



# LONDON

TOP SIGHTS, AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES

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## Welcome to London

*One of the world's most visited cities, London has something for everyone, from history and culture to fine wine and good times. Its energy is intoxicating and its sheer diversity inspiring.*

With a third of all Londoners foreign born, representing 270 different nationalities, London is marvellously multicultural. These cultures infuse the cuisine, fashion and music offerings of the capital – it's all delightfully international.

A tireless innovator of art and culture, London is a city of ideas and the imagination; the city's creative milieu is streaked with left-field attitude, from ground-breaking theatre to contemporary art, pioneering music, writing and design. No matter how often you come, there is always something new to eat, visit or experience.

Contrasting with the up-to-the-minute restaurant and arts scene, London is also a city immersed in history, with more than its share of mind-blowing antiquity. London's buildings are eye-catching milestones in the city's compelling biography, and its museums have collections as varied as they are magnificent. Of course, London is as much about leafy spaces and wide-open parklands as about high-density, sight-packed exploration and there is always a glorious green escape waiting to soothe the senses.

*London is a city immersed in history, with more than its share of mind-blowing antiquity*

London skyline

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**North London**  
Parks, markets and Camden and Islington after dark guarantee a glorious day and night out. (Map p254)



**East London**  
Ground-zero for multi-cultural London, plus the highlights of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. (Map p255)



**Clerkenwell, Shoreditch & Spitalfields**  
Good food and a great night out in one of London's trendiest areas. (Map p253)



**The West End**  
The beating heart of London, with iconic sights, shopping and nightlife. (Map p248)



**The City**  
Two thousand years of history and architecture packed into just one square mile. (Map p245)



**Kensington & Hyde Park**  
Three world-class museums and the largest of the royal parks in a well-heeled district. (Map p250)



**The South Bank**  
A must-visit area for art lovers, theatre-goers and culture hounds, with Thames views to boot. (Map p245)

# Lonely Planet's London

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# Plan Your Trip This Year in London

# 2018



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## London

*London has a busy year ahead: there are festivals and cultural events galore. A few key sights are reopening after extensive renovations too: whether you have seen them before or not, a visit is definitely in order!*

Clockwise from above: New Year's Celebrations at Big Ben (p17); Trooping the Colour (p11); Notting Hill Carnival (p13)



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★ **Top Events**

**Trooping the Colour** June (p11)

**Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Championships** June–July (p11)

**The Proms** July–September (p12)

**Notting Hill Carnival** August (p13)

**New Year's Celebrations** December (p17)



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## June

# 06

*The peak season begins with long, warm days (it's light until 10pm), the arrival of Wimbledon and other alfresco events (concerts and music festivals especially).*

### 🇬🇧 Trooping the Colour mid-Jun

The Queen's official birthday ([www.trooping-the-colour.co.uk](http://www.trooping-the-colour.co.uk); pictured above) is celebrated with much flag-waving, parades, pageantry and noisy flyovers. The royal family usually attends in force.

### 🏠 London Festival of Architecture Jun

This month-long celebration of London's built environment ([www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org](http://www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org)) explores the significance of architecture and design and how London has become a centre for innovation in those fields.

### 🌳 Open Garden Squares Weekend mid-Jun

Over one weekend, more than 200 gardens in London that are usually inaccessible to the public fling open their gates for exploration ([www.opensquares.org](http://www.opensquares.org)).

### 🌟 Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Championships 27 Jun–10 Jul

For two weeks a year, the quiet South London village of Wimbledon falls under a sporting spotlight as the world's best tennis players gather to battle for the championships (p203).





PETER MACDONALD/STAFF/GETTY IMAGES ©

## August

# 08

*Schools have broken up for summer, families are holidaying and the hugely popular annual Caribbean carnival dances into Notting Hill. The last weekend is a bank holiday weekend.*

### 🏊 Outdoor Swimming Aug

London may not strike you as the place to go for an alfresco swim but you can enjoy a dip in the Serpentine in Hyde Park or in the ponds at Hampstead Heath. The water quality is tested daily and they are extremely popular on warm days.

### 🍺 Great British Beer Festival mid-Aug

Organised by CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale), this boozy festival ([www.gbbf.org.uk](http://www.gbbf.org.uk); pictured above) cheerfully cracks open casks of ale from the UK and abroad at the Olympia exhibition centre.

### 🌟 Notting Hill Carnival 25–27 Aug

Europe's biggest – and London's most vibrant – outdoor carnival is a celebration of Caribbean London, featuring music, dancing and costumes.



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### ☆ Summer Screen at Somerset House early Aug

For a fortnight, Somerset House (p63) turns its stunning courtyard into an open-air cinema screening an eclectic mix of film premieres, cult classics and popular requests.

# Plan Your Trip

## Need to Know

### Daily Costs

#### Budget

##### Less than £85

- Dorm bed: £10–32
- Market-stall lunch: £5; supermarket sandwich: £3.50–4.50
- Many museums: free
- Standby theatre tickets: £5–25
- Santander Cycles daily rental fee: £2

#### Midrange

##### £85–185

- Double room in a mid-range hotel: £90–160
- Two-course dinner with a glass of wine: £35
- Theatre ticket: £15–60

#### Top End

##### More than £185

- Four-star/boutique hotel room: £200
- Three-course dinner in a top restaurant with wine: £60–90
- Black cab trip: £30
- Top theatre ticket: £65

### Advance Planning

**Three months before** Book weekend performances of top shows; make dinner reservations for renowned restaurants with celebrity chefs; snatch up tickets for must-see temporary exhibitions; book accommodation at boutique properties.

**One month before** Check listings for fringe theatre, live music and festivals on entertainment sites such as Time Out, and book tickets.

**A few days before** Check the weather on the Met Office website ([www.metoffice.gov.uk](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk)).

### Useful Websites

- **Lonely Planet** ([www.lonelyplanet.com/london](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/london)) Bookings, traveller forum and more.
- **Time Out London** ([www.timeout.com/london](http://www.timeout.com/london)) Up-to-date and comprehensive listings.
- **Londonist** ([www.londonist.com](http://www.londonist.com)) A website about London and everything that happens in it.
- **Transport for London** ([www.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tfl.gov.uk)) Essential tool for staying mobile in the capital.

### Currency

Pound sterling (£)

### Language

English

### Visas

Not required for US, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand or South African visitors for stays of up to six months. EU nationals can stay indefinitely for now (Brexit may change that).

### Money

ATMs are widespread. Major credit cards are accepted everywhere. The best place to change money is in post office branches, which do not charge a commission.

### Mobile Phones

Buy local SIM cards for European and Australian phones, or a pay-as-you-go phone. Set other phones to international roaming.

### Time

London is on GMT; during British Summer Time (BST; late March to late October), London clocks are one hour ahead of GMT.

### Tourist Information

Visit London (p232) can fill you in on everything you need to know.