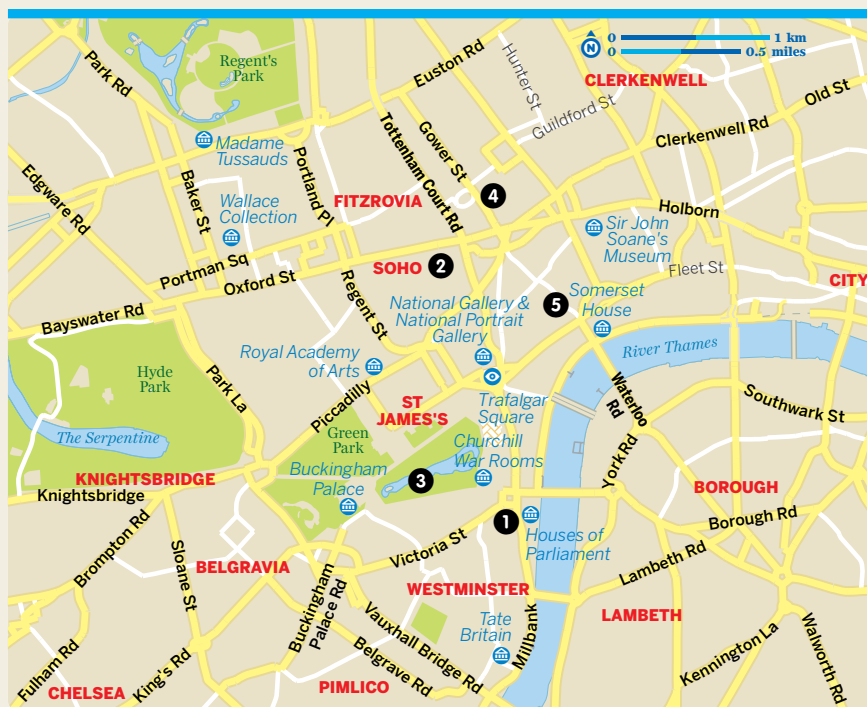


The West End

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

Neighbourhood Top Five

- 1 Visiting **Westminster Abbey** (p86), church of coronations, royal burials and weddings, including that of Prince William and Catherine Middleton in 2011.
- 2 Enjoying a fabulous night out in all singin', all dancin' **Soho** (p110).
- 3 Hiring a deckchair in **St James's Park** (p107) and enjoying regal views of London.
- 4 Exploring the history of ancient civilisations at the excellent (and free) **British Museum** (p89).
- 5 Hitting the shops and boutiques of **Covent Garden** (p111) before stopping to watch all the street performers.



For more detail of this area see Map p430, p432, p436, p438 and p440 ➔

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 (such as the British Museum or 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. The same goes for 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 (p123) and Mildreds (p121) never seem to go out of fashion, while new, hip places such as Polpo (p121) and 10 Greek St (p124) open all the time.

➔ **Late-night openings** Be it for 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 (p97), the National Portrait Gallery (p101) and the British Museum (p89).

➔ **Shopping** Love it or loathe it, most Londoners will hit 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 (p144) and John Lewis (p144).

Getting There & Away

➔ **Underground** Every tube line goes through the West End, so wherever you're staying in London, you'll have no difficulty getting there. The tube is also good for getting from one end of the West End to the other (Russell Sq to Green Park or Baker St to Embankment).

➔ **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.

➔ **Barclays Bikes** 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 (p123)
- ➔ Newman Street Tavern (p120)
- ➔ Dishoom (p125)
- ➔ Dabbous (p120)
- ➔ Bar Shu (p123)
- ➔ Bar Trattoria Semplice (p129)

For reviews, see p119 ➔

Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Lamb & Flag (p133)
- ➔ Opium (p131)
- ➔ London Cocktail Club (p131)
- ➔ Holborn Whippet (p134)
- ➔ Gordon's Wine Bar (p134)
- ➔ Queen's Larder (p130)

For reviews, see p130 ➔

Best Free Sights

- ➔ British Museum (p89)
- ➔ National Gallery (p97)
- ➔ National Portrait Gallery (p101)
- ➔ Houses of Parliament (p95)
- ➔ Wallace Collection (p117)
- ➔ Sir John Soane's Museum (p104)

For reviews, see p89 ➔