

20 Stunning Places to Visit in the UK

“This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle, This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars”. Shakespeare wrote these words about England in his play *Richard II*. They're still true today, but they can be expanded to encapsulate the entirety of the United Kingdom. There are so many beautiful places to visit around Great Britain that each country is its own treasure trove. Here are twenty stunning places to visit in the UK.

1. The Giant's Causeway, County Antrim

This beautiful UNESCO World Heritage Site comprises around forty thousand interlocking columns of basalt. It's on the Northern Irish coast and is within reasonable walking distance of the equally gorgeous town of Bushmills. The Giant's Causeway can be visited for free, so you've no excuse for not going!

2. Stonehenge, Wiltshire

While it may be true that there are larger and more impressive stone circles in the UK, Stonehenge is the most famous. Endlessly pored over and parodied by popular culture (“no-one knows 'oo they were...”), Stonehenge is as mysterious as it is beautiful. We may never know what it meant, but guessing is just as much fun as knowing.

3. Long Meg and Her Daughters, Cumbria

Another of the UK's wonderful stone circles, Long Meg and Her Daughters may be an even more impressive site than Stonehenge. It dates back to the Bronze Age, and local legends say that it's the remains of a coven of witches transformed into stone by a Scottish wizard.

4. Snowdonia National Park, North Wales

In Snowdonia National Park, you can enjoy the sights of Wales' tallest mountain, Mount Snowdon. From the peak of Snowdon, you can see all the way across to Ireland. The view is truly staggering, and everyone should experience it at least once in their lives. The climb is well-signposted, too.

5. Buckingham Palace, London

Fun fact: Buckingham Palace has over seven hundred and fifty rooms, one hundred and eighty-eight of which are staff bedrooms. It's also not actually owned by the Queen herself; it's held by the Crown Estates in trust. Even so, it's still a beautiful building, even if you never get to glimpse it from the inside.

6. Meadowhall, Sheffield

Some say that shopping centres can't be beautiful. We challenge anyone who says that to visit Sheffield's Meadowhall centre. It has all the shops you need to launch a day-long spree should you wish, but it's also simply a beautiful building from the outside. Take a drive up (or down) to Meadowhall and enjoy a decadent day of shopping.

7. Oxford Castle & Prison, Oxford

This historical site is a thousand years old, and if you visit, you'll really get a sense of that history. There's a tower to climb which offers spectacular views, and history buffs can get their fill of the wealth of information on offer regarding Oxford's rich past. Well worth the trip wherever you happen to be.

8. The White Cliffs of Dover

The first time you lay eyes on the White Cliffs of Dover, you'll marvel at how stunning they truly are. You can actually see the Cliffs from far, far out to sea, making them a great way to mark how much progress you've made if you're sailing. Wildlife buffs will find plenty of animals to discover if they walk the clifftops.

9. Richmond Park, London

Richmond Park used to be a royal hunting park, which is why you'll now find herds of deer grazing and frolicking merrily if you go there. It's a beautiful spot in the middle of a bustling city, and you can see St Paul's Cathedral from certain spots within the park. If you're tired of London's hustle and bustle, head here.

10. Riverside Museum, Glasgow

Head into Glasgow's Riverside Museum to discover over three thousand objects from the city's storied past. It's a sort of "general purpose" museum, aiming to collect objects that demonstrate a slice of human life throughout time. It helps that the actual building itself is a beautiful modernist dream, too.

11. St Michael's Mount, Cornwall

When the tide ebbs, you can walk all the way to St Michael's Mount via the cobbled causeway. It's a beautiful walk to an even more stunning location. Where else can you find medieval buildings nestled alongside semi-tropical garden paradises? St Michael's Mount is a true mixture of the modern and the timeless.

12. Lindisfarne

Sometimes called "The Holy Island of Lindisfarne", this island is one of the most important historical sites for early Christianity. Famed for its mead, Lindisfarne also houses the ruins of a 12th-century priory, which you can explore at your leisure. Make sure you go at the right time because the island is inaccessible twice each day.

13. Victoria Street, Edinburgh

Edinburgh's Victoria Street is home to a number of whimsical shops and buildings, each of them a different vibrant colour. You can wander down this quaint street and see a snapshot of a very different life to the one you'd expect from such a major metropolis. It's especially captivating at dusk.

14. Orkney Islands

Historians believe that the Orkney Islands have been continually inhabited for 10,000 years. That's pretty remarkable, and that history shows when you visit. From the ancient town of Skara Brae to the beautiful stone monoliths that dot the landscape, the Orkneys are a true slice of British history.

15. Isle of Staffa, Inner Hebrides

If you're familiar with Mendelssohn's excellent *The Hebrides* overture, you'll want to visit Fingal's Cave on the Isle of Staffa. Like the Giant's Causeway, Fingal's Cave comprises many columns of basalt, giving it an almost alien look. For an extra-delightful experience, explore Staffa to find its colony of puffins!

16. Lake Windermere, The Lake District

As you might expect, the Lake District is home to only one lake. Yep, that's right - all the other "lakes" here don't actually qualify as lakes. That doesn't stop the Lake District from being as breathtaking as it is, though. This region boasts some of the most scenic walks the UK has to offer.

17. The Palace of Westminster, London

While many may not think of the Houses of Parliament as beautiful, that's being unfair on Barry and Pugin's extremely distinctive creation. Wandering over one of the Thames' bridges and seeing the Houses in all their glory gives a feeling of wonder and intrigue. Don't let this iconic pair of buildings pass you by.

18. The Royal Pavilion, Brighton

For a taste of old-school Indian architectural chic in the UK, look no further than Brighton's Royal Pavilion. Constructed for King George IV across 36 years, the Royal Pavilion is now home to a museum (and an ice rink during the winter months). It's a truly stunning building.

19. The Bull Ring, Birmingham

Nicknamed "The Slug", the Bull Ring is a very divisive building indeed. Some say it's a modernist monstrosity while others praise its distinct appearance. Whatever your personal opinion, it's well worth a trip to Birmingham to see the Bull Ring and take a photo next to the iconic bull statue.

20. Salisbury Cathedral, Wiltshire

Construction on Salisbury Cathedral began in 1220. That means that 2020 is the 800th anniversary of the commencement of construction, so honour that anniversary by taking a trip to see it. The cathedral also houses Europe's oldest working clock, so you can see how many hours you've whiled away walking through the fields.