

# plymouth

Escape the shops & explore the historic city on a visit to this city at the edge of Devon

With a rich maritime past and an important naval base, Plymouth is situated at the mouths of the rivers Plym and Tamar and at the head of one of the world's largest and most spectacular natural harbours, the Plymouth Sound.

The earliest known settlement in Plymouth dates back to 1000 BC with a small iron age trading port located at Mount Batten in Plymstock. It is thought that tin was brought here from Dartmoor via the Plym and traded with the ancient Phoenicians.

In 1403, the town was taken over and then partially destroyed by fire by the French, and during the Hundred Years' War it was often the target of foreign enemies.

It was during the 16th century that Plymouth became the home of many successful maritime traders, including Sir William Hawkins and his son John. Buildings that can be found in The Barbican date from this time and were lucky enough to escape the bombs of World War II.

As an Atlantic port Plymouth has seen the arrival and departure of

many historical figures in English history. Catherine of Aragon (first wife of King Henry VIII) and Pocahontas both arrived in England via the port. It was also from Plymouth that the Pilgrims sailed to the New World in 1620 aboard the Mayflower before landing at and founding the 'Plymouth Colony' (the Mayflower Steps can be found near the National Marine Aquarium). Napoleon Bonaparte was brought to Plymouth aboard the HMS Bellerephon which remained in Plymouth Sound for two weeks before taking him to exile on St Helena in 1815 and the surviving crew of the RMS Titanic disaster arrived at Millbay docks on their return to England in 1912.

Most visitors are drawn to the spectacular Plymouth Hoe, an area on Plymouth Limestone low cliffs, overlooking Plymouth Sound; it is believed that this is the place where Sir Francis Drake completed his game of bowls before setting sail to defeat the Spanish Armada.

Plymouth was one of the United Kingdom's principal naval dockyards, a naval tradition that continues to

this day. The city was extensively blitzed during the Second World War, to the extent that approximately twice the amount of houses that existed before the war was destroyed during it (as a result of rebuilt houses being destroyed by bombs).

The first bomb fell on the city on Saturday 6 July 1940, killing 3 people. The last attack came on 30th April 1944. Altogether 1,172 people were killed and 3,269 people were injured – these figures do not include the many service casualties. At one point the population fell from 220,000 at the start of the war to 127,000.

In the middle of the devastation a famous wooden sign was anonymously posted over the door of St. Andrew's Church saying simply "Resurgam" (a Latin word meaning "I shall rise again"), indicating the wartime spirit. To this day the entrance to the ruined church (now located in the middle of a roundabout at the edge of the city) has been called the Resurgam door.

# places to visit

## Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery

Opened in 1910 the museum has a permanent collection as well as visiting exhibitions. With natural history, art and maritime displays there's something for everyone.

The museum is next to Plymouth's Central Library and opposite the University of Plymouth on North Hill.

### Opening Times

Mon. 10am – 5pm

Tues. – Fri. 10am – 5.30pm

Sat. 10am – 5pm

## The Plymouth Arts Centre

Opened 50 years ago, the arts centre offers some of the best exhibitions by local, national and international artists in a range of mediums. Among the influential and innovative artists with connections to Plymouth Arts Centre exhibitors include Beryl Cook, Patrick Heron, Tracey Emin, Allen Ginsberg and Sir Terry Frost.

The museum is located between the city centre and the Barbican; close to Bretonside Bus Station.

The Arts Centre also has an excellent cafe, serving good food at reasonable prices.



### Opening Times

Mon. – Sat. 10am – 8.30pm

Sun. 5.30 – 8.30pm

## Smeaton's Tower (Lighthouse)

A centrepiece on Plymouth's Hoe, Smeaton's Tower was originally built on the Eddystone reef in 1759, but was taken down in the early 1880s. Now standing at 22m (72') high, Smeaton's Tower provides fantastic views of Plymouth Sound and the City.

### Opening Times

Tues. – Sat. – 10am – 3pm

## The National Marine Aquarium

The aquarium was the first to be set up in the United Kingdom for the purpose of education, conservation and research. It has attracted over 2 million visitors in the past 6 years. It is now firmly established as a source of reliable and accurate information and is a regular adviser to many newspapers, magazine, radio and television projects.

### Opening Times

Nov. – March: Daily 10am – 5pm



## Plymouth Gin Distillery

If it says 'Plymouth Gin' on the label, it has to be made in Plymouth. This clear liquor has been distilled in Plymouth since 1793, and this is the gin specified for the original Dry Martini. The Distillery runs tours around their works, you can sample the gin in their cocktail lounge, and there's a great bistro attached to the site.

The distillery is at 60 South Side Street, close to the Barbican.

### Opening Times

Mon. - Fri. 9.30am - 5.30pm

Sat. 10am - 5.30pm

Sun. 11am - 5.30pm

## how to get to plymouth

### BY BUS

First Bus Service X80 runs to Plymouth about once an hour Monday-Saturday, and every two hours on Sundays. A return Ticket costs £5, and the journey takes about an hour and a half.

See

[www.firstwesternnational.co.uk](http://www.firstwesternnational.co.uk) for timetables.

Stagecoach X45 runs to Plymouth hourly Monday-Saturday.

NOTE: you cannot use Stagecoach bus passes on these buses.

### BY TRAIN

First Great Western trains run from Paignton to Plymouth. Most services involve a change of train at Newton Abbot.

See [www.nationalrail.com](http://www.nationalrail.com) for fares and times, but tickets must be bought at Paignton railway station before you travel.