



VisitBritain

PRESS INFORMATION

Destination Themes for 2017

UK City of Culture 2017: Hull, Yorkshire

Hull's first official UK City of Culture 2017 programme announcement will be made in September 2016 at the city's premier annual cultural event, Freedom Festival (www.freedomfestival.co.uk). Until then, here's a taster of what to expect for this year of cultural festivities, including the **Turner Prize**, one of the biggest events in British art, which will be hosted Hull's Ferens Art Gallery.

Organizers have separated the year into four different "Seasons", each with its own theme:

- **Made in Hull** (January – March): opening season, celebrating everything made in Hull, from theatre, music and poetry to wind turbines and caravans.
- **Roots and Routes** (April – June): exploring Hull's connections and its place in the networked, globalised and digital world while also showcasing the city's heritage.
- **Freedom** (July – September): celebrating the role Hull played in the emancipation movement and as a place of freedom, creative risk takers, rule breakers and pioneers.
- **Tell The World** (October – December): a celebratory round up of the year.

The city has also announced plans for the creation of a £36 million music and events centre, plus a major development of a **riverside berth and cruise terminal** at the Port of Hull to welcome cruise ship visitors.

Scotland's Year of History, Heritage & Archaeology

Following on from the successful Year of Architecture, Innovation and Design in 2016, the Year of Food and Drink in 2015 and the Year of Homecoming in 2014, 2017 will celebrate Scotland's Year of History, Heritage & Archaeology. It will be a chance to showcase its rich history, heritage and archaeology, ranging from the remains of its earliest settlements going back thousands of years, through to the turbulent times of the Middle Ages and on to the Scottish Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution.

Where to go: Visit **Glasgow** for its eclectic mix of architectural styles, including the art nouveau buildings by celebrated designer and architect **Charles Rennie Mackintosh** and industrial heritage showcasing the city's shipping industry. Head to the region of **Ayrshire and Arran** with its ancient stone circles and stunning castles. Find beautiful **Royal Deeside**, a favourite holiday spot for the Royal Family since the Victorian era, in Aberdeenshire, where you can visit **Scotland's Castle Trail**, which includes Balmoral. Discover the history of the much-loved Scottish single malt whiskies on the **Speyside Malt Whisky Trail**. Explore the capital Edinburgh and find history on every corner, in the **UNESCO World Heritage Sites of its Old and New Towns**. Head to the centre of Scotland to the ancient **Kingdom of Fife** to the home of golf, **St Andrews**, and its famous Old Course, before travelling to **Falkland Palace**, one of the homes of Mary, Queen of Scots.



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Wales' Year of Legends

To inspire visitors to the destination, following the success of its 2016 Year of Adventure, Wales is looking to run a Year of Legends in 2017, to be followed by Year of the Sea in 2018. The Year of Legends proposes to explore more of Wales' distinctive history, culture, heritage and mythology. In addition, one of the most prestigious tournaments in the world and one of the most prestigious club competitions in European football, the **UEFA Champions League Final**, will be played in Wales' capital **Cardiff** in 2017 – a fantastic opportunity to showcase Wales to the world and watch the emergence of new footballing legends.

Film-inspired holidays

Step into these films with a visit to the **British landscapes** they were filmed in! Due for release in 2017, ***Knights of the Roundtable: King Arthur*** is an upcoming epic adventure film retelling the story of the famous legend. Directed by Guy Ritchie, the cast includes Charlie Hunnam, Astrid Bergès-Frisbey and Jude Law. British locations used in the film include **Snowdonia** in north Wales, the **Scottish Highlands** and the **Isle of Skye**, plus **Windsor Great Park** and the **Forest of Dean** on the border of England and Wales. Meanwhile, Disney production ***Beauty and the Beast*** is an adaptation of the classic fairy tale about a monstrous prince and a young woman who fall in love. The cast includes Emma Watson, Ewan McGregor and Ian McKellen and was filmed on location in **London** and **Surrey** in south-east England. Finally, fans of ***Paddington The Movie*** will be delighted to hear a sequel is due out in 2017.

2017 Anniversaries

70th anniversary of Edinburgh Festivals

The year of 1947 marked the birth of one of the world's leading festival cities: Edinburgh. Led by the Edinburgh International Festival, the Edinburgh Festivals were born out of global conflict as a platform to **celebrate art and culture** and to bring nations together once again. For 69 years that inspiration has been sustained, making Edinburgh and its festivals an unparalleled destination for visitors, performers, artists and thinkers from all over the globe. In 2017, the **12 major festivals of Edinburgh** will mark this special 70th anniversary with a year of celebration. Scotland's historic capital will be transformed as never before by music, science, film, art, theatre, dance, literature and storytelling as its festivals continue to dream, reflect, invent and celebrate – while looking forward to another 70 years of world-leading culture, hospitality and festivity in Scotland's capital city.

25th anniversary of the Premier League

The world-famous Premier League turns 25 in 2017. The inaugural season kicked off on 15 August 1992 and has been drawing international interest ever since. Attending a match is high up on the must-do list of any visitor to Britain – you'll witness the players' skills, the fans' passion, the stadiums' electric atmosphere; altogether a truly unforgettable sports experience. As well as the opportunity to watch the crème de la crème of English and Welsh football (Scotland has its own league), attending a game is also the perfect



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chance to visit the clubs' destinations. Reaching from the far **north-east of England (Newcastle)** to the **south of Wales (Swansea)**, over to **London** and across to the hip cities of **north-west England (Manchester and Liverpool)**, following Premier League football also means discovering some of Britain's most exciting cities – and, of course, the opportunity to explore behind the scenes as many **stadiums run tours**.

125th anniversary of the first Sherlock Holmes publication

The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, by Scottish author and physician Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, was published in 1892. Now a popular TV series, London is almost a character in itself in the Sherlock stories and it's hard to imagine the detective living anywhere else. Explore the city as Sherlock did and visit some of his favourite haunts, including **221B Baker Street**. While it doesn't actually exist, the exterior of their flat as seen in the series is shot in this quieter west London road, 25 minutes' walk from Baker Street, at 187 North Gower Street. Other destinations include **The Sherlock Holmes Museum**, featuring a re-creation of his sitting room and a gift shop. **The Sherlock Homes Pub** in Westminster is stuffed with memorabilia, including Dr Watson's old service revolver and his favourite food, Cumberland sausages.

200th anniversary of the death of Jane Austen

One of the most widely read authors in English literature, Jane Austen died on 18 July 1817 in **Winchester**, south England. To mark the 200th anniversary of her death, Austen fans can visit **Jane Austen's house, Chawton**, near Alton in Hampshire, south England, around an hour by train from London. Everything will gear-up for the 2017 '**Jane Austen 200**' commemoration here, and in wider Hampshire. The charming house was where she spent the last eight years of her life and where she did the majority of her mature writing. It was here that she wrote *Emma*, as well as *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion*, in addition to revising *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility* and *Northanger Abbey*. Now called the **Jane Austen's House Museum**, it runs a programme of events throughout the year to keep even the most ardent of Austen aficionados happy.

20th anniversary of the Harry Potter book series

Since the release of J.K.Rowling's first novel *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* on 30 June 1997, the books have gained immense popularity, critical acclaim and commercial success worldwide, inspiring the popular film series. All eight movies were filmed in Britain, with locations spanning England, Scotland and Wales. While in London, Potter fans shouldn't miss a priceless photo opportunity at the enchanted **Platform 9 ¾ at King's Cross Station**. Would-be sorcerers can try their hand at pushing a trolley through the brick wall between platforms nine and ten, otherwise known as the portal to the wizarding world. And a must-visit for any discerning Harry Potter fan is the **Warner Bros. Studio Tour – The Making of Harry Potter**, a dream come true for anyone – young or old – who watched and loved the movies and the books.

To celebrate the anniversary, **The British Library** in London is launching a new exhibition about the magic of Harry Potter, set to open on 20 October 2017 and run until 28 February 2018. From medieval descriptions of dragons and griffins to the origins of the philosopher's stone, the exhibition will take readers



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on a journey to the heart of the Harry Potter stories. An extraordinary range of wizarding books, manuscripts and objects with original material from Bloomsbury's and J.K. Rowling's archives will be showcased, alongside centuries-old British Library treasures.

More information about the exhibition will be released early in 2017, and tickets will be on sale from spring 2017 at www.bl.uk. #HarryPotter20

Accommodation Trends for 2017

Iconic London buildings become amazing new hotels

Scotland Yard Hotel

The original Scotland Yard police station is set to become a new five-star luxury hotel, opening in early 2017 following a £50 million refurbishment to the historic building. Scotland Yard was made known to millions reading the novels of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and was the centre of the infamous Jack the Ripper investigation in 1888. The new hotel combines luxury bedrooms – costing up to £10,000 a night - with two bars, a library, and dining rooms.

London's West End gets its biggest budget hotel

Hotel operator Accor is set to open the new 583-room Ibis Styles Piccadilly Circus hotel in 2017 on the site of the huge Trocadero building between Shaftesbury Avenue and Coventry Street. It will be the West End's biggest budget hotel and around 80 per cent of its guests are expected to be tourists. The prime central location and proposed price per night (£100 to £150) will make Ibis Styles unique; most hotel openings in the heart of the West End in recent years have been luxury five star hotels. Over the centuries the site has served as a tennis court, circus, theatre, exhibition space and music hall, as well as a tearoom and restaurant until the mid-Sixties. In the Eighties it was turned into an indoor theme park with rides, cinemas and shops but closed in February this year.

Liverpool's First Five Star Hotel

Principal Hayley Group is converting the historic Grade II-listed Martins Bank building in Liverpool into a 227-room luxury hotel with a spa, bar and restaurant. Due to open in late 2017 or early 2018, the group is aiming to make it the city's first five star hotel. Designed by noted architect Herbert James Rowse and completed in 1932, the Martins Bank building is considered to be among the finest classical buildings built in England during the interwar period, and was used to hide Britain's gold during WW2. www.ph-hotels.co.uk

Eden Project Hotel, Cornwall

A £6million hotel is set to open at the Eden Project in Cornwall next year. The hotel will have 115 bedrooms and has been designed to 'blend into the countryside'. It will have access to the main Eden Project site, as well as being close to the perimeter of its outer estate. www.edenproject.com



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Learn to cook on your vacation at the Woolsington Hall Hotel & Spa, Newcastle

Woolsington Hall is undergoing a luxury renovation, transforming the historic building into a 34-bedroom, five-star hotel and leisure complex - the first of its kind in Newcastle. Due to open by early 2017, the site will also be complete with a restaurant, lodges, golf course, spa, and a cookery school.

www.woolsingtonhallhotel.co.uk

Taking the Stage in 2017

The UK premiere of *Sleepless: The New Musical*, based on the popular 1993 comedy film of the same name starring Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan, will take place from 25 March – 17 April 2017 at the Theatre Royal Plymouth's Lyric Theatre, prior to a West End run. Former pop star of British girl band Girls Aloud, Kimberley Walsh is set to star as the female lead. The American Film Institute (AFI) lists the film version of *Sleepless in Seattle* among the Top 10 Best Romantic Comedies of all time. As well as having *The Girls* and his Broadway musical *Finding Neverland* running in London's West End next year, Take That frontman **Gary Barlow** will add a third new musical to his bow, featuring the songs of Take That. The show, called '**The Band**', has been created in association with Gary Barlow, Mark Owen and Howard Donald and will tour the UK in 2017. www.sleeplessmusical.com, www.findingneverlandthemusical.com

British Music Experience moves from London to Liverpool

This new permanent attraction in Liverpool has moved from London to Liverpool and opens at the historic Cunard Building on the Pier Head, 11 February 2017. The attraction will feature more than 600 artefacts and over 90 hours of digital content highlighting how music has influenced British culture over the last 70 years. <https://bdaily.co.uk/creative/04-07-2016/liverpools-new-british-music-experience-attraction-prepares-for-2017-opening/>

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About VisitBritain:

VisitBritain, the national tourism agency, is responsible for inspiring the world to explore Britain and for developing the UK's visitor economy. Americans made 3.3 million visits to Britain in 2015 and spent a record \$4.5 billion. The US remains in the top spot in terms of market value for inbound tourism and is one of the top three most important markets in terms of visitor numbers. Visitors traveling to Britain can find out more information from visitbritain.us plus purchase money and time saving local transport, sightseeing, attraction, theater and tour tickets from visitbritainshop.us.

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