



Go the other way in the UK

## Brighton rocks

Brighton is a bohemian university city, on the Sussex coast, less than 50-minutes from Gatwick. Its Regency architecture, kitsch shops and tranquil green spaces have made it popular with the creative new media crowd, who commonly refer to it as Silicon Beach.

by Cindy-Lou Dale

**B**righton is also renowned as one of Europe's most gay-friendly cities and celebrates every August with the Gay Pride Festival that attracts thousands of participants; but it's the Rio-carnival-type parade, after party and funfair in Preston Park that attracts most of the spectators.

### MORE FESTIVITIES

Then, of course, there's the Brighton Festival—the largest multi-art form festival in the UK which includes organized processions such as the Children's Parade and outdoor spectacles often involving pyrotechnics and a great deal of theater, music, literature and visual arts in venues throughout the city.

The art community in Brighton is extensive and showcased once a year in some 200 artists' private homes in an open house event held during the Brighton Festival. Some of the artists' home studios—a row of Victorian fishermen's workshops converted into small gallery spaces—are directly on the beach, between Brighton Pier and West Pier. This is the famous Brighton Artists' Quarter and one of the UK's premier nightlife hotspots.

### BEYOND THE BROCHURE

Other than the usual tourist brochure list of places to see—like the Hindu-Gothic style Royal Pavilion, the funfair and arcade halls of the Brighton Pier, the world's oldest operating electric train at the Volk's Electric Railway, or the blue lights of The Grand Hotel—go in search of Brighton's creative edge. This edge is to be found in The Brighton Lanes which are crammed with wondrous unconventional shops, funky cafes and jazz musicians. Here narrow alleyways merge the extraordinary with the avant-garde; antiques with contemporary design and bespoke boutiques. It's a great place for both the battle-worn shopper and sedate traveler to savor a coffee and soak up the city's

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history—all to the background sounds of live jazz being busked somewhere.

### BRIGHTON'S CAFÉ CULTURE

The café culture in Brighton is big. From the intricate warren of passageways in The Lanes to the relaxed open-air beachfront wi-fi cafes, it's all about unwinding in a hip cosmopolitan city.

You could indulge in a traditional cream tea at the Royal Pavilion Café, or visit the tea room all of Brighton flocks to—the MetroDeco ([www.metro-deco.com](http://www.metro-deco.com)), a lavish 1930s Parisian tea salon dressed in art deco furniture and crystal chandeliers. Afternoon tea indulgences and three-tier cake stands, overflowing with sinful treats, are on every table, as are pots of bespoke floral teas. Downstairs is a luxurious seating area and art deco showroom, and where they do doggy tea parties!

### STAY THE NIGHT

With 8-million tourists visiting Brighton each year, there are understandably a great many hotels and B&B's to choose from. With chintz slowly giving way to contemporary, finding the right one could be a hit and miss affair.

The elegant Hotel Una ([www.hotel-una.co.uk](http://www.hotel-una.co.uk)), a boutique hotel on Regency Square within view of West Pier, is one of the more stylish hotels Brighton has to offer. It has a champagne cocktail lounge, bespoke interiors and attention to the tiniest detail in each of its 20 individually designed en suite rooms.

Brighton is a melting pot of nostalgia and invention, a diverse city with a cool, vibrant culture plus loads of seaside tradition; it's a definite weekend getaway.

### Must see Brighton attractions

- **British Airways i360:** The country's newest attraction glides visitors 162 meters high for breathtaking 360-degree views across Brighton and Hove. The i360 was officially named the "Most Slender Tower" by Guinness World Records in January 2016.
- **The Royal Pavilion:** The Prince Regent's original pleasure palace; it doesn't get much more bonkers than this. The Pavilion is one of the most dazzling and exotic buildings in the British Isles.
- **Brighton Pier:** A stunning example of a Victorian pleasure pier which depicts traditional seaside fun at its very best. Fish and chips, candy floss, rides for thrill seekers and the infamous stripy deckchairs!
- **West Pier:** Once a thriving center of seaside entertainment, all that is left of the West Pier is its architectural remains. Still a fabulous sight, it's arguably the most photographed building in Brighton and Hove. The area is also now home to the independent traders and artists in the West Pier Arches.
- **Brighton Beach:** Named one of the Top 10 "cities with brilliant beaches" by Lonely Planet, it's famous for its pebbles and attracts people to its shores all year round.
- **The Lanes and North Laine:** From the lifestyle and jewelry shops of The Lanes to the retro chic of North Laine, shopping in Brighton really is an experience. You'll find everything from homeware and jewelry to vintage clothes and vegetarian shoes.

The English know about leisure and Brighton is just the spot.



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