Welcome to Birmingham!

Birmingham is the UK’s second city but it often overlooked as a great place to live and work. Here is some information about why Birmingham is great!

Places to Live and Schools
Birmingham and the West Midlands offers a huge range of places of live from city centre apartments to the leafy suburbs of Edgbaston and Harbourne with easy access via road or public transport to more rural areas. Moseley has just been voted at the best urban place to live in the Sunday Times best place to live guide. Housing in the area is very affordable and transport links in and around the area are excellent.

To find out more about Birmingham schools have a look at www.birmingham.gov.uk/schools-directory. Birmingham also has a number of Grammar schools as well as Independent schools and Academies. There are a number of Further Education Colleges in the area including Matthew Boulton, Bournville, and South and City College as well as four universities in the area – University of Central England, Birmingham University, Wolverhampton, and Aston University.
Going Out
Birmingham has seen a real renaissance over the last 10 years and has a vibrant and cosmopolitan feel. There is a range of bars and restaurants to suit every mood, taste and budget from China town, to traditional baltis, to a range of bars and bistros such as around the canal basin, to high end Michelin starred restaurants (the highest number of Michelin stars outside of London).  [http://www.dinebirmingham.co.uk](http://www.dinebirmingham.co.uk)

Birmingham has a range of theatres, comedy clubs and arts centres with a wealth of entertainment opportunities. Check out [http://livebrum.co.uk](http://livebrum.co.uk) for listings of events going on around the area. Birmingham is home to the Birmingham Royal Ballet, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), and a number of museums including the Art Gallery, the Newly opened Birmingham Library, and the Thinktank for the more culturally minded! The NEC holds a host of different events, exhibitions and internationally renowned musicians from classical to pop. The NIA hosts a range of international sporting events as well as international musicians and comedians. The Jewelry Quarter provides a fascinating insight to the jewelry industry with an excellent museum as well a lot of shopping opportunities!

Birmingham has a number of cinemas including the wonderful Electric Cinema (one of the oldest working cinemas in the UK) and other independent cinemas including one at the MAC.
Transport
Birmingham has excellent transport links with the International Airport, major rail routes and easy access to motorways. Birmingham to London is just 1 hour 20 minutes by train and 1 hour and 30 minutes to Manchester. The new HS2 rail will decrease these times even more. The airport services most European destinations and Dubai.

The motorway network provides easy access to the Peak District and the Cotswolds for days out.

Shopping
There is a huge range of shopping opportunities in Birmingham with the Bull Ring (including Selfridges), the Mailbox (including Harvey Nichols) and the newly revamped Pallasades centre around the New Street station which will include one of the biggest John Lewis stores outside of London opening in September, 2015.

Sports and Activities
The West Midlands has a rich variety of sporting activities whether you are interested in watching or participating! Local football clubs include Birmingham City, Aston Villa, West Bromwich Albion, Wolverhampton and Walsall. Rugby clubs include Moseley, Coventry and Birmingham and Edgbaston hosts the Warwickshire County Cricket Club with national and international cricket matches, and Edgbaston also hosts international tennis tournaments.
There are a number of running clubs, athletics clubs, gyms, and plenty of parks and open spaces for more casual activities.

**Days Out**
The Black Country Museum, Dudley Zoo, Twycross Zoo, the West Midlands Safari Park, Alton Towers, the Space Centre at Leicester, the Tamworth Snowdome, Warwick Castle, Cadburys World, and many more attractions are within 2 hours travel from Birmingham.

**Sandwell**
Sandwell is not actually a town. It is actually the only borough on the country without a town of the same name! The biggest town in the borough is West Bromwich which has easy access to Birmingham and the rest of the region via train, tram and bus. It is a truly multi-cultural area and renowned for being really friendly. West Bromwich is undergoing its own renaissance with New Square Shopping centre providing great facilities for the area and Sandwell college providing great further education opportunities. It is also very green with the Sandwell Valley Country Park and various Nature reserves.

**Things you might not know about Birmingham**
Birmingham is the youngest city in the country with under 25s making up 40% of the population. For more interesting facts about the area have a look at some of these links:


http://www.google.co.uk/url?url=http://paradisecircus.com/101-things-birmingham-gave-the-world/&rct=j&frm=1&q=&esrc=s&sa=U&ei=Jw4HVeKsMiPxUrq3hNgG&ved=0CBQQFjAA&usg=AFQjCNHoMINGw3kDzvydQvoDiNEtoqhzQ