



POCKET

LONDON

TOP SIGHTS • LOCAL EXPERIENCES

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Welcome to London

London has something for everyone, from art to grand museums, dazzling architecture, opulent royalty, striking diversity, glorious parks and irrepressible pizzazz. It's immersed in history, but London is also a tireless innovator of culture and creative talent. A cosmopolitan dynamism makes it quite possibly the world's most international city, yet one that remains somehow intrinsically British.





Regent's Park Open-air Theatre (p175)
VIA BRITAIN/ERIC NATHAN/GETTY IMAGES ©

Top Sights

British Museum

Britain's most visited attraction. **p88**



CHAO KAI SHEN / SHENNAH / 500PX ©

St Paul's Cathedral

Saintly symbol of London's resilience. **p108**



ZEFA/SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Tate Modern

A vigorous statement of modernity and architectural renewal. **p130**



ASASTOCK/SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Natural History Museum

Fascinating place of curatorial genius. **p152**



EM CAMPOS/SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Tower of London

This imposing stone fortress is home to the Crown Jewels. **p112**



Westminster Abbey

Sacred place of coronation for England's sovereigns. **p44**



LEFT: CELSO DINIZ/SHUTTERSTOCK © RIGHT: GLOBETROTTERS/SHUTTERSTOCK ©



Houses of Parliament

There's no more iconic image of London than the Houses of Parliament and Big Ben. **p50**



LEFT: FILIPPO/SHUTTERSTOCK © RIGHT: CLAUDIO DIVIZIA/SHUTTERSTOCK ©

National Gallery

One of the world's greatest art collections. **p66**

Victoria & Albert Museum

The world's largest decorative-arts collection. **p148**



Hampton Court Palace

The grandest Tudor palace in England. **p198**



Buckingham Palace

The monarch's palatial London digs. **p48**



Royal Observatory & Greenwich Park

History, science and gorgeous views of London. **p192**

Eating

Once the butt of many a culinary joke, London has transformed itself over the last few decades and today is a global dining destination. World-famous chefs can be found at the helm of several top-tier restaurants, but it is the complete diversity on offer that is head-spinning: from Afghan to Zambian, London delivers an A to Z of world cuisine.



World Food

One of the joys of eating out in London is the sheer choice. For historical reasons Indian cuisine is widely available (curry has been labelled a national dish), but Asian cuisines in general are very popular. You'll find dozens of Chinese, Thai, Vietnamese Japanese and Korean restaurants, as well as elaborate fusion establishments blending flavours from different parts of Asia. Middle Eastern cuisine is also well covered. Continental Europe cuisines – French, Ital-

ian, Spanish, Greek, Scandinavian etc – are well represented, with many excellent modern European establishments.

Restaurants serving ethnic cuisines tend to congregate where their home community is based.

British Food

Modern British food has become a cuisine in its own right, championing traditional (and sometimes underrated) ingredients such as root vegetables, smoked fish, shellfish, game, salt-marsh lamb, sausages,

black pudding (a kind of sausage stuffed with oatmeal, spices and blood), offal, secondary cuts of meat and bone marrow.

Gastropubs

While not so long ago the pub was where you went for a drink, with maybe a packet of potato crisps to soak up the alcohol, the birth of the gastropub in the 1990s means that today just about every establishment serves full meals. The quality varies widely, from defrosted-on-the-premises to Michelin-star-worthy.



ROBIN STEWART/SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Best British

St John The restaurant that inspired the revival of British cuisine. (p121)

Dinner by Heston Blumenthal Winning celebration of British cuisine, with both traditional and modern accents. (p163)

Launceston Place Magnificent food, presentation and service. (p163)

Hook Camden Town What sort of British list would it be without fish and chips? (p176)

Best European

Padella Cheap and flavourful homemade pasta in Borough Market. (p139)

Club Gascon City restaurant showcasing the cuisine of France's southwest. (p121)

Tom's Kitchen Splendid service, seasonal European fare and a champion of sustainability. (p162)

Baltic Flavours from Eastern Europe on your plate, as well as in your glass. (p141)

Best Indian & Asian

Quilon London's most inventive Indian cuisine. (p60)

Gymkhana Splendid club-style Raj environment and top cuisine. (p60)

Hakkasan Hanway Place Superlative subterranean Cantonese den in the West End. (p100)

Miyama Gem of a Japanese restaurant with oodles of choice. (p120)

Kanada-Ya Join the queue for its superb *tonkotsu* ramen. (p76)

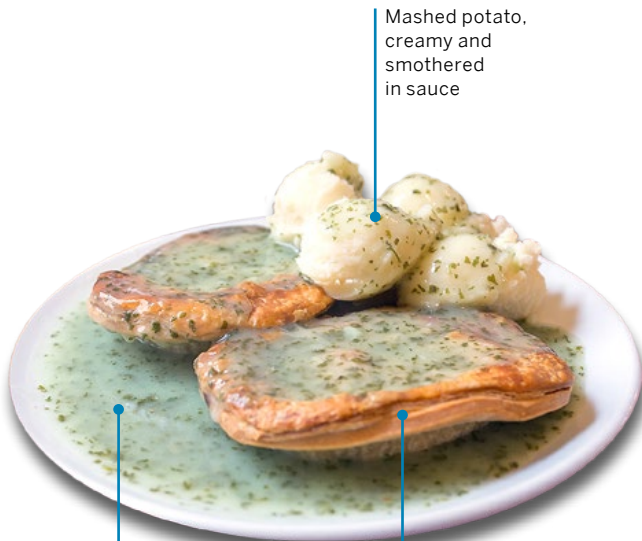
Top Tip



- Many top-end restaurants offer set lunch menus that are great value.
- The reliable internet booking service Open Table (www.opentable.co.uk) offers substantial discounts at selected restaurants.

London on a Plate

Pie & Mash



Mashed potato, creamy and smothered in sauce

Liquor, a parsley and vinegar sauce; if you don't like the sound of liquor, there is always gravy

The pie: minced beef for purists (variations allowed)

★ Top Spots for Pie & Mash

M Manze (www.manze.co.uk; 87 Tower Bridge Rd, SE1; mains from £2.95; ☎11am-2pm Mon, 10.30am-2pm Tue-Thu, 10am-2.30pm Fri, to 2.45pm Sat; 📍Borough)

Goddards at Greenwich

(☎020-8305 9612; www.goddardsatgreenwich.co.uk; 22 King William Walk, SE10; dishes £3.30-7.30; ☎10am-7pm Sun-Thu, to 8pm Fri & Sat; 🚢DLR Cutty Sark)

F Cooke (☎020-7254 6548; 9 Broadway Market, E8; mains £2.70-4; ☎10am-7pm Mon-Sat; 📍London Fields)

Pie & Mash in London

From the middle of the 19th century until just after WWII, the staple lunch for many Londoners was a spiced-eel pie (eels were once plentiful in the Thames) served with mashed potatoes and liquor. The staple modern-day filling is minced beef (curried meat is also good). Pie-and-mash restaurants are rarely fancy, but they offer something of a time-travel culinary experience.

Meat pie with mushy peas



RICHARD SPLASH/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO ©

Drinking & Nightlife

You need only glance at William Hogarth's Gin Lane prints from 1751 to realise that Londoners and alcohol have had more than a passing acquaintance. The metropolis offers a huge variety of venues to wet your whistle in – from cosy neighbourhood pubs to glitzy all-night clubs, and everything in between.

Pubs

At the heart of London social life, the pub (public house) is one of the capital's great social levellers. You can order almost anything you like, but beer is the staple. Some pubs specialise, offering drinks from local microbreweries, fruit beers, organic ciders and other rarer beverages. Others, especially gastropubs, proffer strong wine lists. Some pubs have delightful beer gardens – crucial in summer. Most pubs and bars open at 11am, closing at 11pm

from Monday to Saturday and 10.30pm on Sunday. Some pubs stay open longer, often until midnight, sometimes 1am or 2am.

Bars & Clubs

Bars are generally open later than pubs but close earlier than clubs. They may have DJs and a small dance floor, door charges after 11pm, more modern decor and fancier (and pricier) drinks, including cocktails, than pubs. If you're up for clubbing, London is an embarrassment of riches: choose between legendary

establishments such as Fabric or smaller clubs with up-and-coming DJs. Dress to impress (no jeans or trainers) in posh clubs in areas such as Kensington. Further east, it's laid back and edgy. Cocktail bars are undergoing a renaissance, so you'll find lots of upmarket options serving increasingly interesting concoctions.

Best Pubs

Edinboro Castle Cultured Primrose Hill boozery with a beer garden. (p177)

Lock Tavern Top Camden pub with a roof terrace and live music. (p178)



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Ye Olde Mitre Cosy, historic pub with a great beer selection and no music – how civilised. (p123)

Windsor Castle High up on the brow of Kensington's Campden Hill Rd, with a fabulous beer garden. (p164)

Best Historic Pubs

George Inn History, age-old charm and National Trust designation. (p142)

Jerusalem Tavern An 18th-century ale-aficionado's bolthole. (p124)

Lamb & Flag Atmospheric and creaky old-timer from days of yore, near the Strand. (p80)

Best Bars

American Bar Dapper art-deco stunner at the Beaumont Hotel in the West End. (p79)

Sky Pod Drinks always taste better with views. (p123)

Dukes London Classic bar at the heart of London with the best Martinis in town. (p61)

Oblix Stellar views of London across the river from the 32nd floor of the Shard. (p142)

Best Clubs

Fabric London's most famous superclub. (pictured above; p124)

Heaven The gay club in London. (p81)

Online Listings



Check the listings in *Time Out* (www.timeout.com/london) or the *Evening Standard*. Part of the charm of London's nightlife is that it's always changing, so keep your eyes peeled.