Welcome to London

One of the most diverse cities in the world, London is home to over eight million people of all nationalities and faiths.

As well as some world-leading museums, churches and other attractions, London has a quirky side that many visitors miss.

When we were putting this guide together, I was constantly surprised by the number of things I didn’t know about, in a city that is more or less on my doorstep.

I hope that you enjoy reading and using this guide whether you are new to London, a regular visitor, or even an inhabitant.

As always with something like this, there is a difficult choice to be made on what makes it in to the guide and what gets left out. You will find more ideas and information on the Wanderlust website: www.wanderlust.co.uk.

And... if you have some top tips or insider secrets for London, please do let us know via the website.

As well as being a resource for any trip that you are planning, wanderlust.co.uk is also home to myWanderlust, our vibrant online community. Here, you can upload your photos, share stories and feedback on your latest trip.

Have a question or need some advice? Post your query or comments on our friendly and very knowledgable forum.

I look forward to seeing you on the website or at one of the many Wanderlust events that we run throughout the year.

Lyn

Lyn Hughes
Editor-in-Chief & Publisher
Wanderlust's Quirky Guide

London

Exploring the hidden corners of the world

Try 4 issues of travel inspiration for only £5
If you’ve enjoyed discovering some of London’s hidden secrets, imagine what the rest of the world has to offer – Wanderlust has guided thousands of travellers to the four corners of the Earth for nearly twenty years. Now, for only £5, you could find out what you’ve been missing!

Every issue is packed with:

- Inspirational features on worldwide destinations
- Life-changing travel experiences
- Cultural insights and spectacular photography
- Health advice and practical travel tips

Become a member today... For ONLY £5 and receive 4 ISSUES of Wanderlust PLUS a FREE £50 TRAVEL VOUCHER redeemable against more than 20 different tour operators. VISIT: www.wanderlustvoucher.co.uk to see a full list of participating tour operators.

Subscribing is easy

Call Wanderlust on: 01753 620426 and quote ‘Secrets’

Subscribe online at: www.wanderlustoffer.co.uk/secrets

(Terms & Conditions apply)
A guide to hidden London

Author of the acclaimed Bryant & May thrillers Christopher Fowler offers up the fruits of his research to help you discover a London you may not know.

Find out where to go

When it comes to London nightlife, the listings magazines only give you the most touristy part of the picture. To discover the quirkiest events you have to find flyers put out by fringe organisers who can’t afford to advertise through the more conventional routes. For theatre, pick up flyers at Dress Circle in Monmouth Street, WC2. For clubs and gigs, hit the Soho bars and cafes on Brewer Street, Old Compton Street and Beak Street.

Visit other museums

There’s a reason why the top London exhibition spaces are so popular; they put on world-class shows. But they can also be expensive, especially if you’re travelling with a family. Many of the odder museums and galleries are free. The Hunterian, the Wellcome Institute and the British Library can all be done in one long morning, while the Sir John Soane, the Wallace and the quirky Museum of Everything will fill a very busy afternoon. For odder museums, check out the odder parts of the city. The trick is to do it West to East, not North to South. London is a transverse city built around a switchback river; follow the Thames and see how the London Eye keeps turning from front to side-on views if you really want to discover the trickiness of the streets.

Avoid the obvious

My heart sinks every time I pass the immense queue for Madame Tussauds or see visitors eating in an Angus Steak House, because when you have limited time, there are better places just a street or two away from the obvious tourist attractions. Go to Camden Market by all means, but you’ll find better bargains between Spittalfields and Brick Lane. Go to Brick Lane for a curry, but you’ll find just as good (and cheaper) meals in Drummond Street. For every well-publicised place, there’s a good alternative.

Use the pubs

In the US, bars are largely the province of loners for property vultures. Pubs often occupy corner sites and have extensive basements, which makes them ripe for conversion. A peculiarity of the London pub scene is that the same venue may be used for a dozen different types of event, undivided by race, sexuality, age or musical preferences. In my novel, The Victoria Vanishes, I listed a great number of pubs, and recently checked into a few of them now sadly closed. Pubs are often occupation sites and have extensive basements, which makes them ripe for property vultures.

Walk the London canals

Wherever you are in London, you’re never far from water. I used to live off Angler’s Lane in Kentish Town, beside a fisherman’s pub that is now a Nando’s, and once helped to dig out an underground tributary in Soho, where I found myself surrounded by clay pipes and animal bones washed down from the butcheries on the riverbanks. The rivers are all around us, but remain elusive.

The canals are accessible, though. Connected by wells, lock-gates and basins, they run right across the capital. Once they were filthy, but now they’re filled with fish, hemmed with wildflowers, home to herons, swans and Canadian geese. They’re perfect for cycling too, because the walkways are largely flat.
Did you know? London is criss-crossed by canals. Connected by wells, lock-gates and basins, they run right across the capital. Once they were filthy, but now they’re filled with fish, hemmed with wildflowers, home to herons, swans and Canadian geese.
Hidden London viewpoints

There’s no need to spend a fortune on the London Eye for a great view of the city. Trip Stylist Kathryn reveals five less-obvious viewpoints in central London.

One New Change
Visiting a shopping centre is an unusual recommendation from me, but there is an amazing view of St Paul’s Cathedral from One New Change. Head to the roof terrace via a glass elevator – not one for those with vertigo – and there is an unobstructed view of the cathedral. There are also great panoramic views of London’s skyline.

1 New Change, EC4M 9AF

St James’ Park
My favourite view of the city is from the bridge across St James’ Park lake back to Westminster. It gives an unusual angle of the London Eye and Westminster. Framed by the lake and trees it’s almost as if the Eye has been relocated to a more rural location!

Lambeth Bridge
For a clear view of the Houses of Parliament the view from Lambeth Bridge and the south bank of the Thames by Lambeth Palace are hard to beat. There are far fewer tourists than along Westminster Bridge and Southbank too.

Shad Thames
Further along the Thames check out the view from Shad Thames, outside the Design Museum. Look out to Tower Bridge and the Tower of London in one direction and across to the Docklands in the other.

Monument
Built to commemorate the Great Fire of London and to celebrate the rebuilding of the city, the Monument is 61 metres high – the exact distance between it and the site in Pudding Lane where the fire began. You can climb the 311 steps to admire the view over London. There is a £3 admission fee.

Junction of Monument Street and Fish Street Hill, EC3R 6DB

Insider Secrets

Go online: For more details visit the Trip Stylist website: http://tripstylist.co.uk/
Alternative tours in London’s East End

To get under the skin of a city, you need local knowledge. But how do you find your knowledgeable local? Londoner Gabrielle Jaffe enlists a unique guide for an urban adventure.

That’s where I used to sign on,” says Patrick, pointing to an unremarkable street off Hoxton Square. “It’s not there any more – area’s changed so much since the 90s.” A one-time struggling actor, Patrick’s just the sort you’d imagine meeting in London’s artsy Hoxton area. But he’s the last person you’d expect as a tour guide.

This isn’t your average sightseeing tour; it’s the East End Uncovered Urban Adventure, one of a new series run in cities worldwide by adventure operator Intrepid Travel. Biking

Gabrielle Jaffe

Urban Adventures’ East End Uncovered tour costs £25pp and includes pie and mash.

Go online:
For more details visit www.urbanadventures.com.

Did you know? In the 19th century the city’s weavers would spend all their money in The Eagle. When they hadn’t a penny left they’d pawn their most valued possession – the spool, or ‘weasel’ – for one last drink.

That’s where I used to sign on,” says Patrick, pointing to an unremarkable street off Hoxton Square. “It’s not there any more – area’s changed so much since the 90s.” A one-time struggling actor, Patrick’s just the sort you’d imagine meeting in London’s artsy Hoxton area. But he’s the last person you’d expect as a tour guide.

This isn’t your average sightseeing tour; it’s the East End Uncovered Urban Adventure, one of a new series run in cities worldwide by adventure operator Intrepid Travel. Biking Buenos Aires, home-cooking in Istanbul, riding a cycle across Ho Chi Minh City – these trips get you off the tour bus and into the back streets with a local guide.

Like many other Londoners I regularly migrate to the East End at the weekend. So can Patrick, who’s lived in the area since emigrating from Ireland 20 years ago, show me anything I don’t know?

Our first stop is The Eagle. I’ve stumbled out of this pub many a night, never noticing the nursery rhyme on the wall: ‘Up and down the city road, in and out The Eagle. That’s where the money goes, pop goes the weasel!’

Patrick explains: “In the 19th century the city’s weavers would spend all their money in The Eagle. When they hadn’t a penny left they’d pawn their most valued possession – the spool, or ‘weasel’ – for one last drink.”

Next up is Moorfields Eye Hospital. Patrick strides towards an ordinary metre-square piece of chipboard on the wall. Ordinary, yes – but peering behind it we come face to face with a chain-wearing, microphone-holding rat, sprayed by celebrated street artist Banksy. Not so long ago Hackney Council would paint over his graffiti. Now Banksy’s works of ‘vandalism’ are worth up to half a million pounds.

Patrick points out the designs of other guerrilla artists – an El Chivo on a crumbling wall, a Space Invader on Hoxton Square, and many more unknowns. Future stars, maybe?

We then pass the site of Hitchcock’s Gainsborough Studios (now smart apartments), a gallery housed in two old London Underground carriages, and a mosque, which was once a synagogue, which was once a Huguenot church.

Perhaps the most impressive story of regeneration is that of Shoreditch Park. Patrick claims William the Conqueror’s archers practised there. By Georgian times it was a notorious pleasure garden; in the Victorian period, an even more notorious slum. Bombing in the Second World War decimated it, so the land reverted to green space.

But the past is not the point. If you’re after an encyclopaedic run-down of the East End’s history, look elsewhere.

This is less a tour, more like a friend showing me his neighbourhood, introducing me to the best pie-and-mash shop (F Cooke’s, incidentally) and the owner of the Duke of Uke, Hoxton’s one and (unsurprisingly) only ukulele store. It has better acquainted me with a city I already know – and made me want to better explore the ones I don’t.
London’s secret gardens

Kathryn, aka Trip Stylist, tells you how to explore central London’s hidden gardens, parks and green spaces – and their weird and wonderful features.

**Arnold Circus**
Arnold Circus sits at the site of the former “Old Nichol” slum, which was notorious for being London’s worst. The slum was demolished and redeveloped to become London’s first council housing estate and the mound of the circus was built using the rubble from the demolished slum. Now a beautiful bandstand and garden, which make a little-known peaceful retreat from the nearby hustle and bustle of the Shoreditch markets and cafes.

**Postman’s Park**
It’s very easy to walk past this little patch of greenery without even realising it is there, but if you step inside the gates you will find a peaceful escape from the city – with some unusual features. The park is built on the site of a burial ground – you can still see the gravestones around the edge of the park. But the main reason for visiting should be to read the plaques on the “Memorial to Heroic Self Sacrifice”, which are housed under a loggia in a corner of the park.

The memorial was built in 1900 by George Frederic Watts, a painter and sculptor who wanted to record stories of heroism in everyday life. The plaques commemorate people who died saving the lives of others – mostly in the late 1800s and early 1900s, although one plaque was added in 2009. The plaques offer an unusual snapshot of life in London about 100-150 years ago, sad tales of fires and drownings and runaway horses.

**St George’s Gardens**
In a secluded spot amongst Bloomsbury’s Georgian streets lie St George’s Gardens. These historical gardens and burial ground are dotted with tombs, memorials and gravestones. In 1713 St George’s became one of the very first burial grounds to be established away from a church. The church was bombed during the Blitz leaving only the tower and steeple undamaged. The ruins are now covered in climbers and shrubs creating a beautiful, unique city garden. The garden is busy on weekday lunchtimes with city workers on their lunch breaks but come the weekend it is eerily quiet...

**St Dunstan in East Churchyard**
Right in the middle of the City, in the bombed ruins of a medieval church, lies this peaceful hideaway. The church was bombed during the Blitz leaving only the tower and steeple undamaged. The ruins are now covered in climbers and shrubs creating a beautiful, unique city garden. The garden is busy on weekday lunchtimes with city workers on their lunch breaks but come the weekend it is eerily quiet...

**Bunhill Fields Burial Ground**
An area of unconsecrated ground that was used as a burial ground for non-conformists and dissenters for centuries. It holds the graves of an estimated 120,000 bodies including William Blake, Daniel Defoe and John Bunyan. Now a public garden, it is a peaceful escape from the surrounding city, just a few minutes from Old Street.

**Inner Temple Garden**
The beautiful and tranquil Inner Temple Garden can be found in the Temple complex off Fleet Street. The complex is also home of Middle Temple and Inner Temple Inns of Court and Temple Church, built by the Knights Templar in the 12th century. The three-acre garden has wide lawns, rare and unusual trees, and is bordered by herbaceous borders. You could also explore the maze of courtyards and alleyways that are home to legal chambers and visit Temple Church where you may hear the Temple Church choir practicing.

The garden is open 12.30 – 3pm on weekdays via gates on Crown Office Row, WC2

**Did you know?** Postman’s Park: The plaques offer an unusual snapshot of life in London about 100-150 years ago, sad tales of fires and drownings and runaway horses.

Go online: For more details visit the Trip Stylist website: [http://tripstylist.co.uk/](http://tripstylist.co.uk/)
London's secret gardens
Thousands’ flock to London’s first cable car

London’s Emirates Air Line, also known as the Thames Cable Car, opened last week and is off to a flying start with thousands visiting already.

A spokesperson for Transport for London (TfL) told Wanderlust yesterday about the ‘thousands’ of visitors the Air Line has seen already.

They explained why: “As well as a useful transport link”, the cable cars also serve as an attraction for people “further afield” to see the “stunning views” across the city of London. They also emphasised the different perspective on the Thames Barrier, “which you never usually see”.

By creating a direct link between the Greenwich peninsula (home to the O2 Arena) and the Royal Docks, the Air Line establishes an alternative way to cross the River Thames and to see the sights of London. A ride on the cable car offers 360 degree views of the City, Canary Wharf, the Thames Barrier and the Olympic Park. With its glimpse of the Olympic stadium, and connecting of two Olympic venues, it has been dubbed by some as ‘the Olympic crossing’.

It also boasts the chance to observe London’s skyline without the immense queues of the London Eye. However a spokesperson for TfL said: “We’re not trying to directly compete with the London Eye – our primary aim was to provide a new river crossing.”

The cars can carry up to 2,500 people per hour and reaches a height of 300 feet. The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, called it a “must-see destination in its own right,” which reflects the numbers of travellers already visiting the new transport link.

A ride on the cable car costs £3.20 for a single fare with an Oyster Card, or is otherwise £4.30. The service will run from 07.00 until 21.00 during the week. On Saturdays the gates will open one hour later and on Sundays the service will run from 09.00. There is room for up to two bicycles in each cabin, with no extra charge.

The two terminals were especially constructed and are at Emirates Greenwich Peninsula (by the O2, nearest tube North Greenwich or boat from North Greenwich Pier) and Emirates Royal Docks (beside the ExCeL conference centre, take the Docklands Light Railway to Royal Victoria). Reports suggest that it is most scenic taken from the Royal Docks end.

As well as creating a new way to take in the capital’s city-scape, the cable car will help to cut commuter times just in time for what is to be one of the busiest summers London has ever seen.

Did you know? The cars can carry up to 2,500 people per hour and reaches a height of 300 feet.
London Wanderlust’s Quirky Guide

Top 9 books to learn about London

With the Olympics approaching fast, Stanfords - the one-stop travel shop - has revealed the nine best books for learning about London, or escaping it.

1. I Never Knew That About London
Travelling through the villages and districts that make up arguably the capital of the world, Christopher Winn’s I Never Knew That About London takes us on a captivating journey around London to unearth the hidden gems of legends, firsts, inventions, adventures and birthplaces that shape the city’s compelling, and at times, turbulent past.

2. Favourite London Walks
Andrew Duncan’s Favourite London Walks contains 50 classic routes around the capital, exploring London’s heritage from its busiest central streets to its quiet rural corners.

London 2012 National Venues Atlas and Guide from Geographers’ A-Z is a must-have guide for visitors to the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and fans alike.

Secret London in the Jonglez series of guides; profiling a range of European cities as well as thematic titles and designed to explore the undiscovered and hidden attractions usually unknown to tourists. The 'Secret' titles present a range of sites – including gardens, museums, squares, churches, parks and distinctive architecture – that are often not covered by other guides. Double page spreads have a description of the site and a glossy full length photograph opposite. Addresses, opening times, contact details and relevant transport information is also provided.

5. London Country Walks
Time Out
Time Out’s Country Walks – Volume 2 is a collection of 85 country walks near London, recommending a range of different strolls and rambles for those seeking to escape from the city.

6. London City Guide
Lonely Planet
One of the world’s most visited cities, London has something for everyone – from history to culture, art, grand museums, dazzling architecture, royalty, diversity and irrepressible pizzazz. Inside this book: Full colour guide; thousands of comprehensive listings and recommendations; in-depth background on London’s literary heritage; 3D illustration pages featuring the Thames and Tower of London; expanded coverage of the 2012 Olympics; pull out map of London.

The walks are largely based in the countryside and on scenic footpaths, with a minimum of road walking involved, are between seven and 15 miles long, graded for difficulty and suitable for a range of different walking standards in the Chilterns, Thames Valley, North Wessex Downs, East Hampshire hangers, Surrey Hills, Kent Downs, the Weald, South Downs and Coastal Walks. Extensive directions are accompanied by practical information on distance, the relevant OS map, history, refreshments and suggestions for shortening the walk en route.

7. Secret London – An Unusual

8. London County Walks

9. London City Guide

GOOD NEWS!

Wanderlust readers can now save 10% on any online purchase made on the Stanfords website. Simply enter code: WANDERLUST in the promotional box at the check out to claim your discount and start saving today.
Did you know? *I Never Knew That About London* takes us on a captivating journey around London to unearth the hidden gems of legends, firsts, inventions, adventures and birthplaces that shape the city’s compelling, and at times, turbulent past.

7. **50 Miles Around London A-Z Road Map**

*50 Miles Around London* at 3.5 miles to 1” (1:221,760) on an indexed road map in a regional series from A-Z with clear presentation of the road network, some topographic information, places of interest, etc.

The publisher’s cartography, also used in their 5 miles to 1” series, is enlarged here to make local roads more prominent and provides all the standard motoring information: services, primary route destinations, toll barriers, gradients, etc. Railway lines are shown with stations. Topography is shown by altitude tints, if in rather broad bands, with additional spot heights (all in feet), plus colouring for woodlands. A range of symbols highlight various places of interest. The map shows the British national grid lines for GPS users. Current edition of this title was published in 2012.

8. **Lost London 1870-1945**

*Lost London 1870-1945* is a collection of more than 500 black-and-white images of the capital, arranged by region and compiled from the archive, now held by English Heritage, of the former London County Council.

Most of these images have never been published before; they were taken to provide a visual-historical record of whole districts in London as they were vanishing and are displayed here in full plate images, with text provided by English Heritage’s Planning and Development Director for London and South-East England, Philip Davies, and a foreword written by HRH The Duke of Gloucester.

The photographs truly depict a London in transition – from the late Victorian age through to wartime devastation. Images depict all social strata, from Marshalsea Prison lodgings to the Prime Minister’s bedroom, from squalid slums to aristocratic mansions.

9. **Cycle London Time Out**

*Time Out Cycle London* combines 25 great bicycle rides for all abilities in and around the capital with features and useful information. It’s a contemporary and attractive entry-level book that understands that you don’t have to be able to strip your bike to its ball bearings to enjoy all the pleasures of the road.

Organised according to types of riding, from commuting to family afternoons out to weekend excursions; each includes rides, bike and kit advice and introduces, through features and the routes chosen, London’s vibrant cycle scene. It also takes you to the best of London itself.
Romance

9 romantic things to do in London

Travellers are descending on the English capital for the long-awaited Olympics – Tom Whitehead shows you how to inject a bit of romance into your trip.

1. Raise a toast in London’s oldest wine bar
This tired-looking building may easily be passed off as just another pub, but step inside the dull brown doors and you’ll find the kind of tavern Robin Hood would frequent. Set down a steep staircase is the oldest wine bar in London. Age-old newspaper extracts line the walls and candle-lit tables are home to drinkers sipping from their glasses. The only drink on offer is wine but the list is extensive, so it caters for all versions of the fermented grape. Hours can slip by and the cellar area is devoid of any sunlight so it is easy to lose track of time - if you’re in good company. If hunger strikes, there’s a plentiful range of cheeses, pies, meats, and other home-made treats on offer.

Gordon’s wine bar: 47 Villiers Street, London, WC2N 6NE - located next to the Embankment tube station.

2. Preach love in the National Theatre
If you can’t conjure up your own poem to express your love then why not let the playwrights and poets do it for you?

Head to the national theatre, located on London’s marvellous South Bank. The theatre hosts some of the finest productions in London and the shows on offer are a range of classic, modern, and the downright bizarre. Shakespeare’s Timon of Athens is currently being performed until November and other productions include The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time, The Doctor’s Dilemma, and The Last of the Haussmans.


3. Cuddle up in an alternative cinema
Many relationships start with a date to the cinema but perhaps the silver screen is more associated with hosting the slightly younger audience. Don’t discredit the cinema as a great idea for a romantic outing though, as long as you select the right one. Avoid heading to your local multiplex where the queues are long and the films are associated with hosting the slightly younger audience. Don’t discredit the cinema as a great idea for a romantic outing though, as long as you select the right one. Avoid heading to your local multiplex where the queues are long and the films are associated with the slightly younger audience.

The Everyman Cinema in Islington is one cinema that caters for the more discerning film fans. Sit back and snuggle in comfier chairs - minus the annoying arm rest - using your own foot stool, while enjoying a cool beer, wine, or icy G&Ts. And you won’t miss a minute of the screening - a trolley is on hand to provide refills. Cinema trips will never be the same again.

Everyman cinema: 83 Upper Street, London, N1 0NP - a short walk from Angel tube station.

4. Take a chocolate-fuelled tour
It’s been said that diamonds are a girl’s best friend but time has told us that the cocoa bean reigns supreme. Chocolate can make a great surprise treat and doesn’t cost the earth. One of London’s best chocolate experiences is a chocolate walking tour, exploring either Mayfair or Chelsea. Sample the Queen’s favourite chocolate in Mayfair or try melt-in-your-mouth award-winning chocolates in Chelsea. During the meandering choco-fest you’ll be taken to some of the finest chocolatiers in the world and will be able to sample a selection of their jaw-dropping delights.

www.chocolateecstasytours.com

5. Sit down to afternoon tea
Some of the swankiest hotels in the world are serving up their own interpretation of the Great British Afternoon Tea. London has some of the most impressive dining places you’re likely to find and each venue vies to have the most creative and innovative dishes.

The glutonous pre-dinner feast has made a big comeback in recent years and there are also a number ofquirkier and cheaper places to indulge in a pot of tea and slice of cake. It would probably take a year of gorging in the late afternoon before you tried them all so here’s a few places to get you started.

The Modern Pantry (afternoon tea £20 with bubbles, £15 without) offers a selection of sweet and savoury scones to nibble on, delicious cakes and a glass of berryish Prosecco. A smartly finished interior and dainty tea sets make this a traditional mid-afternoon tea break.

47-48 St John’s Square, London, EC1V 4JL - nearest tube station is Farringdon. Perfect for light, informal dining the Upper Thames Foyer at the Savoy is a great spot to sit down, enjoy a hot pot of traditional tea and watch the world go by. A winter garden gazebo means you can enjoy your surroundings without having to rely on the British weather. Average price for afternoon tea between £35-£44.

The Savoy Hotel, Strand, London, WC2R 0EU - nearest tube station is Covent Garden or Embankment.

6. Cook up a storm together
What’s more romantic than whisking up some fine food and sharing the well earned fruits of your labour with each other?

Hundreds of classes are run across the city of London as they improve their cooking skills. Caldesi offers a friendly class with a laid-back
Run by husband and wife duo Kate and Giancarlo Caldesi, you can learn how to recreate fine, robust and hearty Italian food in your own home.

Cooking also creates a great talking point so the kitchen is the perfect venue to take someone on a first or second date; plus it’s an ideal situation in which you can get to know someone better.

Caldesi: 118 Marylebone Lane, London, W1U 2QF - Bond Street tube station is closest.

7. **Pop a bottle (or two) of the fizzy stuff**

Featuring the longest champagne bar in Europe, St Pancras Station is home to Searcys Champagne Bar. The bar provides the kind of glamour associated with the upper echelons of society. Searcys has a long list of champagne to choose from, ranging from the reasonable to the luxurious and they also serve a selection of ideal accompaniments, like oysters and cheeses.

If you want to impress then this is the place to do it and the bar also makes a great spot for people watching and chin wagging. Be super adventurous and hop on a Eurostar to either Brussels or France, which are both accessible from St Pancras Station.

Champagne bar at St Pancras Station: Travel to Kings Cross and then follow the signposts.

8. **Experience London from the sky**

Pack a dose of adrenaline into your romantic outing by booking a helicopter ride to glide above London’s skyline.

Expert pilots can point out some of the city’s most famous landmarks as you soar through the air.

Nothing can be more romantically thrilling than taking to the skies with a loved one and from £119 per person with London Helicopter Centre you can take in the capital with a bird’s eye view and enjoy the high life with your love life.

www.london-helicopters.co.uk

9. **Or take the slower approach...**

If you want the same aerial views but demand a little less speed then a balloon flight over the city is perfect for you. Ballooning is more traditional than using a motor in the skies so if you think the classic touch would suit you then this is a great way of taking in the 360 views.

Adventure Balloons have a number of different routes to choose from, which can be adapted for each journey. You can also opt for a chilled glass of champagne to toast to your future together or take a ride at dawn - although we can't promise a stunning sunrise.

www.adventureballoons.co.uk
London’s top 10 British pubs

Award-winning Sunday dinners, underground tunnels and real ales – Katherine Price looks at the best of the capital’s British pubs

1. The Spaniard’s Inn
   Hampstead
   Originally built as a tollgate on the Finchley boundary, The Spaniard’s Inn has a rich history dating back to 1585. Mentioned in Charles Dickens’ Pickwick Papers and Bram Stoker’s Dracula, it’s been a popular pub for centuries, while artist Joshua Reynolds and poet John Keats were thought to be regulars. It’s even rumoured that Keats wrote Ode to a Nightingale in the pub garden.
   The pub’s Sunday dinners are renowned and have featured on the UK’s list of top ten pub roasts. Involving 21-day aged West Country beef, farm-assured chickens and home-made Yorkshire puddings, it’s a feast not to miss.
   The Inn also boasts one of the best pub gardens in London, with seating for more than 400, 17 beers, real ales and ciders on tap and views over the city from an artificial mound. They also have an outdoor bar and barbecue for when the British weather holds out, and covered/heated areas and cosy fireplaces for when it doesn’t.

2. The Sherlock Holmes
   Westminster
   The Sherlock Holmes is not only named after the fictional detective, but also features a mock-up of his 221b Baker Street study, sitting room and lounge, all within this central London pub. With a first-floor roof garden and restaurant it’s one of the capital’s most luxurious and traditional English pubs.
   The mock-up study was part of an exhibition from the Festival of Britain, purchased in 1957 and given a home in the pub. As much an exhibition as it is a place for a drink, the quirky memorabilia has been added to over the years, including Dr Watson’s old service revolver, original cartoons, the mounted head of the Hound of the Baskervilles and a collection of film and television stills of the actors who have played the famous duo.

3. The Harp
   Covent Garden
   An award-winning pub, including London Cider Pub of the Year and National Pub of the Year, Covent Garden’s The Harp underlines its commitment to real ales, ciders and perry from around the UK. Eight different real ales are always available from hand pumps at the bar, and they also offer three varieties of sausages every day – thoroughly British grub.
   It’s very central, close to both Charing Cross and Trafalgar Square, and is decked out with cosy leather armchairs on the intimate first floor ‘relaxing room’, and a stained glass front and collection of old Victorian portraits on the ground floor bar.

4. The Ship and Shovell
   Charing Cross
   What’s different about The Ship and Shovell? Firstly, it’s technically two pubs opposite each other on the same street that share the same name. Secondly, it’s not only their name that they share. Technically, the two pubs are connected by a cellar underneath the narrow street.
   These pubs use the Hall and Woodhouse brewery; one of the few remaining regional family brewers that prides itself on traditional ales like Tanglefoot and Badger Best. They also pride themselves on using regional family businesses for their food. The northern pub is a large, traditional Victorian pub, while its smaller southern sibling offers a quieter and more intimate experience.

5. The Nell of Old Drury
   Covent Garden
   This traditional English pub has strong ties with its theatrical neighbour – the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, (so strong, in fact, that they are connected by an underground tunnel). Ideal for pre or post theatre drinks, The Nell of Old Drury even offers an interval drinks ordering service. It’s one of the oldest pubs in Covent Garden and has been decked out with West End theatre posters from over the years; perfect for theatre-goers both young and old.

6. Waxy O’Connors
   Leicester Square
   Irish pub Waxy O’Connors sits right in the centre of London’s West End, and is constructed around the preserved ‘Waxy O’Connor’s tree’. Waxy O’Connor was, ironically, an Irishman famous for his capacity for alcohol during the 19th century. The tree planted in his name grew for 250 years in Ireland, and died naturally in 1994. The tree was ‘planted’ and has been preserved in the pub since 1995.
   The pub itself has a warm, intimate atmosphere despite its labyrinthine quality; it has six levels and four bars, Gaelic signs, stained glass windows and ‘Murphy’s Confessional’. Although it often gets busy, a seat can usually be found on one of the many levels, and is often quiet enough to promote conversation.

7. The Princess Louise
   Holborn
   The amazing Victorian gin palace-style interior is what attracts most to The Princess Louise in Holborn. They don’t serve any big brands here, only those produced by the Samuel Smith brewery in Yorkshire. You won’t remember it for its variety of choice, but all beers, lagers and soft drinks are guaranteed to be unique, cheap and unusual.
   The island bar, partitions, booths and
oak-panelled walls all serve to enhance the Victorian feel of the place, frequented by Londoners and tourists seeking a traditional Brit pub. With the building dating back as far as 1872, not only is the building itself listed, but so are the toilets.

8. **Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese**  
   *Fleet Street*  
   One of the oldest pubs in London, Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese was rebuilt shortly after the Great Fire of 1666, and there have been various pubs on the spot since 1538. A melting pot of histories: the wood interior panelling is thought to be 19th century, the cellars handed down from a 13th century monastery, and a board lists the reigns of the 15 monarchs through which the pub has survived. It is said to have enjoyed famous visitors such as Sir Alfred Tennyson, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Mark Twain and Charles Dickens.

   The Cheese is made up of a set of narrow corridors and claustrophobic staircases that lead to various bars and dining rooms dotted with fireplaces, high-backed settees and author Dr Samuel Johnson’s chair (which he used to sit in when he frequented the pub) mounted on a shelf.

9. **The Blackfriars**  
   *Blackfriars*  
   The Blackfriars was built in 1905 on the site of a Dominican friary, and is a Grade II listed building for its Art Nouveau interior. It was designed by H. Fuller-Clark and Henry Poole, who ornamented the building with sculptures, mosaics and relief paintings. It also claims to have been saved from demolition by Sir John Betjeman.

   Although part of the Nicholson collection of pubs, the company dedicates itself to preserving historical, distinctive buildings. Both the guest ales and the food are British, serving typical pub grub like Gloucester Old Spot sausage and ale-battered fish and chips.

10. **The Angel**  
    *Bermondsey*  
    Complete with a balcony overlooking the Thames, the Shard and Tower Bridge, this quiet pub is a local gem and is a lovely place to sit out when the sun is shining. The present building can be traced back to the 19th century: the ground floor has five bar areas, and its oak-panelling and stone floors give it a genuinely authentic old pub feel.

    The Angel is generally a fairly quiet pub, even on a Friday night. So, if you’re looking for somewhere tranquil to have a few drinks, it’s ideal. Regardless of it being part of the Samuel Smith chain, it’s a pub which the locals treasure.
London is awash with great street food; Tom Whitehead brings you some of the best places to pick up a bite in the capital.

1. **The best ribs in London?**
   **The Rib Man** – King's Cross on Thursdays and Fridays; Brick Lane on Sundays; from around 9am to 3pm
   Offering what is considered by many to be the best ribs around, Mark Gevaux, aka The Rib Man has gained cult status for his barbecued rib rolls. Having stripped the meat from the bone, he then nests it into a large white roll and serves with the optional and rudely named ‘Holy F*ck’ sauce. The home-made sauce is a blend of scotch bonnets, which adds a few scovilles to the audacious ribs. Eating at The Rib Man’s is for the messiest among you; wipes are not an option but a requirement. Also on offer are wraps, half rack and whole rack ribs.

2. **A devotion to jerk**
   **Mama’s Jerk Station** – daily at The Vibe Bar (varied times); Camden Lock Market (10am-5pm); Portobello Market on Saturday (10am-5pm)
   We all love a piece of our mama’s food and now you can get a taste of Jamaican home cooked food courtesy of Mama’s Jerk Station. Spice up your day with the flavours of the Caribbean, blending jerk marinated meat with a mix of fresh bean cake wraps, and jerk salads. Wraps are made offering chicken wraps, sausage wraps, veggie... to 3pm

3. **Indian... burger... wraps?**
   **Bhangra Burger** – Eat.st (King’s Cross) Friday daytime, Street Feast London Friday evening, Brockley Market on Saturday
   At the moment, burgers are going through something of a renaissance in London and across the city you can eat them in a multitude of different ways. Bhangra Burger provide an Indian twist on the American staple, blending the two cuisines together in harmonious existence. The menu consists of four different burgers, two meat, one fish, and one vegetable. The burger patties are flavoured with the finest Indian spices and are rolled into a traditional flat bread with a mix of tangy chutneys, pickles, and salad. Warning: a bib is required to eat these combi-cuisines.

4. **A cheesy treat**
   **Kappacasein** – Borough Market Thursday-Saturday; times vary
   There’s nothing more satisfying than cheese, particularly when its melted and wedged between two slices of toasted sourdough. Kappacasein have made it their speciality and once they’ve added onions, leeks, and garlic into the equation, the result is one of the finest cheese tosties you’re likely to try. Using a Montgomery cheddar, which has a nutty characteristic, once heated it becomes a molten slurry of awesomeness. This signature toastie invention makes other rarebit pretenders go weak at the crusts.

5. **Pillow-soft’ steamed buns**
   **Yum Bun** – Broadway Market every Saturday; 10am-4pm
   Offering a small selection of Asian styled buns and a few sides, Yum Bun have quickly become known for their hand-made buns and freshly sourced local produce. Their best seller: the slow-roasted pork belly bun. The light buns are filled with pork and topped with hoisin sauce, cucumber, spring onions, and sriracha. Although similar to the more familiar duck pancake, these pork buns are an Asian delight in their own right. Veggies can feast on juicy Portobello mushroom buns or sweet and sour broths.

6. **Meat-free feasts**
   **Wholefood Heaven** – Whitecross Street Monday to Friday; Thursdays and Fridays; 12pm-3pm
   Wholefood Heaven is run by husband and wife cooking team, David and Charlotte Bailey. Travelling around in their converted Citroen van, they provide the London public with a healthier alternative to greasy burgers and fried foods. They use wholegrains and unrefined oils so feasters leave feeling rejuvenated after sampling their goods.

7. **Go Mexican**
   **Luardos** – Whitecross Street Monday to Friday; 11.30am-2pm
   Luardos specialise in burritos. A simple but tasty creation of Mexican origin. A flour tortilla is grilled and packed full of various condiments and meat. You can customise your burrito to suit your own personal taste. Fillings include chicken, beef, and pork topped with a choice of salsa, guacamole, hot sauce, black beans, cheese, rice, sour cream, lettuce, and fresh coriander – phew. Once your burrito is stuffed and rolled you are presented with a wrap packing all the intensity of a Mexican stand off.

8. **Take a pot of tea on the streets**
   **Braithwaites Cream Tea co.** – Tuesday to Friday (and some Saturdays) at Camden Lock Market from 2pm
   Serving from a small converted van you no...
longer need to be in the confines of four walls to enjoy your scones and tea. Braithwaites have been lauded for their scrummy warm scones, which are served the traditional and best way, with clotted cream and jam. They use Ringtons tea, sourced sustainably from Kenya and India. Also on offer is a delectable range of cakes if you fancy an alternative to scones, or have both if you’re feeling peckish.

9. Doughnuts are so last year...

Churros Garcia – Saturday at Portobello Road Market, Saturday at Broadway Market, Friday to Sunday at Real Food Market

If you want to be up to date with your fried puddings then you need to grab a churro. This Spanish sweet snack is a long stick of warm fluffy pleasure and is liberally covered in lashings of sugar, but it doesn't stop there. Churros are often served with a cup of heated up chocolate as a dip. The resulting combination is a warm, sweet, doughy, crunchy stick enveloped in a layer of soothing chocolate. Scorchio! Five top spots for street food in London: Borough Market, Portobello Market, Eat St King’s Cross; Brixton Market, and Camden Lock Market.
Hilary Bradt talks: Olympic spirit
The founder of Bradt Travel Guides – and now an MBE – talks about what makes the Olympics so special

A journalist contacted me the other day with this question: “Where would be your ideal place to escape to during the Olympics, and why?” My response was that I would be ‘escaping’ from Devon to the Olympic stadium. Why, I wondered, are people looking for escape when we are lucky enough to be hosting one of the most heart-warming, exciting and genuinely international events in the world?

Perhaps if I hadn’t been to the Mexico Olympics in 1968 I wouldn’t be such an enthusiast, but I can honestly say that it was one of the highlights of my life. I was living in California at the time and went with a group from the British Society, which sounds as though it would be horribly nationalistic, but it wasn’t.

Yes, there were plenty of political elements. One of my enduring memories was of the Czech gymnast, Věra Čáslavská, being cheered at every appearance (the games were held just after the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia). And these Games are still remembered for the black power salute given on the winners’ podium by the American runners Tommie Smith and John Carlos. But there were also stories of noble defeats. Like Tanzania’s John Stephen Akhwari, who set a new record for the Marathon: the slowest. He fell and injured himself during the early stages of the race but – declaring later that “my country didn’t send me to start the race, they sent me to finish it!” – he limped on, crossing the line (to warm applause from the few remaining spectators) an hour after the other competitors had left the stadium.

There will be similar stories in London. They will involve countries you’ve barely heard of, whose governments have managed to send a ‘team’ of one or two people, bursting with pride at representing their country, however remote their chances of a medal.

‘They will involve countries you’ve barely heard of, whose governments have managed to send a ‘team’ of one or two people, bursting with pride at representing their country, however remote their chances of a medal’
Subscription Offer

Wanderlust

the travel magazine that takes you further

Digital subscriptions and single copies are now available, allowing access to your library of magazines wherever your wanderlust takes you.

- Immediate access
- Back issue library
- Multi-platform
- Automatic notification of new issues

For more details visit: www.wanderlust-digital.co.uk