

The World Capital of Ceramics certainly lives up to its accolades, with museums, factories and shops all dedicated to its famous porcelain. At the Wedgwood Visitor Centre try pottery and painting ceramics, browse the museum for exquisite ceramics and fine art and head off for a guided factory tour. The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery and the Gladstone Pottery Museum are also well worth a visit.

www.visitstoke.co.uk

www.wedgwoodvisitorcentre.com



> The Potteries, Stoke-on-Trent © VisitBritain

15 Crosby Beach, Southport

See the 100 cast-iron figures of Anthony Gormley's stunning coastal installation *Another Place* dotting the shoreline of Crosby Beach, north of Liverpool. These remarkable forms are all casts of Gormley's own body, and with each gazing out to sea from a different point on the sand, the display looks entirely different depending on the level of the tide.

www.visitsouthport.com

16 Morris dancing

Jingling bells, clacking sticks, waving handkerchiefs and painted faces characterise this ancient English folk dance that is still going strong in many pockets of the country. Precise styles vary from region to region, but the lively steps and jigs of Morris dancing are deeply rooted in the culture of many English villages, from Exmoor to the Cotswolds to the Yorkshire Dales.

www.themorrisring.org