# SXSW launches first London edition with high-profile AI talks and star-studded line-up



Lanyard-clad attendees sporting branded tote bags streamed through London's vibrant Brick Lane, heralding the inaugural SXSW London festival. The event, which officially began its first full day on June 2, is taking place across multiple stages and venues in Shoreditch and Hoxton. Notably, this marks SXSW's first venture into Europe, expanding beyond the legendary festival's origins in Austin, Texas. The atmosphere mirrored that of Austin, with festival-goers embracing the familiar hustle, including long queues that have become a hallmark of SXSW events.

London's role as a significant cultural hub was underscored by Mayor Sadiq Khan's opening speech at the festival, where he celebrated the city as a "global centre for AI investment and innovation." He shared an amusing anecdote about his morning consultation with ChatGPT regarding the significance of SXSW in London, which humorously portrayed a blend of London’s heritage and Austin's flair. "It's like Big Ben started wearing cowboy boots and launched a podcast," Khan quipped, effectively engaging the audience with a blend of levity and relevance to the festival's themes.

Keynote speakers such as Sir Demis Hassabis, co-founder and CEO of Google DeepMind, and former Prime Minister Tony Blair participated in discussions focused on the implications of artificial intelligence. The UK government announced collaborations aimed at enhancing AI accessibility and ethical considerations, showcasing a proactive approach in using technology for societal benefit. Meanwhile, the breadth of SXSW London’s agenda includes panels on the creator economy, biohacking, and community building in the digital space, reflecting a diverse range of interests that encapsulate the festival’s forward-thinking ethos.

With an array of prominent figures, including Idris Elba, Wyclef Jean, and Deepak Chopra, slated to participate, the festival's programming promises a vibrant exploration of contemporary issues at the intersection of technology, art, and culture. Noteworthy among the film offerings are premieres such as the Eminem-produced documentary *Stans* and Olivia Cappuccini's *Love & Rage: Munroe Bergdorf*. The music segment is equally star-studded, featuring performances by Mabel, Tems, and Alice Glass, amongst numerous other international acts.

The festival runs through June 6, providing a rich tapestry of events designed to foster creative collaboration and innovation. As SXSW London establishes itself, its future iterations may further distinguish themselves, reflecting the unique landscape of European technology and culture. The move to London not only underscores the city's relevance in the global creative arena but also sets the stage for the evolving narrative of SXSW as it adapts to new contexts and audiences.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://tech.yahoo.com/articles/sxsw-launches-first-london-festival-161804865.html), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/4c814c39-3051-4b57-8dc6-24db86cfee9e)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://tech.yahoo.com/articles/sxsw-launches-first-london-festival-161804865.html), [[4]](https://vitrina.ai/blog/idris-elba-tems-deepak-chopra-jean-michel-jarre-katherine-ryan-wyclef-jean-to-headline-sxsw-london-2023/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/4c814c39-3051-4b57-8dc6-24db86cfee9e), [[5]](https://www.itsnicethat.com/articles/sxsw-london-event-media-partnership-070525)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sxsw-festival-launch-european-edition-london-next-year-2024-05-08/), [[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_by_Southwest_London)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://tech.yahoo.com/articles/sxsw-launches-first-london-festival-161804865.html), [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sxsw-festival-launch-european-edition-london-next-year-2024-05-08/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://tech.yahoo.com/articles/sxsw-launches-first-london-festival-161804865.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/4c814c39-3051-4b57-8dc6-24db86cfee9e> - South by Southwest (SXSW), the renowned Texan festival focusing on music and technology, is set to make its European debut with a week-long event in east London. This marks only the second time the festival has been hosted outside its original Austin, Texas location, following last year's SXSW Sydney. This strategic move is a significant endorsement for London Mayor Sadiq Khan and highlights London's prominence in Europe's tech and creative industries. Scheduled for Shoreditch, east London, SXSW London will feature an array of activities including speeches, music and tech showcases, gaming, arts, design and fashion exhibitions. The festival aims to build on the legacy of Austin's festival to create impactful connections and experiences. Additionally, the UK has seen other notable developments, such as the permanent establishment of the London Eye on the South Bank, authorized by Lambeth Council.
3. <https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sxsw-festival-launch-european-edition-london-next-year-2024-05-08/> - South by Southwest, the music, technology and film festival (SXSW) held annually in Austin, Texas is coming to London next year in a new European edition. The inaugural SXSW London will take place in June 2025 in the English capital's trendy eastern area ... . "We'll be calling into every single drop ... ," Randel Bryan, managing director ... . "London has for generations punched way ... ." SXSW first launched in 198 ... . Twitter, now X, promoted itself ... . It has been a launch location for ... . "Obviously, in the US, ... ," Bryan said. "But we also don't want to neglect ... ."
4. <https://vitrina.ai/blog/idris-elba-tems-deepak-chopra-jean-michel-jarre-katherine-ryan-wyclef-jean-to-headline-sxsw-london-2023/> - Idris Elba, Wyclef Jean, Tems, comedian Katherine Ryan, and Deepak Chopra are among the first prominent figures confirmed for the European debut of South by Southwest at SXSW London this summer. At this festival of convergence, attendees will engage with industry leaders who are at the forefront of innovation, alongside some of the globe’s most talented individuals from music, film, tech, and culture. SXSW London will encompass everything attendees have come to expect from SXSW, including talks, music, and screenings, while also introducing new themes such as visual arts and fashion. Founded in 1987 in Austin, SXSW has previously expanded into the Asia Pacific region with SXSW Sydney in 2023. Organizers emphasize that each event will showcase its own distinct flavor, positioning SXSW as an indispensable three-stop tour for the global creative community. The curatorial focus of SXSW London’s Screen Festival will be on exploring the intersections of film, art, and music. The program will feature a mix of feature films, shorts, and music videos, along with a curated selection of immersive works. As a meeting point for international screen industries, the Screen Festival will also host engaging panels and inspiring talent talks that address the future of screen-based storytelling. Recently announced, the festival will showcase the first U.K. film retrospective of Grammy Award-winning artist and filmmaker Jenn Nkiru, including the London premiere of her latest work, The Great North, co-produced by Factory International and Mothershop. SXSW London’s conference program is set to explore an extraordinary convergence of themes across tracks, including innovation, society, robotics, and AI. The first confirmed headliners for the conference include Elba, Jean, Chopra, Ryan, electronic music pioneer Jean-Michel Jarre, and fitness coach and author Joe Wicks. The names we’re announcing today embody the groundbreaking ideas, creative energy, and collaborative ethos that SXSW London will introduce to Europe for the first time, said Max Alexander, CEO of SXSW London. From redefining industries to highlighting cutting-edge music scenes, this is just the beginning of what promises to be an unforgettable celebration of global creativity. Tems to Headline Music Festival In an exciting announcement, Tems, the Grammy-winning singer, songwriter, and producer, has been unveiled as the first headliner for SXSW London’s Music Festival. She will perform on June 5 at London’s Troxy. Abbey Road Studios Collaboration In a world-first initiative, Abbey Road Studios will present Abbey Road: Studio Four at SXSW London—a new concept that will feature live music, inspiring conversations, and immersive experiences. This unique collaboration will highlight the ongoing cultural relevance and innovative spirit of Abbey Road for festival delegates, the organizers stated. Event Dates SXSW London is scheduled to take place from June 2-7. Notably, Penske Media, the parent company of The Hollywood Reporter, is the majority stakeholder of SXSW.
5. <https://www.itsnicethat.com/articles/sxsw-london-event-media-partnership-070525> - South by South West (SXSW), the festival and conference showcasing the best innovators in tech and creativity, normally hosts its annual run of events in Austin, Texas, but this year it’s making its UK debut – running an impressive series of events out of Shoreditch, East London. Taking place from 2-7 June, the festival’s lineup of talks, live performances, film screenings and immersive art and music will take over dozens of venues, galleries, clubs and spaces around Shoreditch, reeling in creative, culture-facing and tech-curious crowds. At this summer’s events, audiences will hear from perhaps the widest spectrum of speakers we’ve ever encountered. At one end of the spectrum, Sir Demis Hassabis, co-founder and CEO of Google DeepMind, will be divulging the frontiers of AI and whether or not it is doomed to be our downfall. The event’s excitement doesn’t stop at tech and creativity though, as SXSW’s music and screen festivals will also be taking place across the week. Special guests on the music side such as Mabel, Alice Glass and NAO, and over 500 other acts. The screen festival spans music videos, shorts and feature-length movies, including headliners Stans (the opening night premiere, executive produced by Eminem); The Life of Chuck, and Love & Rage: Munroe Bergdorf. Just like the music schedule, the festival’s screen programme spans genres, and celebrates both mainstream and underground scenes, with a host of up and coming directors to get to know. Explore the screen schedule here. Alongside the festival’s conference, tickets are also now available for these two strands of the festival. With the chance to attend underground gigs, see up-and-coming cinema and hear from visionaries on contemporary creative issues, it seems like there’s not a corner that SXSW hasn’t covered. Get tickets for SXSW London here
6. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_by_Southwest_London> - South by Southwest London (SXSW London) is a music, film, and tech festival hosted in Shoreditch and Hoxton of London, England. Its programming includes live music, keynote speeches, panel discussions, and other kinds of events. Inaugurated in 2025 with a specific emphasis on artificial intelligence, SXSW London is the first European iteration of the South by Southwest festival annually hosted in Austin, Texas. SXSW first began in Austin, Texas in 1987 as a multimedia festival with music, film, and tech programming. Since then, the festival has been restructured and managed by the Penske Media Corporation, with festival offshoots, like SXSW Sydney, being operated in order to help "the bottom line" following financial difficulties during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. SXSW executive vice president Darin Klein stated that "The U.K. has a huge creator economy" as a reason for expanding the festival to London. The first SXSW London festival was launched in 2025 and was scheduled to run from June 2–7. On the first day, London mayor Sadiq Khan delivered a kickoff speech, and guest speakers included Demis Hassabis, Beeple, Katherine Ryan, Peter Kyle, Dan Clancy, and Tony Blair. Films, such as the Eminem documentary Stans, were due to premiere at the Barbican Centre. Musical acts like Tems, Alice Glass, and Mabel headlined the music program. Over 25 venues across East London, with hundreds of events total, were tapped for festival programming.