

## **ARRIVING IN THE UK**

Birmingham is incredibly easy to reach. Right in the centre of England, it's well-connected by road, rail and air.

If you are arriving in the UK from an international destination please visit the Government's "[Entering the UK](#) page" for the latest restrictions and travel information.

Please be aware that all Europeans, except Irish citizens, will now need an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) to travel to the UK. You must also bring a valid passport, as identity cards are no longer accepted. All non-European travellers who do not require a visa will also need to apply for an ETA and obtain one before their departure. Please visit the UK Government [Immigration page](#) to apply.

## **TRAVEL TO BIRMINGHAM BY TRAIN**

Travelling to Birmingham by train is a quick and easy way to get there. Birmingham has three city centre railway stations (Birmingham New Street Station, Birmingham Snow Hill Station and Birmingham Moor Street Station) and is also served by Birmingham International Airport.

### **Train Services from London to Birmingham**

#### **Avanti West Coast**

Route: London Euston to Birmingham New Street

Fastest Journey: Approximately 1 hour 16 minutes

Frequency: Every 15–30 minutes

Ticket Prices: Advance fares start from £6.40; Off-Peak Single Tickets are available from £50.50

Features: Direct services with free Wi-Fi

Website: [Avanti West Coast](#) | [Buy Train Tickets](#) | [No Booking Fee](#)

#### **Chiltern Railways**

Route: London Marylebone to Birmingham Moor Street

Fastest Journey: Approximately 1 hour 39 minutes

Frequency: Regular departures throughout the day

Ticket Prices: Advance fares start from £6.40

Features: Direct services offering a comfortable journey

Website: [Chiltern Railways](#) | [Buy Cheap Train Tickets & Save](#) | [Check Timetables](#)

#### **West Midlands Railway / London Northwestern Railway**

Route: London Euston to Birmingham New Street

Journey Time: Typically around 1 hour 56 minutes

Frequency: Approximately 6 trains per hour

Features: Direct services

Website: [Trains, tickets & service information](#) | [Home](#) // [Trains, tickets & service information](#)

Other useful travel websites are:

Trainline: [Trains London to Birmingham from £6.40 | Compare Times & Cheap Tickets | Trainline](#)

National Rail: [Trains From London to Birmingham | National Rail](#)

## HOTEL LOCATION

Most FIA Congress delegates, including all those travelling with financial assistance, will be staying at:

### Hotel Leonardo Royal Hotel

245 Broad St, Birmingham B1 2HQ

Website: <https://www.leonardo-hotels.com/birmingham/leonardo-royal-hotel-birmingham>

The Leonardo hotel is within walking distance from all stations (about 10 mn from New Street Station, 15 minutes from Snow Hill Station and 20 minutes from Moor Street Station), as well as the FIA Congress venues.

The hotel and venue are in the centre of Birmingham, with a wide array of cafes, shops, and amenities nearby.

You may access a downloadable map of Birmingham's central area with notable landmarks [here](#).

## TRANSPORT FROM BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT (BHX) TO BIRMINGHAM CITY CENTRE (LEONARDO ROYAL HOTEL)

**Taxi / Private Car:** this is the most direct option. Journey time is around 20–25 minutes depending on traffic. Typical fare is £25–£30.

**Train:** the Air-Rail Link connects the airport terminal to Birmingham International Station in two minutes. From there, trains run regularly to Birmingham New Street Station (journey 15 minutes). Total travel time 30 minutes. Fares are usually £5–£10 one way.

**Bus:** several services operate between the airport and the city centre. Journey time is 40–60 minutes depending on traffic. The fare is around £3–£4, with an additional short walk or local connection required to reach the hotel.

## LOCAL INFORMATION

### Weather

In November, Birmingham is cool and damp. Average daytime highs are around 9 °C, with night-time lows around 4 °C. Rain is frequent, and daylight hours are short (sunset is around 16:00 by the end of the month). Delegates are advised to bring warm layers, a waterproof coat, and suitable footwear for wet conditions.

### Safety

Birmingham is a large and busy city. Standard urban safety precautions are recommended: keep valuables secure, use licensed taxis or established ride-share apps, and prefer well-lit areas when walking at night. Stick with others if going out at night, especially in unfamiliar areas. British venues often have trained security staff (door staff or “bouncers”). Don't be offended if they ask for ID or

refuse entry after certain hours. If you feel unsafe or uncomfortable, staff in most venues are trained to help—ask for "Angela" at the bar if you need discreet support.

There are no unusual health or safety risks beyond what would be expected in a European city.

### **Electric Outlets**

The United Kingdom uses Type G plugs (three rectangular prongs). Power supply is 230 V / 50 Hz. Visitors from regions using different plug types will need an adaptor. Most modern electronic devices (laptops, phones, tablets) are compatible with 100–240 V, but delegates should check their chargers before travelling.

### **Pharmacy**

The nearest pharmacy (that's open on the weekend) is Boots at the Bull Ring Shopping Centre, B5 4BE. It is a 20 minute walk from the hotel. Hours are 9am-8pm (Mon-Sat), 11am-5pm (Sun).

### **Hospital/Accident & Emergency**

In case of any emergency, **please call 999** for police, fire, or medical assistance. Birmingham City Hospital is a 12-minute drive from the hotel (half an hour by public transport). The entrance to the A&E department is on Dudley Road, B18 7QH.

### **Emergency Dentist**

The Night & Day Emergency Dentist is open 24 hours at 51-53 Spring HI, B18 7BH. It is a 19-minute walk from the hotel.

## **FOOD AND DRINKS**

### **Coffee shops**

There are a variety of coffee shops and cafes close to the hotel and to the Town Hall.

#### [Faculty Coffee](#)

*14, Piccadilly Arcade, Birmingham B2 4HD*

*Hours are 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat. and 11am to 4pm Sun.*

The [Yorks Café](#) (at the Ikon Gallery)

*1 Oozells Square, Birmingham B1 2HS*

*Hours are 9am-5pm Wed-Sat, 10am-5pm Sun. (closed Mon-Tues)*

**Costa Coffee** and **Café Nero** are located on the Central Square on Brindley Place, nearby.

[Medicine Bakery](#) (near the Town Hall)

*69a New Street, Birmingham B2 4DU*

*Hours are 8.30am-5pm daily.*

[Second Cup Coffee Cup Company](#)

*64 New Street, Birmingham B2 4DU*

*Hours are 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, 10am-7pm Sunday*

Birmingham New Street station also has various coffee chains available.

## Local Restaurants

### [The Shakespeare Inn](#) - £

*Temple Street, Birmingham B2 4JD*

On the menu, you'll find plenty of delicious, classic pub food dishes, as well as a unique selection of cask ales and spirits.

### [Opheem](#) - ££££

*48-65 Summer Row, Birmingham B3 1JJ*

Michelin starred. Upscale and one of the city's most stunning dining rooms sitting alongside a beautiful lounge.

### [Siamais](#) - £££

*7 Oozells St. / 6 Brindley Pl., Birmingham B1 2HS*

One of the best Thai restaurants and cocktail bars in Birmingham.

### [Gaucho](#) - ££££

*55, Colmore Row, Lower Ground Retail, Birmingham B3 2AA*

Stylish, upmarket steakhouse, offering mouthwatering Argentinian steaks, bold Latin American flavours and an exceptional selection of premium wines.

### [All Bar One](#) - ££

*New Street Station, Smallbrook Queensway, Birmingham B2 4QE*

Located in the heart of Birmingham, close to the Bullring Shopping Centre, Grand Central Station and the Mailbox, All Bar One New Street Station is a stylish spot for anything from a morning coffee or a working lunch, through to dinner and drinks with friends.

### [Botanist Gas Street Basin](#) - £££

*12 Bridge Street Gas Street Basin, Birmingham B1 2JR*

This vibrant venue is set over two floors and boasts one of the best beer gardens in the city centre, as voted in 2019. It offers a diverse menu featuring their famous Hanging Kebabs™, British classics, and a variety of cocktails. The Botanist Gas Street Basin is also known for its live music, creating a lively atmosphere for guests.

### [Yakinori](#) - £

*67, New Street, Birmingham B2 4DU*

Freshly prepared sushi, flavourful ramen, and a variety of traditional Japanese dishes, this restaurant makes every visit a culinary delight.

UK restaurants are generally good with dietary restrictions—inform them in advance for gluten-free, vegetarian, or halal requests. For larger groups, it's smart to book restaurants in advance.

## Bars and Nightlife

### [The Nightingale Club](#)

*18 Kent Street, Birmingham B5 6RD*

One of the most prominent LGBTQIA+ bars in Birmingham, Nightingale Club is renowned for its laid-back attitude and down-to-earth vibes.

### [The Night Owl](#)

*17–18, Lower Trinity Street, Digbeth B9 4AG*

Retro-themed, rambunctious and brimming beats from dozens of decades, The Night Owl has a big love for all things northern soul, ska, reggae and Britpop.

### [The Alchemist](#)

*Colmore Row The Grand, Birmingham B3 2DA*

Known for its theatrical cocktails and stylish ambiance, this bar receives praise for its unique drinks and attentive staff.

### [Sidewalk Bar](#)

*125-131 Hurst Street, Birmingham B5 6SE*

A vibrant LGBTQIA+ bar offering a lively atmosphere with great music and friendly service.

A variety of other bars, restaurants and pubs are also located along Broad Street.

## **UNDERSTANDING BRITISH NIGHTLIFE**

British nightlife is lively, diverse, and a core part of social culture – but for international visitors, some elements may be unfamiliar or overwhelming. Here's what to expect:

### **Stag & Hen Parties**

Pre-wedding celebrations for grooms ("stags") and brides ("hens"), often involving large groups in themed outfits, drinking games, and nightclub visits.

They're usually boisterous but not harmful. It's common to see them on weekends (especially Fridays and Saturdays). If you prefer a quieter venue, consider more relaxed bars or lounges.

### **Football Fans**

Football (soccer) is a national passion, and fans often gather in pubs or bars during matches.

Enthusiastic chanting, loud celebrations, and sometimes heated discussions. Most fans are friendly, but large groups can feel intimidating. Avoid engaging in football debates unless you're comfortable with passionate responses!

### **Drinking Culture**

Pub culture is central to British nightlife. It's common to have a few drinks after work or before heading to a club. Last orders are typically called around 11pm–12am, though many bars stay open later on weekends.

## **CULTURAL ACTIVITIES**

### [Henry's Blueshouse](#) at Snobs

*200 Broad Street, Birmingham B15 1SU*

Catch the very best in Live Blues every Tuesday. Free admission | Doors 7pm Live music from 8pm

### [Made at MAC: Connected by Thread](#)

*Midlands Arts Centre, Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham, B12 9QH*

Connected by Thread showcases the talents of students and tutors who work with textiles and other craft materials.

### [Moulin Rouge! The Musical](#)

*Birmingham Hippodrome, Hurst St, Southside, Birmingham, B5 4TB*

A world of splendour, of eye-popping excess, of glitz, grandeur and glory! A world where Bohemians and aristocrats rub elbows and revel in electrifying enchantment. Welcome to Moulin Rouge! The Musical!

### [Birmingham's Frankfurt Christmas Market](#)

*Victoria Square and New Street , Birmingham, B1 1BB*

The largest authentic German Christmas market outside of Germany or Austria Birmingham's Frankfurt Christmas Market offers a large range of traditional good and gifts and a selection of tempting food and drink.

### [Macbeth \(at the Crescent Theatre\)](#)

*20 Sheepcote Street Brindleyplace Birmingham B16 8AE*

Witness Shakespeare's timeless tale of greed, murder, deception, and superstition.

### [The Birmingham Film Festival](#)

*Millennium Point, Curzon Street , Birmingham, B4 7XG*

The Birmingham Film Festival is a 10-day international film celebration showcasing professional and independent films from around the world, comprising of a wide range of genres, styles, budgets and topics, all shown in a spectacular 350-seat auditorium.

## **OTHER TIPS**

### **Tipping / Gratuity**

This is not expected at pubs, but appreciated in restaurants (about 10-15%). There is no need to tip if there is a service charge added to your bill, although you are free to add more if you like.

### **Accessibility**

We know everyone's accessibility needs are different, which is why having detailed, accurate information is so important. Birmingham is working closely with [AccessAble](#) to give you detailed information you need to work out if a place is going to be accessible to you.

### **Cultural Tips**

Queueing and waiting your turn is always expected, so be patient. Stand on the right on escalators and let people pass on the left.

### **Planning your visit**

[Visit Birmingham- Official Website for Tourism, Events and Information](#)

### **Directions from Symphony Hall to the Library of Birmingham**

All our meetings during FIA Congress week will be held at either Symphony Hall or the Library of Birmingham, both just a two-minute walk apart on Centenary Square. A map showing their proximity is available [here](#).

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