

# EMPIRE CAFE



VISITLEEDS

# MEDIA PACK

SUMMER / AUTUMN 2026

# MEDIA INFORMATION

SUMMER / AUTUMN 2026

## LEEDS

WHERE NORTH,  
SOUTH, EAST  
AND WEST  
MEET,  
CREATING  
A DIVERSE  
DESTINATION  
LIKE NO OTHER,  
JUST WAITING  
TO SURPRISE  
YOU

LEEDS: 200 MILES SOUTH OF EDINBURGH, 200 MILES NORTH OF LONDON, WITH HULL AND MANCHESTER JUST UNDER 50 MILES TO THE EAST AND WEST RESPECTIVELY, LEEDS IS ARGUABLY *THE* CENTRAL POINT IN THE UK. A DESTINATION IN ITS OWN RIGHT, LEEDS IS ALSO THE GATEWAY TO THE SURROUNDING YORKSHIRE COUNTRYSIDE AND BEYOND.



Athena Rising c Carl Milner

# ALWAYS LEADING THE WAY

For generations the city has cultivated the culture and creativity that can be felt today – through our food, film, music, art, sport and way of life. Leeds is where the first ever film was created – by Frenchman Louis Le-Prince in 1888; it's where immigrant Michael Marks opened a stall at Leeds Kirkgate Market, joining forces with Tom Spencer to spark the creation of Marks & Spencer, and where the UK's longest running West Indian carnival parade first took place in 1967.

Surrounded by Yorkshire's bountiful dales and moors, Leeds has a compact, walkable city centre packed with cultural gems, equally home to world famous museums, galleries and cultural institutions including the Henry Moore Institute, Opera North, Northern Ballet, Royal Armouries Museum, Leeds Art Gallery, Thackray Museum of Medicine and Leeds Playhouse - as it is to independent artists and venues: it's not just the best of both worlds, it's the best of ALL worlds.

Leeds is a city made by its people and with a cultural pedigree that includes Barbara Hepworth who studied at Leeds School of Art (now the Leeds Arts University), Henry Moore, Damien Hirst; Spice Girl Mel B, the Kaiser Chiefs and Mercury Music Prize winners English Teacher (2024), plus nominees Corinne Bailey-Rae (2024) and Yard Act (2022). The city is always evolving and delivering its own brand of creativity.



Kirkstall c. James Mulkeen



Whitlocks c Mark Newton



Leeds City Skyline c LCC

# WHERE URBAN AND RURAL SEAMLESSLY MEET

This creative heritage can be seen across the city, with cultural experiences found around every corner: Leeds is a destination for foodies and football fans, walkers and writers, shoppers and sculpture specialists. With more than 4,000 hectares of green space, including Roundhay Park and Golden Acre Park, Leeds is one of the greenest cities in Europe and now with the addition of Aire Park – the UK's largest new city centre green space – it's even more green. With the Yorkshire Dales and North Yorkshire Moors right on the doorstep, a trip to Leeds means you don't have to choose between city and country.

THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF REASONS TO VISIT LEEDS. WE HAVE ALL YOU'D EXPECT TO FIND IN THE UK'S THIRD LARGEST CITY OUTSIDE LONDON BUT THERE'S SO MUCH MORE. READ ON FOR JUST SOME OF THE THINGS YOU'LL FIND ONLY IN LEEDS, OR THAT WE DID HERE FIRST!



# INDEPENDENT MUSIC SCENE



Leeds boasts a rich independent music scene; it is a city jam-packed with unique, independent venues and phenomenal talent. Music flows through the veins of the city, with some of the UK's most highly regarded and exceptional independent venues (Brudenell Social Club – [regularly cited as a favourite by performers](#), Belgrave Music Hall, Domino Club, and Project House to name a few) supporting, nurturing and promoting artists from all over the world.

2026 is a huge year for live music in Leeds, with an epic new festival at Roundhay Park and a series of events at the striking ruins of Kirkstall Abbey joining the already stellar line-up of [Slam Dunk](#), [Leeds Festival](#) and [Millennium Square Summer Series](#).

On Friday 3 and Saturday 4 July, live music returns to [Roundhay Park](#), with headliners Pitbull (Friday) and Lewis Capaldi (Saturday). Towards the end of the month [Kirkstall Abbey](#) sees a series of open-air concerts from The Streets, Sunshine Underground, The Maccabees and Loyle Carner.

Leeds is also home to many vinyl and record shops worth checking out. Flick through vinyl at [Crash Records](#) and [Jumbo Records](#), or even grab a new potted plant with your music at the cleverly-coined [Plant and Deck](#).

# LEEDS IS READY FOR ITS CLOSE UP...



Harewood House c Harewood House Trust & Tom Arber

As featured in the first ever film, Leeds is a movie-star in itself. Back in 1888, Frenchman Louis Le-Prince - inventor of the first early motion-picture camera - created the first moving picture on paper film featuring Leeds Bridge.

Modern filmmakers follow in Le-Prince's footsteps as Leeds continues to appear in feature films and TV series today and film-buffs can enjoy walking the streets on the lookout for these landmark locations themselves.

Roundhay Park, the city centre and suburb of Chapel Allerton can be spotted in the backdrop to 2019 film 'Official Secrets' starring Keira Knightley, while Netflix productions 'Bank of Dave' (2023) and 'Bank of Dave 2' (2025) saw scenes filmed in local squares and streets as well as various pubs and cafes. VERSA studios has welcomed productions such as 'Secret Invasion' by Marvel Studios (2023), while Prime Studios in Kirkstall hosted John Malkovich and Rupert Grint in the remake of Agatha Christie's

'The ABC Murders' (BBC – 2018). Our stunning heritage spots such as Harewood House, City Varieties Music Hall and Temple Newsam pop up regularly in BBC and ITV drama series' including 'Peaky Blinders' (2013) Happy Valley (2023), 'Victoria' (2016) and 'Gentleman Jack' (2022).

Founded in 1987 and now one of the UK's leading annual film events, the Academy Award, BAFTA and BIFA-qualifying Leeds International Film Festival (LIFF) is a must for aspiring film-makers and indie film enthusiasts, which takes place every year in November for two weeks.

Leeds is also home to two of the most historic cinema's in the UK. [Hyde Park Picture House](#) (est. 1914) is not only one of the oldest but also the last remaining gaslit cinema in the UK and possibly the world. [Cottage Road Cinema](#) is two years older than Hyde Park Picture House (est. 1912), where you can still purchase an ice-cream during intervals from staff who walk along the aisles.

# WHERE SPORTING LEGENDS ARE MADE

LEEDS UNITED STARS FEATURE IN FIFA'S WORLD CUP 2026



Leeds is a city with a fervent passion for sports, deeply embedded in the city's culture and identity, generating a palpable sense of community.

The city's rich sporting history is anchored by three major professional clubs for rugby, cricket and football, with equally impressive facilities. Premier League team Leeds United play at Elland Road where you can see them tackling some of the best teams in the world.

Leeds Rhinos and Yorkshire County Cricket Club are based at world-renowned Headingley Stadium, which also hosts national and international Rugby League Matches and International Cricket Test Matches and major T20 Tournaments. This year Headingley will host England v Pakistan Men's International First Rothesay Test Match (19 to 23 Aug) and England v Sri Lanka One Day International (24 Sept).

Ice Hockey fans have plenty to enjoy in the city with Leeds Knights being one of the top teams in the UK. Their league season begins in September and runs through until April (2027), when you can support them at home matches played at Planet Ice.

Leeds also has a notable history in golf. The Leeds Cup, a prestigious golf tournament, has been played annually in northern England since 1902, organised by the north region of the Professional Golfers' Association. Remarkably, it is the oldest trophy in professional golf that is still contested. The Ryder Cup was first hosted on UK soil at Moortown Golf Club in 1929. Alwoodley Golf Club is considered one of the finest inland courses in the UK, designed by Alister MacKenzie, who went on to design the Augusta National Golf Club - home of the Masters.

# FOOD & DRINK

There's a reason Leeds is known as the **foodie capital of the North**, it's a city full of passionate people known for their craft drawing on Yorkshire's bounty of fresh ingredients. The independent food and drink scene is thriving and renowned for its diversity, energy and innovation.

Some of our most striking heritage buildings have been given new life as restaurants - whether former waterfront warehouses or Victorian auction houses, each delivering on their own distinctive atmosphere. From the street food stalls of **Leeds Kirkgate Market** to the abundance of independent restaurants and cafes across the city. Places like Manjits Kitchen, Mans Market, White Cloth Hall, Fint, Eat Your Greens and Empire Cafe, and coffee spots popular with locals and visitors alike including Laynes, newly opened Federal and locals favourite House of Koko.

Bundobust and House of Fu both started in Leeds before becoming popular with branches across the North, both brilliant examples of innovation and the fusion of cuisines and cultures.

The past few years has seen an influx of new restaurants in the city including: **Uyare**, a new rooftop restaurant from the team behind Leeds' favourite Tharavadu. **The Highland Laddie**, a traditional pub with an intimate dining room which recently came out top in the Good Food Guide, **Cinnamon Kitchen**, Chef Vivek Singh's first restaurant outside of London, The Smithfield, an independent pub and eatery with a seasonal menu from chef James Donovan and award-winning Sardinian restaurant Domo, soon to be joined by Dishoom, opening Summer 2026.

For beer-lovers Leeds has some of the most successful independent breweries in the UK including Northern Monk, North Brewing Co. and Kirkstall Abbey as well as microbreweries like female-owned Tartarus Beers, Wilde Child Brewing Co and Anthropology Brewing Company.

These 'new' brewing kids on the block are building on the legacy of brewing and traditional pubs which have quenched the thirst of Leeds' drinkers for hundreds of years; many of which – including Leeds' oldest, Whitelocks Ale House (est. 1715), and recently refurbished to its Victorian splendour the Victoria and Commercial, The Adelphi, Lamb and Flag, Cross Keys, Midnight Bell and Duck and Drake have all been modernised to cater to the needs of new generations of hopheads and libationists.

Those with a sweeter tooth have dozens of dessert cafes to cater to their cravings thanks to a boom in businesses set up to offer a sugary snack just when you need it.



Haute Dolci c Tom Martin for Visit Leeds

# MADE FOR WALKING



City Square c. Thors Tipi

Leeds' compact centre means that a walking tour is the perfect way to experience the city's culture and history .

Leeds Queer History Tours are led by historian Kit Heyam in partnership with the independent queer bookshop [The Bookish Type](#), which also serves as the meeting point. There are a variety of tours including a city centre tour which explores hidden LGBTQ+ history from 1840s court cases to 1990 raves, a music and nightlife tour, which traces Leeds' queer music and nightlife history (and includes the spot where Marc Almond from Soft Cell heard his first disco tune) and the LS6 Tour, covering areas just outside the city-centre featuring wartime genderqueers to early gay hotlines.

Other [Leeds City Walking Tours](#) take place across the city, celebrating our engineering and architectural history, getting up close and personal to the city's waterways and bridges, Victorian architecture and the city's impressive history of textiles, clothing and fashion. Did you know Montague Burton – 'The Tailor of Taste' – set up his eponymous brand of men's clothing in Leeds? By 1925 Leeds was home to the largest clothing factory in the world.



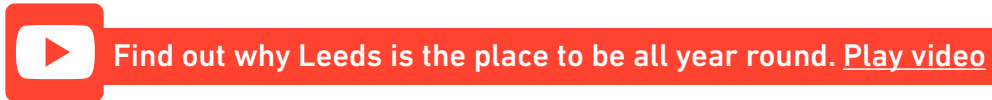
Temple Newsam c. Leeds Museums &amp; Galleries

Self-guided tours include the Leeds Owl Trail, a map of 25 locations for urban 'birdspotters', each featuring an owl – a symbol of Leeds, and the [Street Art](#) Trail which showcases inspirational murals and public artworks: 'Athena Rising' by Nomad Clan, is an awe-inspiring welcome to Leeds for train travellers; 'You & Me & Me & You' by Anthony Burrill is a backdrop to thousands of Instagram stories, and 'Echoes' by Add Fuel celebrates the area's important ceramics heritage.

Striking sculpture 'Hibiscus Rising' – the first permanent public commission in the North of England by international artist Yinka Shonibare CBE RA, is a symbol of unity and hope commissioned to honour the life of David Oluwale, a British Nigerian Leeds resident who was hounded to his death in 1969, drowning in the River Aire as a result of systematic police harassment and violence. Take it in as part of the wider Aire Park development which also includes the new David Oluwale Bridge and iconic Tetley building, the former HQ for the brewery.

Other popular walks include the Armley to Kirkstall Bridge Walk, which follows a section of the 127-mile-long Leeds-Liverpool canal through the city.

# THE CITY THAT LOVES TO ENTERTAIN



Leeds Grand Theatre c Carl Milner

Throughout the year Leeds has a jam-packed programme of events, from award-winning theatre and ground-breaking exhibitions to city-wide festivals celebrating the city's heritage, creativity and communities. This includes Leeds Pride in July, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year (2026), Leeds West Indian Carnival (Aug) and Leeds Black Music Festival (Aug), Leeds International Beer Festival (Sept), Leeds International Festival of Ideas (Oct), Leeds Light Night (Oct) and Leeds International Film Festival (Nov).

Leeds is home to three outstanding theatres, all making a mark on the yearly event calendar. This year, reparatory theatre [Leeds Playhouse](#) presents August Wilson's landmark play *FENCES* by award-winning director Daniel

Bailey (Sept 2026) and next year will bring three new productions of three classics – Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett, and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. [Leeds Grand Theatre](#), home of Opera North, presents a new production of *The Sound of Music* featuring the Opera North choir and orchestra (Jul / Aug 26) followed by the Opera North autumn / winter season featuring *Rigoletto* and *A Christmas Carol* as well as major touring productions like *Mrs. Doubtfire* (Nov) and *Everybody's Talking about Jamie* (Jan 27). The world's longest running Victorian Music Hall, [City Varieties Music Hall](#) has a packed programme of well-known names from the world of entertainment in all forms.

# RETAIL REDEFINED



Victoria Gate, c Tom Martin

Leeds is a shopper's paradise. A world of retail, all within easy reach and on some of the most handsome, wide Victorian-made streets lined with striking buildings whose upper floors and rooftops mean shoppers should look up when in Leeds. Now pedestrianised, our compact and walkable city centre means you're never far away from the biggest brands. The stunning Victorian arcades, each with its own distinct identity, lead off the main shopping streets, so whether it's the Victoria Quarter – complete with the largest single work of stained glass in Great Britain and the largest stained glass roof in Europe – or the smaller Thorntons, Grand or Queens arcades full of eclectic and independent stores, salons and cafes, there's

lots to explore. The contemporary glass domed roof of Trinity Leeds is home to around 120 more well-known brands.

Leeds' fierce independent spirit is in full view at the beautifully restored Corn Exchange, the iconic domed oval building so Insta-worthy you could almost miss the dozens of outstanding and unconventional traders that fill the spaces. Or there's the unique atmosphere of Grade I listed Kirkgate Market, where Michael Marks of Marks and Spencer began his trade. From textiles and loose-leaf tea, to fresh flowers and street food from around the world, all found across over 400 stalls.

# STEP OUT OF LEEDS AND STRAIGHT INTO YORKSHIRE'S BEST LANDSCAPES



Leeds is one of the most easily accessible cities and is ideally positioned in the centre of the UK with direct rail links from across the country. It's just over two hours by train from London and three hours from Edinburgh. With York only 25 minutes away by train and Manchester less than an hour. Leeds Bradford Airport welcomes visitors from 80 destinations and the port of Hull is around an hour away by car. Once you're in the city, [plan journeys](#) at WYMetro or try Leeds City Bikes a fully electric public bike hire service.

Leeds offers the perfect base from which to explore the Yorkshire Dales, Yorkshire Moors and South Pennines – all areas of outstanding beauty, each with its own unique character, providing a wealth of options for day trips - from walks and outdoor adventures to discovering characterful some of the towns and villages that pepper the landscape.

Take a scenic bus or train (or even a steam train) over rolling hills and heather moorland

to Haworth, home of the Brontës and setting for *Wuthering Heights*, or to Halifax, where Ann Lister lived and worked, the recent subject of popular BBC drama *Gentleman Jack*, which was filmed here and in nearby Hebden Bridge, an art lovers paradise. Further afield you can reach the stunning Yorkshire Moors coastline by car, train or bus to enjoy places like Runswick Bay, Saltburn and Whitby.

Make more of your trip by exploring some of the other fascinating places easily accessible from Leeds by car, train or bus. Check out Harrogate – the spa town famous for its festivals, food and Turkish baths or Knaresborough for rowing boat trips under the iconic viaduct; a trip to Ilkley can include a walk across the legendary moor or maybe a stroll through the Yorkshire Sculpture Park in Wakefield is more your speed.

Explore [itinerary ideas](#) for enjoying city and country and find out more about [day trips](#).

# WHERE TO LAY YOUR HEAD



The Met Hotel c. Steph Simmons

Whatever your trip entails and whatever your budget, you'll find somewhere to stay that's so much more than a base. With luxury and iconic hotels (Dakota and The Queens) and classic international brands like Radisson Blu, Malmaison, Marriott, Hilton City and Doubletree Hilton, plus a wealth of exquisite self-catering apartments and boutiques – the choice is yours!

# UPCOMING: SUMMER 2026 & AUTUMN HIGHLIGHTS

## UNTIL SUN 31 AUG

Thor's Tipi  
*City Square*

## FRI 3 JUL

Roundhay Park Festival,  
Pitbull plus special guests  
*Roundhay Park*

## SAT 4 JUL

Roundhay Park Festival, Lewis  
Capaldi plus special guests  
*Roundhay Park*

## THURS 9 JUL TO SAT 1 AUG

Opera North's The Sound of Music  
*Leeds Grand Theatre*

## SAT 19 JUL TO SUN 20 JUL

Leeds Pride: 20th Anniversary  
*City-wide*

## FRI 24 JUL

Live at Kirkstall Abbey, The Streets  
*Kirkstall Abbey*

## SAT 25 JUL

Live at Kirkstall Abbey, Sunshine  
Underground plus special guests  
*Kirkstall Abbey*

## SUN 26 JUL

Live at Kirkstall Abbey, Comedy  
Festival featuring Daran O'Briain,  
Alan Davis, Sara Pascoe, Jason  
Manford and more.  
*Kirkstall Abbey*

## Fri 31 Jul

Live at Kirkstall Abbey,  
The Maccabees  
*Kirkstall Abbey*

## SAT 1 AUG

Live at Kirkstall Abbey, Loyle  
Carner plus special guests  
*Kirkstall Abbey*

## WEDS 19 AUG TO SUN 23 AUG

Men's International First Rothesay  
Test Match England vs Pakistan  
*Headingley Stadium*

## THURS 27 AUG TO SUN 30 AUG

Leeds Festival  
*Bramham Park*

## SUN 30 AUG TO MON 31 AUG

Leeds Black Music Festival  
*Potternewton Park*

## MON 31 AUG

Leeds West Indian Carnival  
*Chapelton and Potternewton Park*

## THURS 3 SEPT TO SUN 6 SEPT

Leeds International Beer Festival  
*Kirkstall Abbey*

## THURS 24 SEPT

Men's One Day International  
Cricket, England v Sri Lanka  
*Headingley Stadium*

## TUES 6 OCT TO SAT 10 OCT

Leeds International  
Festival of Ideas  
*Leeds Playhouse*

## WED 28 TO THU 29 OCT

Light Night  
*City-wide*

## FRI 9 OCT TO SAT 21 NOV

Leeds Opera North Season  
*Grand Theatre*

## THURS 5 NOV TO SUN 22 NOV

Leeds International Film Festival  
*City-wide*



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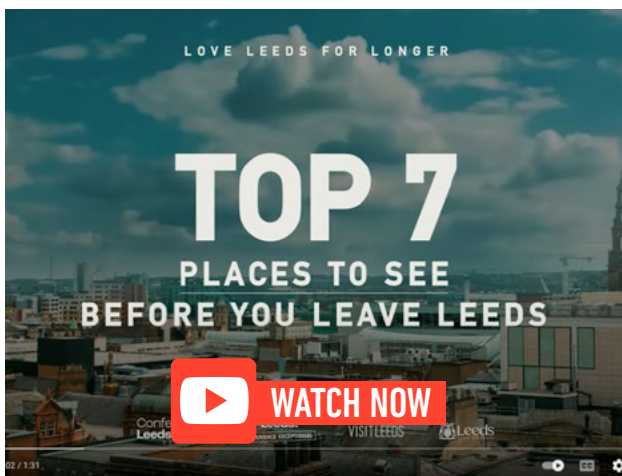
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To arrange a visit, for individual itineraries and for any enquiries about all that's going on in Leeds, please get in touch with Visit Leeds + 44 (0) 113 378 5765

All this and much more can be found on [www.visitleeds.co.uk](http://www.visitleeds.co.uk),

we look forward to welcoming you to our city!



We're a city that loves to entertain, with a jam-packed event programme all year round. Please note that the information contained in this document isn't an exhaustive list of the events in the annual Leeds calendar. To find out more about all the events taking place in Leeds this year, please visit: [visitleeds.co.uk/whats-on](http://visitleeds.co.uk/whats-on)

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