

# An Improviser's Guide to Birmingham



## Getting Around

The Birmingham Improv Festival is being held at the Midlands Arts Centre (or MAC), Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham, B12 9QH, located opposite Edgbaston Stadium on Edgbaston Road (off A441 Pershore Road and A38 Bristol Road). The closest train station would be any of the city centre train stations. You could walk to MAC from the city centre but it's at least 2.2 miles so bus, cycle or car is a better option.

### **Parking**

There is a large car park outside the MAC run by Birmingham City Council, which costs between £2.20 (up to 2 hours) and £5.00 (over 4 hours) with a maximum stay of 17 hours. The main entrance is off Edgbaston Road.

### **Bus**

There are many bus routes which come into Birmingham which can be found at the following link: <https://nxbus.co.uk/west-midlands/services-timetables>

We recommend the following routes to reach the MAC:

- **1** – Stop on Edgbaston Road (0.3 miles)
- **35** – Stop on Willows Road (0.5 miles)
- **41, 45, 47** – Stop on Pershore Road (0.5 miles) (catch from Birmingham city centre)
- **61, 63** – Stop on Bristol Road (1 mile) (catch from Birmingham city centre)

Both the Google Maps and Citymapper apps work well for navigating public transport in Birmingham.

### **Train**

Birmingham has a pretty full coverage of local trains, and this can be a very handy way to reach the city centre. The main train stations in the city centre are:

- New Street
- Moor Street
- Snow Hill
- Jewellery Quarter

It's a 45-minute walk from New Street Station to the MAC, around 20 minutes by bus, or under 15 minutes by bike (see below). Five Ways Station is the nearest station, but is only slightly closer, being a 35-minute walk away from the MAC.

### **Tram**

There is also a tram service which travels to areas such as Wolverhampton and West Bromwich which goes from Snow Hill or Jewellery Quarter train stations.

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## **Taxis**

Along with the main taxi apps, you can try the following local companies:

- **Birmingham Taxis:** 0121 702 2000
- **Taxi Birmingham Ltd:** 0121 000 7777
- **St Pauls Cars:** 0121 236 1919

## **Airport**

Birmingham Airport is the closest airport with links to Birmingham International train station. Trains run from Birmingham International to the city centre as well as to major cities around the UK.

## **Cycling**

MAC is in the middle of National Cycle Route 5, as well as situated on the Rea Valley Cycle Road. MAC is readily accessible by bike from Birmingham City Centre and further afield.

There are free bike racks located at both entrances to the building and at the rear of the Outdoor Terrace adjacent to Cannon Hill Park.

The nearest docking stations for West Midlands Cycle Hire are at Edgbaston Road, Bristol Rd (opposite Edgbaston Stadium) and at Birmingham Wildlife Park nearby. You can hire a bike from over 50 locations in and around Birmingham City Centre. More information on hiring a bike can be found at <https://www.wmcyclehire.co.uk/>

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## Where to Stay

### Hotels

Birmingham City Centre has lots of affordable hotel options such as:

- **Premier Inn:** 6 Exchange Square, The Priory Queensway, Birmingham, B4 6FY
- **Ibis:** 55 Irving St, Birmingham B1 1DH
- **Travelodge:** Carrs Lane, Birmingham, B4 7SS

For smaller options, closer to the MAC, you might try:

- **The Bournbrook Inn:** 1273 Pershore Rd, Stirchley, Birmingham B30 2YT
- **Edgbaston House:** 16 Highfield Rd, Birmingham, B15 3DU
- **University of Birmingham Conference Park:** Lucas House Conference Centre, 48 Edgbaston Park Rd, Birmingham B15 2RA

### Hostels

Hostels are a great cheaper option at around £30 a night. Try the following in the city centre:

- **PH Hostel Birmingham:** 2-95 Livery St, Birmingham B3 1RJ
- **Central Backpackers:** 61 - 65 Coventry Street, Birmingham, B5 5NJ

### Airbnb

Birmingham is well-served by Airbnb and similar services. We recommend looking in the nearby boroughs of Moseley, Edgbaston, Kings Heath and Stirchley.

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## What to Do

Whilst there is a plenty to do and see at the festival itself, you might want to travel further afield to explore all that Birmingham has to offer. Here's a local's guide to what to do around Birmingham, in the style of one of our traditional improv warm up games: Name Five Things!

## Name 5 Places to Be

- **Stirchley** - The "Indie Kid". Best for a bar crawl. Check out their breweries.
- **Kings Heath** - The "Bohemian Vibe". Best for varied night life. Check out York Road.
- **Moseley** – The "Village". Best for all your food needs. Check out The Hive.
- **Brindley Place / Mailbox** – "Venice". Best for the photos. Check out the canals.
- **Jewellery Quarter** – "Industrial Heart". Best for some history. Check out the museums.

## Name 5 Places to Drink

- **The Wellington** – City Centre –Best for real ale 37 Bennetts Hill, B2 5SN
- **Cherry Reds** – City Centre – Best for art deco feel 88-92 John Bright St, B1 1BN
- **The Good Intent** – City Centre – Not for profit pub – 32 – 33 Great Western Arcade, B2 5HU
- **Bacchus Bar** – Best underground secret - Burlington Arcade, New St, B2 4JH
- **1000 Trades** – Jewellery Quarter – Best pop-up kitchen 16 Frederick St, B1 3HE

## Name 5 Places to Eat

- **Hockley Social Club**: Jewellery Quarter, best street food, 60 Hampton St, B19 3LU
- **Peacer**: Moseley, best pizza by the slice, 4 Woodbridge Road, B13 8EJ
- **Shababs**: Balti Triangle, one of the oldest Balti houses, 163-165 Ladypool Rd, B12 8LQ
- **Tiger Bites Pig**: City Centre, best hidden gem with bao and rice bowls, 34 Stephenson Street, B2 4BH
- **Original Patty Men**: Digbeth and Stirchley, best burgers, 9 Shaw's Passage, Birmingham B5 5JG, and 1364 Pershore Rd, Stirchley, Birmingham B30

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## Name 5 Places to Soak in Some Culture

- **The Library of Birmingham:** A modern, impressive library and home to the Shakespeare Memorial Room – City Centre, Centenary Square, B1 2ND
- **The Birmingham Botanical Gardens:** Beautiful gardens with impressive Victorian glasshouses – Westbourne Road, Edgbaston, B15 3TR
- **Back to Backs:** Back-to-back houses from the 1840s preserved by the National Trust - City Centre, 55-63 Hurst St, B5 4TE
- **Coffin Works:** A unique coffin-making museum – Jewellery Quarter, 13-15 Fleet St, B3 1JP
- **The Pen Museum:** A fascinating insight into the history of pens in an old steel nib manufactory – Jewellery Quarter, 60 Frederick Street, B1 3HS

## Name 5 Places to Have Fun

- **The Roundhouse:** Brindley Place – Kayak tours all year round on the canal!
- **Cadbury World:** Bournville – Visit the famous chocolate factory
- **Chance and Counters:** Digbeth – A brilliant boardgame café
- **Birmingham Wildlife Conservation Park:** Edgbaston – A collection of animals from around the world, right next to the MAC!
- **Selfridges:** City Centre – upmarket department store with a great food hall.

## Name 5 Beautiful Spots

- Visit the **Floozy in the Jacuzzi** by the Town Hall
- Sit and admire the cathedral in **Pigeon Park** (officially “Cathedral Square”)
- Observe the fountains in **Centenary Square**
- Take in the panoramic views at the top of **The Cube**
- Walk around the canals at **Gas Street Basin**