

Two Days in Coventry and Warwickshire - Day One

Begin the day in **Coventry city centre**. Start out at the **Herbert Art Gallery and Museum** which is located in the cultural heart of Coventry city centre, next to the historic Cathedral. Having undergone a £20 million redevelopment, the site has eight permanent galleries displaying its collections and is also home to the History Centre, media suites, a shop, café and four temporary galleries displaying large-scale touring exhibitions from around the world. Move onto the world famous **Cathedral of St Michael**, the site of Coventry's 'new' cathedral. See examples of world-class works of art, including: Graham Sutherland's tapestry, John Piper's baptistry window and Epstein's bronze statue of St Michael defeating the devil. In sharp contrast, the mediaeval ruins of its predecessor stand next door. Destroyed in the Blitz of 14th November 1940, they are now seen as a worldwide symbol of peace and reconciliation.

Still keeping in the medieval quarter take a peek at the mediaeval **Guild Hall of St Mary**. Built in 1342, St Mary's has witnessed events both locally and nationally during its long history. Visitors can explore the Armoury, Mary Queen of Scots room and view the Great Tapestry (completed in 1499). The Great Hall dates from the late 14th and early 15th century and houses a fine tapestry dating from 1500. The Mary Queen of Scots Room is so named because of the imprisonment of the Scottish Queen here in 1569. It also has associations with George Eliot and William Shakespeare.

Walk further into the **Cathedral Quarter** to find **Priory Gardens**, part of Coventry's Phoenix initiative. Over several years of archaeology on this site many medieval buildings have been discovered. The remains of the Benedictine Priory of St Mary, Coventry's first cathedral, including superb decorative stone and glass have been preserved. The **Priory Visitor Centre** and its Undercroft, winner of a string of design awards, houses some of the incredible finds from the excavations and recreates life as it was 500 years ago.

Visit **Holy Trinity Church**, first recorded in 1113 and built for the tenants of the Priory lands to the North of Coventry. Holy Trinity is one of the largest medieval churches in England. It has changed greatly through its 900 year history being practically burnt down in 1257 and being rebuilt, extended and redecorated over time. It now houses one of the finest surviving examples of a mediaeval judgment day "Doom" painting. Dating back to 1435, the painting has been carefully and painstakingly restored.

Take a short walk to the **Coventry Transport Museum** right in the heart of Coventry city centre; it displays the largest collection of British road transport in the world. There are many varied exhibitions, the 'Spirit of Speed' being the most exciting as it gives you the opportunity to feel what it is like travelling at 763 miles per hour!

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Coventry & WARWICKSHIRE

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'Cyclopedia' showcases over a hundred of the museum's cycles dating from 1818 to the most recent high tech examples.

Visit the **Ricoh Arena** that will be renamed the City of Coventry Stadium and will host 12 Olympic football matches this summer. The Ricoh Arena's stadium bowl capacity is 32,600 lending its hand to a multitude of different sporting events. A truly multi-purpose venue located in the heart of the UK, within two hours drive of 75 per cent of the country. Famous for an experience that is easy, flexible and memorable. Watch the Sky Blues football against Barnsley and enjoy a meal in one of the many dining areas at the venue. Retire for the evening to recharge your batteries at the Holiday Inn M6 Junction 2 for a restful sleep and hearty breakfast.

Day Two

Travel to the market town of **Warwick** to explore 1000 years of history at Warwick Castle. See the mediaeval household come to life in 'Kingmaker' as it prepares for battle in 1471. The Great Hall and staterooms are home to outstanding collections of paintings, tapestries and furnishings. Explore and experience the Castle dungeons.

There are also 60 acres of gardens and grounds to explore with refreshments and hot/cold meals available. Visitors should allow at least 3-4 hours if not all day to see and experience the castle in full. See Coventry and Warwickshire's amazing and historic landmarks like you have never seen them before with a scenic tour by Helicopter, departing from **Coventry Airport**, courtesy of Patriot Aerospace. After the helicopter ride drive to the quintessential English Country House hotel, Mallory Court. Indulge yourself with fine wine and award winning food at the Michelin starred restaurant.

No visit to Warwickshire would be complete without spending time in **Stratford-upon-Avon**, historic market town and birthplace of the world's greatest poet and playwright, William Shakespeare. Visit Shakespeare's Birthplace and the recently re-furbished **Royal Shakespeare Theatre**. Take a stroll along the river bank or spend some time lazily boating on the Avon. Other highlights to search out The **Falstaff Experience** where history is brought to life or the open top bus experience where you can hop on and off to see the sights.

Visit the Royal Shakespeare Theatre which offers more than just shows, you can now take a trip up the viewing tower to enjoy views of Shakespeare's home town.

Travel to **Warwick** to dine at the Rose & Crown in Market Square. Smack bang in Warwick town centre, you couldn't get a better location for this modern, stylish gastro pub. It bears all the Peach Pub hallmarks - low coffee tables, leather sofas, vibrant modern colours and a relaxed, buzzy atmosphere. Retire for the night to recharge your batteries at the Holiday Inn M6 Junction 2 for a restful sleep and breakfast before departure.

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