

# Brighton's shine

A lively nightlife scene, great beach and youthful population mean that Brighton has always been a popular choice for language travellers. GILLIAN EVANS finds out more.

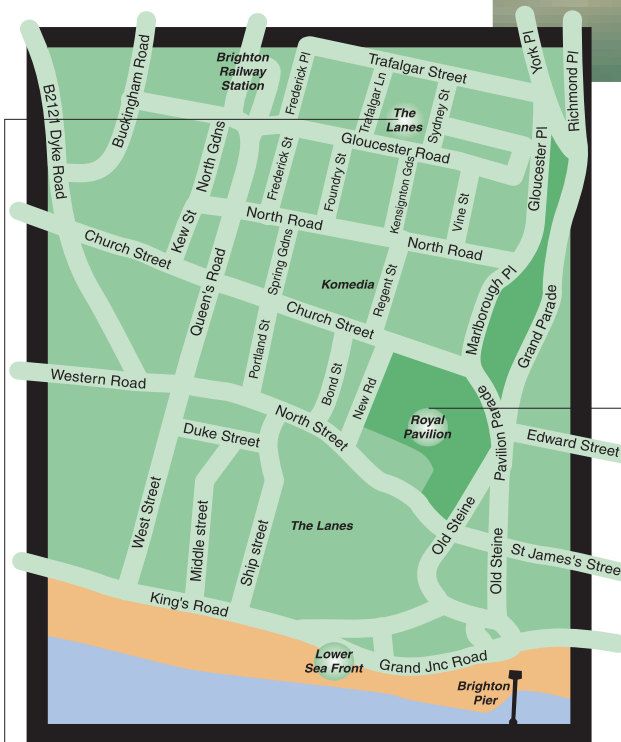
With its attractive beach and Regency-style architecture, Brighton is a traditional English seaside resort - but with a twist. As an open, laid-back city, it has attracted a large number of people who live alternative lifestyles, and this is reflected in the Bohemian atmosphere in parts of the city.

'The fact that [Brighton] has a reputation as a cosmopolitan 'student city' with people from all over the world is very attractive to students,' confirms Julia Wingfield of Sprachcaffe Languages Plus, situated right on Brighton's famous seafront. 'The beach is also a big pull, and also the reputation of Brighton as a very tolerant city.'

'Students visit Brighton and Hove essentially because it's a city by the sea, near to London, but small enough to be considered safer,' says Jan Aram, Principal of Geos English Academy. 'I think it does live up to student expectations - and it's getting better all the time. Brighton and Hove Council is investing a lot of money in making the city a very attractive and lively resort.'

Michael Wilson of Echo Language School also says that Brighton has a solid international reputation as an English language study destination. 'Brighton seems to have developed a reputation for language study independent of individual schools and independent of its tourist trade. The majority of non-English visitors [in Brighton] seem to be on language courses.'

To cater for the demand from English language students, Brighton has language



schools of all shapes and sizes. Echo, for example, is a small school that prides itself on its family atmosphere. 'We have a maximum of 36 students per week in the summer,' says Wilson. 'Outside of summer, we regularly have less than eight students at any one time. Adults are therefore treated to

a cross between a homestay and a school. Most of them leave us with the feeling of having become friends of ours instead of just customers.'

Although Brighton has much to offer students of all ages, it generally attracts 18-to-25 year olds, although Wingfield says that during the holiday

periods, they also have many students aged between 14 and 18, and 'Brighton is a great hit with these too'.

Being such a lively, trendy city means that there is plenty for language travellers to do both day and night. With its unique clothes and bric-a-brac shops, the North Lanes area is popular for 'window-shopping', says Wingfield. Aram adds, 'Students are quite surprised at the North Lanes shopping area with its weird and wonderful shops and sights. It's particularly

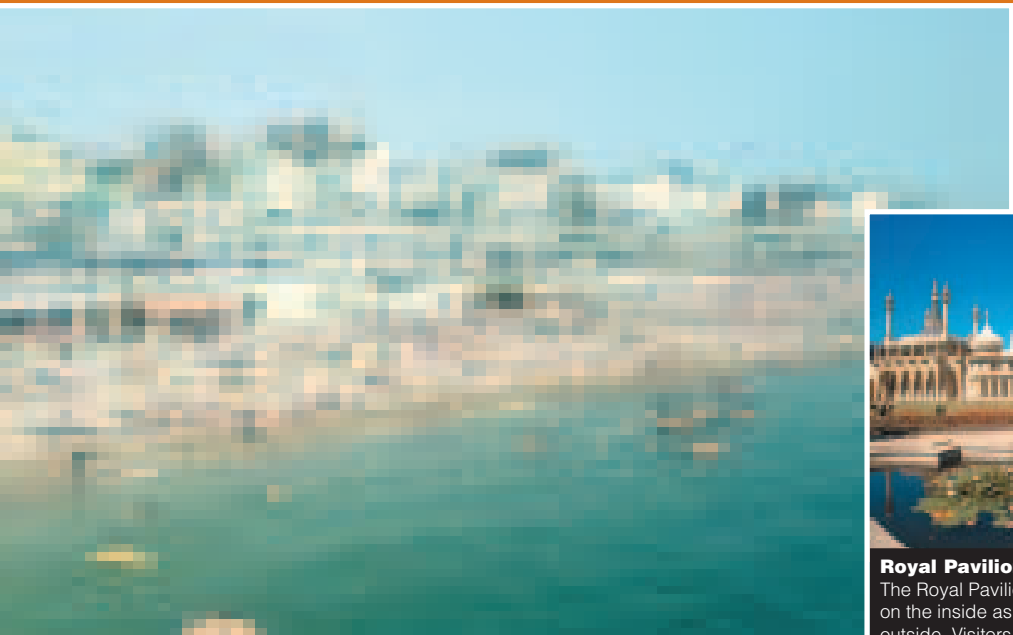
interesting for art and fashion students who really love the innovative designs.'

Brighton is alive with street entertainers, especially during the summer months, while, year round, there are bars and nightclubs with live music, such as the Walkabout Bar and Casablanca nightclub. Although under-18 year olds are not permitted in most bars and nightclubs, Tony Gill of East Sussex School of English points out that there are plenty of opportunities for them to enjoy themselves. 'Most of our students are under [the age of] 18, so bars [and] discos are out of bounds,' he says. '[But] on Mondays and Wednesdays there are under-18 [year old] discos at the Event [nightclub], which are very popular.'

Sprachcaffe has its own café-bar open to both students and the public. 'The bar hosts



**The Lanes**  
The narrow alleys and cobbled streets of Brighton's Lanes make up one of the most historic parts of the city. Today, the area is full of fashionable shops, cafés, restaurants and street artists



events nightly including live music performances and DJ nights, but the most popular event by far is the regular Brazilian party, which takes place every Monday, and many students cite this as their main highlight of Brighton,' says Wingfield.

To get the know the city and its people better, some language schools offer students the chance to become involved in local

events or undertake volunteer work. 'We have a teacher responsible for volunteer work [and] this means that students here for a while have the chance to offer their services to charity shops [or] visit elderly residents in [care] homes,' relates Susan Lancaster Maghrabi, Principal of Language Studies International.



**Royal Pavilion**

The Royal Pavilion is as impressive on the inside as it is on the outside. Visitors wonder at the lavish interiors that combine Chinese-style decorations with impressive furnishings

At Geos English Academy, there is a social coordinator who, according to Aram, 'is very keen to get students involved in the local community'. She explains, '[Our social coordinator] has organised trips to our local fire station, participation in our local community festival and conversation exchanges with local high school students. She has also helped organise a very active local EFL schools football league.'

As well as getting students involved in the local community and showing them the

## Agent viewpoint

'Students generally choose Brighton because it is an excellent place to study English, within easy distance to visit London, a seaside resort and a lovely environment. They enjoy the beach and the beach promenade, and the excursions and all kinds of sports activities. The only negative is that it is a little crowded in the summer.'

**Helmut Hampel, FSTS - Gesellschaft für Studienreisen, Austria**

'The most popular cities [in the UK] are Brighton and Cambridge. [Students] choose Brighton

because of its location by the sea and because it is close to London. Also because the city has plenty of life and opportunities. One of the most interesting places in Brighton is the Royal Pavilion but the beaches, pubs and the shopping centre are very attractive to students as well. The [greatest] advantages of studying in Brighton and Hove are the multicultural atmosphere and the hospitality and friendliness of the English people who live there. It is one of my favourite places!'

**Jorge Alberto Otero, Viajestudios.com, Colombia**

'Brighton is not very far from London [and so] students have the opportunity to see the capital city, visit museums, see a musical, etc, but don't have to cope with the hustle and bustle of the capital. They love the beach and the many tourist attractions Brighton and Hove offers them. In general, the host families are also good and friendly. Most students enjoy doing all kinds of sports in their leisure time, especially water sports in the summer, exploring the countryside, visiting castles and going to local pubs.'

**Heidi Suess, Castle's, Switzerland**

city's interesting sites - such as Brighton Museum, with its Art Deco and Art Nouveau furniture and surrealist paintings, the Palace Pier and funfair, and the exotic-looking

Royal Pavilion, where on Sunday afternoons there is live music - schools also take students to places outside of Brighton. 'Most students perceive Brighton as a city destination and are often pleased when they start discovering the beautiful countryside within an easy bus ride of the city centre,' comments



### Lower Sea Front

Brighton's Lower Sea Front is a bustling meeting place in the summer, where local Brightonians and tourists alike congregate to wander along the beachfront and eat or drink in the sunshine

Seamus Murphy, Director of Regency School of English.

Brighton always has plenty of things to do too, with many festivals and events held during the year. On the beach during the summer, open-air films are shown and live music events are held, such as the Fat Boy Slim concert last year. In May, the famous Brighton Arts Festival takes place, said to be the largest international arts festival in England. There are over 900 events, including

theatre, comedy, contemporary dance and carnival parades. Aram adds that local artists open their houses each weekend during the month for people to come and look around and possibly buy their work. 'One of our artistic host families opened their house this year and their student was so excited with all the visitors coming each weekend.'

Brighton also hosts the fun Classic Car Rally in June, the Brighton Kite Festival in July and the Ace Café Reunion in September, where 10,000 motorcyclists meet at Brighton seafront. All in all, sums up Murphy, students leave happy to have felt so at home in what is a 'young, fashionable, arty' English city. □