



Bradford City of Culture 2025: events programme unveiled

Bradford's UK City of Culture 2025 programme offers an exciting opportunity for international visitors to experience the city's rich cultural heritage, diversity and dynamic arts scene. With a year-long calendar of events, including immersive light shows, dance performances, music festivals and film screenings, Bradford has set itself firmly on the map as a destination to experience in 2025.

England

Yorkshire and the Humber

January 2025

[Bradford 2025](#) has unveiled the first events of its UK City of Culture programme, promising a vibrant year-long celebration of the city's rich cultural heritage and dynamic arts scene. Designed to reflect Bradford's multicultural spirit and industrial legacy, the programme includes a diverse array of events, performances and exhibitions, from major public art installations to community-led projects targeted at audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

Opening the celebrations will be the outdoor spectacular [RISE](#) (10-11 January), created by award-winning theatre director Kirsty Housley in collaboration with Bradford-born magician Steven Frayne (formerly known as Dynamo). Other highlights include [Memories of the Future](#) (5 July), a new project from renowned dancer-choreographer Akram Khan and Akram Khan Company, and a three-day contemporary-classical music festival, [New Music Biennial 2025](#),

featuring both local talent and international stars (6-8 June). [The Turner Prize](#), which showcases new developments in British art, will be hosted at [Cartwright Hall Art Gallery](#) from September 2025. Additionally, there will be pop-up exhibitions at [Salts Mill](#), theatre performances in historic venues, and an outdoor art exhibition titled [Wild Uplands](#), set in the moorlands of Penistone Hill Country Park, near Haworth.

Bradford's UNESCO City of Film status will also shine through as part of an eclectic film programme including open-air film screenings, workshops and collaborations with global filmmakers. Highlights will include a screening of Mathieu Kassovitz's classic *La Haine* with a live performance of the score by the Asian Dub Foundation (15 January). Film director Clio Barnard (*Ali & Ava*, *The Selfish Giant*) will curate a [series of films](#) from working-class northern women at [Pictureville](#), Yorkshire's biggest independent cinema (dates tbc).

Introduced in 2009, the UK City of Culture scheme is designed to promote cultural regeneration and economic growth in cities across the UK. Every four years, one city is chosen to hold the title, with the aim of boosting tourism, investment, and community engagement. Taking the mantle from Coventry, Bradford was selected given its rich cultural diversity, historical significance and its growing reputation as a creative hub.

Things to do in Bradford

[Bradford](#) offers a wealth of experiences beyond the UK City of Culture 2025 events, giving visitors a chance to see the city from new perspectives. From the historic architecture of Little Germany to the serene beauty of Lister Park, once crowned Britain's Best Park, the city boasts plenty of sights and activities.

Film and heritage

Dive into Bradford's industrial heritage at the [Bradford Industrial Museum](#), where the city's textile, steam-power and engineering legacies are brought to life. [The National Science and Media Museum](#) showcases world-class exhibitions celebrating film, photography, and broadcasting. Film buffs can also follow the [Bradford Movie Trail](#), a self-guided walk to film locations and places of film history around the city centre.

Foodie delights and underground bars

Bradford's culinary scene is a melting pot of international flavours. Food lovers can indulge in everything from traditional British fare to globally inspired dishes. Opening in spring 2025, [Darley Street Market](#) is set to become a top foodie destination, offering three floors of all-day entertainment and a food hall with 13 street food vendors. Visitors will be able to enjoy dining on an outdoor balcony overlooking the city square.

Alternatively, venture underground to [Sunbridge Wells](#), a hidden gem of subterranean drinking and dining. This unique underground arcade in restored historic tunnels is home to a long cellar bar, pubs and street food stalls. Visitors can tuck into wood-fired pizza, sip ale at one of Bradford's oldest pubs or watch a gig at Wallers Brewery.

Outdoor adventures

For those seeking outdoor thrills, Bradford is a gateway to adventure. Hire a bike and explore the [Great Northern Railway Trail](#), a scenic route that passes iconic landmarks like the [Alhambra Theatre](#) and takes cyclists into the tranquil countryside. For those that prefer walking, the circular [Eccleshill Railway Walk](#) follows a former railway line through the countryside, or head further out and hike through the breathtaking rural scenery of the Yorkshire Dales and Brontë Country, the region that inspired novelists Charlotte, Emily and Anne Brontë. North of Bradford, visit UNESCO

World Heritage Site, [Saltaire](#), a Victorian model village built in the late 19th century. At its heart is the [Salts Mill](#), a historic building turned hip arts space and destination for fine dining and shopping.