

A to Z of London Monuments, Museums, Attractions, Places

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Abbey Road - For many years, a zebra crossing in St. John's Wood, London, England has held a fascination among fans of popular music. Little did THE BEATLES know, that on Friday the 8th of August, 1969, they were not simply shooting another LP-cover; they were adding another tourist attraction to London. Don't be surprised to see tourists from all over the world trotting across the road with bare feet. It's a London tradition.

Big Ben

Many people think of The Clock Tower as Big Ben, but Big Ben is actually the name of the biggest bell within The Clock Tower (320ft tall) of the Houses of Parliament. To give you an idea of the size of the clocks on The Clock Tower, each face has a diameter of 23ft. The numerals are 2ft high, and the minute hands are 14ft long. The bell, when built in 1858, was the heaviest bell ever made in Britain, and was named after a Sir Benjamin Hall, who was the man who decided that it would be cast. There are something like 400 steps within the tower, but it is not open to the public. Within the tower is a cell in which political prisoners have at times been incarcerated. Every quarter hour, the clock plays the first line of its famous music (taken from Handel's Messiah). At the half hour it plays the first two lines. At a quarter to the hour it plays three lines, and at the hour the full chime is played.

This 316ft clock-tower was completed between 1858-59. Big Ben is named, probably, after Sir Benjamin Hall, the First Commissioner of Works. Big Ben was first broadcast on New Year's Eve in 1923. The light above the clock is lit while the Commons is sitting. Big Ben weighs over 13 tons. The clock mechanism, alone, weights about 5 tons. The figures on the clock face are about 2 feet long, the minute spaces are 1 ft. square; and the copper minute hands are 14 ft. Long.

Buckingham Palace

is the official home of the Queen. She and Prince Philip live there during the week. You can tell she is there because her flag is flown in the middle of the building if she is in residence. Buckingham Palace is the official London residence of the sovereign, and was first opened to the public in 1993. Buckingham Palace is the official London residence of the British monarch since Queen Victoria ascended the throne in 1837. It is placed at the end of the Mall, a wide avenue leading from Trafalgar Square, and faces the Victoria Memorial, a statue of Queen Victoria. A statue of Nike, the ancient Greek goddess of victory, stands in front of the palace in memory of Queen Victoria too. The royal Banner is set on the roof when the monarch is in residence, and the famous Changing of the guard takes place in the palace forecourt every day from, April to September and every other day from October to March. This is perhaps the most popular happening which can be seen in Buckingham Palace. Certain rooms are open to the public in August and September while the Queen is not in residence. Buckingham Palace was built by the Duke of Buckingham and Normandy in 1703 and bought by George III in 1761, although St James's Palace continued to be the official royal residence until the accession of Queen Victoria. The building, in neo-classical style, was remodeled by John Nash in 1825. In 1856 a ballroom was added and in 1913 Sir Aston Webb altered the East Front, which faces the Mall. Marble Arch was the entrance to the palace until it was moved to the north-eastern corner of Hyde Park in 1851. The palace has about 600 rooms and is surrounded by 20 hectares of gardens. Some of the state apartments are open to the public in July and August. The Queen's Gallery and the Royal Mews on the south side of the palace are both permanently open to the public. In the queen's Gallery, annual exhibitions of paintings and works of art from the Royal

Collection are shown. In the Royal Mews state coaches and carriages are displayed: among them is the Gold State Coach, which was used at every coronation since that of George IV in 1762. The stables, in which the Windsor Grey and Cleveland Bay carriage horses are kept, are also open to the public.

Besides being the official London residence of The Queen, Buckingham Palace is also the busy administrative headquarters of the monarchy and has probably the most famous and easily recognisable façade of any building in the world.

The Palace is a working building and the centrepiece of Britain's constitutional monarchy. It houses the offices of those who support the day-to-day activities and duties of The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh and their immediate family. The Palace is also the venue for great Royal ceremonies, State Visits and Investitures, all of which are organised by the Royal Household.

Although Buckingham Palace is furnished and decorated with priceless works of art that form part of the Royal collection, one of the major art collections in the world today, it is not an art gallery and nor is it a museum. Its State Rooms form the nucleus of the working Palace and are used regularly by The Queen and members of the Royal family for official and State entertaining. Buckingham Palace is one of the world's most familiar buildings and more than 50,000 people visit the Palace each year as guests to banquets, lunches, dinners, receptions and the Royal Garden Parties. Visitors are allowed access by and organised tour to some areas of the Palace.

Camden Town

The markets are popular on the weekends selling variety of fashion, lifestyle and bizarre goods. Stables Market also has growing antique and furniture trade. Camden's famous market, lock and nightlife. Our guide to the bohemian place to be and be seen. Camden is more than a market

A myth held by the rest of London, is that Camden's only attraction is the large weekend market and that otherwise it only attracts single-parent teenagers, students and the homeless. In reality, the rich, the poor, the could be either and would be neither, are all co-existing in an area that stretches from the white mansions of Regent's Park to the big estates on the way to Euston.

Furthermore, the market is the least enticement for locals, now that 100,000 bargain hunters descend upon it each weekend. However for tourists and those that enjoy crowds there are some real fashion bargains to be had, particularly with shoes, leather goods and generally bohemian gear.

It is true that nestled round the back of the High Street is London's largest doss-house which serves up soup, clothes and beds for the homeless daily and yes Camden needs two unemployment offices to manage the copious claims. But it also has Jongleurs Comedy Store - which is as professional, slick and expensive as the West End sister, the famous Jazz Cafe on Parkway, the cozy French Cafe down Delancey Street that has a stream of rich and famous dropped off and picked up at its entrance, and Compendium, renowned as the best alternative bookshop in London.

Canterbury Cathedral

The first Archbishop of Canterbury was St Augustine who arrived on the coast of Kent as a missionary to England in 597 AD. He came from Rome, sent by Pope Gregory the Great. Ever since the murder of Archbishop Thomas Becket in the Cathedral in 1170, Canterbury has attracted thousands of pilgrims. This tradition continues to this day, and a large team of Welcomers, Guides, Cathedral Assistants and Chaplains are there to give all visitors a warm welcome.

Every day Morning Prayer is said and Evening Prayer is sung. The Eucharist is also offered daily. On Sundays the Sung Eucharist is at 11.00am. Canterbury Cathedral has a tradition of welcome that reaches back to the days of medieval pilgrimages. This is not only fully maintained today, but has been developed to meet the needs of modern tourists.

Churchill Statue in Parliament Square

Sir Winston Churchill was the eldest son of the aristocrat Lord Randolph Churchill, born on 30th November 1874. He is best known for his stubbornness yet courageous leadership as Prime Minister for Great Britain when he led the British people from the brink of defeat during World War II. Following his graduation from the Royal Military College in Sandhurst he was commissioned in the Forth Hussars in February 1895. As a war correspondent he was captured during the Boer War. After his escape he became a National Hero. Ten months later he was elected as a member of the Conservative Party. In 1904 he joined the Liberal Party where he became the president of the Board of Trade.

The 2nd World War brought out the best in Churchill. He was everywhere, bolstering the nation and overseeing war plans. In December 1941 he managed to bring together the United States and the Soviet Union along with Great Britain in a grand alliance against Germany. After Pearl Harbour, Churchill dogmatically worked on President Roosevelt to focus on the defeat of Germany ahead of the war with Japan. Despite the impending victory of the war, Churchill returned to England following the Yalta conference of February 1945 to find that the Coalition Government had been voted out of power. He was forced to resign as Prime Minister. He remained in parliament, however, and won a second term of office as P.M. in 1951. During this four year term he took on the mantle of elder statesman receiving many honours, including the title Sir Winston. In April 1955 he resigned as Prime Minister at the age of 80. Throughout his life Churchill was plagued by depression, which he called 'the black dog.' In January 1965 he suffered a terrible stroke and died on the exact same day that his father, Lord Randolph, had passed away 70 years earlier. He was 90 years of age.

Cleopatra's Needle - Embankment

First erected in Egypt, by Pharaoh Thotmes III around 1500BC, Cleopatra's Needle was given as a gift to the British people in 1819, in recognition of Admiral Nelson's victory over the French fleet, at the Battle of the Nile in 1798. "Cleopatra's Needles" is the name given to two Egyptian obelisks, formerly at Alexandria. One of these obelisks now lies in New York, the other in London.

Anyone visiting London for the first time and walking along the Thames Embankment may be surprised to come across an original Egyptian obelisk.

Not what you expect to see in downtown London! This obelisk is known as Cleopatra's Needle ...though it has very little to do with Cleopatra at all.

It was made in Egypt for the Pharaoh Thotmes III in 1460 BC, making it almost 3,500 years old. It is known as Cleopatra's Needle as it was brought to London from Alexandria, the royal city of Cleopatra. But how did it come to be beside the Thames? It seems Britain wanted something big and noticeable to commemorate the British victory over Napoleon, sixty-three years earlier. The Needle arrived in England after a horrendous journey by sea in 1878. The British public subscribed £15,000 to bring it over from Alexandria in Egypt, and waited eagerly for the 'needle' to arrive. Cleopatra's Needle stands on the Thames Embankment close to the Embankment underground station. Two large bronze Sphinxes lie on either side of the Needle. These are Victorian versions of the traditional Egyptian original. The benches on the Embankment also have winged sphinxes on either side as their supports. There are four plaques mounted round the base of the Obelisk giving a brief history of the 'needle' and its journey to London.

Covent Garden

One of London's premiere tourist centers. Famous for its street entertainers and lively atmosphere, Covent Garden is an essential place to go for anyone visiting London. Covent Garden is home to many interesting shops and restaurants, making it a great place to spend a couple of hours over lunch. A favorite pub is the 'Punch and Judy', built on the site of the worlds first Punch and Judy show, a Londoners television favorite.

Embankment

Green Park

Lying between Buckingham Palace and Piccadilly, Green Park is a great place to sit and soak up the sun. It has been a duelling ground and private park at various times in its history but was opened to the public in 1826.

Greenwich

lies on the south bank of the Thames, approximately five miles to the east of central London. Rich in maritime history and with an outstanding architectural heritage, Greenwich's more traditional attractions include many buildings designed by well-known English architects, including the Royal Naval College, the National Maritime Museum and the Old Royal Observatory situated in Greenwich Park, built by Sir Christopher Wren for King Charles II. At the Observatory, visitors can stand astride longitude zero with one foot in the eastern and the other in the western hemisphere.

Hampton Court Palace

With over 500 years of royal history, Hampton Court Palace has something to offer visitors, from the magnificent State Apartments to the domestic reality of the Tudor Kitchens. Costumed guides and audio tours bring the palace to life and provide an insight into how life in the palace would have been in the time of Henry VIII and William III. The Palace also has a programme of special events throughout the year. Hampton Court Palace contains an important part of the largest private collection of art in the world, the Royal Collection, the property of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. This collection, which covers 500 years, is complete and

Hampton Court contains much of the most important material from the 16th, 17th and early 18th centuries. Hampton Court Palace has been divided into six routes or tours: The Maze at Hampton Court, the royal palace on the Thames to the west of London, is probably the most famous hedge maze in the world. It was planted as part of the gardens laid out for William of Orange between 1689 and 1695 by George London and Henry Wise. It was described with great wit in Jerome K. Jerome's novel 'Three Men in a Boat.' Hampton Court Maze continues to attract hundreds of thousands of visitors each year.

Harrods

Probably the best and certainly the most well known department store in the world, Harrods occupies a whole city block. The store's motto is *omnia omnibus ubique* - everything for everyone everywhere. Don't miss the food hall with its mouthwatering display of fresh produce. Harrods is the very epitome of high class shopping in London. The Kensington department store caters for the more discerning customer and offers a huge range of top quality goods from gourmet foods, leathers and Egyptian gifts, to mens' and womens' clothing and accessories. One of the world's most famous department stores, established in 1849 as a humble grocery store employing two assistants. Today, it offers everything from food to fashion, furniture to sportswear plus 20 in-store restaurants serving every kind of cuisine imaginable from pizza to sushi. Services range from piano tuning to fitting saddles. Must-see sights include the Food Halls, the Egyptian Hall and the Pet Department. At night the store is illuminated by 11,500 light bulbs.

Hay's Galleria

The history: Built in the 1850's, Hay's Wharf took deliveries from ships from all over the world and the area became known as the 'Larder of London'. The great Hay's Wharf complex has been restored to its former glory and those who visit the Galleria today stand on the same spot where the tea clippers from India and China edged their way into the dock 150 years ago.

Traditional craft and market stalls decorate the walkways, sharing the spectacular surroundings with the permanent shops. Open every day, the stalls offer a variety of products from jewellery to paintings, ceramics to designer children's wear.

A variety of special events are held regularly in the Galleria, including jazz & classical music concerts. Take a leisurely stroll by the waterfront or simply sit and watch the world go by, basking in the unique atmosphere. Surrounded by major attractions: HMS Belfast, Tower Bridge, London Dungeon, Tate Modern, Vinopolis and, just across the river, the Tower of London, Hay's Galleria can be part of a great day out.

HMS Belfast

In 1971 HMS Belfast was saved for the nation as a unique and historic reminder of Britain's naval heritage in the first half of the twentieth century. Launched in 1938, HMS Belfast was the Royal Navy's biggest and most powerful warship during the Second World War, with a crew of over 950 officers and men. Today she is a unique floating museum offering a fascinating glimpse of naval life. You can explore her nine decks including the massive boiler and engine rooms, operate the anti-aircraft guns and experience what life was like for those on board.

Horse Guards Parade

This famous ceremony consists of a colorful display of pageantry by the Foot Guards of the Household division of the Army, the Queen's personal guard.

Takes place daily in the Summer (alternate days in the Winter period) Arrive early to get a good view especially in the summer months. Horse Guards Parade is London's largest single open space, built in 1745 to house the old palace guards.

Today, the guards are changed at the top of Horse Guards Parade every hour on the striking of the clock, a ceremony which is well worth seeing. Horse Guards Parade is also the setting for the Trooping of the Color.

Hyde Park

Hyde Park has been a Royal Park since 1536 when Henry VIII acquired the land. The two most famous features of the Park are the Serpentine, a lake much used for boating and swimming, and Rotten Row, the world famous riding track and first public road to be lit at night in England. There are almost four miles of horse rides as well as cycle and roller-blading routes. Hyde Park is also one of the best places in London for jogging, combining easy access with world famous views. On Sundays at Speaker's Corner, London's most vocal orators share their opinions with the world.

Kensington Gardens

is one of London's Royal parks, and in it you can find a statue dedicated to Peter Pan, the boy who never grew up. The author of Peter Pan, J.M. Barrie, lived near Kensington Gardens and used it as inspiration in his books.

Kensington Palace

has been a royal home for over 300 years and parts of the palace remain a private residence for members of the Royal Family today. The magnificent State Apartments and the Royal Ceremonial Dress Collection, which includes dresses worn by HM Queen Elizabeth II and Diana, Princess of Wales, are open to the public. Kensington Palace was once the home of some of Britain's most famous kings and queens and the setting for many great events in royal history. Parts of the palace remain a private residence for members of the Royal Family; the State Apartments and Royal Ceremonial Dress Collection are open to the public.

Kew Gardens

Kew Gardens is often referred to as the Royal Botanic Gardens.

Three hundred acres containing collections of over 40,000 varieties of plants. Also seven glasshouses and two art galleries, Japanese and rock garden etc...

Leicester Square

If London has a heart it must be Leicester Square, traversed by 22 million people a year. The tree-lined square in the centre provides much needed shade in the summer. Major cinemas stand on three sides of the square offering over 12 films at any one time and cheap restaurants, night clubs, portrait artists and outdoor entertainers strive to catch the attention of the passing public. Leicester Square's multiplex cinemas show all the latest films. Take in an afternoon matinee. Top London nightclubs such as the Hippodrome, Equinox and Maximus can be found in the area, as well as numerous other venues nearby ready to show you a good time. Wild at night with young people ready to drink the place dry and party till dawn. In

the center of the Square is a copy of the Shakespeare memorial in Westminster Abbey.

London Bridge

Discover the inner secrets of the World's most famous Bridge. No tour of London is complete without a trip to the world's most famous attraction - it's a must for every visitor's photo album.

London Eye

Standing proud in London's Jubilee Gardens, on the South Bank of the River Thames the British Airways' London Eye, is a focal point of the Nation's celebration of the New Century. Experience a bird's Eye View of the River Thames from the British Airways London Eye. At 135 meters high, the Eye is the capital's fourth-tallest structure. Continuous commentary enhances the visitors' experience in the capsules, which can accommodate up to 25 people in each of the 32 enclosed capsules. The London Eye is the world's highest observation wheel with amazing views of Britain's capital city. The Eye takes you on a 30 minute flight, rising to 450 feet above the river Thames, in 32 high tech fully enclosed capsules.

London Planetarium

The Planetarium is over forty years old and offers star shows in the great green dome and two interactive zones. It is the only Planetarium in Europe which has Digistar 2 the world's most advanced star projector. The shows last 30 minutes with commentary. You can enjoy interactive exhibits before watching the star show.

Here, visitors can experience a star show that explores and reveals some of the mysteries of the planets and solar system. The 'main attraction' is a 30 minute show but as there is a 40 minute gap between performances visitors should plan their trip to avoid a long wait.

London Zoo

See what's new at London Zoo. Indulge your senses and engage your mind and with so many exciting animals for 2003, a day at London Zoo offers the ultimate back to nature experience and supports the active conservation of many amazing species. Watch out for the Happy Families area opening in spring 2003, where you can see meerkats keeping an eye on their neighbours from rocky outcrops. Watch the playful otters swimming gracefully underwater as they chase each other in and out of the pools and waterfalls. Visit the tapirs and see them enjoying their new pool in their indoor enclosure or see the endangered tamarins basking in the sunshine in their new outdoor enclosures.

Learn more about the many ongoing conservation programmes that the zoo is involved in. You can experience conservation in action with a trip around B.U.G.S (biodiversity underpinning global survival)- an innovative exhibition dedicated to conservation and explanation of biodiversity.

Get first hand experience of over 600 species of amazing animals including lions, tigers, primates, giraffes and many many more. Watch the penguins and pelicans embarking in some fishy goings on at feeding time. Younger visitors (or the young at heart!) can enjoy an encounter with farmyard favourites at the touch paddock in the Children's Zoo. Experience our 'Animals in Action' display - 30 minutes of flying, foraging and leaping action with animals showing their amazing natural skills and abilities. With all this on offer, there is something for everyone.

Madame Tussauds started in the early 1800s as a collection of death masks of guillotined French aristocrats - today Madame Tussauds presents models of well-known sports personalities, musicians and film stars, statesmen from around the world. Started by Madame Tussaud in 1835, this famous waxworks is one of London's most popular tourist attractions. The museum shares the same building as the London Planetarium. Over two million visitors a year come to see the lifelike wax models of the famous and infamous pop stars and royalty. The wax figures are placed in new themed areas, including 'The Garden Party', 'Two Hundred Years of Madame Tussaud's', 'Hollywood Legends' and 'The Spirit of London'.

Notting Hill

Activities: shopping, city walk sightseeing, antiques, dining, people-watching
Trendy and fashionable neighborhood in London with a distinctive, small-village feel, made famous by a movie of the same name.

Notting Hill, one of London's hippest areas, is more than antiques. The market sometimes seems like a long garage sale, but there are bargains to be found there, plus food, drinks, funky people - a day-long party with noise, colour, a good look at London's Bohemian, vibrant street life. That also means a mix of cultures - a melting pot with rock and film stars sharing space with post-war immigrants from England's former colonies.

Piccadilly Circus

For many years, Piccadilly Circus - at the junction of five busy streets - has been a famous London landmark. At its heart and backlit by colorful electric displays is a bronze fountain topped by a figure of a winged archer. The statue is popularly called Eros, the pagan god of love, but it was in fact designed in the 19th century as a symbol of Christian charity - a monument to Lord Shaftesbury, a philanthropist. The famous statue of Eros in Piccadilly Circus is one of the symbols of London. It was originally called the Shaftesbury Monument, having been erected as a memorial to the philanthropist Lord Shaftesbury. The actual figure rises above a fountain, which is made in bronze, but Eros is made out of aluminum, at that time a rare and novel material. Piccadilly takes its name from a 17th century frilly collar called a picadil. A dressmaker grew rich making them and built a house in the vicinity.

Portobello Road

Welcome to Portobello Road, the world's largest antiques market, with over 1500 dealers selling every kind of antique and collectable. The market is open every Saturday, while the shops are open six days a week. Market days start gradually from around 5.30am with trading between dealers from the UK and overseas. Most stall holders have arrived by 8.00am and the market is in full swing for the rest of the day, with collectors and visitors from all over the world. The shops and stalls of Portobello Road offer an extraordinary variety of goods ranging in price from a few pounds to several thousands. Visitors come from all over the world because they know that in Portobello Road they will find the most extensive selection of antiques in Britain.

Regent's Park

John Nash, the famous architect, was commissioned by The Prince Regent to construct Regent's Park in a grand style. The grand result includes an open air

theatre, rose garden, a lake with islands, a heronry and waterfowl collection and children's playgrounds. It also contains London Zoo and is the largest outdoor grass area for sports in central London.

River Thames

is not one of the world's longest rivers – it is a mere 346 kilometers in length (215 miles) – but it is one of the most famous, and it is the longest and most important waterway in England. Roman writers mention it as the Tamesis, and the name is probably a Celtic word which means 'broad river'. Thames doesn't rhyme with James- it is pronounced Tems.

Royal Opera House

The present theatre was built in 1858. During World War II it was used as a dance hall but after the war the idea of public subsidy of the arts was accepted and the decision was made to establish the Royal Opera House as the permanent year-round home of the opera and ballet companies now known as The Royal Opera and The Royal Ballet. In 1999 the Royal Opera House reopened after a £214 million redevelopment and expansion programme. The magnificent new building, which features the stunning facade of the Floral Hall, links the Covent Garden piazza with Bow Street. Since it reopened the Royal Opera House has been open to the public throughout the day (except when performances are in progress), with its many restaurants and bars, and often hosting free lunchtime recitals.

Shakespeare's Globe Theatre

has been recreated on the south bank of the River Thames in London. The theatre is only a short distance from the site of the original Globe Theatre built in 1599 here many of Shakespeare's plays were first produced. Shakespeare's Globe was founded by the pioneering American actor and director Sam Wanamaker and has become one of London's most successful theatres and top visitor attractions. The theatre is a faithful reconstruction of the 1599 open-air playhouse where Shakespeare wrote many of his greatest plays. Resident storytellers introduce visitors to all aspects of the Globe, historical and contemporary, including Sam Wanamaker's epic struggle to recreate the theatre for which Shakespeare wrote many of his works.

The first Globe was built in Southwark in 1599. The Globe was at the heart of Shakespeare's London, the Elizabethan equivalent of Shaftesbury Avenue or Broadway and the main theatrical entertainment ('red light') district of London. Unfortunately, the theatre was burnt down in 1613 when a prop cannon shot an ember into the thatched roof during a performance of Henry VIII.

Now, nearly 400 years later, Shakespeare's Globe is a reconstruction of the original Southwark theatre. The Shakespeare Globe Centre is an educational, cultural and entertainment centre which includes a museum under the theatre, research facilities and an exhibition of Elizabethan London.

Shakespeare's Globe Trust is dedicated to the experience and international understanding of Shakespeare in performance. Uniquely its work celebrates the fact that the greatest dramatic poet in the English language lived and worked in London and that the cradle of English theatre was on Bankside by the River Thames.

Soho

In the 20th century, as the local population began to fall, Soho became known for its cheap restaurants and entertainment's, both legal and illegal. In the 1950's Soho was famous for its jazz, Ronnie Scott opened his first jazz club in 1959 on Gerrard Street, before moving to Frith Street in 1965.

At the same time the sex industry, for which Soho had been renowned since the mid-19th century, expanded during the 1960's and 1970's. However, in the 1980's and 1990's Soho began to improve. Soho pubs revived as a boom in gay business injected life into its cafés, restaurants and shops, giving vitality into the neighbourhood. Chinatown has also developed in a very vibrant part of Soho and is very popular with tourists, especially at Chinese New Year.

Today, Soho's narrow streets are home to around 5,000 residents, a mix of local tenants, artists, media workers, tailors, market traders, dealers, prostitutes and the homeless people, who shelter in Soho's doorways and alleyways. Soho hasn't become a tourist trap like Covent Garden...

Speaker's Corner

Speaker's Corner in London's Hyde Park is one of the best places to let off steam in London . It is one of the most famous locations symbolizing democratic rights in the world. Amongst those who have attended meetings there, are the some of the most influential figures in world history like Karl Marx, Fredrick Engels and Lenin.

St James's Park

Bordering The Mall as it heads towards Buckingham Palace, St James's Park has a truly regal air. From the bridge over the lake there are two of London's best views, towards the Palace in one direction and Whitehall to the south. The park is a great picnic spot on a royal itinerary. Rent a deckchair in summer and listen to the bands on the bandstand.

St Katharines Dock

St Katharine's Dock, the capital's first Docklands redevelopment, has a splendid location just east of Tower Bridge and Tower of London. Situated on the north bank of the Thames, St Katharine's once had over 1,000 cottages, a brewery, hospital and the 12th century church of St Katharine. In 1828 all this was removed to make way for a new docklands development, designed by Thomas Telford.

St Katharine's Dock, the most central of the capital's docks, flourished during the 19th and early-20th centuries but by the mid-20th century the dock became too small to handle the new, larger, container ships. In 1968 St Katharine's Dock closed when larger docks opened downstream. The capital's other docks followed 15 years later.

In 1973 St Katharine's was transformed as one of London's most successful redevelopments, with residential and commercial areas and entertainment facilities. The old warehouse buildings now have shops, restaurants, cafés and pubs on their ground floors and offices above. There is often live music here during summer lunchtimes. On the north side of the dock is the London FOX (Futures and Options Exchange) trading in such commodities as oil, sugar and coffee. St Katharine's

Haven is a yacht marina with a lighthouse ship and has a group of russet-sailed, turn-of-the-century barges.

St Paul's Cathedral

is Sir Christopher Wren's masterpiece, built between 1675 and 1708 to replace the previous cathedral destroyed in the Great Fire of London in 1666. The huge and elegant dome dominates the skyline of the City and gives panoramic views over London. Inside you can see the majestic interior and enjoy the unique acoustics of the Whispering Gallery. The crypt contains tombs and memorials of historic figures, including Lord Nelson and Lawrence of Arabia. St Paul's was designed by Christopher Wren, renowned architect of the age, who chose to mix many styles in planning the great cathedral, including classical and gothic construction. Almost 300 years later, St. Paul's survived the Blitz in WW11 and became a symbol of hope to devastated Londoners. The cathedral has also been the venue for royal weddings including the marriage of Prince Charles and Princess Diana.

Tate Britain

Tate Britain exhibits British art from 1500 to the present day. Tate holds the largest collection of British art including major works of art by Blake, Constable, Epstein, Gainsborough, Gilbert and George, Hatoum, Hirst, Hockney, Hodgkin, Hogarth, Moore, Rossetti, Sickert, Spencer, Stubbs and Turner etc.. Tate Britain has a programme of free guided tours, gallery talks, lectures and films, every day of the week. There are also study days, courses and conferences designed for anyone who has an interest in the history of modern or contemporary art.

Tate Modern

Tate Modern, opened in May 2000, is Britain's new national museum of modern art. Housed in the former Bankside Power Station, Tate Modern is a spectacular setting for displaying the Tate's collection of international modern art from 1900 to the present day, including major works by Bacon, Dalí, Picasso, Matisse, Rothko and Warhol as well as recent work by artists such as Steve McQueen, Rebecca Horn and Gillian Wearing. There is also an extensive range of special exhibitions and a programme of events throughout the year.

No. 10 Downing Street

with its famous black front door - the backdrop to many historical announcements, has been the official residence of Britain's Prime Minister since 1732. Occupied by Tony Blair at the moment ...

Downing Street is named after Sir George Downing who built houses here in the 17th century. Sir George, 1623-84, spent part of his youth in the American colonies, he was the second graduate from the newly founded Harvard College, before returning to England to fight for the Parliamentarians in the Civil War.

In 1680 he purchased a piece of land near Whitehall Palace and built a street of houses. Four of these houses have survived, and in 1732 George II gave No.10 Downing Street to Sir Robert Walpole and since that time the building has been the official residence of the Prime Minister.

As well as the Prime Minister's private apartment, No.10 Downing Street houses the Cabinet Room, the State Dining Room, where official guests are entertained, and government offices. The black front door of No.10 Downing Street, guarded by a single policeman, is one of the most famous sights in England.

Other buildings in Downing Street also have government functions. No.11 is the official residence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and No.12 houses the Whips' Office, where Party campaigns are organized. Until recently Downing Street was open to the public but in 1989 Margaret Thatcher had iron gates erected at the Whitehall end for security purposes.

The British Museum

The British Museum is the oldest, and one of the largest museums in the world. Where else can you see some of the greatest treasures of all time under one roof? The British Museum holds in trust for the nation and the world a collection of art and antiquities from ancient and living cultures. Housed in one of Britain's architectural landmarks, the collection is one of the finest in existence. The museum celebrates its 250th anniversary this year and will see the re-opening of the King's Library. Don't forget to visit the impressive library in its center.

The initial collection was bequeathed by Sir Hans Sloane, a Chelsea doctor in 1753. It became a magnet for all the loot being amassed by the British Empire through the nineteenth century. In the 1880s the natural history collections were transferred to South Kensington .Key Exhibits include the Rosetta Stone, the Lindisfarne Gospels, Egyptian Hall, the Tomb of Payava, the Elgin Marbles & the Sutton Hoo treasure (British Museum). The Magna Carta (British Library). The British Museum is one of the worlds finest museums.

The Cenotaph

commemorates British and Commonwealth servicemen and Women who lost their lives in War. Every Year during November on a Sunday Closest to the 11th of the Month at 11am, The Queen and The Nation remember their sacrifice for our freedom, with a service of remembrance and two minute silence. The Cenotaph is located in Whitehall between Parliament and Horse Guards Parade. The inscription reads "The Glorious Dead"

The Changing of the Guard

outside Buckingham Palace is one of the biggest tourist attractions in England today. It is the ceremony which takes place outside the palace when the soldiers who have been mounting guard go off duty and are replaced by the new "guard". This royal ceremony takes place outside Buckingham Palace at 1130. In May the Guard will change daily. There will be no Guard change on 31 May. The ceremony lasts 40 minutes and takes place inside the palace railings, which means you can watch it from outside. The Queen's Guard, accompanied by a band, leaves Wellington Barracks at 1127 and march via Birdcage Walk to the Palace.

During the summer, the Changing of the Guard takes place at the front of the Palace and is a popular event for visitors to the capital from 1st April to Early July and on alternate days at other times.

Since 1660, Household Troops have guarded the Sovereign and the Royal Palaces. The Queen's Guard usually consists of Foot Guards in full-dress uniform of red tunics and bearskins.

The Changing of the Guard takes place in the forecourt of Buckingham Palace at 11.30 every day in summer, every other day in winter, and lasts about 45 minutes.

The New Guard marches to the Palace from Wellington Barracks with a Guards band, the Old Guard hands over in a ceremony during which the sentries are changed and then returns to barracks. The New Guard then marches to St James's Palace leaving the detachment at Buckingham Palace.

The Cutty Sark

When launched in 1869, the Cutty Sark was at the pinnacle of sailing ship technology, with one important mission: to bring back the season's first tea crop! Now dry-docked in maritime Greenwich, a world heritage site, you can see how her beautiful streamlined shape helped her to become the fastest ship of her type. Inside is a collection of carved ships, figureheads and displays telling the illustrious story of the Cutty Sark.

The Docklands

From Tower Bridge to the Royal Docks and the Isle of Dogs is one of the oldest areas of London, containing the wharfs, warehouses and ports along the River Thames. In the last half of the 1980s this whole area was rejuvenated with very modern buildings and an extensive new light rail system, Docklands Light Railway (DLR). The trains are fully automatic, with no drivers but a service agent on board to assist passengers. Throughout the Docklands, there are restaurants, shops, apartment and town house developments (with a distinct Canadian flavour) sometimes mingling with some of the oldest streets in London. The center of the Docklands is Canary Wharf - One Canada Square is Britain's tallest building.

The Houses of Parliament

were rebuilt in 1834 after a fire destroyed the original buildings. There are over 1,000 rooms in it, but it is apparently still very crowded at times! The Houses of Parliament, otherwise known as The Palace of Westminster, stands on the site where Edward the Confessor had the original palace built in the first half of the eleventh century. Parliament is the legislative assembly of Great Britain.

It has evolved into the nation's sovereign power, while the monarchy remains sovereign in name only. Technically, it consists of the monarch, the House of Commons, and the House of Lords, but the term usually refers only to Commons, a democratically elected body of 651 members. The House of Lords is composed of peers and Anglican prelates. Since 1911 its powers have been negligible.

Edward the Confessor had the original palace built in the eleventh century. The British parliament is the seat of the Government of the United Kingdom. The Palace of Westminster consists of the House of Commons (elected) and the House of Lords (not elected- hereditary and nominated). Big Ben, one of London's famous landmarks is found at the Houses of Parliament. Big Ben is not the clock tower but the thirteenth bell which strikes the hour. It is counterweighted with old pennies!

Parliamentary government in the United Kingdom is based on a two-chamber system. The House of Lords (the upper House-not elected) and the House of Commons (the lower house-elected at least every 5 years) sit separately and are constituted on entirely different principles. The legislative process involves both Houses - the Commons and the Lords. The main functions of Parliament are to: examine proposals for new laws, provide, by voting for taxation, the means of carrying on the work of government, scrutinise government policy and

administration, including proposals for expenditure and to debate the major issues of the day.

The Imperial War Museum - From Britain and Commonwealth forces to stories from civilians, war heroes, and villains, step into the history of modern war. The wars of the twentieth century have affected each and every one of us in some way, and the Imperial War Museum is here to tell all our stories, covering all aspects of life in wartime. A major exhibition *Women and War* opened in October 2003 and runs until April 2004.

The Museum is not only at its main London location but also at its three further branches: the Cabinet War Rooms in Whitehall, the historic ship HMS Belfast, moored in London, and Duxford Airfield near Cambridge in Cambridgeshire.

The London Dungeon

Buried beneath the London Bridge Station, deep in the heart of London, you will find the world's most infamous museum of horror. The London Dungeon brings more than 2,000 years of gruesomely authentic history vividly back to life ...and death. With over 40 exhibits the London Dungeon strives to display the best examples of Britain's dark and gruesome past. Major exhibits include Jack the Ripper's London, The Plague years, Judgment Day, The Great Fire of London and of course The Torture Chamber. You will see plague victims vomiting blood, witness the prosecution and subsequent execution of accused witches during the burning times. The memory of brutal disembowelment will sear itself into your memory as you watch the removal of the victims' intestines inch by bloody inch. Be vigilant, maintain your composure and you may survive to tell the tale. (Editor's Note: The Dungeon prides itself on the accuracy and realism of the exhibits - we do not recommend this attraction for unaccompanied children and individuals with an aversion to gore.)

The London Millennium Footbridge

is located on the River Thames, between St. Paul's Cathedral on the north bank of the river, and the Borough of Southwark with the nearby Globe Theater and Tate Modern Art Museum on the South bank. The Millennium Bridge is the first pedestrian bridge across the Thames in London in more than a century.

The Millennium Dome

As the world marked the year 2000, Greenwich moved centre-stage. The Millennium Dome was an opportunity for us all to celebrate the year 2000. The Dome is now closed to visitors.

The Monument

Designed by Wren and completed in 1677, The Monument commemorates the Great Fire of London of 1666. The fire started in Pudding Lane. The column stands 202ft high, and is the tallest free standing stone column in the world.

The Museum of London

London is a vibrant and evolving city. Discover its story at the Museum of London. London has survived Viking invasions, a Great Fire and two world wars. It has been home to Roman settlers, great monarchs and dangerous criminals. With half a million years' worth of objects, stories and mysteries, the Museum of London is the key to the capital. Visit the Museum of London and put a smile on your face.

The National Gallery

houses one of the greatest collections of European painting in the world. There are over 2,300 paintings from the period 1260 to 1900, including masterpieces by Van Eyck, Leonardo da Vinci, Holbein, Rembrandt, Vermeer, Monet and Van Gogh.

One of the world's finest art collections, the National Gallery contains over 2,300 Western European paintings, mostly dating from 1260 - 1900, including many masterpieces by the greatest artists. Occupying all of the north side of Trafalgar Square, the National Gallery is around the corner from the National Portrait Gallery.

The National Maritime Museum

Opened in 1937, after the buildings were vacated by the Royal Naval Asylum, a school for sailors' orphans. The Museum is the largest and most important museum of its kind in the world. It houses 16 galleries within a dramatic architectural space, which tell the story of Britain and the sea and the importance of the ocean in our lives today.

The National Portrait Gallery

The National Portrait Gallery was founded in 1856. Portraits of Over 1,000 British men and women are on display from the Middle Ages until the present day. Henry VII to portraits of Queen Elizabeth II. Built in the 19th century, the National Portrait Gallery's collection contains over 10,000 oil paintings, watercolours, drawings, miniatures, sculptures, caricatures, silhouettes and photographs.

The Natural History Museum

Ever stared into the gaping jaws of a Tyrannosaurus rex, felt the devastating power of an earthquake or come face to face with a giant, moving scorpion ? You will when you enter the amazing world of The Natural History Museum. One of the worlds finest and largest museums of natural history with hundreds of exhibits, many interactive, ranging from the volcano experience to the dinosaurs exhibition. Creepy-Crawlies exhibition, blue whale, earths treasury, dinosaurs etc. You can join highlight and themed guided tours of the Museum, which start near the Life Galleries entrance. Free map/information leaflet on admission The Central Hall, with its Victorian architecture and Dinosaur skeleton.

The Rock Circus

Have you ever dreamt of being a being a pop star (or at least living like one)? Then visit the new Madame Tussaud's Rock Circus which tells the story of rock and pop music from the 1950s to the present day, using audio-animatronic moving and static wax figures, lasers, authentic memorabilia, videos, archive film and personal stereo. Go behind the scenes and encounter some of the biggest names in pop and rock music today. It will take you approximately 90mins to see.

The Royal Albert Hall

The Royal Albert Hall was planned by Prince Albert, the husband of Queen Victoria, inspired by Roman amphitheatres he had seen in Europe. Albert's original concept was for an ovoid auditorium for 30,000 people but money constraints meant that the hall was reduced to seat just over 5,000.

Designed by engineer, Francis Fowke, the hall was completed in 1871. The red brick and terracotta building is topped by an iron and glass dome, and a frieze representing arts and science, runs around the exterior. Originally to be called the Hall of Arts and Science Queen Victoria changed it to the Royal Albert Hall in memory of Prince Albert.

This much-loved London landmark, the Albert Hall is used for a variety of events, from fashion and pop concerts to wrestling. From mid-July to mid-September it is devoted solely to the Sir Henry Wood Promenade Concerts or 'Proms', that are organized by the BBC and feature the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra. These concerts were originally held in the Queen's Hall, Langham Place, but moved to the Albert Hall after the Queen's Hall was destroyed in the Blitz.

The 'Proms' have a varied programme including modern symphonic music and classics. Seats are removed from in front of the stage, leaving an open space in which members of the audience either stand or sit on the floor. The very English 'Last Night of the Proms' has become a national institution and tickets sell out weeks in advance. Tickets for the 'Proms' can be bought on the day of the performance but long queues build up.

Science Museum

Situated in Exhibition Road, South Kensington, the Science Museum contains all the wonders of our industrial and technological age. The Science Museum is one of three British museums which, with the National Railway Museum, York and the National Museum of Photography, Film & Television, Bradford which together are the National Museum of Science & Industry (NMSI). The Science Museum opened in 1857, as the South Kensington Museum, on land purchased with the profits from the Great Exhibition of 1851. At the Science Museum visitors can experience the major scientific advances of the past 300 years. There are over 40 galleries with the world's finest collections in science history technology and medicine offer over thousands of interactive exhibits with many permanent displays. From working steam engines to Apollo 10. A IMAX 3D film theatre is now open. The Science Museum holds the world's largest and most significant collection illustrating the history and contemporary practice of science, technology, medicine and industry. The Museum welcomes about 1.6 million visitors per year and is one of the top ten tourist attractions in the UK. About 15% of the Museum's collections are on display.

The Sherlock Holmes Museum

Sherlock Holmes, the fictional detective created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 1868 - 1952, lived at 221b Baker Street.

Although this small museum has the correct street number, it is actually located between 237 and 239 Baker Street. On visiting this re-creation of the famous sleuth's lodging you are greeted by Holmes's 'maid' and shown around his rooms on the first floor. The candle-lit bedroom contains a make-up case for Holmes' elaborate disguises and his famous violin can be seen in the corner. On the walls are pictures of real-life Victorian criminals including the notorious Dr Crippen. A 'maid ' is also on hand in the study to answer questions and to take photographs of visitors wishing to sit in Holmes' chair with the famous deerstalker and calabash pipe. The other floors contain scenes from various Holmes stories.

Conan Doyle's fascination with crime not only helped him solve fictional mysteries but also real-life crimes, and he also wrote well-regarded science fiction and romances. The shop sells copies of the stories and items such as deerstalker hats. His statue is outside Baker Street underground station.

The Thames Barrier

is a unique structure, built to protect London against tidal surges. At a width of 520m and as high as a five-storey building, the barrier is a triumph of modern engineering. The Information Centre describes the construction and operation of the barrier, with video, displays, models and computer software to navigate on.

The Tower of London

For over 900 years, The Tower of London has dominated the capital. As a Royal Palace, fortress, prison, place of execution, arsenal, Royal Mint and jewel house, it has witnessed many great events in British history. Today is still one of the capital's most prominent landmarks and a world famous visitor attraction. Throughout its long history the Tower has served as a royal palace and fortress, prison and place of execution, an arsenal, royal mint, menagerie and jewel house. Discover its long and eventful history, its buildings and collections including the Crown Jewels and Royal Armouries. Founded by William the Conqueror in 1066-7 and enlarged and modified by successive sovereigns, today the Tower of London is one of the world's most famous and spectacular fortresses. Discover its 900-year history as a royal palace and fortress, prison and place of execution, mint, arsenal, menagerie and jewel house. The Tower of London is one of the world's major tourist attractions; today, over 2.5 million visitors a year come to discover its long and eventful history, its buildings, ceremonies and traditions, and to get a glimpse of the world famous Crown Jewels.

The Tower of London was first built in 1078 by William the Conqueror(1066-1087) and was completed by William II who was tragically killed by Walter Tyrell in a hunting accident in the New Forest. During the Towers history it has been a palace, prison, treasury, zoo and arsenal. The Crown Jewels are housed in the tower. Also the Medieval Palace, the " Bloody" Tower. Free tours by the Yeoman Warders. A new exhibition the 'Crowns and Diamonds', showing the development of Royal Crowns in Britain is in the Martin Tower. Visitors should allow 2-3 hours for your visit.

The Transport Museum

The award-winning London Transport Museum has been housed in Covent Garden's old Victorian Flower Market since 1980. The collection records the history of London's public transport system from the first buses of the 1820's to the present day.

The history of London's public transport reflects it's social history. At first the bus, tram and underground routes followed the growth of the city and but later they promoted its development. The northern and western suburbs did not start to grow until their underground connections were constructed.

As well as tracing the history of London's public transport, the museum also looks forward to the future. The museum balances fun and education and is very popular with children and adults. Children are given a 'Kidzones' card which they can stamp at points along the way, an incentive for them to complete the tour.

There are plenty of interactive displays and children can clamber aboard an early tram and pretend to be a bus conductor, or put themselves in the driver's seat of a London bus or Underground train. Also in the museum is a collection of 20th century commercial art. Throughout their history London's bus and train companies have been patrons of contemporary artists, and among the designs on display are works by the innovative Art Deco artist E. McKnight Kauffer, and the celebrated 1930's artists Paul Nash and Graham Sutherland.

The museum shop, also open to those not visiting the museum, has copies of some of the best posters in the collection, together with a selection of books for the transport enthusiast. Many of the items display the London Transport logo or the stylish London Underground font. Items such as mugs and stationery feature well-known slogans like: 'Mind the Gap', 'Not in service' or 'Penalty for improper use £50'.

The Tube

London had the first ever underground railway: 'the Tube'. The first line was completed in 1863.

The earliest lines on the London Underground follow the direction of major streets and rarely pass under buildings. This is because many Londoners feared that the tunnel would undermine the foundations of the city's buildings. The trains in the London Underground were the first to be powered by electric engines. During World Wars I and II, the London Underground subway stations were used as air-raid shelters.

The Victoria and Albert Museum has long been established as a leading advocate of contemporary art and design. Born out of the Great Exhibition of 1851, the Museum has evolved into one of the World's most comprehensive and diverse collections of the decorative arts. Queen Victoria laid the foundation stone of the Museum on 17th May 1899. The V&A has a collection of more than 4 million objects. The Victoria & Albert Museum in London is the world's largest museum of the decorative arts and has 146 galleries, including national collections of sculpture, furniture, fashion and photographs. It also houses the National Art Library. The V&A also manages the Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood, the Wellington Museum at Apsley House and the Theatre Museum in Covent Garden.

The West End

So many theatres and plays to choose from !

Tower Bridge

took 8 years to build, completed in 1894. The high level walkways, joining the two towers, were provided for use by pedestrians when the deck was raised. These walkways were however closed in 1910 due to the lack of use; pedestrians were prepared to wait until the deck was re-lowered. The deck is raised on average 500 times a year. This reflects the reduction in river traffic since the bridge was built; the deck was raised 655 times during the first month of opening. It is however estimated that 38,000 road vehicles now use the bridge each day. Type: Movable, bascule Suspension Span Length: 200 feet (60 m) Total Length: 880 feet (268 m)

Tower Bridge Exhibition

Over a 100 years ago, the Victorians built a bridge that has become one of London's most famous landmarks. High level walkways were built to allow people to cross the Thames whilst the Bridge was lifted to let tall ships come through.

Today these walkways act as viewing galleries, giving visitors the most spectacular views across an ever-changing London skyline. At Tower Bridge Exhibition you can enjoy these breathtaking views, learn about the history of the bridge and how it was built from the interactive displays and videos. You can then visit the Victorian steam engines that used to power the bridge.

Trafalgar Square

set in central London, is one of Britain's great tourist attractions. A visit to the capital would be incomplete without going to this most famous of landmarks. The main hub of Central London, was built in honor of Admiral Nelson after his victory in 1805 at the Battle of Trafalgar, off the coast of Spain. John Nash designed the square in the 1830's. The center piece is Nelson's Column, which supports a large statue of Nelson on the top. Nelson, atop the column, looks minute from the ground but is actually 18ft high. Four bronze lions by Edwin Landseer stand at the base of the column. Trafalgar Square is also famous for its pigeons. The local authorities try to discourage people from feeding them, but the pigeons are still very popular with Londoners and visitors alike.

Wellington Arch

The Waterloo campaign of 1815 was without exception the most famous of the Nineteenth century. It was to culminate in the final overthrow of Napoleon Bonaparte by Wellington and the end of twenty five years of warfare.

Westminster Abbey

was founded in 1065, and the vast majority of English monarchs have been crowned there. One favourite section is Poet's Corner, where you can find memorials to many great English writers and poets. Originally a Benedictine monastery in London, Westminster Abbey is the most famous church in Great Britain. The kings and queens of England are crowned there, and many rulers and famous men of Britain are buried there. The church is built in the shape of a cross, in the style of architecture called Gothic.