

48 Hours in Birmingham

You may have your own plans or you may not. Either way, here's our must-do guide to the city. All you need is this piece of paper, the city centre map from your apartment and your walking shoes. And if you need to know more, just ask us on your way out or visit the Tourist Information Centre in the basement of the Rotunda (turn right outside the front door and down the steps, towards New Street Station).

Afternoon

You've checked in and hopefully enjoyed a nice cup of tea and a sit down. Or perhaps a large glass of something. Now a short walk from the Rotunda will take you to the [Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery](#). This magnificent building houses the [Staffordshire Hoard](#), one of the finest [Pre-Raphaelite collections](#) in the world and many other treasures. All that and admission is free. If you're more of a science buff, go to [Thinktank](#) at Millennium Point – a fantastic hub of over 200 hands-on science and discovery exhibits and attractions plus a planetarium and IMAX cinema.

Evening

Go for cocktails at [Bank](#) in Brindley Place (tel: 0121 633 4466) then have dinner at the [Vaults](#) on Newhall Hill (tel: 0121 212 9837) for something fun and funky or [Loves](#) on Canal Square (tel: 0121 454 5151). Both are independent restaurants, not part of a chain. If neither takes your fancy then give us a ring (we're not on commission!) or consult our restaurant section in your apartment guide.

Day 2

Morning

Head to Brindley Place and take a tour of the [Ikon Gallery](#) to see some modern artworks. It also has a [small cafe](#) if you get the munchies. You can dine in or out. Another alfresco eatery in the area is the canal-side [Handmade Burger Company](#) where you can watch the barges. Take a boat tour along the canals, you can hop on-board just outside the canal souvenir shop.

Afternoon

It's probably time for a shop. As you will have noticed, Birmingham is not short of a shop or two. Start at the [Bull Ring](#) as it is literally on your doorstep. Stop for a glass of champagne at Selfridges or a doughnut at the Krispy Kreme café at Selfridges to help you on your way. Next is the waterfront [Mailbox](#) for more high-end shopping. Do visit the free [BBC Public Space](#), where you can have a go at presenting a radio show or being a sports commentator. Visit www.bbc.co.uk/tours or call 0370 901 1227 to arrange a studio tour.

Evening

Ballet, cinema, pop, plays, concerts...the city pretty much has it all. Take in a film at Britain's oldest working cinema, [The Electric](#) with its new high definition screen - just around the corner from Rotunda (47-49 Station Street, B5 4DY)- - or book a show at one of Birmingham's many performing arts venues: the [NIA](#) (0121 780 4141), The [Hippodrome](#) (0870 730 1234), [The Rep](#) (0121 245 2000) or [Symphony Hall](#) (0121 200 2000).

Day 3

Take a tour of the National Trust [Back to Backs](#) - a restored 19th-century courtyard of last-surviving 'slum' houses, including a 1930s sweet shop. The story is told through people who lived there (0121 666 7671).

We'd recommend a visit to the [Jewellery Quarter](#) with its 200 independent outlets, cafes and bars. Open Tues- Sat 11.30-16.00 (0121 554 3598). If jewellery isn't for you then the rather quaint [Pen Museum](#) might be right up your street (0121 236 9834).

If you're staying longer

[Cadbury World](#) - a chocoholic's paradise and working factory. Enjoy a fascinating tour documenting the 185 year history of the world's largest confectionery company; you can even make an image of your face in chocolate! (0845 450 3599).

[Warwick Castle](#) is just half an hour away, as is Stratford which you can reach using the Shakespeare Express train (0871 265 2000). More at <http://www.shakespeare-country.co.uk>

For more ideas, visit the Tourist Information Centre next door to the Rotunda or see www.visitbirmingham.com