



LONDON

TOP SIGHTS, AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES

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Welcome to London

One of the world's great – and most visited – cities, London has something for everyone: from culture to fine food and a buzzing party scene. Its energy is intoxicating and its diversity inspiring.

This city is deeply multicultural, with one in three Londoners foreign-born. Britain may have voted for Brexit (although the majority of Londoners didn't), but London remains one of the world's most cosmopolitan cities, and diversity infuses daily life, food, music, fashion and art. It inspires festivals such as the now-famed Notting Hill Carnival, and the new annual Borough of Culture celebrations.

London is also a city of contrasts. On the one hand, it is constantly changing: witness the evolving skyline, with its statement skyscrapers; the endless stream of new restaurants, pop-up bars and concept stores; and the myriad new artists, from fashion designers to musicians, that have emerged from its creative milieu. No matter how often you visit, you'll always find something new.

On the other hand, this thirst for innovation has been facilitated by a strong sense of history and of how London came to be London. The city's buildings are striking milestones in a unique and beguiling biography, and many of them – Big Ben, Tower Bridge, the Tower of London – are instantly recognisable landmarks. Amazingly, all this history and culture leave glorious amounts of green spaces, which are a joy to explore or relax in.

London remains one of the world's most cosmopolitan cities, and diversity infuses daily life, food, music, fashion and art.



Kensington & Hyde Park

Three world-class museums and the largest of the royal parks in a well-heeled district. (Map p278)



North London

Parks, markets and Camden and Islington after dark guarantee a glorious day and night out. (Map p284)



Clerkenwell, Hoxton & Spitalfields

Good food and a great night out in one of London's trendiest areas. (Map p282)



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East London

Ground-zero for multicultural London; great restaurants and increasingly trendy. (Map p285)



City & South Bank

Centuries of history and architecture across the Thames from a must-visit area for art lovers, theatre-goers and culture hounds. (Map p280)



West End

The beating heart of London, with iconic sights, shopping and nightlife. (Map p274)

Hampton Court Palace
(13km)

Kew Gardens
(8km)

Heathrow
(19km)

Greenwich
(3.2km)



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Plan Your Trip This Year in London

2020



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London

Culture and sports will be high on the list for 2020 – hello Euro football tournament and London Design Biennale! There are many smaller events happening too, and plenty of life's small pleasures to enjoy in the capital's ever changing eating and drinking scene.

Clockwise from above: Performer at Notting Hill Carnival; UEFA Euro 2020 official ball; Exhibit at London Design Biennale



February

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February is usually chilly and wet (sometimes even snow-encrusted). Schools break off for a week in mid-February. Londoners lark about with pancakes on Shrove Tuesday.

☆ BAFTAs

mid-Feb

The British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA; www.bafta.org) rolls out the red carpet mid-February to hand out its annual cinema awards. It's the British Oscars, if you will. Expect plenty of celebrity glamour.

🍷 Pint by the Fire

Feb

What better way to thaw after sightseeing in the cold than with a drink by the fire? Amazingly, London still has plenty of pubs with working fireplaces so make the most of them.

✶ Shrove Tuesday

25 Feb

On Shrove Tuesday, you can catch pancake races (pictured above) and associated silliness at various venues around town (Spitalfields Market, in particular).

☆ A Night at the Opera

Feb

The nights are long and cold so what better way to cosy up than inside the stunning Royal Opera House to revel in a world-class opera or ballet? (Plus, it's a really good opportunity to dress up.)

Plan Your Trip

This Year in London

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September

The end of summer and start of autumn is a lovely time to be in town, with comedy festivals and a chance to look at London properties normally shut to the public.

☆ Greenwich Comedy Festival

early Sep

This week-long laugh fest – London's largest comedy festival – brings big names and emerging acts to the National Maritime Museum.

✿ The Mayor's Thames Festival

Sep

Celebrating the River Thames, this cosmopolitan festival (www.totallythames.org) brings fairs, street theatre, music, food stalls, fireworks and river races, culminating in the superb Night Procession.

👁 Open House London

mid-Sep

For a weekend in mid-September the public is invited in to see over 800 heritage buildings throughout the capital that are normally off-limits (www.openhouselondon.org.uk; UCL at Here East pictured above).

👁 London Design Biennale

Sep

Some of the best, most eye-catching and exciting design works from over 40 countries are displayed at Somerset House (pictured below) on the Strand in the heart of London in this month-long festival (www.londondesignbiennale.com).



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