



City of London Guide



Compiled by Bonnie Follett





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When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford.

Samuel Johnson to James Boswell, 1777

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Welcome to London



Welcome to England's capital city, London, the best big city on earth.

This booklet has been designed to help first time visitors get started in London with useful information for making the most of your trip and practical advice on getting around town.

With its unique heritage, culture and iconic attractions, there is always something to see and do whether you are here for a day, a week or longer.

For additional information there are other free guides including the London Planner which is available in Tourist Information Centres. Also see other guides to London that you will find in bookshops across the capital.

London is always packed with events, festivals, activities, exhibitions and entertainment. For inspiration and the latest tips, including information on bars, restaurants, shops and attractions, check London's official website visitlondon.com



Tourist Information Centres

London's Tourist Information Centres will be able to help you with all of your visitor needs and questions. They can help you make the best of your experience in London.

The British Tourist Authority

For information on tourism in London as well as anywhere in the UK.
Phone: +44 (0)20 01 8846 9000

London Tourist Board and Convention Bureau

26 Grosvenor Gardens
Victoria, SW1

City of London Information Centre

N. St. Paul's Churchyard
City of London, EC4M 8BX .

Greenwich Tourist Information Centre

Pepys House, 2 Cutty Sark Gardens,
Greenwich, SE10 9LW

Holborn Information Kiosk

Kingsway, London, WC2B 6BG.
Located just outside Holborn Tube Station.

King's Cross St Pancras Travel Information Centre

LUL Western Ticket Hall (through brick arches at St Pancras to LUL), Euston Road, N1 9AL.

Liverpool Street Travel Information Centre

Liverpool Street Underground Station,
EC2M 7PP.

Piccadilly Circus Travel Information Centre

Piccadilly Circus Underground Station,
W1D 7DH.

Victoria Station Travel Information Centre

Opposite Platform 8, Victoria Railway Station, SW1V 1JU.

Bexley Tourist Information at The Central Library

Central Library, Townley Road,
Bexleyheath, Kent, DA6 7HJ. Tel. 020 8303 7777.

Borehamwood Tourist Information Point

Council Offices/Elstree Way,
Borehamwood, Hertfordshire, WD6 1WA.

Enfield Tourist Information Centre

Dugdale Centre, Thomas Hardy House,
39 London Road, Enfield, EN2 6DS.

Euston Travel Information Centre

Opposite platform 8, Euston Rail Station,
NW1 2HS.

Harrow Tourist Information Centre

Gayton Library, Garden House, 5 St John's Road, Harrow, Middlesex, HA1 2EE.

Heathrow Travel Information Centre

Terminals 1, 2, 3 Underground Station
Concourse, TW6 1JH.

Kingston upon Thames Tourist Information Centre

Market House, Market Place, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey, KT1 1JS. Located in Kingston town centre.

Swanley Tourist Information Centre

Swanley Library & Information Centre,
London Road, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7AE.

Uxbridge Tourist Information Centre

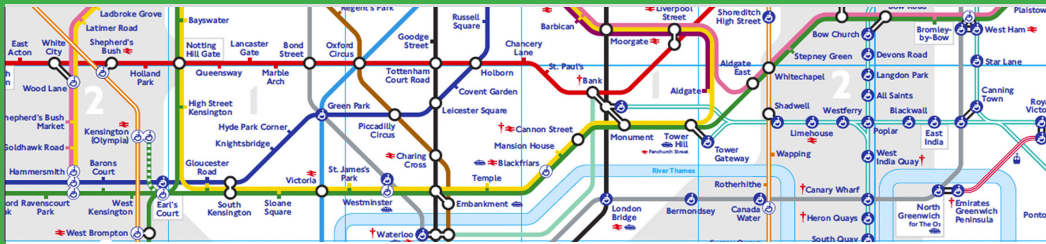
Central Library, High Street, Uxbridge,
Middlesex, UB8 1HD.

Wimbledon Town Centre Information Point

Centre Court Shopping Centre, 4 Queens Road, Wimbledon, SW19 8YA.



London Transportation



The London Underground (The Tube)

The main public transport in London is the Underground (or the Tube as it is known to Londoners). This extensive network of 12 lines can get you to most places in the centre of the city quickly.

The Tube maps on station walls are diagrams of the routes and are drawn so that they are easy to read: they do not provide an accurate depiction of the physical location of the stations.

It's a necessity to get an Oyster Card or a Travelcard. Single tickets are priced starting at an absurd price of £4.50 (Zone 1 -3), if you pay cash. Using an Oyster card, a single fare is £2.10 if you are travelling within the central Zone 1. So the most affordable way to ride the Tube is to buy an Oyster Card (£8 including £5 credit) or a Travelcard.

First and last trains: Last trains leave central London at around 00:30 weekdays, 23:30 Sundays. First trains leave the suburbs around 05:00. If you are travelling with a group of up to five and it's not rush hour, you might find that a taxi doesn't cost much more than the Tube would cost for the lot of you, and it can be much quicker, for short trips.

Travelcards

You can buy a Travelcard for 1, 3 or 7 consecutive days for any combination of travel zones. If you'll only be within Central London, pick up a Zone 1 & 2 pass.

There's no need for an All-Zone pass unless you plan on heading out to the suburban areas of London. Fees for Travelcards start at £6.60 and are valid on the Underground, Docklands Light Railway, Bus system and National Rail (but not the Heathrow Express) for the entire



day. They also give you a one-third discount off river services. Off-Peak passes start after 9:30 am. A Travelcard for 7-days covering Zones 1-6 will cost an adult £50.40 but are be worth purchasing if you will be using the transport system across a variety of Zones.

The Bus System

Buses are quite affordable, even if it is a slower journey. A bus ticket costs £2.20 (cash). It costs £1.30 if using an Oyster Card with a daily price cap of £4.00. You can top-up your Oyster from tube stations and newsagents. The One Day Pass is valid until 4:30 the following morning, so you don't need to worry about getting home after a late evening out. The bus also offers more chances for sightseeing.

Buses are frequent during normal Monday-Friday daytime hours, becoming less frequent early morning, late evening and weekends. Night buses cover the whole of the London and generally run all through the night at frequencies ranging from hourly to 4 an hour, seven nights a week.

Most bus stops require that you purchase your ticket from the red vending machine before you board the bus, showing the ticket as you board. At stops with no machine you can purchase the ticket from the driver.

A Travelcard purchased for the Tube is also good on the buses, but bus passes are not good for the tube. On boarding buses, show your ticket or pass to the driver, or touch your Oyster on the reader or give the driver the stub of your Saver ticket.

Routemaster Red Bus Heritage Routes

If you want to ride on an old Routemaster Red London bus, an icon synonymous with London, the two "heritage routes" are the Route 9 from the Albert Hall to the Aldwych and the Route 15 from Trafalgar Square to Tower Hill. Standard fares apply on both historic routes, Bus Passes, Travelcards, Freedom Passes, Oyster cards and Saver Tickets will be accepted. For information, click Here..

Bus Stops

There are two types of bus stops; Compulsory and Request. Compulsory stops are white with a red roundel; request stops are red with a white roundel. Buses will always call at compulsory stops unless they are full but only at request stops if a passenger on board rings the bell or if an intending passenger at the bus stop hails the bus by holding his/her arm out parallel to the ground.

Things To Do in London



1 British Museum

A top London free attraction. The museum is an architectural beauty housing many treasures.

2 Tower of London

Although its exterior might be grim it is a fascinating site to visit.

3 Buckingham Palace

The Palace is the London home of Queen Elizabeth II and is open for tours.

4 Westminster Abbey

This medieval church has been graced with 16 royal weddings and nearly 40 coronations.

5 Victoria & Albert Museum

This palatial Museum was named in honor of England's 19th century royal couple.

6 Hyde Park & Kensington Gardens

These were once the recreational stomping grounds for King Henry VIII and are lovely places to visit.

7 National Gallery

Covering the north side of Trafalgar Square, the National Gallery features a labyrinth interior and much to see.

8 Imperial War Museum

Closed until July, keep this South Bank museum in mind for summer visits.

9 Churchill War Rooms

This site celebrates the life of the illustrious Winston Churchill, England's prime minister during World War II.

10 Tower Bridge

Check it out for an expansive view (and photo op) of London.

There is much to do and see in London. The City can accommodate anyone's interests. You need never be at a loss for something to enjoy. This List represents only some of the main attractions.

11 Tate Modern

This art gallery houses modern and contemporary art and is located bankside on the Thames.

12 St. Paul's Cathedral

Besides Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's Cathedral is the other must-see church in London.

13 Natural History Museum

Located in Kensington, this museum brims with more than 70 million specimens and exhibits.

14 Houses of Parliament

Visit Parliament with its House of Lords and House of Commons.

15 Old Spitalfields Market

Return home with the London look, by shopping at this market.

16 The London Eye

The giant Ferris wheel found in many London panorama photos.

17 Shakespeare's Globe Theatre

A replica of the early 1600s theater, where Shakespeare's plays were performed.

18 Harrods

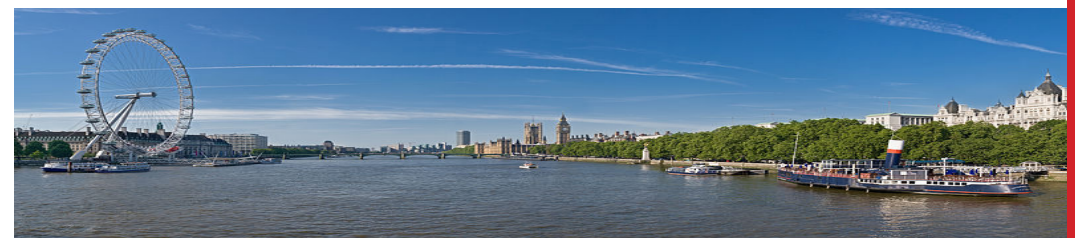
London's famous department store is a great place to shop, even if you are not planning to purchase anything.

19 London Dungeon

Visit the city's darker, more grisly side of things.

20 The Courtauld Gallery

Great art located in the Strand's Somerset House.



Greater London Annual Events

Greater London hosts an abundance of annual events, from the Wimbledon tennis competition to world-class food, film, floral and cultural festivals, art and book fairs. For specific dates, see the EVENTGUIDE calendar London.



JANUARY

London International Boat Show:

The biggest, splashiest boat show in Europe unfolds at Earl's Court Exhibition Center on Warwick Road. Call (020) 7234-5800..

New Year's Day Parade:

More than 10,000 participants follow the Lord Mayor of the city of Westminster on this quite spectacular two-mile parade. Call (44) 20 8566 8586.

Russian Winter Festival:

Celebrants gather for this eclectic staging of folk acts from across Russia, along with performances of big names in rock and pop. Call (44) 20 7510 2560.

Charles J. Commemoration:

The last Sunday in January marks the anniversary of King Charles' execution. Cavaliers march through Central London in 17th-century attire. Call (020) 7234-5800.

FEBRUARY

The Olympia Fine Art and Antique Fair:

Held in Olympia, this fair features more than 200 exhibitors selling antique furniture and fine art works. Call (020) 7234-5800.

Chinese New Year:

London marks China's traditional celebration with firecrackers, music, bustling street markets, drums and paper dragons. Call (44) 9068-663-344.

Holiday & Travel Show:

The U.K.'s largest consumer travel and holiday show unfolds at Earls Court, presenting thousands of destinations for short or long trips. Call (020) 7370-8256.

MARCH

Classic Motor Show:

Alexandra Palace, Wood Green, in north London, stage one of the world's largest exhibitions of vintage, Edwardian and rare vehicles. Call (020) 7234-5800.

London Book Fair:

The London Book Fair hosts over 1,000 companies involved with the trade along with authors, literary agents, librarians and avid readers. Call 44 20 8910 7850.

Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race:

Cambridge and Oxford crews race along a 4.25 mile stretch of the Thames River, between Putney Bridge and Mortlake. Call (020) 7234-5800.

London Maze:

Guildhall Yard off Gresham Street becomes the scene for this free, local history fair with a wealth of historical resources under one roof. Call (020) 7332-3700.

Whisky Live London:

At the Lawrence Hall & Conference Center, this is the U.K.'s whisky event of the year, with expert advice, tastings, live music. Call (020) 7828-4125.

APRIL

London Marathon:

The 26-mile course stretches from Greenwich Park and Black Heath to the Buckingham Palace, with live bands and entertainment. Call (020) 7234-5800.

London Garden Show:

The Alexandra Palace in Wood Green hosts hundreds of vendors and floral artists for this extravaganza ushering in spring. Call (020) 7234-5800.

MAY

Chelsea Flower Show:

Plants and flowers from some 600 exhibitors are on display at the Chelsea Flower Show, held annually since 1913 and always a sellout. Call (0171) 630-7422.

London Dollhouse Festival:

Founded in 1985, this festival is a stop for miniature houses eventually making their way to the Museum of Miniatures in Los Angeles. Call (020) 7234-5800.

Outdoor Shakespeare:

Shakespearean favorites presented in the open air. Call (0171) 486-2431.

Baishakhi Mela:

London's east end hosts a celebration of Bangla New Year, with artists, chefs, and musicians amid an atmosphere of culture and fun. Call (020) 7377-5300.

JUNE

All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club:

Wimbledon is the site for these annual competitions held during June and July. To book seats for the All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club competitions, [click here](#).

Epsom Derby Stakes:

The Epsom Derby Stakes, the most recognized event of the British horse racing circuit, unfolds at Epsom Downs. Call (01) 372 47 7747.

Trooping of the Colour:

The official birthday of the sovereign is observed at Horse Guards Parade in Whitehall. The reigning monarch inspects regiments parading their colours from the vantage point of a horse-drawn carriage. Call (020) 7414-2479.

Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition:

From June through mid-August, the Royal Academy sponsors Summer Exhibitions of living painters at Burlington House in Piccadilly Circus. Patrons can browse and purchase at reasonable prices throughout the summer. Call (0171) 439-7438.

Kenwood Lakeside Concerts:

Outdoor concerts from June through September are now embellished with fireworks

and laser shows. Call (020) 7234-5800.

Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Championship:

From late June through early July, Wimbledon, started in 1877, draws a socially prominent crowd, along with tennis fans. Call (0181) 946-2244.

JULY

Great British Beer Festival:

This gigantic suds festival features more than 200 British beers, plus another 200 imports, and assorted food stalls. Call (44) 1727-867-201.

Party in the Park:

This is a huge open-air pop festival to benefit the Prince's Trust. It takes place on the first Sunday of July, featuring big name acts on one ticket. Call 44 (800) 333-958.

The Proms:

From mid-July through mid-September, the traditional Henry Wood Promenade Concerts, launched in 1895, attract music aficionados from around the world. Call (020) 7589-8212.

AUGUST

African-Caribbean Street Fair

Live reggae and soul music and Caribbean food attract more than half a million people, making it one of the largest festivals in Europe.

River Cultures Festival:

Family activities and street entertainers are part of the River Cultures Festival fun. Call (020) 7538-5422.

Notting Hill Carnival:

Caribbean rhythms arrive in West London, with steel drums, floats, colorfully attired dancers, rap, reggae and Red Stripe beer. Call (020) 8964-0544.

SEPTEMBER

Chelsea Antiques Fair:

The Chelsea Antiques fair has something for all budgets. Call (20) 7928-0011.

Covent Garden Festival of Street Theatre:

For more than two weeks, Covent Gardens comes alive with acts of quality. Call (020) 7836-9136.

Thames Festival:

This river festival on the south bank provides free exhibitions for the arts, with fireworks, treasure hunts and illuminated floats. Call (020) 7401-3610.

OCTOBER**Opening of Parliament:**

The British Monarch opens parliament in the House of Lords, riding from Buckingham Palace in a royal coach. Call (020) 7234-5800.

Horse of the Year Show:

Riders arrive from all over the world to join in this equine extravaganza at Wembley Arena. Call (0181) 902-8833.

London Film Festival:

Top films from around the world are screened across the UK. Call (020) 7234-5800.

Trafalgar Square Festival:

Devoted to poetry, chamber music and the visual arts. Call (020) 7234-5800.

NOVEMBER**London to Brighton Veteran Car Run:**

This motoring run is sponsored by the Royal Automobile Association. Vehicles built before 1905 creep through London no faster than 20 mph. Call (44) 1753-765000.

Guy Fawkes Night:

Fireworks on Nov. 5 mark renegade Guy Fawkes' failed effort in 1605 to blow up Parliament over religious differences. Other activities include the burning of an effigy, and many parks have fairs. Call (020) 7234-5800.

Lord Mayor's Procession and Show:

For inauguration of the new Lord Mayor of the City of London, the Queen must ask permission to enter the city's square mile. Ceremonies are at Guildhall to the Royal Courts of Justice. Call (020) 7234-5800.

Christmas Nightmare:

From the weekend after Thanksgiving, through the Christmas holidays, this tour along Tooley street and underneath the London Bridge is led by the ghostly Ebenezer Scrooge. Experience a Dickensian Christmas. Call (020) 084 4847-1757.

DECEMBER**Trafalgar Square Christmas Tree:**

Each year the people of Norway give the people of Britain a fir tree as a salute to British help during World War II. The tree is lit in Trafalgar Square, with concerts scheduled. Call (020) 7234-5800.

Boxing Day Sale Celebrations:

The sales beginning the day after Christmas are not to be missed. Bargains galore are big in the West End and all over London. Call (020) 7234-5800.



For a complete list of current London-area events, check the [London Event Guide](#).

Related Links: [Event Guide London](#)

Event Tickets: [London Event Tickets](#)

A Brief History of London

(This is an Abridged version) Original by Tim Lambert, Dedicated to Lucinda Wilde

Roman London (Londinium)

The Romans founded London about 50 AD. Its name is derived from the Celtic word Londinios, which means the place of the bold one. After they invaded Britain in 43 AD the Romans built a bridge across the Thames. They later built a port. The water was deep enough for ocean going ships but it was far enough inland to be safe from Germanic raiders. Around 50 AD Roman merchants built a town by the bridge. So London was born.

In 61 AD Queen Boudicca led a rebellion against the Romans. Her army marched on London and burned it. But after her rebellion was crushed, London was rebuilt. By the end of the 2nd century a wall was erected around London. The population of Roman London rose to perhaps 45,000, which seems small to us but it was the largest town in Britain.

Roman London was an important port. Grain and metal were exported and luxury goods were imported. Rich citizens had baths in their homes but there were several public baths near the city gates. (Romans went to the baths to socialize not just to keep clean). Most people in the town got their water from wells and used cesspools but there were underground drains to remove rainwater.

Roman London also had an amphitheatre, which could hold 8,000 people. Here gladiators fought to the death. Cockfighting was also a popular sport.

Saxon London (Lundenwic)

The last Roman soldier left Britain in 407 AD. Afterwards, during the Dark Ages London was probably abandoned. But soon it rose again. A new town appeared outside the walls on the site of Covent Garden. It was much smaller than Roman London with perhaps 10,000 inhabitants.

In 597 monks from Rome began the task of converting the Saxons to Christianity. In 604 a bishop was appointed for London.

Disaster struck London in 842 when the Danes looted London. They returned in 851 and this time they burned a large part of the town. Then the Danes turned to conquest. They conquered northern and Eastern England including London.



King Alfred the Great defeated the Danes in 878 and they split the country between them.

The nursery rhyme "London Bridge is falling down... is believed to be derived from an event that took place in the early 11th century. King Olaf of Norway attacked England but he was unable to sail up the Thames past London Bridge. At that time London Bridge was made of wood. Olaf and his men tied ropes to the wooden struts supporting it. They then rowed away and London Bridge collapsed. Some historians question whether this event really happened or whether it was just a legend .

Edward the Confessor (1042-1066) built a wooden palace at Westminster. Later Parliament met here and Westminster became the seat of government not the city of London itself. He also built Westminster Abbey, which was consecrated a few weeks before his death.

London in The Middle Ages

After the battle of Hastings an advance guard of Normans approached London Bridge from the South but were beaten off. The Norman army then marched to the west of London to cut it off from the rest of England. William the Conqueror occupied the royal palace at Westminster and won over the Londoners by making various promises. William was crowned king of England at Westminster on 25 December 1066. He gave London a charter, a document confirming certain rights. He built a wooden tower to stand guard over London. It was replaced by a stone tower in 1078-1100. That was the beginning of the Tower of London

The population of London at this time was perhaps 18,000, very large by the standards of the time. London grew in size and in 1176 the wooden bridge across the Thames was replaced with a stone one.

A writer described London about the year 1180:

"London is happy in its clean air, in the Christian religion, in the strength of its fortifications, in its natural situation, in the honor of its citizens. The Cathedral is St Paul's but there is also in London and its suburbs 13 large monasteries, beside 126 parish churches. On the east side lies the tower, very large and strong with 4 gates and turrets at intervals and runs around the northern side of the city. To the north lie fields and meadows with small rivers flowing through them, by these water mills are driven with a pleasant murmur. To this city come merchants from every nation under heaven rejoicing to bring merchandise in their ships".

Someone else wrote about London:

"Amongst the noble and celebrated cities of the world, that of London, the Capital of the Kingdom of England is one of the most renowned, possessing above others, abundant wealth, extensive commerce, great grandeur and significance".

Medieval London was a lively place. There was a horse market at Smithfield (originally smooth field) where horse racing took place. Smithfield was also the site of public executions, which always attracted large crowds. Londoners also loved dancing, archery, wrestling and mock battles with wooden swords and shields. In Winter people went ice skating on frozen marshes at Moorfield using skates made of animal bones.

The Jews suffered from persecution during the Middle Ages. The first Jews came to England after the Norman Conquest. Jews in London lived in a ghetto. They were some of the first people since Roman times to live in stone houses. Wooden houses were not safe enough! In 1189 a wave of persecution resulted in the deaths of about 30 Jews. In 1264 rioters killed about 500 Jews in London. In 1290 all Jews were expelled from England.

In 1381 the Peasants Revolt broke out. Rebels marched on London and sympathizers opened the gates to them. The king and his ministers took refuge in the Tower of London. The rebels opened the prisons and looted the house of John of Gaunt, an unpopular noble. The king met the rebels at Moorfield and made them various promises, none of which he kept.

The rebels broke into the Tower of London and killed the Archbishop of Canterbury and several royal officials who had taken refuge there.

The population of London may have reached 50,000 by the middle of the 14th century. However at least a third of the population died when the Black Death struck in 1348-49 but London soon recovered. Its population may have reached 70,000 by the end of the Middle Ages.

London in The 16th & 17th Centuries

The population of London reached 120,000 by the middle of the 16th century and about 250,000 by 1600. In the Middle Ages the church owned about 1/4 of the land in London. When Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries it released a great deal of land for new buildings.

The suburbs outside London continued to grow. In the late 16th century rich

men began to build houses along the Strand and by 1600 London was linked to Westminster by a strip of houses. Banqueting House was built in 1622. In 1635 Hyde Park opened to the public. In 1637 Charles I created Richmond Park for hunting, and Queens House was completed in Greenwich.

In the early 17th century the Earl of Bedford built houses at Covent Garden, on the Strand and at Long Acre. He also obtained permission to hold a fruit and vegetable market at Covent Garden. Other rich people build houses at Lincoln Inn Fields and at St Martins in the Fields.

On the other side of London hovels were built. The village of Whitechapel was swallowed up by the expanding city. There were outbreaks of bubonic plague in 1603, 1633 and 1665 but each time the population of London quickly recovered.

Then in 1642 Civil War began between king and parliament. The royalists made one attempt to capture London in 1643 but their army was met 6 miles west of St Paul's by a much larger parliamentary army. The royalists withdrew. However the Puritan government of 1646-1660 was hated by many ordinary people and when Charles II came to London from France in 1660 an estimated 20,000 people gathered in the streets to meet him. All the churches in London rang their bells.

In 1666 came the great fire of London. It began on 2 September in a baker's house in Pudding Lane. At first it did not cause undue alarm. The Lord Mayor was awoken and said "Pish! A woman might piss it out!" But the wind caused the flames to spread rapidly. The fire continued to spread until the king took charge. He ordered sailors to make fire breaks. Also, the wind dropped. About 13,200 houses had been destroyed and 70-80,000 people had been made homeless.

To prevent such a disaster happening again the king commanded that all new houses in London should be of stone and brick not wood. Citizens were responsible for rebuilding their own houses but a tax was charged on coal brought by ship into London to finance the rebuilding of churches and other public buildings. Work began on rebuilding St Paul's in 1675 but it was not finished till 1711.

In the late 17th century fashionable houses were built at Bloomsbury and on the road to the village of Knightsbridge. Elegant houses in squares and broad straight streets were also built north of St James palace. Soho also became built up. The rich also began to live in attractive villages near London such as Hackney, Clapham, Camberwell and Streatham. In the east

the poor continued to build houses and Bethnal Green was swallowed up by the growing city.



French Protestants fleeing religious persecution arrived in London. Many of them were silk weavers who lived in Spitalfields.

In the 17th century wealthy Londoners obtained piped water brought by canal from the countryside. It was carried by hollow tree trunks under the streets. You had to pay to have your house connected. After 1685 oil lamps lighted the streets. Hackney carriages became common in the streets of London.

In 1694 the Bank of England was formed. It moved to Threadneedle Street in 1734. Billingsgate was a general market until 1699 when an Act of Parliament made it a fish market.

London in The 18th Century

The population of London rose from about 600,000 in 1700 to 950,000 in 1800. The fashionable suburbs spread north along Tottenham Court Road and north west to the village of Paddington. By 1800 growth had spread to Islington and Chelsea. In the east growth spread to Stepney, Ratcliffe, Limehouse and Wapping. In the south the city spread to Bermondsey, Rotherhithe, Walworth and Kennington.

Several hospitals were founded in London in the early 18th century including Westminster, Guys, St Georges, London and Middlesex Hospitals.

Early in the 18th century London was severely affected by gin drinking. Gin was cheap and for the poor it offered a chance to forget their poverty. In

1751 gin drinking was curtailed when a duty was charged on the drink.

New buildings erected in London in the 18th century included Buckingham Palace built in 1703 for the Duke of Buckingham. The first monarch to live there was Queen Victoria in 1837. Marlborough House was built in 1711. The British Museum was founded in 1753. Also in 1753 Mansion House was built as a residence for the Lord Mayor of London. In 1757 the houses on London Bridge were demolished.

In 1761 an Act of Parliament set up a Board of Commissioners with power to pave and clean the streets of London. The walls of the city were demolished between 1760 and 1766 and new bridges were built Westminster in 1749 and Blackfriars in 1770.

Somerset House was built between 1776 and 1786 by Sir William Chambers (1724-1796).

On the South Bank were industries like leather tanning and timber yards. There were also many craftsmen in London who made luxury goods. Silk weavers in Spitalfields, watchmakers in Clerkenwell, coach makers and furniture makers in Long Acre. There were also makers of surgical and navigational instruments and jewellers. London was the largest port in the country, with a large shipbuilding industry.

London in The 19th Century

The population of London grew from 950,000 in 1800 to 6 million in 1900. At the beginning of the 19th century rich men built estates at Somerstown, Camden Town, Walworth, Agar Town, Bromley and Pentonville. Growth also spread to Battersea, Clapham, Camberwell, Brixton, Bayswater and Peckham. By 1850 Deptford was part of London. Growth also spread to Fulham and Kensington. In 1839 Shepherds Bush was called a "pleasant village" but it was soon swallowed up.

After 1850 growth spread to Acton, Chiswick, Brentford, Richmond, Twickenham and Ealing. In the North it reached Willesden and Hampstead. Growth also spread to Hornsey and Tottenham. In the South it spread to Putney, Wimbledon, Streatham, Dulwich, Catford, Lewisham and to Greenwich and Charlton. After 1850 Chinese immigrants started settling in Limehouse. There were also many Irish immigrants in the Docklands. By 1850 London had 20,000 Jews. Their numbers doubled in the 1880's when many refugees arrived from Russia and Eastern Europe.

Part of the reason for the growth of London was the railway, which made it possible for people to live away from the city centre and travel to work each day. Euston Station was built in 1837. Kings Cross Station was built in 1852. St Pancras was built in 1868.

There were epidemics of cholera in London in 1831, 1848-49 and in 1866. In 1859 work began on building a system of sewers for the whole city but it was not complete until 1875. After that deaths from disease fell drastically.

In 1807 gas light was used for the first time at Pall Mall and by the 1840's was being used all over London. Electric light was first used in Holborn in 1883. By the 1840's there were horse drawn buses and from the 1870's horse drawn trams. The first underground railway opened in 1863. The system was electrified in 1890-1905. The Thames Tunnel was built in 1843.

In 1834 Parliament was destroyed by fire. It was rebuilt to a design by Charles Barry. The new parliament included a great clock, which is now known as Big Ben. Originally the bell which struck the hour was called Big Ben and was likely named after Sir Benjamin Hall, the Commissioner of Works. In time people began to call the whole clock tower Big Ben.

John Nash created Trafalgar Square in 1839 and Nelsons column was erected in 1842. Many parks were created in London in the 19th century. Regents Park opened to the public in 1838. Victoria Park opened in 1845. Battersea Park opened in 1858. Another great London landmark the Albert Hall was built in 1871 by Francis Fowke (1823-1865).

The Victoria and Albert Museum opened in 1852. The Science Museum opened in 1857 and the Natural History Museum opened in 1881.

New Scotland Yard was built in 1891 and the statue of Eros in Picadilly Square was erected in 1892.

Meanwhile London continued to be a great port. In the 18th century the river Thames became so overcrowded that the various docks were built.

London was also a great manufacturing centre with food and drink industries, flourmills, sauce factories, sugar refineries, and tinned food factories. There were also breweries all over London. There was a leather industry, boot and shoe making, hat making and a clothing trade. Clocks, watches and jewellery were made in Clerkenwell. There were shipyards in Poplar, Deptford, Milwall and Blackwall. Other industries in London included furniture making, and the manufacture of horse drawn carriages.

London in The 20th Century

In the early 20th century London continued to grow rapidly. Hendon and Finchley became built up. Growth also spread to Harrow and Wealdstone, Twickenham, Teddington and Kingston Upon Thames. Wimbledon and Surbiton also became suburbs of London.

The London County Council began to build estates of council houses on the edge of the city. In 1903 the first ones were built at Tooting. Later estates were built at Norbury, Tottenham, Roehampton, at Downham near Catford and at Becontree. Other estates were built at Watling and Morden. Despite this, 75% of houses built in London between 1919 and 1939 were private. The population of London rose from 6 million in 1900 to 8.7 million in 1939.

Westminster Cathedral was built in 1903. The Victoria and Albert Museum moved to its present home in 1909. Wembley Stadium was built in 1923. Gunnersbury Park opened in 1925. Chiswick Bridge was built in 1933.

London suffered badly during the Second World War. The Blitz began in September 1940 and Londoners started sleeping in underground stations. Soon 150,000 people were sleeping there overnight. About 20,000 people were killed and 25,000 were injured. The first blitz ended in May 1941 but in 1944 Germany began firing missiles at London, killing about 3,000 people.

In 1944 a plan for post war London was published. The authorities felt the city was overcrowded and they planned to create a ring of satellite towns 20-30 miles from London. But the new towns attracted the skilled workers away from London. The new towns had modern industries who wanted skilled workers. The unskilled and the old were left behind.

The council also began building flats in London. The first were built in 1948. At first they were low rise, but after 1964 high rise flats, up to 24 stories high, were built to replace slums.

Waterloo Bridge was built in 1945. The Royal Festival Hall was built in 1951. Pollocks Toy Museum opened in 1956. The Shell Centre and Millbank Tower were built in 1962-1963. One of London's famous landmarks the Post Office Tower opened to the public in 1966. Hayward's Gallery opened in 1968. The Museum of London opened in 1976. A Museum of Garden History opened in 1979. The London Transport Museum opened in 1980. The Museum of the Moving Image opened in 1988. Somerset House opened to the public in 2000. It includes the Courtauld Gallery and the Gilbert Collection.

In the 1950's London boomed. The docks were busy, employing 30,000 men. But in the 1960's the docks suffered from the break up of the British Empire. Newly independent countries began to trade with countries other than Britain. In 1973 Britain joined the EEC and imports from commonwealth countries were limited by quotas or had to pay tariffs. This hurt London docks. Imports from the EEC tended to go to ports like Felixstowe and Dover. The London Docks Authority tried to cut costs by shifting to a containerized dock at Tilbury but many of the old docks closed.

In the early 1970's when London was still prospering the government tried to reduce congestion by encouraging companies to move out to the provinces. Then in the mid 70s came a recession and companies looked for ways to cut costs. One way was to leave London with its high rents and high labour costs. Unemployment soared.

After 1976 the GLC opposed the policy of encouraging industry to leave London. Central government did a u-turn. In 1981 the Greater London Enterprise Council was set up to encourage investment in London. But unemployment remained high in the 1980s and 1990s. One industry - tourism - continued to prosper.

Despite immigration from West India and Asia, the population of London fell after 1945. However in the last years of the 20th century the population began to grow rapidly again.

London in The 21st Century



In the year 2000, the Greater London Authority was created, the new Tate Modern opened in a former power station, and the London Eye opened to the public.

In 2012 a new building called the Shard opened, and the Olympics were held in London, confirming its status as one of the world's greatest cities. Today the population of London is 8.1 million.

For more on Historical London: See the **Museum of London's Great Fire of London MP4 Walking Tour**.

Hotels and Lodging



Hotel Guides

<http://www.visitlondon.com/where-to-stay/hotel>

<http://www.timeout.com/london/hotels>

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Bed & Breakfast Guides

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<http://www.bedandbreakfast.com/london-england.html>

<http://www.londonbb.com/>

Restaurant Guides



<http://www.visitlondon.com/search?keywords=restaurants>

<http://www.london-eating.co.uk>

Useful Links

Visitor Guides

Timeout London Guide: <http://www.timeout.com/london>

The Guardian London City Guide: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/travel/series/london-city-guide>

Welcome to London Arts & Entertainment Guide:
<http://www.welcometolondon.com>

London Maps and Guides: <http://www.visitlondon.com/traveller-information/getting-around-london/london-maps-and-guides>

Transportation Information and Maps

Transport for London website: <http://www.tfl.gov.uk>

Getting Around and Maps: <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/gettingaround>

London Pass: <http://www.londonpass.com>

Annual Events Guides:

London Annual Events Guide: <http://www.londontopic.co.uk/events.htm>

London Events 2013:
<http://www.timeout.com/london/things-to-do/london-events-in-2013>

EventGuide.network - London: <http://london.eventguide.com/>

Embassies in London

List of Foreign Consulates & Embassies in London:
<http://www.allinlondon.co.uk/directory/1264.php>

United States Embassy in London: <http://london.usembassy.gov>

City of London Guide



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