London is the cultural, political and economic heart of Britain, famous for its world-class museums, galleries, royal palaces, shopping destinations, West End theatre shows and award-winning restaurants. Whether you want to stay in a 5-star luxury hotel and sip Champagne on the London Eye, or find a cheap hostel and stroll around one of London's beautiful Royal Parks, you're sure to find something that suits your budget and interests.

**Top 5**

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London is a world-class city and the heart of British politics, culture and commerce. Its history stretches back thousands of years, and remnants of this fascinating past can still be found across the capital – from the Tower of London, a gruesome site of Medieval torture, to the majestic Buckingham Palace.

A captivating mix of old and new, London is also renowned for its creativity, innovation and originality in art, theatre, music, design and cuisine. It is home to countless art galleries and museums, including the Tate Modern, National Gallery and British Museum, which possesses some of the world’s finest treasures. And best of all, entry to most of these museums and galleries is free!

To catch all the 'big-hitters' in one go, you can’t beat a walk along the River Thames. Strolling from Tower Bridge to the Houses of Parliament you’ll pass the Tower of London, Shakespeare’s Globe, Tate Modern, the Southbank Centre, the National Theatre, the London Eye, the SEA LIFE London Aquarium and London Dungeon. In addition to these world-famous attractions, there are many more to discover during your stay.

The West End is the place to go to see London's top theatre shows and musicals. Alongside classics including Les Misérables, Phantom of the Opera and The Woman in Black, you will find hit contemporary shows, such as Billy Elliot, The Lion King and Thriller – Live. Don’t forget to explore the many off-West End venues too, such as the National Theatre, The Old Vic and (during the summer months) Regent’s Park Open Air Theatre.

In the West End you will also find some of London’s top shopping destinations, from Oxford Street to Seven Dials. Different neighbourhoods are known for other unique opportunities for shopping: Notting Hill is renowned for its antiques and Portobello Market, Greenwich has an excellent arts and crafts markets, while Westfield London City and Westfield Stratford are the city’s most famous malls.

If you would rather save money than spend it, the eight Royal Parks are well worth a visit – and a great spot for a picnic. Visit Greenwich Park to drop in on the Royal Observatory, walk through Kensington Gardens to see Kensington Palace, take a paddle on the Hyde Park boating lake, see Buckingham Palace from scenic St James's Park, spot deer at Richmond Park and Bushy Park, and meet the animals at London Zoo, which lies within Regent’s Park.

Along the way indulge your taste buds with delicious food at one of London’s many restaurants, gastropubs and pop-up eateries. You can eat food prepared by a celebrity chef, discover modern British cuisine, or eat food from anywhere in the world – be it Indian, Chinese, Persian, Greek, Italian or Lebanese. Top off your perfect day with a fancy cocktail, excellent wine or locally brewed beer at a top London pub or bar – and maybe a boogie at one of the capital’s buzzing nightspots and clubs.
London offers a jam-packed calendar of events that cater to a wide range of audiences all year round. This guide highlights the most popular and interesting ones that should definitely be on your bucket list.

**Christmas Markets in London**

They say you can start to feel Christmas coming as early as October in the UK. But to feel the true spirit of Christmas in London head to one or more of these very festive destinations throughout the capital and thank us later. You don't want to miss the cosy Christmas markets peppered around the city centre. Be it at Leicester Square, the Southbank Centre or London Bridge City, why not warm yourself up with a mug of mulled wine by the river while you browse the stalls and take in the festive atmosphere.

**The Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace**

The Changing of the Guard or Guard Mounting is an exchange of guard duties at Buckingham Palace. Watch the ceremony as each set of guards dressed in traditional red tunics and bearskin hats takes over from their brothers in arms. You can also watch a similar procedure at Horse Guards Arch on Horse Guards Parade.

**British Summer Time Music Festival**

The Barclaycard British Summer Time music festival takes place every year in Hyde Park. The week-long event covers many musical tastes, from pop to rock to dance and hip hop. Find out more on their website.
RHS Chelsea Flower Show

The world's greatest flower show takes place in West London over a four-day period in May. Each year is different from the last but the vibrant small gardens and horticultural displays bring a splash of colour and scent to London's events calendar. Booking in advance is advisable.

Photo: GERARD BOTTINO/Shutterstock.com
Address: Royal Hospital Chelsea, Royal Hospital Road, Chelsea, London
Public Transport: Sloane Square Tube station
Opening hours: May
Internet: www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-chelsea-flower-show
Email: showscustomercare@rhs.org.uk

Notting Hill Carnival

Europe's biggest street festival takes place every August Bank Holiday weekend in West London. The huge Caribbean-themed party takes place over a period of three days with the main parade held on the Monday. Expect colourful floats, dressed up performers and lots of music.

Photo: jeff gynane/Shutterstock.com
Address: Notting Hill area, West London
Tickets: Free entry
Internet: www.thelondonnottinghillcarnival.com
Email: info@lnhcet.com

Trooping the Colour

To celebrate The Queen's official birthday in June each year, the tradition of Trooping the Colour takes place on Horse Guards Parade and The Mall near Buckingham Palace. The ceremony of military pomp and pageantry includes a flypast by the Royal Air Force and a procession led by Her Majesty.

Photo: Markus Gann/Shutterstock.com
Address: Horse Guards Parade, Whitehall, London
Public Transport: Charing Cross, Embankment or Westminster Tube stations
Internet: www.householddivision.org.uk/trooping-the-colour
Email: info@householddivision.org.uk
More Info: See the website for more information

Totally Thames Festival

The whole month of September is dedicated to celebrating London's famous river. The Totally Thames Festival takes place over a period of 30 days. With more than 100 different artistic and cultural events, the festival takes over the city spreading out for miles. In 2014 there were guided walks, tours and tall ships regattas, as well as theatre, cinema and many other exciting ways to enjoy London. All of these events take place either on or by the river Thames.

Photo: Songquan Deng/Shutterstock.com
Address: Various locations along the river
Opening hours: Throughout September
Phone: +44 20 7928 8998
Internet: totallythames.org
Email: marketing@thamesfestival.org
London is full of things to do and see. From famous attractions such as the London Eye, Houses of Parliament, Big Ben and Tower of London to much lesser known ones that are almost secrets. There are also exciting shopping destinations, vast areas of green parkland in the middle of the city and much, much more.

Read on for inspiration and handy tips on places you just can't miss while you're in the capital. Many attractions on this list are free to enter, giving you another great reason to fall in love with London.

**London Mithraeum**

Reopened recently at the very site of its original discovery, the ruins of this Roman Temple of Mithras are open for public visits in the basement of Bloomberg’s European headquarters at number 12 Walbrook. There are also a few other exhibitions that include both historic artefacts and contemporary artwork. Entrance is free of charge.

**Disney's The Lion King**

Set against the majesty of the Serengeti Plains and to the evocative rhythms of Africa, Disney’s multi-award winning musical will redefine your expectations of the theatre. Brilliantly reimagined by acclaimed director Julie Taymor, Disney’s beloved film has been transformed into a spectacular theatrical experience that explodes with glorious colours, stunning effects and enchanting music. At its heart is the powerful and moving story of Simba - the epic adventure of his journey from wide-eyed cub to his destined role as the King of the Pridelands.

**WICKED**

WICKED, the West End and Broadway musical sensation, is already the 9th longest running musical in London theatre history. ‘Packed with wit, storming songs and beautiful costumes’ (The Guardian), WICKED imagines an ingenious...
backstory and future possibilities to the lives of L. Frank Baum’s beloved characters from The Wonderful Wizard of Oz and reveals the decisions and events that shape the destinies of two unlikely University friends on their journey to becoming Glinda The Good and the Wicked Witch of the West.

**The Phantom of the Opera**

Experience the unmissable The Phantom of the Opera in London’s West End at Her Majesty's Theatre. Now celebrating 32 years, book your The Phantom of the Opera tickets today.

Seen by over 140 million people worldwide, The Phantom of the Opera is the highest grossing musical of all time.

Now celebrating 32 record-breaking years, this multi-award winning musical continues to captivate audiences at Her Majesty's Theatre in London's West End.

**The Woman in Black**

Join the millions of people all over the world who have experienced 'The most brilliantly effective spine-chiller you will ever encounter' Daily Telegraph.

Susan Hill’s acclaimed ghost story comes dramatically alive in Stephen Mallatratt’s ingenious stage adaptation. Now celebrating three decades in the West End, Robin Herford’s gripping production is a brilliantly successful study in atmosphere, illusion and controlled horror.

**9 to 5 The Musical**

9 TO 5 The Musical is getting down to business - with a strictly limited season at the West End’s Savoy Theatre. Tumble outta’ bed and stumble to Dolly Parton’s rip-roaring West End musical!

Starring Caroline Sheen, Amber Davies, Natalie McQueen, Bonnie Langford and Brian Conley, the smash-hit musical features a book by the iconic movie’s original screenwriter Patricia Resnick and an Oscar, Grammy and Tony
award-nominated score by the Queen of Country herself, Dolly Parton.

Photo: 9 to 5 The Musical
Address: Savoy Theatre, Strand
Public Transport: Charing Cross Underground and Train Station
Opening hours: Monday to Saturday 19.30 Wednesday and Saturday 14.30
Phone: +44 (0)20 7206 1182
Internet: www.lovetheatre.com/london
Email: tix@lovetheatre.com

MAMMA MIA!

Celebrate the songs of ABBA with the smash-hit musical MAMMA MIA! in London at the Novello Theatre. Join the fun as the world’s favourite feel-good musical, MAMMA MIA! celebrates its twentieth anniversary in London’s West End. Now, in the musical’s 21st year, the producers are delighted to announce some major cast changes in the London production from Monday 10 June 2019 including Mazz Murray, (previously Tanya) who returns to play Donna.

Seen by over 8 million people in the West End, MAMMA MIA! continues to break box office records at the Novello Theatre, its third London home.

Photo: MAMMA MIA!
Address: Novello Theatre, Aldwych
Public Transport: Covent Garden Tube
Opening hours: Monday to Saturday 19:45 Thursday and Saturday 15:00
Phone: +44 (0)20 7206 1182
Internet: www.lovetheatre.com/london
Email: tix@lovetheatre.com

The British Museum

One of the largest and most interesting museums in the world, the British Museum is home to some of the most treasured historical artefacts ever found. The extensive exhibition includes the Rosetta Stone, Assyrian treasures, Egyptian mummies and the museum’s spectacularly illuminated Great Court, where you can find the museum’s new restaurant. This restaurant is an ideal spot for taking afternoon tea under the court’s spectacular roof. Free tours of the museum and guides are also available.

Photo: jennyt/Shutterstock.com
Address: Great Russell Street, London
Public Transport: Holborn, Tottenham Court Road, Russell Square, and Goodge Street Tube stations
Opening hours: Daily 10.00-17.30. Friday 10.00-20.30
Phone: +44 20 7323 8000
Tickets: Free (some temporary exhibitions are ticketed)
Internet: www.britishmuseum.org
Email: info@britishmuseum.org

The National Gallery

You will find vast collections of some of the most famous, beautiful and awe-inspiring paintings in the world at the National Gallery. Treat yourself to some of the best artistic production there is and ever has been. Feast your eyes on masterpieces by Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Titian, Rembrandt, Vermeer, Turner, Monet or Van Gogh.

Photo: Cedric Weber/Shutterstock.com
Address: Trafalgar Square
Public Transport: Charing Cross Tube Station
Opening hours: Daily 10.00-18.00. Friday 10.00-21.00
Phone: +44 20 7747 2885
Madame Tussauds London

There's plenty to keep you entertained at Madame Tussauds London, with more than 300 wax figures, the Marvel Super Heroes 4D movie experience and Spirit of London Taxi Ride. The uncannily lifelike wax figures of famous (and infamous) individuals from throughout history are the obvious highlight. From Johnny Depp and One Direction to Muhammad Ali and the Queen, you are sure to recognise everyone who makes an appearance. Who is your favourite celebrity?

Photo: Chubykin Arkady/Shutterstock.com
Address: Marylebone Road, London
Public Transport: Baker Street Tube station
Phone: +44 871 894 3000
Internet: www.madametussauds.com/london/en
Email: guest.experience@madame-tussauds.com

Tower of London

Tower of London is one of the most famous fortified buildings in the world. It's also a mysterious place full of dark secrets, strange stories and historic relics. Here you can admire the priceless Crown Jewels, explore the Medieval Palace, visit the infamous Bloody Tower, and go on a tour with a Yeoman Warder to learn about the many executions that took place here.

Photo: Justin Black/Shutterstock.com
Address: Tower Hill, London
Public Transport: Tower Hill Tube station
Opening hours: Tue-Sat 09.00-17.30. Sun-Mon 10.00-17.30

Natural History Museum

The Natural History Museum houses hundreds of amazing exhibits from the natural world in one of London's most beautiful landmark buildings. Highlights include the popular Dinosaurs gallery, the model blue whale and the Cocoon specimen centre special. Events and debates are held in the Darwin Centre high-tech Attenborough Studio, where you'll have the chance to meet important scientists.

Photo: ileana bt/Shutterstock.com
Address: Cromwell Road, London
Public Transport: South Kensington and Gloucester Road Tube stations
Opening hours: Daily 10.00-17.50
Phone: +44 20 7942 5000
Tickets: Free (some exhibitions have separate charges)
Internet: www.nhm.ac.uk

St Paul's Cathedral

The 17th century cathedral on Ludgate Hill in the City of London is one of the capital's most iconic buildings. Designed by the illustrious Sir Christopher Wren, St Paul's was the tallest building in London until as late as 1962. Use the touch-screen multimedia guides or take a guided tour to learn about the famous interior or, if you're feeling fit, climb up to the Whispering Gallery and try out the acoustics. From there you can carry on making your way up to the Golden Gallery atop the dome, where you'll be rewarded with breathtaking views of London. You can also descend into the crypt.
where you’ll find memorials of important historical figures such as Admiral Lord Nelson.

Photo: Victor Moussa/Shutterstock.com
Address: St Paul's Churchyard, London
Public Transport: St Paul’s, Mansion House and Blackfriars Tube stations
Phone: +44 20 7246 8350
Internet: www.stpauls.co.uk
Email: reception@stpaulscathedral.org.uk

Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre
Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre is a reconstruction of the original open-air theatre where playwright, William Shakespeare, first staged many of his famous plays such as Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, and Midsummer Night’s Dream.

On the banks of the Thames, just a few hundred yards away from its original location, the Globe stages classic and modern interpretations of Shakespeare’s works as well as of brand new plays. And at only £5 for a standing ticket, you can’t go wrong. There is also an exhibition with audio guides available in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, and Japanese. And expert guided tours run every 30 minutes.

Photo: Victor Moussa/Shutterstock.com
Address: 21 New Globe Walk, Bankside, London
Public Transport: Blackfriars, London Bridge and Mansion House Tube stations
Opening hours: Daily 09.00-17.00
Phone: +44 20 7902 1400
Internet: www.shakespearesglobe.com
Email: info@shakespearesglobe.com

SEA LIFE London Aquarium
Located on the South Bank, right next to London Eye, SEA LIFE London Aquarium harbours one of Europe’s largest collections of global marine life covering more than 500 species, 14 themed areas and two million litres of water. The exhibition includes favourites such as seahorses, octopus, zebra sharks and clown fish. There are also interactive experiences, so you can see diving displays, watch the sharks being fed, or even try and feed the stingrays yourself. And don’t forget to take a dive ‘under the ocean’ in the glass tunnel walkway.

Photo: NadyaEugene/Shutterstock.com
Address: County Hall, Westminster Bridge Road, London
Public Transport: Waterloo and Westminster Tube stations
Opening hours: Mon-Fri 10.00-18.00. Sat-Sun 09.30-19.00
Phone: +44 871 663 1678
Internet: www.visitsealife.com/london
Email: sllondon@merlinentertainments.biz

Legoland Windsor
Built on 150 acres of parkland, the LEGOLAND Windsor Resort is located just outside of London. It is home to more than 55 rides, shows, attractions and workshops, all geared towards children up to 12 years of age. This theme park is a great place for a family day trip. But for those of you who would like to make the most of all the fun there is to be had at the theme park, there is the possibility of staying at the Resort Hotel’s themed rooms for a few days and enjoying its themed rooms. That way you can fully enjoy all that the park has to offer. You can jump on board a Lego submarine, take a good look at London’s iconic
landscape in miniature form, get soaked at the water rides and put your skills to the test at The Driving School.

Photo: Fulcanelli/Shutterstock.com
Address: Winkfield Road, Windsor, Berkshire
Public Transport: Take a train from London Paddington to Windsor & Eton Central via Slough, or from Waterloo to Windsor & Eton Riverside direct. A shuttle bus service operates from both stations to the park.
Phone: +44 871 2222 001
Internet: www.legoland.co.uk
Email: customer.services@legoland.co.uk

**Hampton Court Palace**

Hampton Court Palace was King Henry VIII's favourite royal residence. It is brimming with thrilling stories and beautiful sights. Inside the building you can visit the medieval Great Hall where William Shakespeare’s company once performed, as well as the huge Tudor kitchens and the Haunted Gallery. There is also much to see on the outside of the palace, what with the puzzling maze, the palace's beautiful gardens and a large park. Other highlights include daily tours and talks, as well as the annual Hampton Court Palace Flower Show.

Photo: Gail Johnson/Shutterstock.com
Address: East Molesey, Surrey
Public Transport: Hampton Court train station is just across the bridge.
Opening hours: Daily 10.00-16.30
Phone: +44 844 482 7777
Internet: www.hrp.org.uk/hampton-court-palace
Email: hamptoncourt@hrp.org.uk

**National Portrait Gallery**

The National Portrait Gallery in Central London harbours more than 195,000 portraits of famous men and women who have shaped British history from 16th century to the present day. Painted by acclaimed artists such as Holbein, David Hockney, Cecil Beaton and Lucian Freud, sitters include kings, queens, film stars, politicians, musicians and many more. The gallery's rolling calendar of exhibitions is worth investigating as well, particularly the annual BP Portrait Awards.

Photo: Ham/Wikimedia Commons (image cropped)
Address: St Martin’s Place, London
Public Transport: Charing Cross, Leicester Square and Embankment Tube stations
Opening hours: Daily 10.00-18.00, Thu and Fri 10.00-21.00
Phone: +44 207 306 0055
Tickets: Free (some exhibitions have separate charges)
Internet: www.npg.org.uk


Step into the magical world of Harry Potter and visit the film sets where the movies were shot in Warner Bros. Studio Tour London - The Making of Harry Potter. On the tour you can nose around Dumbledore's office, enter the Great Hall, walk down Diagon Alley, see how they made Harry Potter fly on his broomstick and watch special effect animatronics come to life. A must-do for fans of the world's favourite wizard.

Photo: IR Stone/Shutterstock.com
Address: Studio Tour Drive, Leavesden
Phone: +44 345 084 0900
Internet: www.wbstudiotour.co.uk
Museum of London

Discover the story of the world's greatest city at The Museum of London. The tale begins with prehistoric London, moving on to the influence of the Romans and Saxons on the city, and then on towards Medieval London. Along the way you will encounter civil wars, deathly plagues and rampant fires. Journey through the Galleries of Modern London along Victorian streets and marvel at the lavish Lord Mayor's Coach display.

Photo: steve estvanik/Shutterstock.com
Address: 150 London Wall, City of London
Public Transport: Barbican, St Paul's and Moorgate Tube stations
Opening hours: Daily 10.00-18.00
Phone: +44 20 7001 9844
Tickets: Free entry
Internet: www.museumoflondon.org.uk
Email: info@museumoflondon.org.uk

The Sherlock Holmes Museum

The official home of the famous fictional detective Sherlock Holmes is 221b Baker Street. According to the books by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, he lived here from 1881 to 1904. The museum features Holmes' detailed study, life-size waxworks representing scenes from Holmes and Watson's adventures and a souvenir shop.

Photo: AVN Photo Lab/Shutterstock.com
Address: 221b Baker Street, London
Public Transport: Baker Street Tube station
Opening hours: Daily 09.30-18.00
Phone: +44 207 224 3688
Internet: www.sherlock-holmes.co.uk
Email: curator@sherlock-holmes.co.uk

City Cruises

See London from a different angle by taking a cruise along the famous River Thames. City Cruises offer frequent sightseeing trips between Westminster, Waterloo (next to the London Eye), Tower and Greenwich piers. Options include tea-time cruises, evening cruises, a jazz cruise and The London Showboat, a dinner/cabaret/dance cruise.

Photo: Jorge Felix Costa/Shutterstock.com
Address: Victoria Embankment, Westminster, London
Phone: +44 20 7740 0400
Internet: www.citycruises.com
Email: info@citycruises.com
The Victoria and Albert Museum

The Victoria and Albert Museum in Kensington has a breathtaking collection of design and art. From Islamic art to fine European jewellery. From famous watercolours by artists such as John Constable to iconic fashion creations by Vivienne Westwood. Explore the permanent collection or visit one of the museum's world-class, and ever-popular temporary exhibitions. Look out for the quirky Friday Lates events that happen on the last Friday of every month.

Photo: Martin Hesko/Shutterstock.com
Address: Cromwell Road, London
Public Transport: South Kensington Tube station
Opening hours: Daily 10.00-17.45. Fri 10.00-22.00
Phone: +44 20 7942 2000
Tickets: Free (some exhibitions have a separate charge)
Internet: www.vam.ac.uk
Email: contact@vam.ac.uk

The London Dungeon

London's history is filled with gruesome tales and scary characters. The London Dungeon attraction on the south bank of the Thames retells some of those bloody stories. Using costumes, 360° sets and a multitude of special effects, London Dungeon takes you through 1000 years of the city's gory, gruesome and terrifying past in 90 minutes. Look out for Jack the Ripper and Sweeney Todd along the way. This is not an attraction for those of nervous disposition.

Photo: BackgroundStore/Shutterstock.com
Address: County Hall, Riverside Building, London
Public Transport: Waterloo and Westminster Tube stations
Opening hours: Daily 10.00-17.00. Thu 11.00-17.00. Sat 10.00-18.00
Phone: +44 20 7654 0809
Internet: www.thedungeons.com/london/en
Email: london.dungeon@merlinentertainments.biz

Tate Modern

Housed in a large former power station, Tate Modern is Britain's leading art gallery when it comes to modern and contemporary art. As well as the Tate's much anticipated exhibitions, there's a fantastic permanent collection to explore. It features works by artists as diverse as Matisse, Picasso, Rothko, Pollock, Warhol and Bourgeois.

Photo: r.nagy/Shutterstock.com
Address: Bankside, London
Public Transport: Southwark and Blackfriars Tube stations
Opening hours: Daily 10.00-18.00. Fri and Sat 10.00-22.00
Phone: +44 20 7887 8888
Tickets: Free (some temporary exhibitions are ticketed)
Internet: www.tate.org.uk
Email: visiting.modern@tate.org.uk

Buckingham Palace

During the summer months, Buckingham Palace - the official residence of The Queen - opens the doors of its elegant State Rooms to the public. As well as proving a very fancy backdrop for many an official royal engagement, the rooms contain some of the finest treasures from the Royal Collection - including paintings, sculptures and fine French furniture.

Photo: Philipp Dase/Shutterstock.com
Address: Buckingham Palace, London
Public Transport: Victoria, Green Park and Hyde Park Corner
**Houses of Parliament**

Take a tour of the Houses of Parliament and experience 1,000 years of history at Westminster. Visitors are welcomed into the building through Westminster Hall, before following in the footsteps of the Queen at the State Opening of Parliament. Marvel at the Victorian splendour of the Lords Chamber and see the famous green benches in the Commons Chamber. Audioguides and tours are available in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian and Mandarin.

Photo: Richie Chan/Shutterstock.com
Address: Westminster, London
Public Transport: Westminster Tube station
Opening hours: Saturdays and weekdays when Parliament is not in session
Phone: +44 20 7219 3000
Internet: www.parliament.uk/visiting

**The London Eye**

At a staggering height of 135 metres (443 ft), The London Eye offers a superb view of the capital's most famous attractions. A full rotation around the observational wheel in one of the glass capsules lasts some 30 minutes and it is so popular that each year it receives more visitors than the Taj Mahal and the Great Pyramids of Giza. And once you've taken a 360-degree ride on the wheel you'll understand why.

Photo: View Apart/Shutterstock.com
Address: Riverside Building, County Hall, Westminster Bridge Road, London
Public Transport: Westminster and Waterloo Tube stations
Phone: +44 870 990 8883
Internet: www.londoneye.com

**TOP MUSICALS**

London is a city of culture and any visit to the British capital would not be complete without a night at the theatre. West End musicals are the most popular form of stage performance in town, mixing enchanting stories and spectacular special effects with good old song and dance.

**Disney's The Lion King**

Set against the majesty of the Serengeti Plains and to the evocative rhythms of Africa, Disney’s multi-award winning musical will redefine your expectations of the theatre. Brilliantly reimagined by acclaimed director Julie Taymor, Disney’s beloved film has been transformed into a spectacular theatrical experience that explodes with glorious colours, stunning effects and enchanting music.

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Photo: WICKED
Address: Apollo Victoria Theatre, Wilton Road, 17
Public Transport: Victoria Train, Bus and Underground Station
Opening hours: Monday to Saturday 19.30 Wednesday and Saturday 14.30
Phone: + 44 (0) 844 871 7615
Internet: www.lovetheatre.com/london
Email: tix@lovetheatre.com

The Woman in Black

Join the millions of people all over the world who have experienced ‘The most brilliantly effective spine-chiller you will ever encounter’ Daily Telegraph.

Photo: The Woman In Black
Address: Fortune Theatre, Russell Street, 29
Public Transport: Covent Garden Tube
Opening hours: Tuesday to Saturday 20:00 Tuesday and Thursday 15:00 Saturday 16:00
Phone: +44 (0)20 7206 1182
Internet: www.lovetheatre.com/london
Email: tix@lovetheatre.com

Susan Hill’s acclaimed ghost story comes dramatically alive in Stephen Mallatratt’s ingenious stage adaptation. Now celebrating three decades in the West End, Robin Herford’s gripping production is a brilliantly successful study in atmosphere, illusion and controlled horror.

Photo: The Phantom of the Opera
Address: Her Majesty's Theatre, Haymarket
Public Transport: Piccadilly Circus Tube
Opening hours: Monday to Saturday 19:30 Thursday and Saturday 14:30
Phone: +44 (0)20 7206 1182
Internet: www.lovetheatre.com/london

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Starring Caroline Sheen, Amber Davies, Natalie McQueen, Bonnie Langford and Brian Conley, the smash-hit musical features a book by the iconic movie’s original screenwriter Patricia Resnick and an Oscar, Grammy and Tony award-nominated score by the Queen of Country herself, Dolly Parton.

Photo: 9 to 5 The Musical
Address: Savoy Theatre, Strand
Public Transport: Charing Cross Underground and Train Station
Opening hours: Monday to Saturday 19.30 Wednesday and Saturday 14.30
Phone: +44 (0)20 7206 1182
Internet: www.lovetheatre.com/london
Email: tix@lovetheatre.com

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Photo: MAMMA MIA!
Address: Novello Theatre, Aldwych
Public Transport: Covent Garden Tube
Opening hours: Monday to Saturday 19:45 Thursday and Saturday 15:00
Phone: +44 (0)20 7206 1182
Internet: www.lovetheatre.com/london
Email: tix@lovetheatre.com

RESTAURANTS

Thanks to London’s rich mix of cultures, the capital’s restaurants serve up delicious food from all corners of the globe. Whatever cuisine you fancy, you’re sure to find it in London - be it Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Caribbean, Polish, French, Italian, Afghan, Ethiopian, American, Spanish, South African, Persian... the list goes on.

There’s also an exciting buzz on the British culinary scene in London, with innovative chefs rethinking traditional British classics and creating new favourites - all with an emphasis on fresh, local produce.

Plus with Michelin-starred restaurants,
family-friendly eateries, cosy gastropubs, fast food joints and quirky cafes dotted all over the city, there’s something for every budget too.

Rainforest Cafe
Rainforest Cafe brings the sights and sounds of the jungle to London’s famous Piccadilly Circus, with elephants, gorillas, jaguars, crocodiles, butterflies, tropical fish tanks, an indoor waterfall and roaring thunderstorm sounds. Feeding time is a fun, family-friendly affair, with steaks, burgers, pasta and salads on the menu.

Photo: Loulou Von Glup/Shutterstock
Address: 20 Shaftesbury Avenue, London
Public Transport: Piccadilly Circus Tube station
Opening hours: Mon-Fri 12.00-22.00. Sat 11.30-22.30. Sun 11.30-22.00
Phone: +44 20 7434 3111
Internet: www.therainforestcafe.co.uk
Email: customercare@therainforestcafe.co.uk

Masala Zone - Bayswater
Colourfully decorated with Indian folk art and collages of firecracker labels, the Bayswater branch of Masala Zone is as warm and welcoming as the other restaurants in this growing chain. The menu takes inspiration from Indian street food and home-cooked dishes, with Indian grills and regional curries as well as tapas-style Thali platters.

Photo: espies/Shutterstock.com
Address: 75 Bishops Bridge Road, Bayswater, London
Public Transport: Royal Oak and Bayswater Tube stations
Opening hours: Mon-Fri 12.30-15.00 and 17.30-23.00. Sat 12.30-23.00. Sun 12.30-22.30
Phone: +44 20 7221 0055
Internet: www.masalazone.com
Email: bayswater@masalazone.com

OXO Tower Restaurant, Bar and Brasserie
Dine in true British style with a beautiful raised view across the River Thames. This restaurant, bar and brasserie is a great place for a romantic meal, especially when combined with a casual stroll along the South Bank before and after your meal. Book ahead to make sure you get an alfresco table on the outdoor terrace and enjoy the scene with St Paul's Cathedral in the background. You can also expect to enjoy live jazz in the brasserie.

Photo: Pres Panayotov/Shutterstock.com
Address: Barge House Street, Oxo Tower Wharf, South Bank, London

Mestizo Mexican Restaurant & Tequila Bar
Colourful and welcoming, Mestizo Mexican Restaurant and Tequila Bar serves quality, traditional Mexican cuisine. Downstairs from the relaxing restaurant you’ll also find a stylish tequila bar serving cocktails, tequila and ‘antojitos’ (Mexican tapas).

Photo: JeniFoto/Shutterstock.com
Address: Mestizo, 103 Hampstead Road, London
Public Transport: Euston Square and Warren Street Tube stations
Opening hours: Mon-Sat 12.00-23.00. Sun 12.00-22.00
Inamo

Inamo is a pioneering Oriental fusion restaurant and bar where the control of the dining experience is placed firmly in your own hands, thanks to an interactive ordering system. Instead of reading a long list of dish names, you simply pick your favourite from an illustrated food and drinks menu projected onto your table surface. The pan-Asian menu includes influences from Japan, China, Thailand, Korea and beyond.

Photo: Ekaterina Smirnova/Shutterstock.com
Address: 134-136 Wardour Street, Soho, London
Public Transport: Tottenham Court Road and Oxford Circus Tube stations
Opening hours: Mon-Thu 17.00-23.30. Fri 17.00-00.00. Sat 12.00-00.00. Sun 12.00-22.30
Phone: +44 20 7851 7051
Internet: www.inamo-restaurant.com
Email: reservations@inamo-restaurant.com

Restaurant Gordon Ramsay

If the name alone doesn’t sell it, the three Michelin stars that Restaurant Gordon Ramsay was honoured with should. Located in affluent Chelsea, the restaurant serves up modern French food in an elegant, intimate atmosphere - under the masterly gaze of head chef Clare Smyth.

Photo: vichie81/Shutterstock.com
Address: 68 Royal Hospital Road, London
Public Transport: South Kensington and Sloane Square Tube stations
Opening hours: Tue-Sat 12.00-14.15 and 18.30-22.15
Phone: +44 20 7352 4441
Internet: www.gordonramsayrestaurants.com/restaurant-gordon-ramsay
Email: royalhospitalroad@gordonramsay.com

The Wolseley

Housed in a former car showroom on Piccadilly, The Wolseley is an elegant café-restaurant inspired by the grand European style of years gone by. The food follows the same classic European thread, with favourite dishes including veal Holstein and chicken soup with dumplings. Pop in for breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner... Any meal you fancy.

Photo: Chef photography/Shutterstock.com
Address: 160 Piccadilly, London
Public Transport: Green Park and Piccadilly Circus Tube stations
Opening hours: Mon-Fri 07.00-00.00. Sat 08.00-00.00. Sun 08.00-23.00
Phone: +44 20 7499 6996
Internet: www.thewolseley.com
Email: info@thewolseley.com

Wild Heart

Located on the ground floor of the stylish Sanctum Soho Hotel, Wild Heart serves modern, seasonal British cuisine from breakfast through afternoon tea to dinner. A bar as well as a restaurant, it's also a good spot for a coffee, evening cocktail or glass of wine.

Photo: Shebeko/Shutterstock.com
Address: 20 Warwick Street, Soho, London
Public Transport: Oxford Circus and Piccadilly Circus Tube stations
Opening hours: Mon-Wed 7.00-10.00 and 12.00-17.00 and
Jamie Oliver's Fifteen

Rustic yet elegant modern British food is the focus at Jamie Oliver's East London restaurant Fifteen. Under the helm of Jon Rotheram, the restaurant uses top British meat and fish (butchered and prepared on site every day) and fresh ingredients to create delicious dishes such as grilled plaice, Jerusalem artichoke & brown shrimp; Lindisfarne oysters, sweet & sour apple vinaigrette; and Chocolate & malt mousse.

Photo: Somkit Insawa/Shutterstock
Address: 15 Westland Place, London
Public Transport: Old Street Tube station
Opening hours: Mon-Thu 12.00-15.00 and 18.00-22.30. Fri-Sat 12.00-15.00 and 17.30-22.30. Sun 12.00-15.00 and 18.00-21.30
Phone: +44 20 7292 6100
Internet: www.sanctumsoho.com/restaurant
Email: info@sanctumsoho.com
More Info: Located inside Sanctum Soho Hotel

Gaucho - Piccadilly

The glitzy Piccadilly branch of Argentinian restaurant Gaucho is spread over four floors. Alongside the main restaurant is the Cavas De Gaucho wine boutique, a ground-floor wine bar and a supper lounge on the top floor. Steaks, of course, are high on the menu - but there are many other dishes to try too, from Ecuadorian ceviche to Scamorza and potato ravioli.

Photo: hlphoto/Shutterstock.com
Address: 25 Swallow Street, London
Public Transport: Piccadilly Circus and Green Park Tube stations
Opening hours: Sun-Wed 11.30-23.00. Thu-Sat 11.30-00.00
Phone: +44 20 7734 4040
Internet: www.gauchorestaurants.com/restaurants/piccadilly

Dinner by Heston Blumenthal

Heston Blumenthal’s Knightsbridge restaurant Dinner is known for its inventive menu of historically inspired British dishes. Choose from dishes such as Earl Grey Tea cured Salmon (c.1730), Spiced Pigeon (c.1780) and Tipsy Cake (c.1810) - or let the chef do the choosing by going for the Set Lunch Menu or splashing out on a seat at the Chef's Table, which directly faces the restaurant's custom-built show kitchen.

Photo: Shaiith/Shutterstock.com
Address: 66 Knightsbridge, London
Public Transport: Knightsbridge Tube station
Opening hours: Mon-Fri 12.00-14.00 and 18.00-22.15. Sat-Sun 12.00-14.30 and 18.30-22.30
Phone: +44 20 7201 3833
Internet: www.dinnerbyheston.com
Email: molon-dinnerhb@mohg.com
More Info: Located inside Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park hotel

Sketch

Sketch is an eccentric, original and elegant venue off Regent Street founded by French master chef Pierre Gagnaire and restaurateur Mazouz. The unique space comprises five dining areas: The Parlour patisserie and restaurant, The Glade bar, The Gallery brasserie, the two Michelin-starred...
Lecture Room & Library dining room and The East Bar.

Photo: My Good Images/Shutterstock.com
Address: 9 Conduit Street, Mayfair, London
Public Transport: Oxford Circus and Piccadilly Circus Tube stations
Opening hours: Daily (see website for times)
Phone: +44 20 7659 4500
Internet: www.sketch.london
Email: info@sketch.london

Sarastro

Sarastro is renowned for its flamboyant interior - part stage set, part old curiosity shop. Taking a nod from the nearby West End theatres, the dining room features opera boxes, luxuriant velvet tablecloths and cosy booths. The menu is Mediterranean and live shows regularly take place, with live opera on Sundays and Mondays, swing and Motown on Thursdays and Latin rhythms on Fridays.

Photo: Smiley.Dog/Shutterstock.com
Address: 126 Drury Lane, London
Public Transport: Covent Garden, Holborn and Temple Tube stations
Opening hours: Mon-Sat 12.30-22.15. Sun 12.30-14.30 and 18.15-21.30
Phone: +44 20 7836 0101
Internet: www.sarastro-restaurant.com
Email: info@sarastro-restaurant.com

J Sheekey

Tucked away between Leicester Square and Covent Garden, J Sheekey has been in business since the 1890s and is the place to go for sustainably sourced fish, oysters and shellfish.

From Sheekey's Fish Pie to potted shrimps (plus vegetarian and meat options), there's plenty of selection for everyone.

Photo: Cesarz/Shutterstock.com
Address: 28-34 St. Martin's Court, London
Public Transport: Leicester Square Tube station
Opening hours: Mon-Sat 12.00-22.00. Sun 12.00-15.00 and 17.00-23.00
Phone: +44 20 7240 2565
Internet: www.j-sheekey.co.uk

Poppie's Fish & Chips

On your way back from Camden Market and want to stop for a meal? At Poppie's you can experience the traditional dish of the British working classes the way it should be enjoyed. Why not sit down to a nice portion of tasty cod with a serving of crisp and fluffy chips complete with tartare sauce and a slice of lemon on the side. Decorated in the style of 1940s London, Poppie's is known as one of the capital's finest fish and chip shops. As well as the branch in Camden, you'll find another two in Spitalfields and Soho.

Photo: from my point of view/Shutterstock.com
Address: 30 Hawley Crescent, London
Public Transport: Camden Town tube station
Opening hours: Mon-Thu 11.00-23.00. Fri-Sat 11.00-23.30. Sun 11.00-22.30.
Phone: +44 020 7267 0440
Internet: www.poppiesfishandchips.co.uk
Email: www.poppiesfishandchips.co.uk/enquiry/
The Blues Kitchen - Shoreditch

While you're exploring London's trendy East End why not book a table at the now well-established live music and burger restaurant The Blues Kitchen. Pop in for lunch, brunch, dinner or an evening of cocktails at the bar while you enjoy the blues and soul acts on almost every day of the week. Bite into the big brisket burger, share the shrimp taco salad or dig into the szechuan chicken wings with creamy mango dip. And don’t forget to choose a succulent side dish of onion rings and fries to accompany your meal.

Photo: zygonema / Shutterstock.com
Address: 134-146 Curtain Road, Shoreditch, London
Opening hours: Mon-Wed 12:00-00:00 Thurs 12:00-01:00 Fri 12:00-02:30 Sat 11:00-03:00 Sun 11:00-22:30
Phone: +44 020 7729 7216
Internet: www.theblueskitchen.com
Email: info@theblueskitchen.com

Duke of Cambridge

The Duke of Cambridge is the first and only British pub to be certified as organic by the Soil Association. The menu at the Islington gastropub unsurprisingly features an excellent range of delicious organic food and drinks, and changes daily according to what seasonal food is available.

Photo: Larisa Blinova/Shutterstock.com
Address: 30 St Peters Street, Islington, London
Public Transport: Angel Tube station
Opening hours: Mon-Sat 12.00-23.00. Sun 12.00-22.30
Phone: +44 20 7359 3066
Internet: www.dukeorganic.co.uk
Email: duke@dukeorganic.co.uk

TOP 10 AFTERNOON TEAS

Delicate finger sandwiches, tempting cakes, pots of steaming tea, scones with lashings of jam and cream. With so many delicious ingredients it’s no wonder traditional afternoon tea remains as popular as ever in London. There are many top hotels, restaurants and cafés serving afternoon tea in London to this day, and there are many
varieties available – from classic afternoon tea to low-calorie alternatives and even gentleman's afternoon teas.

Afternoon tea at The Ritz

Afternoon tea at The Ritz is a London institution. In fact, it's so popular that you have to book at least four weeks in advance. There is a stunning total of five afternoon tea sittings every day to keep up with demand and they all take place in the building's beautiful Palm Court. Once you're comfortably settled in, you can tuck into one of the four afternoon tea options available and choose from 17 different types of loose-leaf tea while you listen to the pianist or harpist softly playing in the background.

Photo: Ingus Kruklitis/Shutterstock.com
Address: 150 Piccadilly, West End
Public Transport: Green Park Tube station
Phone: +44 20 7300 2345
Internet: www.theritzlondon.com
Email: dining@theritzlondon.com
More Info: At The Ritz Hotel

Afternoon Tea at Fortnum & Mason

In 2012, Fortnum & Mason's newly renamed Diamond Jubilee Tea Salon was officially inaugurated by the Queen, the Duchess of Cornwall and the Duchess of Cambridge. Today, having afternoon tea or high tea in the Tea Salon is a suitably regal matter. A selection of cakes and pastries from the Coronation Cake Carriage, salmon blinis, and tea and cake pairing menus are all available.

Photo: petereleven/Shutterstock.com
Address: 181 Piccadilly, West End
Public Transport: Green Park and Piccadilly Circus Tube stations
Phone: +44 20 7734 8040
Internet: www.fortnumandmason.com
Email: reservations@fortnumandmason.co.uk
More Info: The Diamond Jubilee Tea Salon is located on the fourth floor of Fortnum & Mason

Afternoon tea at Brown's Hotel

Afternoon tea at Brown's Hotel is served in the cozy, timeless setting of the English Tea Room, complete with wood panelling, fireplaces and original art. Tuck into a selection of sweet and savoury snacks and enjoy a cup of tea from Brown's unique Prestige Seasonal Tea Library, all to the sound of music from the Baby Grand Piano. And have your plate replenished at no additional charge.

Photo: Maximum Exposure PR/Shutterstock.com
Address: Albemarle Street, Mayfair, London
Public Transport: Green Park and Piccadilly Circus Tube stations
Phone: +44 20 7518 4155
Internet: www.roccofortehotels.com
Email: tea.browns@roccofortehotels.com
More Info: At Brown's Hotel

Afternoon Tea at Hotel Café Royal

Ladies and gentlemen, pick your best jacket because afternoon tea at Hotel Café Royal requires you to be dressed appropriately. And for good reason. During the week, tea is taken in the excellent Ten Room restaurant, whereas weekend bookings are served in the glamorous Oscar Wilde Lounge, named this way because the man himself was a regular patron. There is
nothing standard about this experience - even the ingredients are sure to offer many delightful surprises.

Afternoon Tea at The Emmeline's Lounge

Take time out from visiting the nearby Houses of Parliament and Buckingham Palace. The bright lounge area at The Emmeline's provides a suitable setting for a quintessentially posh British afternoon tea. And the lounge’s live harpist soothes even the weariest of minds. Have a drink of the bubbly beverage the Queen herself likes to enjoy and order the popular free-flowing champagne afternoon tea, brought to you by the same supplier that provides Her Majesty with the drink.

Afternoon Tea or the bite-size Spatisserie Afternoon Tea. Special seasonal teas are also available at different times of the year.

City Cruises Afternoon Tea

Take a river boat cruise along the Thames and enjoy a traditional afternoon tea of freshly made sandwiches, scones with clotted cream and strawberry jam, cakes and unlimited tea. Enjoy a window view of sites such as the Houses of Parliament, the Tower of London, the Tate Modern, Tower Bridge and the London Eye. A recorded commentary plays throughout the whole journey providing historical information that will enrich your experience.

Afternoon tea at The Dorchester

Afternoon tea is served five times a day at The Dorchester in the timeless Promenade and at the elegant Spatisserie. Choose from Vintage Afternoon Tea on The Balcony, the Dorchester Afternoon Tea, Champagne Afternoon

Royal Albert Hall Afternoon Tea

Any music enthusiast will want to book afternoon tea at the Royal Albert Hall. This iconic London venue has hosted countless numbers of memorable concerts throughout the years and it is home to the annual BBC Proms. Afternoon tea
is served in the venue's very own Verdi Restaurant, from Wednesday to Sunday. Twinings tea is served alongside sweet treats and finger sandwiches. If you would like a classier upgrade you can always order a glass of Moët & Chandon champagne.

Photo: T photography/Shutterstock.com
Address: Kensington Gore, South Kensington, London
Public Transport: Gloucester Road and South Kensington Tube stations
Phone: +44 20 7589 8212
Internet: www.royalalberthall.com
Email: food@royalalberthall.com

Afternoon Tea at Roseate House
Planning to visit Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens? Exploring the canals around Little Venice and Paddington? Why not take some time out to rest and have afternoon tea at the luxurious Roseate House London (formerly known as Royal Park Hotel). Indulge your tastebuds and try the fresh raisin scones with Devonshire clotted cream, the lemon posset, the carrot cake, the Victoria sponge and the specialty loose leaf tea.

Photo: jreika/Shutterstock.com
Address: 3-5 Westbourne Terrace, Paddington, London
Public Transport: Lancaster Gate and Paddington Tube stations
Phone: +44 20 7479 6600
Internet: www.roseatehotels.com/london/roseatehouse/
Email: info@theroyalpark.com

Afternoon Tea at The Goring
Indulge your royal fantasies with an afternoon tea at The Goring, just a few steps away from Buckingham Palace. This hotel has been perfecting the art of afternoon tea for more than a century. So much so that it was presented with the British Tea Guild Council’s Top London Afternoon Tea Award. The five-star experience includes the option to take tea on The Terrace overlooking The Goring Gardens.

Photo: Teerapong Tanpanit/Shutterstock.com
Address: Beeston Place, Victoria, London
Public Transport: Victoria Tube station
Phone: +44 20 7396 9000
Internet: www.thegoring.com
Email: afternoontea@thegoring.com

BARS & NIGHTLIFE

London's nightlife is one of the most vibrant and varied in the world, with everything from mega clubs to live music. And from trendy bars to traditional British pubs.

Spots in central London like Soho and Leicester Square attract visitors most nights of the week, but if it's the more trendy venues you're interested in why not try neighbourhoods like Hoxton and Shoreditch in East London, or
Brixton and Clapham in South London.

Here's just a taster of what London has to offer on a night out, including quality pubs and bars, world-renowned clubs, live music venues and much more.

Ministry of Sound

Converted from an old bus station in the 90s, the Ministry of Sound is a legendary spot in London's clubbing scene - and is an international brand too. Located close to Elephant and Castle, south of Waterloo, the club boasts five rooms, four bars, a VIP lounge, a courtyard area and what's said to be the world's best sound system.

Photo: Anthony Mooney/Shutterstock.com
Address: 103 Gaunt Street, Elephant & Castle, London
Public Transport: Elephant & Castle Tube station
Opening hours: Fri 22.30-06.00. Sat 23.00-06.00
Phone: +44 20 7740 8600
Internet: www.ministryofsound.com
Email: info@ministryofsound.com

The Argyll Arms

Known for its real ales, traditional pub grub and beautiful Victorian décor, The Argyll Arms is a slice of old London in the bustling shopping district of Oxford Street. Completed in 1742, the Grade II listed pub is named after the second Duke of Argyll and there is a rumour that a secret tunnel once connected the pub to the duke's mansion.

Photo: Syda Productions/Shutterstock.com
Address: 18 Argyll Street, London
Public Transport: Oxford Circus Tube station
Opening hours: Mon-Thu 10.00-23.30. Fri-Sat 10.00-00.00.

Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club

Perhaps the capital's most iconic jazz venue. Up and running since 1959, Ronnie Scott's has had the pleasure of hosting some of the world's most renowned musicians. Whether it's the weekly jam sessions in the upstairs cocktail bar or any of the top notch live bands playing in the main club, it is guaranteed you will enjoy the evening in style in one of the coolest and classiest places in London.

Photo: Freedom Studio/Shutterstock
Address: 47 Frith Street, Soho, London
Opening hours: Daily (see website for times)
Phone: +44 20 7439 0747
Tickets: Prices vary depending on event.
Internet: www.ronniescotts.co.uk
More Info: Booking a spot in advance is highly recommended

The Top Secret Comedy Club

In keeping with its name, the Top Secret Comedy Club is perhaps London's best kept secret when it comes to comical entertainment. But watch out - it's unlikely to stay this way for long! Dishing out the jests, the quips and the witticisms every night of the week are a range of both well-established and up-and-coming comedians. At prices accessible beyond belief, you can find yourself spending the evening (and only a pound or two) at one of the city's most interesting comedy venues.

Photo: aerogondo2 / Shutterstock.com
Icebar London

Carved out of crystal-clear ice from the Torne River in Sweden and maintained at a constant minus-five degrees all year round, Icebar London is literally the coolest bar in town. Everything in the bar is made from ice, including the walls, tables, chairs and even the glasses that the cocktails are served in. And every autumn the bar is sculpted differently, according to a new theme every time.

The King's Head Theatre Pub

A cheaper and more authentic alternative to the glamour of London's West End can be found hidden away upstairs or downstairs in many pubs across the capital. The King's Head in Islington was the first theatre pub to open since Shakespearean times. And if you're willing to leave the city centre for an evening, The King's Head offers theatre, musicals and stand-up comedy. This is where a handful of world-renowned actors started off before being propelled to fame and where many a successful West End production was born. Make sure to have a look at the shows on their website and see if anything catches your eye before booking tickets.

Gordon's Wine Bar

Thought to be London’s oldest wine bar (it was established in 1890), Gordon's is a wonderfully atmospheric venue that feels like something from another era. This candlelit cellar-bar serves a wide range of wines, sherries and ports from the barrel, as well as big hearty meals. Always busy, you're advised to arrive around 4pm if you want to bag a table.
The Atlas Pub

The Atlas Pub is a warm and relaxing venue, where you’ll find stylish wood panelling, fresh flowers and a brick fireplace. It also has a fine selection of wines and ales, a menu full of delicious and diverse dishes, and is the location of The London Wine Academy’s popular wine workshops.

Photo: Gorodisskij/Shutterstock.com
Address: 16 Seagrave Road, Fulham, London
Public Transport: West Brompton station
Opening hours: Mon-Sat 12.00-23.00. Sun 12.00-22.30
Phone: +44 20 7385 9129
Internet: www.theatlaspub.co.uk
Email: reservations@theatlaspub.com

The Prince Alfred

Established in 1863, The Prince Alfred has retained much of its period features, including the original Victorian snugs - each with its own door onto the street and separated from each other by a wooden partition with a small access door. The PA, as it is known locally, also serves food in the adjoining Formosa dining room, and is located close to the picturesque waterside of Little Venice.

Photo: Shebeko/Shutterstock.com
Address: 5a Formosa Street, London
Public Transport: Warwick Avenue Tube station
Opening hours: Mon-Thu 12.00-23.00. Fri-Sat 12.00-00.00. Sun 12.00-23.00
Phone: +44 20 7286 3287
Internet: www.theprincealfred.com
Email: princealfred@youngs.co.uk

The Hippodrome Casino

Just like Leicester Square, where it is located, the five-floor Hippodrome Casino is glitzy and vibrant. Aside from the gaming areas, there are live shows, six bars, a restaurant, two lounges and an outdoor smoking and cigar bar. The heart of it all is the Heliot bar on the first floor balcony, serving classic cocktails with a Hippodrome twist.

Photo: AS Inc/Shutterstock.com
Address: Leicester Square, London
Public Transport: Leicester Square Tube station
Opening hours: 24 hours a day / 7 days a week
Phone: +44 207 769 8888
Internet: www.hippodromecasino.com
Email: info@hippodromecasino.com

SHOPPING

Shopping in London is one of the most popular pastimes for visitors and locals alike. And it’s no wonder given the huge range of shopping destinations across the capital, from high-end luxury boutiques and huge department stores to lively markets and vintage pop-ups.

The key is to find the right shopping area for you, be it the bright lights and big brands of the West End, the quirky and outrageous fashion of
Camden or the smart suits in Savile Row. Here are just a few of London's top shopping destinations well worth a visit.

**Oxford Street**

Oxford Street is the ultimate London shopping destination, packed with high street fashion, international brands, technology, homewear and much, much more. No wonder its streets are always crowded with bag-laden shoppers! Favourite destinations include a huge branch of Topshop, plus iconic department stores such as Selfridges, John Lewis, House of Fraser and Marks & Spencer.

Photo: alice-photo/Shutterstock.com
Address: Oxford Street, London
Public Transport: Oxford Circus, Tottenham Court Road, Bond Street and Marble Arch Tube stations
Internet: www.oxfordstreet.co.uk

**Selfridges**

Selfridges' flagship London store is one of the world's finest department stores. It is six floors of fabulous fashion, pop-up concessions, electrical gadgets, stylish homeware and tasty food. But it's far more than just a shopping destination. It's also a social hub - with events, bars, restaurants, cafés, art exhibitions and the odd rooftop party.

Photo: inavanhateren/Shutterstock.com
Address: 400 Oxford Street, London
Public Transport: Bond Street and Marble Arch Tube stations
Opening hours: Mon-Sat 09.30-21.00. Sun 11.30-18.00
Phone: +44 207 160 6222
Internet: www.selfridges.com

**Harvey Nichols**

Harvey Nichols, or Harvey Nicks as it's known locally, is a favourite among London's fashionistas. Its flagship Knightsbridge store opened in the 1880s and today boasts a massive eight floors of fashion, beauty and lifestyle collections. The fifth floor is given over to the stylish Fifth Floor Restaurant, Café and Bar - plus a food market and wine shop.

Photo: Wang An Qi/Shutterstock.com
Address: 109-125 Knightsbridge, London
Public Transport: Knightsbridge and Hyde Park Corner Tube stations
Opening hours: Mon-Sat 10.00-20.00. Sun 11.30-18.00
Phone: +44 20 7235 5000
Internet: www.harveynichols.com/store/knightsbridge
Email: contact.knightsbridge@harveynichols.com

**Regent Street**

With its beautiful curved facades, listed architecture and elegant hotels, Regent Street is a cultural destination as well as a shopping hotspot. Top brands such as Liberty, Apple and Hamleys congregate here, alongside what is the largest Burberry store in the world.

Photo: Zoltan Gabor/Shutterstock.com
Address: Regent Street, London
Public Transport: Oxford Circus and Piccadilly Circus Tube stations
Internet: www.regentstreetonline.com
Email: info@regentstreetonline.com
Liberty

Instantly recognisable by its iconic mock-Tudor frontage, Liberty is a lavish design emporium located just off Regent Street. It first opened its doors in 1875, and was later crowned by Oscar Wilde “the chosen resort of the artistic shopper.” Today it’s best known for its top-quality fashion, jewellery, beauty, furniture, toys, oriental rugs and much more.

Photo: Clare Louise Jackson / Shutterstock.com
Address: Regent Street, London
Public Transport: Oxford Circus Tube station
Opening hours: Mon-Sat 10.00-20.00. Sun 11.30-18.00
Phone: +44 20 7734 1234
Internet: www.liberty.co.uk
Email: customerservices@libertylondon.com
More Info: The main entrance is located on Great Marlborough Street

Covent Garden and Seven Dials

As well as its street entertainment, Covent Garden is famous for its covered markets - Apple Market, Jubilee Market and East Colonnade Market - which sell everything from British-made arts and crafts to jewellery and antiques. The area has many permanent shops too. From the ever-popular Disney Store to travel book shop Stanfords. Close by are two other unique London shopping destinations, Neal Street and Covent Garden’s 'village' Seven Dials, a small agglomeration of streets packed with fashion boutiques, vintage shops, jewellers and design furniture stores.

Photo: Andres Garcia Martin/Shutterstock.com
Address: Covent Garden, London

Knightsbridge

Knightsbridge and the surrounding areas of Chelsea and South Kensington are known for their high-end fashion and prestigious brands.

On Sloane Street, you’ll find Prada, Gucci, Giorgio Armani, Dolce et Gabbana, Fendi and many more top labels. The road intersects to the north with Brompton Road, home to the likes of Harrods and Harvey Nichols, and to the south with King's Road, where punk and other counterculture movements flourished in the 1960s. Today this is where you’ll find a Vivienne Westwood shop and a Peter Jones department store.

Photo: Ivanko80/Shutterstock.com
Address: Knightsbridge, London
Public Transport: Knightsbridge, Sloane Square and South Kensington Tube stations
Internet: www.knightsbridge-estate.com

Harrods

Famous around the world, Harrods is a gold-and-green beacon in London's shopping scene. Inside the stunning store you'll find everything from homewares and kitchen essentials to books and beauty products. But most people make a beeline for the Harrods-branded gifts, fashion aisles and food hall - an ornate treasure trove of foodie delicacies and sweet treats.

Photo: Richie Chan/Shutterstock.com
Address: 87-135 Brompton Road, Knightsbridge
Public Transport: Knightsbridge Tube station
**Savile Row**
A street in Mayfair, Savile Row has been synonymous with traditional bespoke tailoring since 1803. It remains a key player in the London fashion scene thanks to cutting-edge designers such as Richard James and Ozwald Boateng. For shirts, ties, hats and other accessories head for nearby Jermyn Street.

Photo: Pressmaster/Shutterstock.com
Address: Savile Row, Mayfair, London

**Greenwich Market**
Packed with unique arts and crafts, Greenwich Market is the place to go for one-off, unique gifts and souvenirs - be it handmade jewellery, natural beauty products, children’s toys or antiques (every day is different). There are also permanent shops selling art, clothing and accessories - plus a good range of food stalls serving up delicious cuisine from around the world.

Photo: Pawan Pathak/Shutterstock.com
Address: Greenwich High Road, London
Public Transport: Cutty Sark and Greenwich stations
Opening hours: Tue-Sun 10.00-17.30
Phone: +44 020 8269 3096
Tickets: Free entry
Internet: www.greenwichmarketlondon.com
Email: hello@greenwichmarketlondon.com
More Info: The market can also be accessed from College Approach

**Mayfair**
Mayfair is home to some of the world’s most prestigious brands and luxury hotels, and is London’s most exclusive shopping destination. Along Mount Street you’ll find many luxury fashion and beauty brands, art and antiques dealers, as well as top restaurants. Other Mayfair retail residents include Marc Jacobs, Christian Louboutin, Jenny Packham, Balenciaga, Purdey and William & Son.

Photo: Alexey Fedorenko/Shutterstock.com
Address: Mayfair, London
Public Transport: Bond Street, Marble Arch and Green Park Tube stations
Phone: +44 20 7312 0011
Internet: www.grosvenorlondon.com/home
Email: customercentre@grosvenor.com

**Westfield London**
Westfield London is a super-sized shopping and leisure destination in West London’s Shepherd’s Bush district. Inside this stunningly designed mall you’ll find more than 265 luxury and high-street shops, from Debenhams to Dior (located inside luxury brand area The Village). There are also plenty of restaurants and bars to refuel at along the Southern Terrace, plus a 14-screen cinema, gym, spa, library and a packed programme of special events in the central Atrium.

Photo: Syda Productions/Shutterstock.com
Address: Ariel Way, London
Public Transport: Shepherd’s Bush and Wood Lane Tube stations
Opening hours: Mon-Sat 10.00-22.00. Sun 12.00-18.00
Westfield Stratford City

The sister mall to the pioneering Westfield London, Westfield Stratford City has revitalised East London with its great brands, top restaurants and entertainment venues. As well as 250 shops and 70 dining spots there's a cinema, an All Star Lanes bowling alley and a casino of around 65,000 sq. feet. While you're there, look out for great views over the stunning Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park nearby.

Photo: Monkey Business Images/Shutterstock.com
Address: Montfichet Road, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, London
Public Transport: Stratford Tube station
Opening hours: Mon-Fri 10.00-21.00. Sat 09.00-21.00. Sun 12.00-18.00
Phone: +44 208 221 7300
Internet: uk.westfield.com/stratfordcity

Camden Lock Market

Located next to the picturesque canal, Camden Lock Market is a must if you're into quirky, alternative and unique gifts, fashion and crafts. Comprising a mix of shops and stalls, the buzzing market has been attracting crowds of visitors since 1972. While you're in the area, make sure you visit the nearby Stables Market and Camden Market (formerly Buck Street Market).

Photo: Chris Mole/Shutterstock.com
Address: 54-56 Camden Lock Place, Chalk Farm Road, London
Public Transport: Camden Town and Chalk Farm Tube

Passport / Visa

Citizens of the European Union member-states, Norway, Liechtenstein, Iceland, Switzerland, and Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) only require a valid passport to enter the UK. Residents of a further 10 countries do not require entry visas for stays under 6 months: the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, South Africa, Hong Kong, and Malaysia. Nationals of some further countries do not require a visa, but need to hold an entry certificate. Use the UK Government website to check for specific requirements: www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa

Photo: TukTuk Design
**Best Time to Visit**

London is graced by a mild climate and, as such, can be visited at any time of the year. However, a few things need to be considered first. Most of the royal palaces and residences, like the State Rooms at Buckingham Palace, are only open to the public during the summer months. Many of the city's most important festivals, like the British Summer Time Music Festival, also take place during this time. Late June to mid July is also when some of the best sales are on in shops around the capital.

Spring is also a good season for a visit, since the weather is generally good and finding accommodation is both easier and cheaper (high season in London means a lot of tourists). And if you're not too bothered about the grey weather, then low season (January and February) can be a good option too, when there are fewer tourists and prices are lower.

**Airport - London Heathrow**

London Heathrow Airport is one of the busiest airports in the world, with five terminals. There are various ways to travel from Heathrow Airport to your destination. Hotel Hoppa and Hotel By Bus are shared ride services, transporting travellers to (and from) local and Central London hotels by coach. The quickest journey is by train on the Heathrow Express, which runs every 15 minutes (from approximately 5am to 11.45pm) and gets you into Central London in 15 minutes for £20. You can also travel into Central London via Heathrow Connect (£9.50), the Piccadilly line on London Underground, a coach to Victoria Coach Station (£6), bus (£1.40 Oyster/£2.40 cash) or taxi (£50 to £80 in a metred black cab).

*Photo: VectorA/Shutterstock.com*

**Airport - London Gatwick**

London Gatwick Airport is the second largest airport in the UK (Heathrow Airport is the largest), with two terminals: North and South. The fastest route from the airport into Central London is via the Gatwick Express, with trains departing every 15 minutes. The non-stop journey to Victoria Station takes 30 minutes and costs £19.90. Alternative travel options include going by First Capital Connect train to London Bridge, City Thameslink, Blackfriars, Farringdon or St Pancras International (£10 to St Pancras); Southern train services (£19.90 to Victoria Station), coach (£8), easyBus (£2 – online price) or taxi.

*Photo: Juan Garces*

**Address:**
- Heathrow Airport, Hounslow, Middlesex
- Gatwick Airport, West Sussex

**Public Transport:**
- Heathrow Airport Train Station
- London Gatwick Airport Train Station

**Phone:**
- +44 844 335 1801
- +44 844 892 0322

**Internet:**
- www.heathrow.com
- www.gatwickairport.com
Airport - London Stansted

London Stansted Airport is the third busiest airport in the UK, and where many low-cost airlines serving Europe and the Mediterranean operate from. On the Stansted Express you can reach Liverpool Street station in 47 minutes. Trains run every 15 minutes and the journey costs £23.40. You can also travel between Stansted Airport and Central London by coach with easyBus (£2 - online price), National Express (from £5) or Terravision (from £6). Alternatively book a minicab in advance with 24x7 Stansted. Black cabs do no operate from Stansted (though you can take one to the airport).

Photo: Juan Garces
Address: Stansted Airport, Essex CM24 1RW
Public Transport: Stansted Airport Train Station
Phone: +44 844 335 1803
Internet: www.stanstedairport.com

Airport - London Luton

London Luton Airport is located just 56km north-west of Central London, and is a popular base for low-cost airlines. A regular shuttle bus transports passengers from the airport to the nearest station, Luton Airport Parkway, which takes about 10 minutes. From the station you can catch an East Midlands Trains or First Capital Connect service into Central London taking somewhere between 21 and 25 minutes (for £13.50). Other options include the easyBus express service (from £2 - online price), the Green Line 757 coach service to Victoria Coach Station (for £17) or Terravision coaches to Victoria Coach Station (for £15). Each transport service stops at different destinations en route. A metered taxi ride to or from Central London costs around £80.

Photo: Juan Garces
Address: London Luton Airport, Luton, Bedfordshire
Public Transport: Luton Airport Parkway
Phone: +44 1582 405100
Internet: www.london-luton.co.uk

Airport - London City

London City Airport is a single runway airport located 9.5km east of Central London, and serving mainly short-haul and business flights. The airport is on the Docklands Light Railway, which connects to London’s Tube network at Canning Town, Stratford and Bank and uses the same price structure. Buses serve the airport too, with numbers 473 and 474 providing a connection to other East London destinations. You can also take a cab from the taxi rank outside the airport.

Photo: Juan Garces
Address: London City Airport, Hartmann Road, London
Public Transport: London City Airport DLR Station
Phone: +44 20 7646 0088
Internet: www.londoncityairport.com

Public Transport - Bus

London’s bus network stretches right across the capital, and provides a frequent and accessible service. If you’re using an Oyster card, a single trip costs £1.40. All you have to do is ‘touch in’ when you get on the bus. And remember there is a daily cap of £4.40 if you’re using only bus and tram services. If you’re paying by cash a single
bus ticket is £2.40. Seven-day, one-month and annual bus passes are also available.

To navigate your way around the network, pick up a Central London Bus Guide from travel information centres at larger Tube stations or use Transport for London’s online Journey Planner. A reduced service of night buses operates throughout the night and the early hours of the morning. Most late-night routes will stop at Trafalgar Square. Various concessions are available for children, students, the elderly and disabled travellers.

Photo: Pierre-Luc Auclair
Address: London
Phone: +44 343 222 1234
Internet: tfl.gov.uk

Public Transport - Tube

There are 12 Underground or 'Tube' lines serving Greater London, which connect at various points to the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) and local rail network. The Tube usually operates from 5am to midnight from Monday to Saturday, with a reduced service on Sunday. Plan your route by picking up a free Tube map from any Underground station, or using Transport for London’s online Journey Planner. Fares vary depending on which of London's six travel 'zones' you travel through, though they are considerably cheaper with an Oyster card than buying paper tickets. Various concessions are available for children, students, the elderly and disabled travellers.

Photo: Michael Zenaty
Address: London
Phone: +44 343 222 1234
Internet: tfl.gov.uk

Public Transport - Docklands Light Railway

The Docklands Light Railway (DLR) serves East London and connects with the Tube network at Bank, Tower Gateway (Tower Hill), Shadwell, Stratford, Bow, Heron Quays, Canning Town and Canary Wharf. It also connects to the Emirates Air Line cable car at Royal Victoria. Fares are the same as on the Tube, and the DLR runs from 5.30am to 12.30am Monday to Saturday and from 7am to 11.30pm on Sunday. Fares are the same as those on the Tube, and both Oyster card and Travelcard holders can use the DLR.

Photo: Michael Zenaty
Address: London
Phone: +44 343 222 1234
Internet: tfl.gov.uk

Public Transport - Thames River Bus

Travel with ease along the Thames on board a river bus. There are six different routes that all stop at destinations along the riverbank between Putney and Woolwich Arsenal. Popular services include the Thames Clippers route between Hilton London Docklands Riverside and Canary Wharf, the Tate-to-Tate boattride between Tate Britain and Tate Modern, and the journey between London Eye and Greenwich village. Depending on the service you’ll be able to buy your ticket either before boarding or on board. Discounts are available when using Travelcards and Oyster cards.
Public Transport - Local Trains

As well as the Underground, London has its own local train network, which connects to the Tube at many points. The main train operators serving London are Silverlink, First Capital Connect, SouthEastern Railway, Southern Railway, London Overground and Greater Anglia. These local lines are, in turn, connected to the national rail network and the Eurostar. You can use your Oyster card on all trains operating within Zones 1-9, with the exception of Heathrow Express and a few other select services. Several different railcards are available too, providing discount fares to their holders.

Public Transport - Trams

London's tram network, Tramlink, was introduced in the year 2000 and it runs in specific parts of South London – between Wimbledon, Croydon, Beckenham and New Addington. Trams run approximately every seven minutes to New Addington and every 10 minutes to Wimbledon, Elmers End and Beckenham Junction during the day from Monday to Saturday. Fares are the same as on buses. This means there is a flat rate of £1.40 when using an Oyster card and £2.40 when paying by cash. Travelcards and bus passes are also valid on trams.

Public Transport - Cycle Hire Scheme

Hop on a 'Boris bike' and zip around London using the city's public bike-sharing scheme. Named after London's former mayor Boris Johnson, the popular red bikes can be picked up at over 550 bicycle docking stations across London – which means you're never far away from one. After you've paid your registration fee (from £2), you can hire a bike for a day, a week or even a year. The bikes are free to use for the first 30 minutes, after which the price increases by £2 every extra 30 minutes. When you've finished your journey, simply return the bike to your nearest docking station – you can find out where that is using the Santander Cycles app.

Public Transport - Emirates Air Line

Cross the Thames in style on board the Emirates Air Line, London's cable car connecting Greenwich Peninsula and the Royal Docks. As well as taking you across the river in less than 10 minutes, it
provides an amazing bird’s eye view of London and the Thames. The fare is £3.20 using an Oyster card, or you can buy a return journey (known as a ’360° tour’) for £6.40 from the terminals at either end of the line. Multi-journey boarding passes (£10 for 10 single trips) and private cabin packages are also available.

Photo: DM-Studio/Shutterstock.com
Address: Emirates Greenwich Peninsula, Greenwich, London
Phone: +44 343 222 1234
Internet: www.emiratesairline.co.uk

Taxi

Taking a ride in one of London's iconic black cabs makes for a very comfortable and spacious ride. Hail a cab in the street or pick one up at a taxi rank. Your journey is calculated using a meter, with a minimum charge of £2.40. Watch out though, because the price can go up pretty quickly and the roads in central London are often packed with cars. London also has many private vehicles for hire, as well as minicabs - these are unmetered so check the fare when booking. To find a local, reputable firm download Transport for London's free CabWise app or check the Hailo app to find a nearby black cab.

Photo: VisitLondon.com
Address: London
Phone: +44 343 222 4000
Internet: tfl.gov.uk

Post

Postage stamps are available across London at post offices, newsagents and supermarkets. To post a package or small souvenirs, drop into a post office – you can find your nearest branch on their official website. Post offices are generally open Monday-Friday from 9.00am to 5.30pm and Saturday from 9.00am to 12.30pm.

Photo: Andy Fuchs
Address: London
Internet: www.postoffice.co.uk

Pharmacy

Whether you need to buy over-the-counter medication or collect a prescription, there are plenty of pharmacies all over the capital. Boots and Superdrug are two big chemist chains. You will also find pharmaceutical products at some of the larger supermarket branches.

Boots London Piccadilly Circus:

Photo: Gemma Garner
Address: 44-46 Regent St, London
Public Transport: Piccadilly Circus Tube station
Opening hours: Mon-Fri 08.00 - 00.00. Sat 09.00-00.00. Sun 12.30-18.30
Phone: +44 207 7346 126
Internet: www.boots-uk.com
Telephone

The international dialling code for the UK is +44 or 0044, which replaces the first 'zero' of the phone number. So, for example, to call the number 020 7946 0000 from abroad you would dial +44 20 7946 0000.

The area codes for London are (020) 7, (020) 8 and (020) 3. If you're dialling a London number from another fixed phone line within Greater London you don't need to dial the '020' before the number, just the rest of the number starting with 7, 8 or 3.

Photo: Jardson Almeida

Electricity

Electrical appliances are connected to the UK mains supply using a three-pin plug. This plug fits into a wall socket. The sockets come with on-and-off switches, unlike in many other countries.

The average voltage of a UK power socket is 230v or slightly higher, so check the voltage of your device before plugging it in. Voltage adaptors and convertors are available from London airports and high-street electrical chains such as Argos or Curry's.

Power sockets are available at many coffee shops with WiFi and on some overground trains. Need to charge your mobile? Download the 'find-a-chargebox' iPhone app to find your nearest ChargeBox.

Photo: Stirling Tschan

Population
8.1 million

Currency
British pounds, £1 = 100 pence

Opening hours
Typical shopping hours are Monday-Saturday 9.00-17.30. Many department stores stay open until 18.00, some until 19.00 or 20.00 on Wednesdays or Thursdays. Larger shops are often open 10.00-18.00 on Sundays.

Newspapers
The Times
The Telegraph
The Guardian
Daily Mail
The Independent
London Evening Standard

Emergency numbers
999

Tourist information
City Information Centre
St. Paul's Churchyard,
London,
EC4M 8BX
+44 20 7332 1456
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