

LONDON

ENCOUNTER

JOE BINDLOSS

London Encounter

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Colour-Coding & Maps

Colour-coding is used for symbols on maps and in the text that they relate to (eg all eating venues on the maps and in the text are given a green knife and fork symbol). Each neighbourhood also gets its own colour, and this is used down the edge of the page and throughout that neighbourhood section.

Shaded yellow areas on the maps denote 'areas of interest' – for their historical significance, their attractive architecture or their great bars and restaurants. We encourage you to head to these areas and just start exploring!

Prices

Multiple prices listed with reviews (eg £10/5 or £10/5/20) indicate adult/child, adult/concession or adult/child/family.

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JOEB INDLOSS

Joe Bindloss lived briefly on London's Caledonian Rd as a child and he headed back here as soon as he was old enough to work out the tube map. He's lived in north London ever since, in between stints working overseas. Joe has written for more than 30 Lonely Planet guidebooks, from *India* and *Nepal* to Lonely Planet's *Gap Year* book. When not travelling for Lonely Planet, he writes about travel, restaurants and life in London for the *Independent*, the *Guardian*, *Wanderlust* and other publications. For more information, see www.bindloss.co.uk.



The 1st edition of *London Encounter* was written by Sarah Johnstone.

JOE'ST HANKS

First and foremost, my thanks to my partner Linda for providing a second opinion on trips to restaurants, bars and sights. Thanks also to the friends who provided dining tips – Gar Powell Evans, I owe you one – and the helpful Londoners who gave interviews for this book.

Our readers Many thanks to the travellers who wrote to us with helpful hints, useful advice and interesting anecdotes. Erica McCreath, Jill Murphy, Michel Porro, Chris Rickwood, Caroline Winter, Rob Woodburn.

Cover photograph Millennium Bridge by Erica Rodriguez Sanz. This image was selected as one of the winners of a competition to find four unique travellers' photos that really convey the experience of using an Encounter guide. Entrants were challenged to submit eye-catching photos that get right to the heart of the city and give the impression of seeing and experiencing it for themselves. Check out the other winning images on *Barcelona*, *Paris* and *Istanbul Encounter* covers.

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Familiar faces – Parliament's Big Ben clocktower (p14) seen through the London Eye (p10)

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>THIS IS LONDON

'When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life,' claimed the great lexicographer Samuel Johnson, and we're inclined to agree. Few world cities can compete with the English capital for variety, vitality and pace.

More than seven million people, from six continents, are crammed into this heaving metropolis, creating one of the largest cultural mixing pots on earth. This is where the money that drives the British economy is made and spent, where the Queen reigns and parliament governs, and where trends in music, fashion and the arts are made and discarded, sometimes in the space of a single evening.

London is the fashion capital of Mary Quant and Stella McCartney, the music capital of the Rolling Stones and Coldplay, the arts capital of the Tate Modern and Damien Hirst, the shopping capital of Harrods and Harvey Nichols, the culture capital of the BBC Proms and the Victoria & Albert Museum. Almost 2000 years of history are writ large in the streets, from the medieval spires of Westminster Abbey to the soaring dome of St Paul's Cathedral and the phallic exclamation mark of Norman Foster's 'Gherkin'.

London obviously has its faults – it's expensive, overcrowded and often run-down around the edges – but Londoners love it with a giddy passion. This urban love affair is fuelled by romantic dinners at restaurants run by uberchefs like Gordon Ramsay and Marcus Wareing, by neon-coloured cocktails in the sleek bars of Shoreditch and Notting Hill, and by bass-charged all-nighters at super clubs like Fabric and the Ministry of Sound.

London is changing, and many would say improving, in the run-up to the 2012 Olympics. You'll still see the London clichés – red buses, black taxis and bobbies on the beat – but you'll also find improved infrastructure, reinvigorated public spaces and some of the best nightlife, shopping, theatre, music and dining in the world. Catch it now before they start charging Olympic prices.

Top left Sole brothers – participants on a high during a London Pride parade (p30) **Top right** A coffee break from the Big Smoke **Bottom** Life changing – a young boy watches the Changing of the Guard (p87)