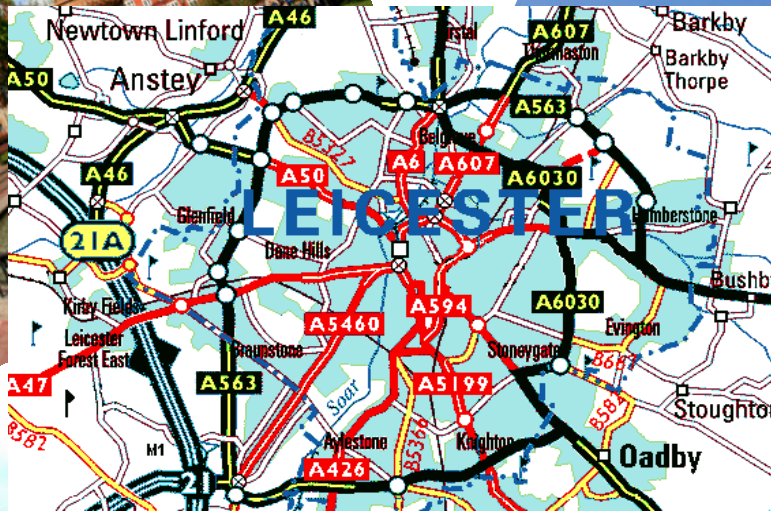




Travelodge

# SEE LEICESTER FOR FREE



## SEE LEICESTER FOR FREE

Leicester is the largest city in the East Midlands and the tenth largest in the country. Its importance was first recognised by the Romans and later by the Danes, who used it as a strategic stronghold to control the Midlands. Since then it has developed into a major commercial and manufacturing centre, known better for the diversity of its trade than for its dependence on a single industry.

It is also a historic meeting place. For centuries people of different races and cultures have gathered in Leicester, creating a rich and unique heritage. This diversity continues today with the city's thriving ethnic minority community accounting for more than a third of Leicester's population, enriching life in this beautiful city.

Fun and vibrant Leicester offers plenty of things to do and see for all ages and this Travelodge city guide will show you how you can see the city for free. Included within this guide are:

- **Details on major free attractions**
- **A list of museums and art galleries**
- **Locations of the top parks to visit**

To get the most out of your city break to Leicester book a Travelodge Saver room at £19 or £29 which will leave you plenty of pennies to spend on eating out and enjoying the shops! To book a Travelodge Saver room just go to [www.travelodge.co.uk](http://www.travelodge.co.uk).

A Travelodge family room will cater for two adults and two children or three adults – so there is no excuse not to get away this year with the family, your partner and your friends. By staying with Travelodge you can afford to take more short breaks this year. Wherever you are in the UK you are bound to find a Travelodge hotel close by.



A Travelodge family room

## ATTRACTIONS



**Belgrave Hall & Gardens** is set in the heart of a vibrant and diverse community that has seen many changes in the past 50 years. The Hall's new community gallery displays the richness of their lives, past and present. Outside the Belgrave Hall gardens which were designed in the 1850's provide a tranquil environment to relax and enjoy the surroundings. You can walk through formal, herbaceous and woodland gardens. Many original features from the Victorian garden are still retained including the walled gardens and a number of statues and monuments from lost gardens in Leicestershire. The formal gardens have remained unchanged since the 1850s and are today complemented by 20th century herbaceous, woodland and water gardens, as well as tropical and alpine glasshouses.

**Opening times:** Sat, Mon, Tues, Wed and daily during school holidays  
11am to 16.30 Closed Nov - Jan

**For further information please visit:** [www.leicestermuseums.ac.uk](http://www.leicestermuseums.ac.uk)



Leicester's magnificent red brick **Town Hall** was built in 1875 on the site of the old cattle market. It forms one side of the attractive Town Hall Square and remains one of Leicester city centre's most striking buildings. Free guided tours around the Town Hall take place on the first Wednesday of every month - turn up at 1.45pm to begin the tour at 2pm. Tea and coffee is also provided.

**For further information please call:** 0116 252 7970



**Leicester Cathedral** was originally built in 1086 and was further modified in 1860 with the addition of a 220 feet spire. The Cathedral houses a Harrison organ with many of the original Snetzler pipes remaining from 1774. At the Cathedral you can learn about the Leicester Tigers connection and see the memorial to Richard III. It is also well known for its bell ringing. It contains bells from the reign of Henry VIII. The full set of 12 bells were installed in 1937. Soon after, the Cathedral Bell Ringers became the leading Sunday Service band in the country. The surrounding churchyard has been landscaped whilst seats have been placed around the fountain and church garden.

**Opening times:** Sun 7am to 5pm & Mon to Sat 8am to 6pm

**For further information visit:** [ww.cathedral.leicester.anglican.org](http://ww.cathedral.leicester.anglican.org)



**Gracedieu Priory** is a very picturesque ruin in North West Leicestershire. It has a very chequered history having been founded as an Augustinian nunnery in 1238 by Roesia de Verdin of Belton. After the Dissolution of Monasteries in 1538 The Priory was turned into a Tudor Mansion. This belonged to the Beaumonts until 1690 when it was sold to Ambrose Philips who left it to become a ruin.

**Opening times:** Open all times

**For further information please visit:** [www.gracedieupriory.org.uk](http://www.gracedieupriory.org.uk)



At **Donington le Heath Manor House** you can explore medieval life at a superbly restored 13th century Manor House with delights such as a period herb and flower gardens, maze and orchard. See how people lived in medieval, Tudor and Stuart times. Try on replicas of their clothes and have a go with some of the toys and games that would have been played over the past seven centuries. A computer based virtual tour, a free audio guide and interactive activities. Regular family events and exhibitions are held and there is a cafe and gift shop.

**Opening times:** Call 01530 831259 for opening times

**For further information visit:** [www.leics.gov.uk/donington.htm](http://www.leics.gov.uk/donington.htm)



**Ferrers Centre for Arts & Crafts** is situated amidst the beauty and tranquility of a quintessential English landscape. The Ferrers Centre for Arts and Crafts is housed in the original Georgian Stable block at the rear of Staunton Harold Hall. This thriving community offers visitors an opportunity to experience the working and retail environments of crafts people. Here traditional skills mix harmoniously alongside more contemporary studios and workshops. The Centre has a tearoom and the Ferrers Gallery also runs a year round exhibition programme.

**Opening times:** Call 01332 863133 for latest opening times

**For further information visit:** [www.ferrerscentre.co.uk](http://www.ferrerscentre.co.uk)



The '**Haymarket Memorial Clock Tower**' (known better as **The Clock Tower**) is one of the city's famous landmarks. It is located at the heart of the city centre. The Clock Tower was the first of its form of traffic island in England and served as a pedestrian refuge. Underneath the Clock Tower is a large inspection chamber for a section of the city's sewage system. This chamber was opened to the public when the area was laid out as a pedestrian precinct in 1972.

**For further information visit:** [www.leicester.gov.uk](http://www.leicester.gov.uk)



**Leicester Guild Hall** - Leicester is very privileged to have one of the best-preserved timber-framed halls in the country. Dating back six hundred years, the Guildhall has had many uses and lives. The Great Hall of the Guildhall was built circa 1390 as a meeting place for the Guild of Corpus Christi (a small but powerful religious and social group). It was a venue for social gatherings, banquets, festivals and a place for Chantry priests to live. Over the next hundred years the Great Hall was extended and the two wings were added at either end.

Today, the Guildhall is best known as an excellent performance venue, attracting top acts from across the country, and as a space for a wide variety of children's activities. The Guildhall is also licensed to host civil marriage ceremonies. Visitors can step back in time and marvel at the building and come face to face with 'Crankie Gemmie' and Emma Smith, two of Leicester's notorious criminals, who can be found lurking within the Victorian police cells. The Guildhall is also reputedly Leicester's most haunted building, claiming five ghosts including the mysterious White Lady, who makes her presence known in the library. The Hall has also been seen on Living TV's now legendary 'Most Haunted' TV series.

**Opening times:** Feb to Nov Mon to Wed 11am to 4.30pm, Sat 11am to 4.30pm and Sun 1pm to 4.30pm

**For further information visit:** [www.leicester.gov.uk/museums](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/museums)

## MUSEUMS & ART GALLERIES



**The Leicester's Museum of Science and Technology** is appropriately located in a late 19th century sewage pumping station and is home to some rare examples of working beam steam engines. Abbey Pumping Station is Leicester's Museum of Science and Technology, displaying the city's industrial, technological and scientific heritage. Situated adjacent to the National Space Centre, the two attractions tell the story of over 200 years of science and technology from the early days of steam and industry, to the space exploration of today.

**Opening times:** Feb to 31<sup>st</sup> Oct Mon to Sat 11am to 4.30pm & Sun 1pm to 4.30pm

**For further information visit:** [www.leicestermuseums.ac.uk/museums](http://www.leicestermuseums.ac.uk/museums)



**Charnwood Museum** is a popular family friendly museum set in the heart of the beautiful Queens Park. The Museum features a wide range of exhibits which reflect local history and industries. The permanent displays have been grouped into four areas: Coming to Charnwood; The Natural World of Charnwood; Living off the Land and Earning a Living. Each contains exhibits from the past and present including interactive displays.

**Opening times:** April to 31<sup>st</sup> Oct 2pm to 5pm Nov to Mar 1pm to 4pm

**For further information visit:** [www.leics.gov.uk/charnwoodmuseum.htm](http://www.leics.gov.uk/charnwoodmuseum.htm)



**Guru Nanak Sikh Museum** holds a valuable collection of paintings, coins, hand written manuscripts and spectacular models of shrines, all of which illustrate the origins and development of Sikh history and culture. Shoes must be removed upon arrival and for women head coverings must be worn (provided).

The Guru Nanak Gurdwara is open every day for the congregation.

**Opening times:** Thurs 1pm to 4pm, Sat 7pm to 8.30pm and by appointment any other time.

**For further information visit:** [www.thesikhmuseum.com](http://www.thesikhmuseum.com)



**New Walk Museum and Art Gallery** is situated within the historic New Walk area of the city. In 1849 the Literary and Philosophical Society formally presented to the town its various collections, which have grown and developed over the last 150 years into one of the premier museums in the region. New Walk Museum has been the inspiration for many people including Lord Attenborough and Sir David Attenborough, who pursued their love of art and natural history as a result of spending their formative years as regular visitors to the galleries. Leicester's oldest museum has wide-ranging collections, spanning the natural and cultural world.

**Opening times:** Mon - Sat 10am to 7pm

**For further information visit:** [www.leicester.gov.uk/museums](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/museums)



**Newarke Houses Museum** is composed of two historic houses, Wygston Chantry House and Skeffington House. William Wygston, Leicester's richest citizen, built Wygston's Chantry House in 1511. It was used to house two Chantry priests who sang masses for William's soul in the nearby church of St Mary of the Annunciation. It's the only Elizabethan urban gentry house that survives in Leicestershire. Skeffington House was built by Sir Thomas Skeffington, between 1560 and 1583. The meandering garden at the site is worth a visit in its own right. At the bottom of the garden is the castle wall, bordering with the churchyard of St Mary de Castro. The gun-loops in this medieval wall date back to the English Civil War. The museum tells the story of 20th century Leicester and the history of the Royal Leicestershire Regiment through a variety of ways including a 1950s street scene, period rooms, a fantastic recreation of a First World War trench, oral histories, archive film, interactive computers and newly acquired objects.

**Opening times:** Mon to Sat 10am to 5pm & Sun 11am to 5pm

**For further information visit:** [www.leicester.gov.uk/museums](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/museums)



**The National Gas Museum** is housed in the Victorian gateway of the original Aylestone Road gas works. This gem of a museum possesses the world's largest collection of gas related artifacts. The museum traces the history of gas from the production of coal gas to the discovery of natural gas. Exhibits cover production and distribution methods together with displays of working lights from 1820, fires and cookers from 1880, washing appliances from 1890, a captivating all gas 1920's kitchen, as well as more unusual items such as gas powered radios and hair dryers.

**Opening Times:** Tue - Thu 12:00 noon to 4.30pm

**For further information visit:** [www.gasmuseum.co.uk](http://www.gasmuseum.co.uk)



**Old Rectory Museum at Old Rectory Museum & Wildlife Garden**, Set on Toothill in Loughborough, near the parish church, The Old Rectory is one of the oldest rectories in the country. The earliest known record of it relates to 1228. Though only the Great Hall remains, this has been restored and now houses a fine little museum. The museum displays archaeological and historical objects found in and around Loughborough with a temporary exhibition of local interest that changes annually.

**For further information & opening times call:** 01509 237433



The Award winning **Hallaton museum** is located in one of Leicestershire's most picturesque and historic villages. The museum hosts exhibitions relating to the history of the village, including Hallaton's unique traditional event, the annual Hare Pie Scrambling and Bottle Kicking contest. Other exhibitions include 'Before Beeching' which relates to the history of the railway at Hallaton.

**Opening times:** Easter to Oct - 2.30pm to 5pm, Sat & Sun. Also open Bank Holidays.

**For further information visit:**

[www.leicestershirevillages.com/hallaton/hallatonmuseum.html](http://www.leicestershirevillages.com/hallaton/hallatonmuseum.html)



**Harborough Museum** is a local history museum. Discover the industries that were important in building Market Harborough, from the impressive Symington Corset Factory, Symington Food works and the Harboro Rubber Company. Find out how people lived in the town and what working life was like years ago - see the shoe-maker's workshop within the museum and find out what life might have been like for a local craftsman. Learn what people in Harborough did for fun - see toys from the past, including some that date back to the 17th century. Temporary exhibitions, which change seasonally, include many aspects of the region's history.

**Opening times:** Open daily 10.30am to 4.30pm

**For further information visit:** [www.leics.gov.uk](http://www.leics.gov.uk)



**The Jewry Wall Museum** is one of Leicester's most famous landmarks. It's a rare example of Roman walling which has survived for nearly 2000 years. Originally it was part of the Roman public baths. The origin of the name is a mystery though it may have been named after Leicester's medieval Jewish community who were expelled from Leicester by the town charter of 1250. Another possibility is that the wall came to be associated with the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, all that survived of the great Jewish temple destroyed by the Romans. The Jewry Wall is unique in that it is the highest remaining Roman structure in Britain. The museum now holds archaeological collections dating from the end of middle ages.

**Opening times:** Feb to 31<sup>st</sup> Oct Mon to Sun 11am to 4.30pm

**For further information visit:** [www.leicester.gov.uk/museums](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/museums)



The City Gallery is Leicester's leading contemporary arts and crafts gallery with a vibrant range of exhibitions presenting work by regional, national and international artists. In addition it also houses events, education programmes and innovative offsite projects. Comprising of three exhibition spaces, including fine art and crafts, the Gallery hosts a changing exhibitions programme with twelve shows per year. Touring exhibitions, including those from the Arts Council of England and the Crafts Council.

**Opening times:** Tue to Fri 11am to 6pm & Sat 10am to 5pm closed Sun

**For further information visit:** [www.leicester.gov.uk/citygallery](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/citygallery)

## PARKS



Abbey Park is Leicester's premier park and lies approximately one mile north of the City centre. The River Soar divides this beautiful park into two distinct areas: to the east of the river lies the highly decorative Victorian part of the park with its evergreen shrubberies, trees, lakes and formally planted flower displays and to the west of the river lies the fascinating Abbey Grounds. Within this area are the remains of the twelfth century Leicester Abbey and the ruins of Cavendish House, a seventeenth century mansion.

**Opening times:** dawn to dusk

**For further information visit:** [www.leicester.gov.uk](http://www.leicester.gov.uk)



**Aylestone Hall Gardens** surround Aylestone Hall. This Grade II listed building dates from the 15th century with many later alterations. The tranquil settings are enhanced with herbaceous, rose and ornamental beds plus a wide selection of trees and shrubs including mature yews, rhododendrons and azaleas. The gardens also feature 2 tennis courts and a bowling green.

**Opening times:** open all the times

**For further information visit:** [www.leicester.gov.uk](http://www.leicester.gov.uk)



**Beacon Hill Country Park** has 240 acres of undulating heathland, woodland and meadows. There is a native tree collection, walking paths, permissive horse / cycle tracks, picnic areas, barbecue stands and remains of Bronze Age settlement.

**Opening times:** open from dawn to dusk

**For further information visit:** [www.leics.gov.uk](http://www.leics.gov.uk)



**Bouskell Park** is an attractive area of parkland set on the remains of a medieval village. Interpretative panels give you the history of the area and the restored 19th century ice-house give an insight into the ways of fashionable Victorians.

**Opening times:** open at all times

**For further information visit:** [www.blaby.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/leisure-and-culture/parks-and-recreation/](http://www.blaby.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/leisure-and-culture/parks-and-recreation/)



**Brocks Hill Country Park & Visitor Centre** is a unique centre that demonstrates wind and solar power, photovoltaics, rainwater recycling and sewage composting. It is set in 67 acres with young woodland, meadowland, a community orchard and a play area which includes a new 'natural' play area and human sundial.

**Opening times:** Park open all year. Visitor Centre open 10am to 5pm Mon - Fri and 10am to 4pm at weekends and Bank Holidays.

**For further information visit:** [www.brockshill.co.uk](http://www.brockshill.co.uk)



**Castle Gardens** were the original site of Leicester Castle. Now all that can be seen is the large mound that it was once situated upon. The cobbled lanes and buildings such as the Mary de Castro church do give indications of Leicester's historic past. The gardens themselves allow visitors to stroll along the River Soar and enjoy a tranquil moment just two minutes away from the city centre.

**Opening times:** Open all the time

**For further information visit:** [www.leicester.gov.uk](http://www.leicester.gov.uk)



**Castle Hill Country Park.** Established in the early 1980's, the park comprises some 250 acres of grassland, plantation and broad leaved woodland. The A46, Leicester Western By-Pass divides the park into two linear sections. The southern section, bordering Beaumont Leys, comprises of relatively high land with good views out over Bradgate Park and the Charnwood Hills. The northern section, bordering Anstey, comprises mainly of flat meadow land associated with the Rothley Brook. Aside from the pleasant Rothley Brook, with it's abundance of birdlife, the park's key natural attractions include the Bluebell Woods, located of the Astill Lodge Road.

**Opening times:** Open all the time

**For further information visit:** [www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council-services/lc/parks--green-spaces/main-parks/castle-hill-country-park](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council-services/lc/parks--green-spaces/main-parks/castle-hill-country-park)



**Leicester University Botanic Garden** spans 16 acres of lovingly cultivated grounds and greenhouses, displaying a wide variety of environments, including alpine, tropical, temperate and cactus houses. Outdoors there are rock gardens, an herb garden, a water garden and an arboretum. Included are the national collections of hardy fuchsia, skimmia, Lawson's cypress and aubrieta. The formal planting centres around a restored Edwardian garden. The plant collections and landscape features make this garden one of the most diverse in the region.

**Opening times:** 10am to 4pm

**For further information visit:** [www.le.ac.uk/biology/botanicgarden](http://www.le.ac.uk/biology/botanicgarden)



**Sence Valley Forest Park** - This 60 hectare former open cast coal site has been transformed with extensive tree planting and creation of lakes interlinked with a series of paths.

**Opening times:** open daily from 8am to dusk

**For further information visit:** [countryparks@leics.gov.uk](mailto:countryparks@leics.gov.uk)



**Watermead Country Park** is a two mile long park, with a wetland area and lakes. It is an ideal spot for walking, fishing, cycling, picnics, bird watching and watersports. There have been some interesting archaeological finds at the park which includes Bronze Age human skulls, the bones of an Auroch (primitive wild ox) and more recently a 'wooly mammoth' - to which there is a monument. The main lake is known as King Lear's lake, it was named after the legend of King Lear, who ruled Britain in the 8th century, on his death he was buried in the River Soar, possibly close to the lake itself.

**Opening Times:** From dawn to dusk.

**For further information visit:** [www.leics.gov.uk](http://www.leics.gov.uk)



**Altar Stones** is a four acre Picnic site on rock outcrop, with geological interest and supporting heath and gorse. It offers good views over Charnwood Forest.

**Opening times:** open at all times

**For further information visit:** [www.leics.gov.uk](http://www.leics.gov.uk)



**Bradgate Park** is Leicestershire's largest and most popular country park. It comprises of 840 acres of land with grass, heath, bracken, rocky outcrops, small woods, herds of deer and the River Lin. The Park also includes the ruins of Bradgate House, the birthplace and early home of Lady Jane Grey 1537 - 1554 (Nine Days Queen of England.) Old John Tower folly, a well known Leicestershire landmark, stands on the ridge of high land.

**Opening times:** Open at all times

**For further information visit:** [www.goleicestershire.com](http://www.goleicestershire.com)