



Cultural festivals to experience in Britain in 2025

Across England, Scotland, and Wales, 2025 is set to be an exciting year for cultural celebrations, with events highlighting everything from world-class performances to grassroots community art.

England

Highland Scotland

Scotland

Wales

July 2025

England

England boasts a year packed with world-class cultural experiences, beginning with Bradford's moment in the spotlight as the [UK City of Culture](#). This historic Yorkshire city has transformed into a creative hub, offering a year-long celebration of art, heritage, and community. From immersive performances in repurposed mills to vibrant street festivals showcasing Bradford's diversity, visitors will find endless inspiration. Highlights include [Memories of the Future](#) (5 July 2025), 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 to 8 June 2025).

Meanwhile, Manchester cements its status as a cultural powerhouse with the return of the [Manchester International Festival](#) (MIF) (3 to 20 July 2025), with Kee Hong Low as this year's Creative Director. This biennial event celebrates new and groundbreaking works across music, visual arts, and theatre. Whether exploring large-scale installations or intimate performances in unique venues, the festival tries to push boundaries to captivate audiences. The full programme is scheduled to be announced in March 2025. However, one confirmed highlight is '[The Trequartista – Art and Football United](#)', a two-year collaboration between 11 contemporary artists and 11 footballers. The project, which kicked off at MIF23, is co-curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist,

writer Josh Willdigg, and former Chelsea and Manchester United footballer Juan Mata.

In the capital, the [BFI London Film Festival](#) takes over cinemas across the city in October, premiering some of the most exciting films of the year. This globally renowned event attracts stars, filmmakers and cinephiles from every corner of the world, celebrating storytelling on the big screen. The programme will be unveiled later in the year. Documentary enthusiasts can head to [Sheffield DocFest](#) (18 to 23 June 2025), which showcases the best in documentary filmmaking through screenings, discussions, and panels. The specific programme details for 2025 have not been released. However, based on previous editions, visitors can anticipate a diverse array of compelling documentaries, insightful talks, and immersive experiences.

In the south of England, literary enthusiasts can commemorate the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen's birth. Key events include the [Jane Austen Festival](#) in Bath (12 to 21 September 2025), an annual ten-day festival celebrating the author's life and work, including Regency-era balls, theatrical performances, and literary talks. For her anniversary, visitors can expect an expanded programme to be confirmed closer to the time. To the north, [Chatsworth House](#) in Derbyshire, which took a starring role in the 2005 film adaptation of Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice*, is also planning a series of events to mark the anniversary (13 to 15 June 2025).

Britain's biggest South Asian festival, [Birmingham Mela](#) will also return to Victoria Park in Smethwick, Birmingham (19 to 20 July 2025). Featuring more than 150 international and local artists, including stars like Sunanda Sharma and Yasir Hussain, it is a colourful celebration of South Asian music, dance, and culture. Visitors can indulge in the Food Village, browse the stalls at the Shopping Bazaar or get creative at the Art Village as part of the celebrations.

In addition, [Portsmouth](#) will host [UK Pride](#) (7 June 2025), while other major LGBTQIA+ celebrations can be found at [London Pride](#) (29 June 2025) [Brighton & Hove Pride](#) (2 to 3 August 2025) and [Manchester Pride](#) (22 to 25 August 2025).

Scotland

Scotland's festival season is a blend of ancient traditions and contemporary artistry, with Edinburgh welcoming a host of major festivals in the summer. Led by festival director Nicola Benedetti with a theme of 'The Truth We Seek', [The Edinburgh International Festival](#) (1 to 24 August 2025) draws world-class talent in opera, theatre, and dance. Meanwhile, the [Edinburgh Festival Fringe](#) (1 to 25 August 2025) offers an explosion of creativity across comedy, drama, and experimental art forms. The city's cobbled streets come alive with performers, pop-up venues, and audiences from around the globe, creating an eclectic atmosphere.

In the summer, the [Highland Games](#) (May to September 2025) provide a uniquely Scottish experience. These traditional events, held across the country, feature events like caber tossing alongside Highland dancing, bagpipe music, and local food. Another Highlands' highlight is the [Belladrum Tartan Heart Festival](#) (31 July to 2 August 2025), offering a weekend brimming with music, art, and festival fun. This year's theme, 'Bella Goes to the Moovies', invites visitors to embrace their inner film stars and encourages them to don costumes inspired by cinematic classics. The 2025 line-up boasts an eclectic mix of artists, including Texas and indie rockers The Pigeon Detectives.

As 2025 ends and a new year begins, Scotland's legendary [Hogmanay](#) celebrations are set to usher in 2026 in spectacular style. Edinburgh's streets light up with fireworks and live music, culminating in the dramatic Loony Dook, a chilly but joyous dip in the Firth of Forth, near Edinburgh, symbolising a (very) fresh start to the new year.

Wales

In Wales, the festivals are just as vibrant. Kicking off the season is [St David's Day](#) (1 March 2025), an annual national celebration of Welsh culture. According to tradition, Welsh soldiers wore leeks during battle to distinguish themselves from their enemies, a custom supposedly linked to St. David, the patron saint of Wales. To honour the tradition, many proudly don the vegetable on St. David's Day, as part of the celebrations which include parades and festivities across the country. Why not grab a leak and soak in the atmosphere at the [National St. David's Day Parade in Cardiff](#) (1 March 2025).

The [Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod](#) (8 to 13 July 2025) is one of the nation's most cherished cultural celebrations, bringing together musicians, dancers, and choirs from around the world. Against the backdrop of the Welsh hills, the festival will open with a performance by Roger Daltrey (8 July 2025), the frontman of British rockers, *The Who*, who will deliver a concert filled with hits from both his time with the band and solo career.

For literary lovers, the [Hay Festival](#) in Hay-on-Wye (22 May to 1 June 2025) offers an escape into the world of books. This well-known literary festival gathers some of the most influential writers, thinkers, and storytellers for a series of lively discussions, readings, and panels. 'Earlybird' events have already been announced, including talks by Robert Macfarlane, Rebecca Solnit, and Richard Dawkins. Nestled amid the stunning Brecon Beacons (Bannau Brycheiniog), Hay has lots to offer beyond the festival. Wander its quirky independent bookshops or climb the highest peaks in the [Brecon Beacons \(Bannau Brycheiniog\) National Park](#). The region also plays host to the [Green Man Festival](#) (14 to 17 August 2025). This independent festival offers an eclectic mix of music with immersive art installations, local food, and family-friendly activities, alongside striking natural vistas.