



PRESS RELEASE

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12 reasons to visit Bath in 2012

New events, enticing exhibitions and an enduring appeal of architecture, history and spa culture ensure that the beautiful UNESCO World Heritage City of Bath continues to be a tempting place to visit in the new year. Here are 12 reasons why Bath should be on anyone's list of must-see places in 2012...

1. Picnic in the Park

For those looking to make the most of the Queen's Jubilee celebrations, join in the festivities on 5 June at Royal Victoria Park in the centre of Bath where a free 'Picnic in the Park' event will be held. Two giant screens will show all the Jubilee celebrations and a large stage will host performances from the Bath Philharmonic Orchestra, young emerging pop artists and popular ABBA tribute band, Björn Again. Party goers will be encouraged to dress up in retro clothes from 1977 when the Queen celebrated her Silver Jubilee.

2. Bath in Fashion

The third Bath in Fashion is gearing up for an action packed week from Sunday 25 to Saturday 31 March 2012, with plenty of events, fashion shows, talks and workshops that will appeal to fashionistas young and old. Two of the most exciting events include Manolo Blahnik in conversation with Iain R Webb - both leading fashion experts and commentators - and a fascinating talk by Matteo Alessi, the great grandson of Giovanni Alessi who established his business in 1921. The event will also have a local flavour with designers from Bath's independent boutiques showcasing their collections at the Holburne Museum.

3. Independent Bath

Unlike other cities with cloned high streets, branded hotels and chain restaurants, Bath offers something really different, making it an exciting place to explore. Independent shops and boutiques line the city's shopping streets and restaurants unique to Bath serve a delicious choice of international cuisine. If staying in the city, choose from one of the independently-run bed and breakfasts or hotels that offer a personal service and a very comfortable stay.

4. Holburne Museum

After several years of major development, the Holburne finally re-opened its doors in 2011 following an impressive restoration of the original museum building and a glittering new and modern extension. The building now houses major exhibitions, more of its wonderful collection of 9,000 extraordinary objects and artwork founded by Sir William Holburne. The display space is now doubled and the Grade One listed building has been completely restored and transformed for the 21st Century.

5. Art at the Edge

Art at the Edge is an exciting and brand new exhibition coming to the Victoria Art Gallery in the summer of 2012. The collection will feature 30 bronze sculptural statues of different Olympic and Paralympic sports. There will also be a city-wide sport themed sculpture trail featuring 10 life-sized works of art situated in dramatic settings around Bath. The Olympic theme will continue when the Torch Relay comes to Bath on 22 May passing some of Bath's iconic sights.

6. 2,000 years of spa culture

Blessed with the only natural hot springs in the UK, Bath's story has been shaped by its waters, and it has had spa culture at its heart from its very humble beginnings. Today, relaxation and pampering is the order of the day, and with Bath being home to a number of top spa facilities, this is the city in which to indulge. Experience 'Spas Ancient & Modern' - a special spa package that spans 2,000 years. Vouchers can be purchased from the Tourist Information Centre or online via visitbathshop.co.uk. The voucher includes a spa session at the Thermae Bath Spa, entry to the ancient Roman Baths and a Champagne afternoon tea or lunch in the Pump Room for just £61.50 – a perfect way to discover Bath's fascinating historic and modern spa culture.

7. Bike Bath

A brand new event will be coming to Bath next year that is sure to appeal to cycling enthusiasts. There will be organised rides, fun activities and top-level racing in Royal Victoria Park over the weekend of 22 to 24 June. Cyclists can choose to take part in three organised rides - 30, 60 or 100 miles - as well as taking part in other activities and events.

8. A new way to discover Bath

Bath Tourism Plus will be launching its first mobile application for the city of Bath in early 2012. The free app will be available on both iPhone and Android handsets and will provide an interactive and useful source of information about Bath. The essential tool for both visitors and residents on the go will include details of events, accommodation availability, maps and deals and discount vouchers on offer in the city.

9. Classic Bath

One of the reasons Bath was awarded UNESCO World Heritage Site status was thanks to its incredible architecture. The best way to see all the highlights is by joining an organised tour, and there are plenty of ways to explore in Bath – bus tours, boat trips, walking tours and even chauffeur-driven options are just some of the choices available to visitors. Alternatively, download the free World Heritage Site audio tour from visitbath.co.uk that takes listeners on a journey through Bath's unique history and architecture.

10. Family Festival of Music and Sport

Bath Racecourse will be celebrating the London 2012 Olympics on 21 July with a festival for all the family. Music fans will enjoy the programme of entertainment with established and emerging artists as

well as headliner Jools Holland and his Rhythm and Blues Orchestra. Meanwhile, sporting fans can look forward to meeting leading sportsman and women and join the sport activity taster programme provided by clubs and coaches from all over Bath and the surrounding area.

11. Roman Baths

Re-discover one of the UK's top attractions at the Roman Baths in 2012. Even visitors who have been before will be fascinated by the new interpretation and displays following a recent £5.5 million investment. Around the heart of the World Heritage Site and using Britain's only hot springs, the Romans built an impressive temple and bathing complex with much remaining to this day. Walk on ancient pavements where Romans walked, see the extensive ruins and enjoy the beautifully preserved treasures from the spring.

12. Returning favourites

Bath is known as a 'City of Festivals' thanks to its year-round and packed calendar of events. 2012 will see the return of many favourite festivals including the well-established Bath International Music Festival in June, the Jane Austen Festival in September - celebrating all things Regency - and the popular Bath Christmas Market in November, offering festive cheer and gift ideas galore.

Find out more...

For more information on all aspects of visiting Bath see the official tourism website www.visitbath.co.uk for ideas and inspiration. Alternatively, contact the Tourist Information Centre on 0906 7112000 for recommendations and advice, or visit the brand new Visitor Centre which is due to open in early 2012 where they'll be a one stop shop for information and tickets.

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Notes to Editors:

For further information please contact Lucy Ryder at Bath Tourism Plus on 01225 477441 or email: lucy_ryder@bathtourism.co.uk or visit www.visitbath.co.uk, the official tourism website for Bath and the surrounding area.

Bath Tourism Plus

Working with the public and private sectors, Bath's destination marketing organisation, Bath Tourism Plus, takes full responsibility for co-ordinating the work of a busy tourist information centre, the marketing of Bath and the surrounding area to leisure and business travellers, PR activity to attract the nation's top travel writers, a conference office, and development of Bath's official destination website www.visitbath.co.uk

Travel to Bath

Bath is easy to access from all over the UK and the world. Bristol International **Airport** is just 15 miles from Bath and operates flights from the USA, as well as most major European and UK airports. An express bus service to Bristol Temple Meads train station operates throughout the day, and Bath is just a 20 minute train journey from there. See: www.bristolairport.co.uk. High speed, direct **train** services operated by First Great Western link Bath Spa train station to London and its major airports. Bath Spa train station is well situated, just 5 minutes level walk into the city centre's main shopping and tourist areas. See: www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk. Bath is easy to access by **car**, from junction 18 of the M4 motorway which links Bath to Bristol, London and South Wales. There are 3243 public car parking spaces in Bath with the main long stay car parks at Charlotte Street and Avon Street. There are three **Park & Ride** services on the outskirts of the city which operate fast, frequent services into the city centre, offering a hassle free, cost effective way of reaching the city centre. There is also a Park & Ride service that operates on Saturdays only from the University of Bath.