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### What

Blackpool Illuminations.

### Where

Blackpool, UK. Located just over an hour by train from Manchester, the annual Illuminations officially started in 1912, although the resort's electric tramway, which is still in operation, introduced illuminated trams in 1897.

### How

Take a tram to Little Bispham and stroll back to town along the North Shore, enjoying the impressive mechanical son et lumières dioramas. Walk the Golden Mile but pause to admire the light show on the Blackpool Tower while standing on Britain's largest public artwork – The Comedy Carpet. Adventurous individuals may continue to Starr Gate and cover the entire six miles of lights.

### When

From the end of August to Christmas, consider planning around events such as Ride the Lights (August), the World Fireworks Championship (September), or the Lightpool Festival (October). Be sure to visit the Grundy Art Gallery and the exquisite Tower Ballroom. Since this is the North West coast of England, make sure to dress for all weathers. During Heritage Open Days, you can book a guided tour of the Illuminations workshop.

### Why

Since the 1950s, the Illuminations have displayed icons from popular culture, including singers, comedians, celebrities, female impersonators, burlesque performers, giant Tiffany Lamps, and Daleks. They pay tribute to fairy tales, myths, cartoons, and nursery rhymes. They explore themes from the supernatural, horror, and science fiction. Ultimately, the Illuminations act as an extraordinary historical record of both emerging and fading trends, cultural practices, and styles, reflecting the essential characteristics of British popular culture. The resort is a City of Lights that rivals Paris or Chicago in culture, glamour, and style. Blackpool boasts its own version of the Eiffel Tower, so why not?

[www.mmu.ac.uk](http://www.mmu.ac.uk)

“Restraint, straight-laced good taste aesthetics and minimalism are your sworn design enemies. To work, Blackpool Illuminations have to be high kicking, showbiz, jazz hands and more than a little ‘nudge nudge, wink wink’. Terms no-one ever teaches you at art school.”

Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen,  
TV personality and interior designer

