

Diwali

L E I C E S T E R 2 0 2 4



#DiwaliLeicester

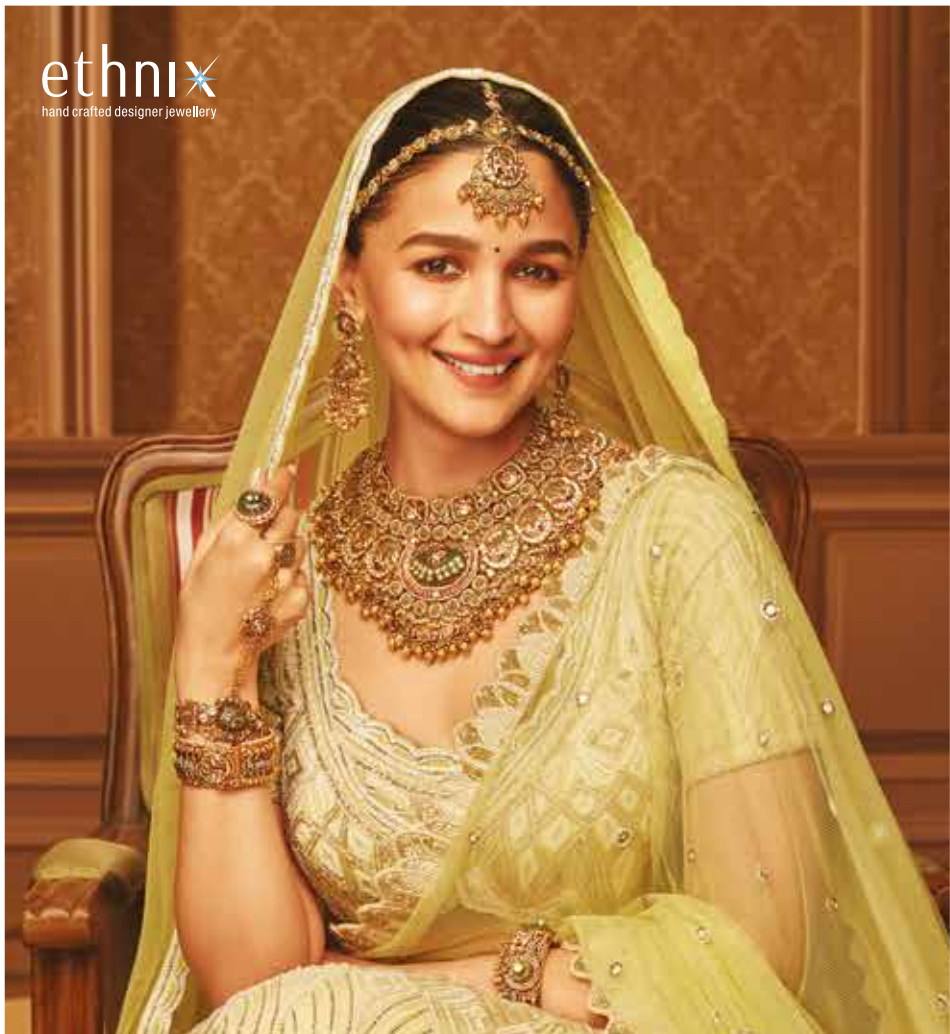
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Welcome

Welcome to Leicester's guide to Diwali 2024.

Celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and some Buddhists, Diwali is important to all our communities.

We are exceptionally proud of our Diwali celebrations and we want Diwali to continue to thrive as part of Leicester's annual events calendar.

This year however, in exceptionally difficult financial circumstances, we have had to make changes.

We are delighted to continue to support the festival with thousands of decorative lights and, following consultation with community representatives and local businesses, we have combined the celebrations into one major event on Diwali Day itself.

We are very grateful to all our partners who make the city's Diwali celebrations possible, and who work to ensure the events are safe and successful.

Thanks go to Leicester Hindu Festival Council, our programming partners, Leicestershire Police, East Midlands Ambulance Service, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service, local ward councillors and the many different council teams involved.

We will continue to work with partners to look at how we can make our Diwali celebrations sustainable in the long term.

We wish everyone Happy Diwali and Happy New Year.



Sir Peter Soulsby
City Mayor



Cllr Vi Dempster
Assistant City Mayor



Cllr Manjula Sood
Assistant City Mayor

For further information on Diwali in Leicester:

W: visitleicester.info

E: info@visitleicester.info

T: 0116 299 4444

What is Diwali



Diwali is an ancient festival celebrated by **Hindus, Sikhs** and **Jains** all over the world. It represents the universal messages of good over evil, of truth over falsehood and of light shining in the dark of the year. It is traditionally a time for exchanging gifts, friendship, peace, and goodwill to all.

For **Hindus**, Diwali represents the start of the New Year. It also marks the beginning of winter. Diwali honours **Lord Rama** and his wife **Sita** returning to their kingdom of Ayodhya, following Rama and **Hanuman's** victory over the demon **King Ravana** and rescue of Sita from his evil clutches.



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Each day leading up to Diwali has a different meaning and these also vary between regions or communities.

The first day marks the start of Diwali. It is dedicated to the worship of the **Goddess Lakshmi** who provides prosperity.

On the second, there is a focus on abolishing evil and the **Goddess Kali** is worshipped.

On the third, Diwali day, clay lamps (called **divas**) and candles are lit in temples and houses, and fireworks are let off, giving Diwali its name of **Festival of Lights**. People also clean and decorate their homes with Rangoli (traditional colourful folk patterns), buy new clothes, and give each other gifts and sweets.

On the fourth, it is the start of the New Year (**Nutan Varsh**) and businesses traditionally open new accounts.

The fifth day is important to Hindus as it celebrates the relationship between brothers and sisters.

People seek blessings at Diwali from **Lakshmi**, the goddess of wealth and prosperity, and **Lord Ganesha**, the remover of obstacles.

For **Sikhs**, Diwali celebrates the release of the sixth guru, **Guru Hargobind Ji**, and 52 Hindu Rajas (kings) from imprisonment. Guru Hargobind Ji was held for 40 days at the Gwalior Fortress along with the Rajas, who had been deprived of their kingdoms and were badly treated. When the time came for the Guru's release, he refused to leave unless the Rajas were also set free.

The condition imposed on him was that only those Rajas that could hold onto the Guru's robe would be set free. Guru Hargobind Ji had a special robe made with 52 khalia (tapers) so that each of the Rajas could walk free with him. He was then given the name '**Bandhi Chhorr**', the deliverer of prisoners.

In India, Sikhs celebrate by lighting candles and divas (clay lamps) in houses and on the Sarowar – the sacred water which surrounds the Golden Temple, Amritsar. Sikhs in Leicester celebrate in Gurdwaras (temples).

For **Jains**, followers of one of India's most ancient religions, Diwali marks the anniversary of the attainment of **Moksha**, the final liberation of the soul from the cycle of death and rebirth, by **Lord Mahavir**. On this day, Jains celebrate this permanent happiness of the soul and remember Lord Mahavir's last sermon, which was given on Diwali day, before his soul left his body and was liberated.

HAPPY
Diwali

FROM EVERYONE AT

NEXT

Wishing you happiness and light during this celebration.

Leicester's Diwali Celebrations



Sparkle
at the festival
of
lights

Join us for
crafts & henna art
at the Diwali Village



Leicester's Diwali festivities are among the largest outside India, offering a vibrant celebration of culture and tradition. Whether you're drawn by the dazzling fireworks, lively performances, delicious food, or colourful fashion, come and immerse yourself in the spirit of Diwali with us!

The highlight of the festival will be a stunning firework display and live entertainment on **Diwali Day, Thursday 31 October**. A special thanks to our Diwali Leicester sponsors, **Malabar Gold and Diamonds**.

Throughout the two-week celebration, there will be a wide range of events across the city, and we invite everyone to join in the joy and excitement here in Leicester.

Leicester's Golden Mile will be beautifully lit throughout the festive season, leading up to the grand celebrations on Diwali Day. The main stage programme will run from 5pm to 8.30pm on Cossington Recreation Ground, showcasing an array of performances, organised by the Leicester Hindu Festival Council.

A fantastic array of street artists and performers will parade up and down Belgrave Road bringing music and entertainment to all.



The Diwali Village, sponsored by LIDL GB will once again take place at Cossington Street Recreation Ground. Featuring food stalls, funfair rides, an additional stage with a laser show, a fire garden display and a mesmerizing LED light installation created by the Canal and River Trust.

Fireworks remain a key highlight of Diwali festivities, with a stunning display set for 7.30pm on Diwali Day. Expect a dazzling combination of aerial fireworks and pyrotechnics, which can be seen from all across the event site.

Leicester's famous Wheel of Light will also be located on Belgrave Road from Saturday 12 October to Saturday 2 November.

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Diwali
CELEBRATIONS

FREE EVENT

Friday 25 October
11am - 3pm

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What's On



Diwali

Day

Thursday 31 October 3pm - 9pm

Diwali Village 3pm - 9pm Cossington Recreation Ground
Main Stage 5pm - 8.30pm Cossington Recreation Ground

The main stage will be on Cossington Recreation Ground on **Thursday 31 October from 5.30pm to 8.30pm**, offering an exciting evening of entertainment.

From 3pm to 9pm, the **Diwali Village** at Cossington Recreation Ground will be buzzing with activities. Enjoy **fashion, arts, crafts, a children's funfair, and a variety of Indian snacks, curries, and drinks**. Sponsored by **Lidl GB**, the village will also feature the stunning **Neon Waterfall** and the **Fire Garden** will return again for 2024, offering a peaceful oasis amid the festive excitement.

Along the **Golden Mile**, immerse yourself in a family-friendly programme of **street theatre** and **processions**. The celebrations will include music, puppets, dance, and storytelling.

For a stunning view of the celebrations, hop on **Leicester's Wheel of Light**,

providing a panoramic view of the brightly illuminated streets along the Golden Mile.

The grand finale of Leicester's Diwali celebrations will be an extraordinary **fireworks display**. The aerial fireworks will light up the sky and can be viewed from far and wide, capping off a magical day.



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Highlights



Wheel of Light

Saturday 12 October – 2 November
Belgrave Road

W: visitleicester.info

The Diwali Wheel of Light returns to Belgrave Road, providing a glittering centrepiece and extra fun to this year's celebrations. Each ride lasts for approximately 8 to 10 minutes, in which you'll rise to a dizzying 110 feet. The wheel offers unparalleled views around the Golden Mile and beyond.

Red Bull DJ Truck

Thursday 31 October

5pm - 8.30pm

Belgrave Road

Red Bull is energising your Diwali celebrations with DJs and live performances on Belgrave Road.



Rangoli Exhibition

Thursday 31 October

4pm - 9pm

Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre

E: Harharproduction15@gmail.com

Har Har productions in partnership with Leicester City Council and Tilda, bring you the Rangoli exhibition - a mixture of vibrant, breathtakingly, modern and traditional Rangoli patterns.

Rangoli is an ancient folk-art form that originates from India, created at Diwali on doorsteps, in which patterns are created on the floor using powdered bright colours.

Be inspired by Rangoli artist Milan Arvindkumar and his team who will produce visually stunning artwork as part of the Diwali in Leicester celebrations in Belgrave.

WISHING ALL OUR CUSTOMERS A VERY

HAPPY Diwali

E: info@pinnacleaccountants.co.uk W: www.pinnacleaccountants.co.uk

DIWALI DAY 2024

Thursday 31 October, 3pm – 9pm


Main stage 5pm - 8.30pm








Fireworks display starts at approx. 7.30pm

Diwali Village closes at 9pm





 The green zones show the best place to watch the Diwali Firework display

-  Toilets
-  Bike Park
-  Stalls
-  Street Food
-  First Aid
-  Entrance / Exit
-  Information & Missing Child



Leicester
City Council

Image credit: K. Korla



India to Leicester An Artist's Journey

Exhibition on now until 1 December
Leicester Museum & Art Gallery
W: leicestermuseums.org

Telling the story of artist K. Korla and his drive to pursue a career in the arts. It explores his life from his early beginnings in India, to how he came to establish himself as the UK's first Asian graphic artist.

This exhibition includes many of his commercial works and contemporary paintings. Inspired by the rich culture of colourful India, these poetically capture moments in everyday village life from a time gone by. Through the expert use of colour, and with bold composition,

his works preserve and celebrate the essence of India as he remembers it.

K. Korla continues to make a significant impact on British Asian culture, with his works reaching across continents.





Ragas with Soul:

Aayush Mohan + Sanju Sahai

Friday 18 October

7pm - 8.30pm

Attenborough Art Centre

Tickets: £15 / £20

W: darbar.org/events

Experience an enchanting evening of Hindustani classical music with emerging sarod player Aayush Mohan and tabla maestro Sanju Sahai. Explore the depth of ragas through a traditional structure, starting with a meditative alaap and evolving into rhythmic jor and jhala sections. The dynamic interplay between the sarod and tabla will culminate in a thrilling finale, offering a captivating journey into Indian classical music. Produced by Darbar Arts Culture Heritage Trust.

Diwali Celebration

Saturday 19 October

John Lewis, Highcross Leicester

W: highcrossleicester.com

John Lewis Leicester are proud to be partnering with the BAP Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, Leicester to celebrate Diwali this year. Enjoy a special selection of cultural performances and Hindu dancers in the store plus view the dedicated Diwali sculpture especially produced to mark the Diwali celebration in the store.



Diwali 40

Throughout October

W: inspirate.org

Inspirate will uncover the 40-year history of Diwali Festival in Leicester with an exciting array of events. Look out for the giant street art mural on Belgrave Road, the Mellor Primary school exhibition in Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre, as well as the DiwaliLeicester.com animated website - sharing stories from local communities, a short film and the historic 40 year journey, which turned Diwali Leicester, into one of the biggest Diwali celebrations outside of India. Funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund. Fund and Arts Council England.

Diwali Celebrations

Friday 25 October

11am - 3pm

Haymarket Shopping Centre

W: haymarketshoppingcentre.com

Join the Mr Cleaver's Monsters team for an awesome Diwali shadow puppet-making workshop. Make characters from the Ramayana and try them out on the projector screen. Make clay divas and glow in the dark mandalas with the team from Kala Arts and see students from Nupur Arts with their dance performances.



Festival of Lights Graffiti Residency

Monday 21, Tuesday 22 and

Wednesday 23 October

10am - 2pm

Pedestrian

W: pedestrian.info

Join Pedestrian for a free three-day Graffiti Residency, inspired by the Festival of Lights. Work with professional artists to spray your own graffiti artworks to take home using lettering, stencils, tags and much more. Ages 8 - 16 years, SEN / additional needs are welcome.



Spirit to Matter: Exhibition Launch and Last Friday

Friday 25 October

5pm - 10pm

LCB Depot

Tickets: £2.50

W: lcbdepot.co.uk

Spirit to Matter takes place during a celebratory and transformational time of the year as people around the world celebrate Diwali; Dia De Muertos; Samhain; Halloween and Black History Month, LCB Depot creates a space for contemplating the transformational potential of existence.

Featuring work by Pasha Kincaid, Marianne Scahill-Pape, Raisa Watkiss, Shivani Khoshia, and more, this exhibition will celebrate ancient wisdom and collective creativity. With funding from Arts Council.



Ramayan Story Telling Workshop & Performance

Saturday 26 October

11am - 1pm workshop on heroic Ram

7pm - 8pm Performance Ramayan

Curve Theatre

W: curveonline.co.uk

As part of Diwali at Curve the Centre for Indian Classical Dance is delighted to present workshop and an uplifting evening performance on the stories from Ramayan performed by Anaya Sudha (Bharatanatyam), Anuradha (Kathak), Pallavi (Odissi), Shalini and her group (Mohiniattam).

Diwali celebrates the triumph of light over darkness, good over evil. All communities are welcome to share this important celebration with us.



Waterfall of Light

Saturday 26 October

5.30pm - 8pm

Leicester Outdoor Pursuits Centre

E: Kelly.alcock@canalrivertrust.org.uk

Join the Canal & River Trust, in partnership with Leicester Outdoor Pursuits Centre for a spectacular waterside Diwali celebration. This magical evening will feature an enchanting Waterfall of Lights, a stunning lights trail created by the local community, and an on-the-water lights paddle display. There will also be bell-boat paddling activities on the water and high ropes adventures for the thrill-seekers.

Get involved in the excitement by helping us create our magical lights trail at our pre-event art workshops and let's light up the night together. Free event but bookable discounted activities available on the night.

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An Evening of Music & Light:
**Annual Diwali concert of Indian
 Classical Music**

Saturday 26 October

7.30pm - 9pm

Leicester Cathedral

Tickets: £15 / £12

W: [leicestercathedral.org/
 events/2024/10/annual-diwali-concert-
 of-indian-classical-music](https://leicestercathedral.org/events/2024/10/annual-diwali-concert-of-indian-classical-music)

Join us for the annual concert of Indian Classical Music, in partnership with the Sitar Music Society, for the Diwali Festival of Lights. The concert will be a recital of instrumental music by Debasmita Bhattacharya playing the Sarod, accompanied by Sanju Sahai on the Tabla.

**From India to Leicester:
 Meet the Artist**

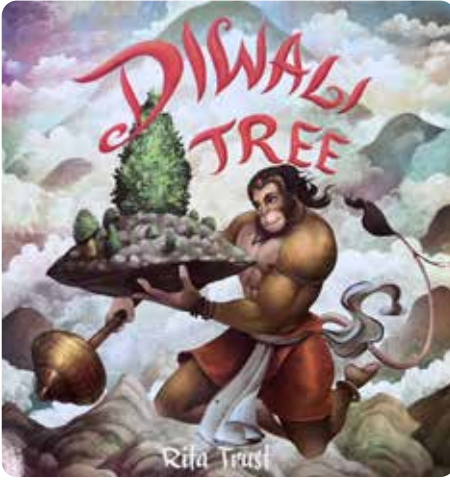
Sunday 27 October

11am - 2pm

Leicester Museum & Art Gallery

W: leicester museums.org

Meet the local artist Kamal Koria, known for his dynamic and colourful approach to contemporary Asian art. Come and see his unique style, which merges traditional techniques with modern aesthetics and has captivated audiences worldwide. This is truly a unique opportunity to meet with a first generation migrant artist who made his career in Leicester.



Diwali Tree

Sunday 27 October

3pm - 5pm

Peepul Centre

W: peepulenterprise.com

Supported by the Ethnic Inclusion Foundation and performed by children. The Enchanted Diwali Tree tells the story of the enchanting Sanjivani (Bay Tree) that Hanuman flies across the seas to revive the unconscious Lakshaman, all enacted in a Rama Sita love story setting. Bookings required.



Diwali at Curve

Curve Theatre

During October

W: curveonline.co.uk

Join Curve for Diwali celebrations including themed events, workshops, shows and activities for all ages throughout the period. Stay tuned to Curve's social media channels to find out more soon.

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Sculptural Gateway



Sculptural Gateway on Belgrave Circle is a new piece of public art by Anuradha Patel, conceived to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Ugandan Asian migration to the city and celebrate Leicester's proud history of offering sanctuary to people fleeing persecution and conflict.

brief reflected the collective identity and memory of Leicester's Ugandan Asian diaspora.

Following an open call for artists Anuradha Patel's design for Sculptural Gateway was selected, marking the start of an artist-led collaborative process to bring the vision to life.



Discussions explored the potential to make Belgrave Circle a shared space that: an inclusive area for contemplation and reflection, for all communities, to come and celebrate their different journeys to Leicester.

Leicester Museum & Galleries began the process of commissioning the project with an in-depth consultation involving local community leads and stakeholders. By gathering these insights, this ensured that the artist

Thanks to the generous donations from sponsors, engraved granite paving featuring family names of supporters was introduced as a key feature of the shared space at Belgrave Circle. These contributions helped bring additional landscaping enhancements to life, completing the transformation in Spring 2024.

For further information:
leicestermuseums.org/
SculpturalGateway



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Travel into Leicester

Park & Ride

The Diwali Park & Ride service will be operating for Diwali Day. This will run from the Birstall Park & Ride site, located at LE4 4NN to Belgrave Road as parking is limited. The drop off and pick up point will be on Belgrave Road at the lay-by opposite Painter Street.

The services will run from Birstall Park & Ride site to Belgrave Circle from 4pm until 10pm with a break between 7pm and 8pm. The last bus will leave promptly at 10pm.

The cost will be £4 per person for a return journey or £7.50 for a group of up to five people travelling in a car together. The cost for concessionary pass holders is £1 for a return journey. Park & Ride Season Tickets will not be valid.

For the most up to date information on public transport, walking and cycling routes and car shares, please visit choosehowyoumove.co.uk Safe and secure bike park on site.

Car parking

Car parking spaces in and around the area will be limited during the event; therefore visitors are positively encouraged to use public transport to travel to and from the city centre. There will be limited spaces available for blue badge holders on a first come first served basis in the B&M carpark access from Belgrave Circle.

A 24-hour NCP car park is situated in Abbey Street, which is approximately a three minute walk from bus stops and approximately a 15 minute walk from the event. 24-hour parking is also available at the Haymarket Centre, and also at Lee Circle, which are approximately a 15 minute walk from the event.

There are other car parks a little further out from the ones mentioned, these are Phoenix Square, Upper Brown Street Car Park, Dover Street and NewarkeStreet.



Bus services

The bus services below are those that will travel, or have stops near to, Belgrave Road. Bus services will continue to operate normally on Abbey Park Road and Belgrave Gate to facilitate attendance at the events.

4 (First) Rushey Mead Departs Haymarket Bus Station Stand HR

5 (Arriva) East Goscote Departs Haymarket Bus Station Stand HQ

6 (Arriva) Syston Departs Haymarket Bus Station Stand HP

25 (First) Beaumont Leys Departs Haymarket Bus Station Stand HV

26 (First) Beaumont Leys Departs Haymarket Bus Station Stand HW

54 (First) Beaumont Leys Departs Haymarket Bus Station Stand HY

126/7 (Arriva) Shepshed/Loughborough Departs St Margaret's Bus Station Stand SC

Bus Diversions

When Belgrave Road is closed to traffic bus services will divert as follows:

Services **4** to Rushey Mead, **6** to Thurmaston and **5, 5A** to Melton will use Marfitt Street and Catherine Street. Services to **25/6** and **54** to Beaumont Leys/MowmacreHill and **126/7** to Loughborough will use Abbey Lane.

The nearest point that buses will be able to access Belgrave Road are Belgrave Roundabout and Melton Road at Marfitt Street.

Further information on bus timetables, fares and disruptions can be found on www.leicesterbuses.co.uk



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Road Closure Information

Thursday 31 October

A full closure of Belgrave Road and the junctions with its side roads will be in place from 5pm until approximately 9.30pm, during which time vehicles will not have any access.

Please note the Emergency Services and Leicester City Council will need to maintain two clear routes through the Belgrave area for emergency vehicles.

The routes are: Loughborough Road, Holden Street, Ross Walk, MacDonald Road, Hildyard Road, Marjorie Street, Abbey Park Street, Harrison Road, Surrey Street, Doncaster Road, Cossington Street, Rothley Street, Rendell Road and Portsmouth Road.

Any vehicles parked on these roads, which will be marked on both sides with 'No Waiting' cones, between 6am and 10pm on Thursday 31 October will be ticketed and towed away. Doncaster Road will have the existing one-way order suspended.

In addition, any vehicle causing an obstruction on any road in the

Belgrave Area will also be ticketed and towed away. Any vehicle parked in contravention of a parking restriction, temporary parking restriction, causing obstruction or dangerously parked will be issued with a Penalty Charge Notice and will be towed away to a secure compound.

Health & Safety

In the interests of public safety, members of the public are asked not to bring fireworks to the celebrations. The use of fireworks in a public area will not be tolerated and will be reported to the police.

Leicestershire Police will have mobile awareness units at this year's events, highlighting the importance of safety during the festive period. The units will be at the Diwali Village on Cossington Street Recreation Ground for the public to pop along to. We would like to thank Leicestershire Fire & Rescue Service and Leicestershire Police for their continued support of the Diwali celebrations.

For further information visit: celebratesafely.com





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BELGRAVE

GOLDEN MILE

Rushey Fields

Cossington Recreation Ground

P
Abbey Park

Road Closure Key

- Road Closure, no parking.
- Emergency Routes, no parking
- Vehicles causing an obstruction will be towed

A Taste of Leicester

Diwali is one of Leicester's cultural highlights, with some of the biggest Diwali day celebrations outside Asia. This is no surprise for the city that has just been named **England's Curry Capital!**

But there's lots more to explore here, so why not take the time to discover one of England's oldest cities, where recent developments and modern attractions sit alongside 2,000 years of history.

Explore the greatest lost and found story ever told as you follow the journey of **King Richard III** from **Bosworth Battlefield**, where he lost the battle that reshaped English history, to the **King Richard III Visitor Centre** where you'll learn how his lost remains were uncovered 500 years later, to **Leicester Cathedral** where you can see his last resting place.



The city's free museums are always packed full of artefacts, artwork and exhibitions which showcase the city's history, culture and communities.

Thanks to the University of Leicester we have an international reputation for innovation in space, and we are home to the UK's **National Space Centre**, with rockets, spacesuits and interactive exhibits.

Out in Leicestershire take a ride on the **Great Central Railway** to Loughborough on a restored steam train or visit **Taylor's Bell Foundry Museum**, the only remaining working bell foundry in the UK whose bells can be found all over the world, including in temples across the Asian subcontinent.





You can take a trip out to **Twycross Zoo** which is the only zoo in the UK to have all four Great Apes, experience the historic country house at **Stoneywell** and the **1620s House**, or see canal boats travel through ten locks up a 75-foot hill at **Foxton Locks**.

Leicester is known for its fantastic diversity and that is showcased in our food! In Leicester you can explore the world on a plate, from the **curry houses** and sweet shops of the **Golden Mile** that helped us win the England's Curry Capital title, through to authentic **European** and **South American** dishes in the city centre. Alongside the fantastic vegetarian Indian restaurants, Leicester is where Donald Watson coined the term 'Vegan' in the 1940s, and there are many **vegan** and vegetarian places to eat, which are perfect for a plant-based diet.

Getting a taste of Leicestershire means trying some of our local delicacies.

Stilton and **Red Leicester cheese** plus the delicious pork pie are among the local foods giving you a Taste of England. We are positively packed

with fantastic places to eat, drink, buy and experience the very best locally produced food.

If you want to make your visit to Leicester extra special, then stay for more than a day. Choose from luxury apartments at **The Gresham** or **Pocklington**, or book a city centre room at the **Novotel**, **Voco**® Leicester or the **Ramada Encore**. Check availability and book direct on the Visit Leicester website.



Whatever it is you're looking for from your visit to Leicester and Leicestershire, you'll find it all at **visitleicester.info**

Leicester's

Family Hub



Helping you to give your baby the best Start for Life

Leicester's Family Hub network works together to provide information and services for families including:

- ♥ Antenatal and postnatal support
- ♥ Special educational needs and disabilities
- ♥ Parenting advice and support
- ♥ Emotional wellbeing and mental health
- ♥ Money and housing
- ♥ Community groups in your area.



For help and support, visit the early adopter Family Hubs at select Children, Family and Young People Centres.



Funded by
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families.leicester.gov.uk



Leicester
City Council

Christmas in Leicester



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Food & Family since 1896



Happy Diwali

Wishing all our colleagues and friends peace, prosperity and a very happy Diwali.

Samworth Brothers makes delicious, quality food enjoyed by millions of people every day. As a family business we aim to be a force for good: Reinvesting in the future of our business, so we can make a positive difference and celebrate our success with our people, our customers and our communities.

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