



*London's Houses of Parliament at dusk*

## Quick Facts

Country	UK	
Currency	British Pound	£
	100 pence makes	£1
Language	English	
Population	7,615,000	
Time Zone	GMT 0 or GMT +1 (March to November)	

## Climate

Summer Av Max	24°C	
Autumn Av Max	15°C	
Winter Av Max	7°C	
Spring Av Max	17°C	

## Introducing London

Millions flock to [London](#) each year to admire the 'essential' English sights and sounds of [Oxford Street](#), [Buckingham Palace](#), [Big Ben](#), and the [London Eye](#). But London is a city that craves exploration beyond the tourist trail; it urges its visitors to delve into its past, to absorb the heritage and culture inherent in its bounty of old streets, lesser-known landmarks, churches, museums and theatres.

History gloriously pervades the city: Roman ruins, ornate Baroque churches, grand government buildings, the architectural legacy of Wren and jingoistic monuments to the British Empire charting 2,000 years of history. And it is a joy to stumble on oases of tranquillity and elegance in the beautiful squares and gardens just a short walk from the heartland of London's buzzing West End.

London's size and stature generally makes a first visit an intoxicating, sometimes bewildering experience. This is Europe's largest, wealthiest and most populated city, which is constantly evolving because it always runs at full tilt.

London is most easily defined by its districts, such as the West End, South Bank and Mayfair, all with their own distinctive character and divided between north and south by the famous River Thames.

## What to See in London

**Music** Grand venues like the [Royal Albert Hall](#) and [Wigmore Hall](#) offer truly memorable experiences, whilst world-class ballet and opera can be enjoyed in fabled venues like [Sadler's Wells](#) and the [Royal Opera House](#). The [South Bank](#) is the leading arts area in the capital, with three world-class arts institutions for classical music, dance and theatre on the south side of the Waterloo Bridge.

**Sports** Sports fans can watch international soccer at [Wembley Stadium](#) in Twickenham, with cricket matches played out on the historic fields of [Lord's](#) and at [The Oval](#). The world's richest tennis tournament takes centre stage in London at [Wimbledon](#) during June and early July. Thoroughbreds contest several major prizes at [Kempton](#) and [Sandown Park](#) racetracks, with the nearby [Epsom Derby](#) and [Royal Ascot](#) the top events of the Flat racing season.

**Museums** The [British Museum](#) features over 6.5 million objects include collections dating from prehistoric times, drawings, coins, medals and vast statues. The [Tate Modern](#), housed in a former power station, is the home of international art from 1900 onwards including works by Bacon, Dali and Picasso. The [National Gallery](#) has Western European paintings dated between 1260 and 1900. Many famous works can be viewed, including paintings by Monet, Renoir, Gauguin, Turner and Picasso.

## Getting into London

**From Heathrow** The train or tube is the easiest way to get into central London, costing from £6. A taxi into the outer suburbs costs from £30 if you pre-book but can cost £50 if you arrange on at the airport.

**From Gatwick** Taxis from Gatwick into central London are very expensive, in the region on £80, so taking the train is much more cost effective, at about £10. There are also various coach companies which offer tickets from £2 if booked well ahead of time.

**From Luton** The cheapest way is to take a shuttle to the station then take a train to London. Taxis are easier but cost £65.

**From Stansted** The Stansted Express train is the quickest and easiest way to get into London. Coach tickets can be cheaper but only if bought in advance.

## Shopping in London

**Oxford Street** is possibly the most famous shopping street in London. It has one of the highest concentrations of large shops in the world - more than 300 shops sell thousands of lines of goods from inexpensive gifts to haute couture, whilst **Regent Street** is home to stylish outlets such as Liberty, Austin Reed and Benetton.

**Covent Garden** offers an eclectic and upmarket range of specialist stores, cafes and bars which makes for delightful browsing and people watching; further west is bustling **Knightsbridge** and **Sloane Square**, where designer clothing vies with the landmark stores of **Harrods** and **Harvey Nichols**.

Other renowned, specialist shopping streets include **Hanway Street** for music; **Charing Cross** and **Cecil Court** for books; **Savile Row** and **Jermyn Street** in Westminster for bespoke suits and shirts; and **Tottenham Court Road** for electronics.

## Getting Around London

**Walking** Walking is an easy way to explore most of London's most popular areas, such as Oxford Street and along the Thames. Getting from one side of this vast city to the other is also a cinch if you take the tube.

**Tube** Journeys cost from £1 but it is cheapest to buy a travel card for the duration of your stay. The tube is easy to navigate using the pocket tube maps.

**Buses** Public buses are also a cheap and quick way to reach nearby destination, however can be quite time consuming to travel longer distances due to traffic. A single bus journey costs £2.30 cash or £1.30 using a tube pass.

**Train** There are various train operators in London and it is very easy and reasonably priced to reach nearby towns. Tickets can be bought at the station or online.

## Annual Entertainment in London

During February, Soho, Chinatown and Leicester Square are more vibrant than ever through the Chinese New Year celebrations. Rowing teams from Oxford and Cambridge demonstrate brawn over brain during the hotly contested and televised Boat Race down the Thames during March.

May has a floral theme with VE Day on May 8th and the Chelsea Flower Show; elite thoroughbreds and fashion are on display at the Epsom and Ascot Races in June, whilst hardy tennis fans camp out overnight for standby tickets at Wimbledon, tennis' most famous grass tournament. Shakespeare's Globe, the Open Air Theatre and Kenwood House make historic and scenic locations to enjoy the season of summer plays.

The weeks leading up to Christmas prompt an array of Winter events; lights along Oxford Street, ice skating at Somerset House and Hyde Parks Winter Wonderland. Westminster Abbey and St Paul's Cathedral present seasonal classical music and services.

## Our London Favourites...

### Hotels

\$\$\$ **InterContinental Park Lane** 1 Hamilton Place



\$\$ **Best Western Burns Kensington** 18-26 Barkston Gardens



\$\$ **London Heathrow Marriott** Bath Road



\$\$ **Crompton Guesthouse** 49 Lampton Road



\$\$ **Holiday Inn Sutton** Gibson Road, Sutton



### Restaurants

\$\$\$ **Gordon Ramsay At Claridges** 21 West 52nd Str - classic, gourmet, smart dress



\$\$ **The Blind Tiger** 697a Wandsworth Road - fine dining, gourmet, 1920s theme



\$ **Made in Italy** 249 Kings Rd, Chelsea - traditional Italian, casual, crowd



## Don't miss...

### Tragalgar Square

*Pall-Mall East*

**Why?** Grand architecture, museums, fountains and pigeons - so many iconic London-things in one place.



## One Day Itinerary

**Morning** Head to Waterloo Station for an early morning walk along the Southbank, seeing the houses of Parliament, London Eye and other icons.

**Early Lunch** Tube to Hyde Park Corner for lunch overlooking the lake in Hyde Park.

**Afternoon** Stroll along Oxford Street from Marble Arch for shopping.

**Dusk** Dinner and drinks amongst the lights at one of Leicester Square's many restaurants.