

The West End

WESTMINSTER | BLOOMSBURY & FITZROVIA | ST JAMES'S | SOHO & CHINATOWN | COVENT GARDEN & LEICESTER SQUARE | WHITEHALL | HOLBORN & THE STRAND | MARYLEBONE | MAYFAIR

Neighbourhood Top Five

- 1 Paying your respects to **Westminster Abbey** (p78), church of coronations, royal burials and weddings.
- 2 Enjoying a fabulous night out in all singin', all dancin' **Soho** (p102).
- 3 Hiring a deckchair in **St James's Park** (p100) and enjoying regal views of London.
- 4 Exploring the history of ancient civilisations at the excellent (and free) **British Museum** (p81).
- 5 Hitting the shops and boutiques of **Covent Garden** (p104) before stopping to watch the street performers.



For more detail of this area see Maps p406, p408, p412, p414 and p416 ➔

Explore: The West End

It may be a compact area, but the West End packs in a lot when it comes to sights. You'll need to allow half a day for each of the big museums (the British Museum and the National Gallery), and at least a couple of hours for places like Westminster Abbey and Buckingham Palace.

One of the delights of the West End is its energy and there is no better way to enjoy it than by walking around and taking it all in. Atmospheric places for a breather include Covent Garden, Trafalgar Sq and St James's Park.

Westminster and Whitehall are deserted in the evenings, with little in the way of bars and restaurants. It's a similar story in St James's. Instead, head to vibrant Soho for fantastic bars and restaurants, or the streets surrounding Covent Garden.

Local Life

➔ **Eating out** Soho is unrivalled when it comes to eating out. Andrew Edmunds (p114) and Mildreds (p113) never seem to go out of fashion, while hip new places such as Yalla Yalla (p118), Chiltern Firehouse (p119) and 10 Greek St (p115) open all the time.

➔ **Late-night openings** Be it catching the latest exhibition or simply enjoying the permanent collections without the weekend crowds, many Londoners make the best of late-night openings at the National Gallery (p89), the National Portrait Gallery (p93) and the British Museum (p81).

➔ **Shopping** Love it or loathe it, most Londoners will hit crowded Oxford St at some stage to shop; it's smack bang in the centre of town and has every franchise under the sun, as well as good department stores such as Selfridges (p133) and John Lewis (p133).

Getting There & Away

➔ **Underground** Almost every tube line goes through the West End, so wherever you're staying in London, you'll have no difficulty getting here. The tube is also good for getting from one end of the West End to the other.

➔ **Walking** The West End is relatively compact, so it'll be cheaper and generally more enjoyable to walk from one place to another rather than take public transport.

➔ **Santander Cycles** There are docking stations everywhere within the West End and cycling is your best bet for short journeys.

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

London – the West End especially – can be expensive, but there are plenty of tricks to make your pennies last. Many of the top museums are free, so give them priority. The West End is compact, so walk or take the bus (cheaper than the tube).

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Brasserie Zédel (p114)
- ➔ Palomar (p114)
- ➔ Dabbous (p112)
- ➔ Bar Shu (p114)
- ➔ Shoryu (p116)

For reviews, see p110 ➔

Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Lamb & Flag (p122)
- ➔ Dukes Bar (p120)
- ➔ London Cocktail Club (p121)
- ➔ Rivoli Bar (p120)
- ➔ Gordon's Wine Bar (p123)
- ➔ Queen's Larder (p121)

For reviews, see p120 ➔

Best Free Sights

- ➔ British Museum (p81)
- ➔ National Gallery (p89)
- ➔ National Portrait Gallery (p93)
- ➔ Houses of Parliament (p87)
- ➔ Wallace Collection (p108)
- ➔ Sir John Soane's Museum (p96)

For reviews, see p81 ➔