

DESTINATION LONDON

LONDON OVERVIEW

Situated on the River Thames in South-East England, London is the capital of England and the United Kingdom. It is a port on the famous navigable River Thames, which has played a major role in the development of the city. London was founded by Romans and was referred to as Londinium, and the City of London, its ancient core, still preserves its square-mile mediaeval boundaries. A major settlement for two millennia, London is counted among the great world cities and is globally acclaimed as the capital of culture, economics, fashion, politics and trade.

A major metropolitan area and the largest urban region in the European Union, it is considered as a megalopolis of people, ideas and liveliness. This capital city is home to people of diverse origins, cultures and religion. English (UK) is the main language of communication, but more than 300 languages are spoken in the city. Accommodating the headquarters of over hundreds of Europe's biggest companies, London has the largest city GDP in Europe. In terms of economical prominence, London is the largest financial centre in the world along with New York. The city have gained prominence in the world map owing to various contributing factors like arts, commerce, education, entertainment, healthcare, media, research and development, transport and tourism.

Revered for its 21st Century hospitality and specialty to attract and entertain visitors from all over the world, London offers the tourist numerous options to explore from arts to sports, from film to fashion to finance. London is home to four World Heritage Sites, namely the Tower of London, Kew Gardens, the site consisting of Palace of Westminster, Westminster Abbey and St. Margaret's Church, and the historic settlement of Greenwich, which are among the most popular tourist attractions.

Apart from that, Buckingham Palace, the London Eye, Piccadilly Circus, 30 St Mary Axe ("The Gherkin"), St Paul's Cathedral, Tower Bridge and Trafalgar Square are some other landmarks of the city that are worth visiting. The city boasts of several museums, galleries, libraries, sporting events and other cultural institutions such as the British Museum, National Gallery, British Library, Wimbledon and 40 theatres, making it a delight for the visitors.

Having five international airports, the city's airspace is busier than any urban centre of the world. With approximately 15 million tourists coming to the city every year, London is the most visited city in the world. Most of the tourists flock the city in summer, which is probably the best season to visit this multi-cultural city as it features long days with mild temperature.

Hotel Overview

Accommodation in London ranges from budget hotels, resorts to luxury and boutiques. There are various hotels in London with 2 star, 4 star or 5 star ratings, which are in close proximity with the city airport, like Hilton, Sheraton and Holiday Inn near Heathrow airport and Travelodge, Hilton and others at Gatwick. Some of the luxury hotels in London like The Berkeley, Browns hotel, Claridge's and The Landmark London, are quite near from the Marylebone station.

London consists of some of the most luxurious hotels that even provide certain special offers depending on the occasions. Tourists have the option of staying in international hotel chains likes of Hilton, Marriott, Radisson, Sheraton and Holiday Inn in London. The budget hotel chains like easyHotel, Express by Holiday Inn, Ibis, Novotel, Premier Inn, Ramada Encore and Travelodge, which are popular among travelers for providing luxury at affordable rates. These hotels provide facilities within an economical budget and sometime provide the options of combining the stay with concert tickets at a cheaper cost.

Accommodation in London also includes business class hotels that can provide facilities for clear thinking and relaxation as well for business professionals. Some of the popular business class hotels include Radisson Edwardian New Province Wharf and Jumeirah Carlton Hotel, which offer facilities of spa and waterside terrace to high class dining facilities aptly suited for business professionals.

The city boasts of a large variety of chains both traditional and modern, where facilities keep on varying especially during the festive seasons, when the tourist inflow is at its maximum. The prices of most of the hotels may vary as per the peak tourists' seasons that are from June to September.

THINGS TO DO

Things to Do - Overview

Tourists have numerous options when it comes to choosing things to do in London, right from visiting world heritage sites, world famous landmarks, royal palaces, museums, parks, theatres, sports venues, concert halls, shops to dining in hundreds of restaurants with cuisines from around the world. Travellers use the London Pass Card for getting free entry to more than 50 attractions in London including museums, historic ships, zoos, and gardens. There are various tourist attractions in London like the Buckingham Palace, the London Eye, St Paul's Cathedral, the Tower of

London, Westminster Abbey and the Palace of Westminster including Big Ben, Madame Tussauds Wax Museum and others, which are a must-visit.

The city is home to some world-class museums and galleries. In fact, it is the only city among the conventional alpha world cities - i.e. London, New York, Tokyo and Paris, where there are no entrance fees for visiting the majority of museums. British Museum, National Gallery, National Portrait Gallery, Tate Modern, Natural History Museum, Tate Britain and museums in Greenwich are some of the famous museums and galleries that provide free entrance.

Many tourists visit Royal Parks in London for taking a walk, which usually starts at Paddington station leading to Kensington Gardens, Hyde Park, Green Park (passing Buckingham Palace) and St James Park. Then one heads through Trafalgar Square, crossing the River Thames to the South Bank and Waterloo Station. The whole area can be strolled in about half a day and there are numerous places to sit, drink, eat, and stop en route for taking occasional breaks.

There are numerous parks like the Royal Parks of Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, Regent's Park, Royal Parks of Green Park and St. James's Park and Richmond Park, which are popular among nature lovers. London also offers the travellers option to embark on various tours like open top bus tour, London Ducktours, London Film Location Tours, New London Tours (by foot) or Architectural Tours to discover the city.

The football fanatics visit the city to watch home matches among the 20+ professional football clubs in London, including the biggest EPL clubs like Arsenal, Chelsea, Fulham, Tottenham Hotspur and West Ham United. A prior bookings is required to watch the bigger clubs play, whereas the smaller clubs offers the facility to pay at the gate before the match. London is the ultimate shopping destination for shopaholics with famous shopping places like Harrods, Oxford Street, Regent Street and Bond Street, where anything available in the world is present.

Cultural magazines like Time Out London, provides complete information about the cultural offerings of the city like performing arts, museums, exhibitions, clubs, eateries and numerous others including the show times and current attractions. Alternatively, the website - <http://www.timeout.com/london/> provides all details and even tickets for major events happening in London, enabling the tourists to make the most of the city's cultural richness and events galore.

Sightseeing - Overview

Rich in cultural heritage, London is home to numerous remarkable tourist attractions and landmarks from all eras of its history. The colourful Royal pageantry with the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace and on Horse Guards Parade are a major attraction for visitors.

Many tourists visit the city during August and September to visit the illustrious Buckingham Palace, which is open for visitors at that time.

The Houses of Parliament and the famous clock tower housing the Big Ben are a must-visit. Other popular sightseeing London options include the London Bridge and the Tower of London with colourful 'Beefeaters', British Museum, Princess Diana's memorial and the famous Madame Tussauds. Tourists also prefer a relaxing picnic at Hamstead Heath and Kew Garden along with a ride on the London Eye.

Tourists avail the London Pass (www.londonpass.com) for getting free entry to more than 50 attractions and sightseeing in London, including the London Aquarium, Hampton Court Palace, Tower of London and Buckingham Palace in summer. Available for one, two, three or six days, the card can be purchased from the airport and tourist information offices in London. If you are thinking for hopping on London buses, Tubes and trains to explore the city, then choose the 'with transport' option. However, you should take the card only if interested in doing lots of sightseeing in London, as the card is rather expensive.

Detailed information on sightseeing in London is provided at Britain and London Visitor Centre:

Visit London - Britain and London Visitor Centre (BLVC)

Address: 1 Lower Regent Street, SW1, London

Timings: October to March - 9:30 am -6:00 pm (Monday)

9:00 am – 6:00 pm (Tuesday to Friday)

10:00 am – 04: 00 pm (Saturday and Sunday)

April to September - 9:30 am -6:30 pm (Monday)

9:00 am – 6:30 pm (Tuesday to Friday)

10:00 am – 04: 00 pm (Saturday and Sunday)

Tele: +44- 0870-156 6366

Website: www.visitlondon.com

1. Buckingham Palace

Buckingham Palace is the official residence of HM Queen Elizabeth II in London. It was originally built as a big town house for the Duke of Buckingham in 1703. Later on, it was developed to become the official royal palace of the British monarch in 1837.

Being the biggest "working" royal palace of the world, the palace accommodates 19 state rooms, 52 principal bedrooms, 188 staff bedrooms, 92 offices and 78 bathrooms. In the 1990s, the state rooms were made open to the public for visiting. Buckingham Palace hosts various state occasions and royal entertaining events. Moreover, it acts as a base for all Heads of the State, whenever they are visiting the city for official work.

The major highlights of the palace include the Royal Collection, Queen's Gallery and Changing of Guard ceremony. The Royal Collection comprising precious furnishings, paintings, fittings and other artifacts can be seen only at particular times of the year usually in August and September. However, the Queen's Gallery is open for visitors all year round, while Changing of the Guard ceremony is held daily at 11.30 am in summer and every other day in winter. It is a unique display of Royal pageantry, a delight to watch for the onlookers. Held outside Buckingham Palace, the British pomp and ceremony can be watched free. In this ceremony, the guards are dressed in traditional red tunics and bearskin hats and changes places along with music.

Address: Buckingham Palace Buckingham Palace Road London SW1W 0SR

Timing: 09:45 am -6:00 pm (last admission 3:45 pm) in 2010
Summer 2011: (provisional: 1 August - 25 September) to be confirmed.

Admission Fee- INR 2228.34 per entry for adult with concession of INR 2009.16, INR 1278.55 for under 17, INR 5844.82 for family and free entry for children under 5

Tele: +44- 020- 7321- 2233

Email: bookinginfo@royalcollection.org.uk

Website: <http://www.royalcollection.org.uk>

2. The British Museum

The British Museum is a popular museum in London and is one of the first museums of human history and culture. Located on Great Russell Street, the nearest tube stations to the museums are Holborn and Tottenham Court Road. The museum houses ninety-four galleries of archaeological finds, prints, coins, antiquities and more.

Established in 1753 containing the collections of the physician and scientist, Sir Hans Sloane, currently the museum displays over thirteen million items with their origin from all continents of the world. Being Europe's most famous museum, more than four million tourists visit it a year. The museum has disabled facilities as well, tours and guides are available in sign languages along with the hard and hearing and guide dogs.

Address: Great Russell Street, London, WC1

Timing: Museum - 10 am - 5:30 pm (Saturday to Wednesday)
10 am - 8:30 pm (Thursday and Friday)
Great Court – 9am – 6 pm (Sunday to Wednesday)
9 am - 11 pm (Thursday to Saturday)

Admission Fees: Free, suggested donation INR 146.12

Tele: +44-020-7636-1555

Website: <http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk>

3. The London Wetland Centre

The London Wetland Centre is popular among wildlife visitors. Created by the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT), it is located in Queen Elizabeth's Walk in southwest London. Sprawling across 105-acre, this wetland houses lagoons, lakes and ponds, which makes it a safe haven for numerous varieties of wild bird species, dragonflies, bats and amphibians.

The World Wetlands exhibits endangered wildfowl from all over the world and Waterlife includes wildlife gardens and three-storey bird hide. London Underground to Hammersmith, followed by a short bus ride from Hammersmith bus station is a convenient way to reach London Wetland Centre. Alternatively, there is also a train from London Waterloo to Barnes, and then take a short walk to reach here.

Address: WWT London Wetland Centre, Queen Elizabeth's Walk, Barnes, London SW13 9WT

Timing: Winter - 9.30 am to 5:00 pm (Daily Until Saturday 26 March 2011), last admission 4:00 pm

9.30 am to 3:00 pm on 24 December, last admission 2:00 pm

Summer - 9.30 am to 6:00 pm (Daily From Sunday 27 March, 2011), last admission 5:00 pm

Admission Fees: INR 772.05 for adult, INR 428.11 for children (4-16 years), INR 2151.50 for family (2 adults & 2 children, 4-16 years)

Concession of INR 574.46 for over 65 years, full-time students and unemployed

Free entry for children under 4 years

Tele: +44 -020- 8409 4400

Fax: +44- 020- 8409 4401

E-mail: info.london@wwt.org.uk

Website: www.wwt.org.uk

4. London Eye

London Eye is a popular London sightseeing option, and one need to make booking in advance and wait in long queue to get a 'flight'. It is at a height of 135 m, and one revolution of the wheel that takes around 30 minutes is a must-do activity. The 'flight' gives a 360^o view of London and reaches around 40 km. Many tourists also opt for cruises on the River Thames along with experiencing the EDF Energy London Eye.

Address: Jubilee Gardens, South Bank, SE1, London, United Kingdom

Timing: 10:00 am – 8:30 pm (Daily - January to June and September to December)

10:00 am -9:30 pm (Daily- July and August)

Admission Fees: INR 1225.04 for adults, INR 627.88 for children (4-15 years), free entry to children under 4 years, INR 3337.03 for family

Tele: +44- 0871- 781 3000 (booking line)

+44-0870-990 8883 (customer service)

Fax: +44-0870 - 400 3006

E-mail: customer.services@londoneye.com

Website: www.londoneye.com

5. Oxford

Oxford is located 97 km northwest of central London and makes for an excellent option for sightseeing in London. Famously known as the ‘dreaming spires’, it accommodates one of the oldest universities in Europe. Oxford reflects the history, architecture and tradition of the area and even bustles with shops and pubs to keep pace with modernization.

To reach Oxford, travellers take train from Paddington station as well. There are frequent 24-hour coaches from Victoria, the Oxford Express X90 from Victoria coach station and the Oxford Tube from Grosvenor Gardens outside Victoria train station.

Address: 15-16 Broad Street, Oxford, OX1 3AS (Oxford Information Centre)

Tele: +44-01865- 252 200 (Oxford Information Centre)

Fax: +44 - 01865 240261

E-mail: tic@oxford.gov.uk

Website: www.visitoxfordandoxfordshire.com

www.oxfordcity.co.uk/

www.citysightseeingoxford.com

6. Madame Tussauds

Madame Tussauds is the world-renowned wax museum, housing more than 400 life size wax models of the rich and famous from all over the world. Born in Strasbourg in 1761, Madame Tussaud inherited a wax museum from Philippe Curtius in 1794. Madame Tussaud later moved to London to organize an exhibition on Baker Street, London. Her grandson moved the exhibits to Marylebone Road, its current location, after her death in 1850.

Tourists from all over the globe visit the museum for seeing life size replicas of famous celebrities of the stage, movies, musicians and monarchs along with footballers and politicians. Tourists are photographed alongside the likes of film star Marilyn Monroe, Amitabh Bachchan, Australian popstar Kylie Minogue, footballer David Beckham and members of the British Royal Family.

Another attraction for tourists is the Chamber of Horrors, where some of the most notorious criminals and various torture instruments of history are on display.

Address: Marylebone Road, London NW1, United Kingdom

Timing: Daily 9:30 am – 5:30 pm (Monday to Sunday)

9.00 am - 2.30 pm (Christmas Eve), closed Christmas Day

10.30 am - 6.00 pm (Boxing Day)

9.30 am - 6.00 pm (New Year's Day)

Admission Fees: INR 2107.60 for adult, INR 1800.24 for children, INR 7244.87 for family

Tele: +44- 0870- 400 3000

E-mail: guest.services@madame-tussauds.com

Website: www.madametussauds.com/London

7. *Kew Gardens*

Kew Gardens are located on the western edge of London along the River Thames. Sprawling across 300 acre of land, the Royal Botanic Gardens in Richmond were planted in the 17th century. Considered as a heaven for horticulturist, the gardens consist of numerous glasshouses including the beautiful Palm House accommodating rare or rare orchids and palms.

The Alpine House, which is the only public glasshouse that has been constructed at Kew in the last 20 years, is another popular place of visit. There is also a treetop walkway that allows the tourists to feel the life at canopy level. Travellers take London Underground to Kew Gardens or come by train from Waterloo to Kew Bridge.

Address: Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 3AB

Timing: 9.30 am – 5:30 pm (Daily, except Christmas Eve and Christmas Day (24-25 December))

Admission Fees: INR 1017.21 for adult, INR 870.84 for concession, free entry for children

Tele: +44-020-8332 5655

E-mail: info@kew.org

Website: www.kew.org

8. London Dungeon

London Dungeon is a famous horror theme park, located on the South Bank of London. A visit to this theme park will allow the tourist to become acquainted with the darker side of British and European history.

Opened in 1975 to the public, the London Dungeon recreates the most gruesome events of the history. There are numerous theme rides based on historical murders and executions, such as seeing the streets of Victorian London where serial killer Jack the Ripper lived, or experience the times of the Great Fire of London, or go down the River Thames to Traitors Gate, where the 18th century judge sentenced the traitors to death and much more like that.

Address: 28-34 Tooley Street, SE1, London, United Kingdom

Timings: 10:00 am – 5:00 pm (Daily 2nd January to 18th February)

9:30 am – 6:30 pm (Daily 19th February to 27th February)

10:00 am – 5:00 pm (Daily 28th February to 8th April)

9.30 am – 7:00 pm (Daily 9th April to 25th April)

10:00 am - 5.30 pm (Daily 26th April to 27th May)

9:30 am – 6:30 pm (Daily 28th May to 5th June)

10:00 am - 5.30 pm (Daily 6th June to 15th July)

9:30 am – 6:30 pm (Daily 16th July to 29th July)

9.30 am – 7:00 pm (Daily 30th July to 31st August)

10:00 am - 5.30 pm (Daily 1st September to 21st October)

9.30 am – 7:00 pm (Daily 22nd October to 31st October)

10:00 am – 5:00 pm (Daily 1st November to 30th December), except 24th Dec, 26th Dec, 31st Dec, 1st Jan (2012), when it will open from 11:00 am – 4:00 pm

Admission Fees: INR 1690.47 for adult, INR 1251.38 for children, concession INR 1536.79, INR 5883.72 for family

Tele: +44-020-7403 7221

E-mail: london.dungeon@merlinentertainments.biz

Website: www.thedungeons.com

9. Tate Britain

Tate Britain is the renowned Gallery of Modern British Art. Opened in 1897, this gallery is based on the collection of Henry Tate, who was a sugar merchant. Currently, the gallery has a host of British paintings, from 1500 to the present day. Although most of the artwork from 20th century is now exhibited at the Tate Modern, some paintings are still displayed here on rotation basis.

Tourists come here to see art works and paintings of renowned artists from Gaudier Brzeska to Gilbert and George. The 'Art Now' room showcases contemporary art, which keeps on changing. Then there is the Turner Bequest, another attraction among tourists, where hundreds of paintings created by Turner are showcased. Turner Bequest is in Clore Gallery, which was specially built for this purpose only.

Address: Millbank, SW1, London, United Kingdom

Timing: 10:00 am - 06:00 pm (Monday to Sunday)

10:00 am -10.00 pm on the first Friday of each month

Admission Fees: Free, except for major exhibitions

Tele: +44-020-7887 8888

E-mail: visiting.britain@tate.org.uk

Website: www.tate.org.uk/britain

10. Tower of London

The Tower of London, which is a royal fortress on Tower Hill, is among the most favourite option for sightseeing in London for the tourists. Built in 1078 by William the Conqueror, Tower of London was the royal residence until the middle of 16th century. Currently, the tower holds invaluable Crown Jewels and collection of Royal Armouries.

History has it that the tower is a witness of deception and bloodshed as a number of historical names that also included members of the royal family, were imprisoned in the tower and were even tortured and executed.

The Tower Bridge, which is a popular example of architecture and engineering of Victorian era, is another major attraction for travellers. The Tower Bridge crossed the River Thames and it features hydraulic machinery concealed in twin neo-gothic towers that lifts the middle section of the bridge

so that the ships can move in and out of the Pool of London. Tourists are provided complete information about the unique construction of the bridge in the Tower Bridge Exhibition.

Travellers see a view towards Canary Wharf and the City of London from the bridge.

The harbour at St Katharine's Dock located on the northeast side of the Tower Bridge is the starting point of the London Docklands. Then there is the popular Design Museum located on the south in the warehouses.

Address: Tower of London, EC3, London, United Kingdom

Timing: March to October - 9:00 am -5:30 pm (Tuesday to Saturday)

10:00 am – 5:30 pm (Sunday and Monday)

November to February - 9:00 am -4:30 pm (Tuesday to Saturday)

10:00 am – 4:30 pm (Sunday and Monday)

Admission Fees: INR 1368.47 for adults, INR 764.73 for children under 16, INR 3783.43 for family, concession INR 1167.23

Tele: +44- 020- 3166 6000

E-mail: VisitorServices_TOL@hrp.org.uk

Website: www.hrp.org.uk

11. Westminster Abbey

Westminster Abbey is among the most popular religious site in England. Considered as a living monument to British history, Westminster Abbey is the site where numerous kings, statesmen, warriors, scientists, musicians and poets, including Charles Darwin, Geoffrey Chaucer, Charles Dickens, Mary I, James I and Charles II, were laid to rest.

Westminster Abbey was the site of a Norman abbey in the beginning; however, in the 13th century Henry III constructed it to vie with the European cathedrals. This abbey have witnessed the coronation of almost every monarch, except Edward V and Edward VIII, since William the Conqueror. It is still an important part for royal state occasions and many recent coronations including the present monarch, Queen Elizabeth II in 1953, late Princess of Wales in 1997 and Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother in 2002, were held here.

Address: Westminster Abbey, London, SW1P 3PA, United Kingdom

Timing: 9:30 am - 4:30 pm (Monday and Tuesday, Thursday and Friday)

9:30 am - 7:00 pm (Wednesday)

9:30 am - 2:30 pm (Saturday)

Admission Fees: INR 1170.88 for adult, free entry for child under 11 free accompanied by an adult, INR 439.08 for schoolchildren (11 - 18 years), INR 2341.77 for family (2 adults and 1 child), concession INR 731.80

Tele: +44-020- 7222 5152

Fax: +44-020-7233 2072

E-mail: info@westminster-abbey.org

Website: www.westminster-abbey.org

12. Brighton

Located 97 km from London on the south coast, Brighton is popularly known as 'London on Sea'. Tourists from all over the world flock this resort town for experiencing coastal retreat at relatively cheap prices. Brighton can be reached conveniently from Victoria station or London Bridge and features young demographic, lively nightlife and world-class restaurants.

Travellers will enjoy visiting the Royal Pavilion, which used to be the summer retreat of George IV. The renovated Museum of Brighton and the old town around the lanes makes for a relaxed and peaceful sightseeing choice.

Address: Brighton, East Sussex UK

Tele: +44-01273-290 337

Website: www.visitbrighton.com

13. County Hall

County Hall is a popular tourist attraction located directly across the River Thames from the Houses of Parliament. County Hall was the home of the Greater London Council earlier and houses the London Aquarium.

The London Aquarium has over 350 different aquatic species from around the world, which makes it especially popular among kids. Various huge water tanks and the Dalí Universe that houses more than 500 works of art by the renowned surrealist, are quite popular among travellers. It houses the painting Spellbound that was created for the set of the 1945 Hitchcock thriller. The uniquely designed sofa in the shape of lips of Mae West is another major highlight.

County Hall features two hotels along with various bars and restaurants for the visitors to relax and enjoy. The place also has a Namco Station that offers video games, bumper cars, 10-pin bowling and other entertainment activities. The Namco station also houses a pool hall, a bar and lounge having big TV screens.

Address: Riverside Building, Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7PB

Timing: Dali Universe - 9:30 am - 6:00 pm (Daily)

Admission Fees: Dali Universe- INR 1024.52 for adult, concession INR 878.16, INR 585.44 for children (7 – 14 year), INR 658.62 for children (15-18 years), INR 2780.86 for family

Tele: +44 – 020- 7981 2550 (County Hall Entertainment)

+44 -020 - 7967 1067 (Namco Station)

Fax: +44 - 020 - 7928 3130 (County Hall Entertainment)

E-mail: info@londoncountyhall.com

Website: www.londoncountyhall.com

14. Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament

The Houses of Parliament are located within the Palace of Westminster. This is where Big Ben, one of most popular landmarks of London, is situated. Big Ben is a huge bell, which has an easily identifiable tolling tune and is a popular attraction among travellers from all over the world.

The architecture of the 900 years old Westminster Hall, which is perhaps the oldest part of the palace, is among the main highlights of the place. The Westminster Hall was reconstructed in neo-gothic style during the 19th century, after the original hall was completely destroyed due to fire. Charles Barry proposed the new design of the hall.

The Palace of Westminster is open during late July/August and middle of September/early October, when the Parliament is in recess. Guided tours that usually take about 75 minutes, wherein one can see the Royal Robing Rooms, the House of Lords and the House of Commons and Westminster Hall, are also provided here. However, if the travellers wish to see Parliament at work, then it is possible from the Stranger's Gallery. One need to stand in two long queues, for the Lords and for the Commons, outside the palace to see the Parliament in session.

Address: 20 Dean's Yard, Parliament Square, SW1, London, United Kingdom

Timing: 09:15 am – 4:30 pm or 1:15 pm – 4:30 pm depending on schedule (Monday to Saturday)

Admission Fees: INR 1097.70 for adult, INR 2707.68 for family,

Tele: +44-0844- 209 0381

Website: www.parliament.uk

15. Covent Garden

Covent Garden is an important market of trade in London. Being around for 300 years, various types of traders, especially the fruit and vegetable sellers, used to trade in the Piazza. Currently, the Covent Garden is still a popular market and hosts many shops, bars and restaurants.

The market area gets a vibrant feel as a large number of street performers woe the crowd, especially the first-time travellers to London. A visit to the renowned Royal Opera House is a must for the tourists while in Covent Garden. The London Transport Museum provides a glimpse of the history and development of the transport system of London.

Address: Piazza, Covent Garden, London, United Kingdom

Timing: 10:00 am - 8:00 pm (Monday to Friday)

10:00 am - 6:00 pm (Saturday)

Admission fees: Free

Tele: +44-020- 7240 9731

Fax: +44-020- 7836 3137

E-mail: info@coventgarden.uk.com

Website: www.coventgarden.uk.com

16. Trafalgar Square

Trafalgar Square is another popular London sightseeing option, which was developed under the reign of former London Mayor Ken Livingston. There was a time, when this place was extremely overcrowded and infested by pigeons, and the seed-sellers added to the nuisance. However, Mayor Livingston pedestrianized most of the area and developed it into a ‘World Square’.

The centre of Trafalgar Square has the Nelson’s Column, whereas one will find the National Gallery, one of the greatest galleries of the world, on the north side. The National Gallery displays a myriad collection of Western paintings, right from 13th century to the early 20th century.

The National Portrait Gallery houses a large collection in the media of oil, watercolour, marble and photography by the famous and forgotten artists of the country. A lecture theatre and restaurant is located in the Ondaatje Wing. Then there is the popular neoclassical church, which was built in 18th century, St Martin-in-the-Fields that is the centre for many concerts and houses a café in the crypt.

Address: Trafalgar Square, WC2, London, United Kingdom

Timing: Daily

Admission fees: Free

Tele: +44-020- 7983 4750

Fax: +44-020-7983 4137

E-mail: trafalgar.square@london.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.london.gov.uk/trafalgarsquare/>

17. Duck Tours

London Duck Tours are an extremely popular option among tourists coming from all over the globe and are organized on an amphibious craft. This unconventional tour of London starts from Chicheley Street, which is just behind the London Eye, and leads through streets of London streets, including Whitehall, Trafalgar Square and Buckingham Palace. The tour ends with a 30-minute cruise in the River Thames.

Address: Head office- 55 York Road, London, SE1 7NJ

Departure Point - Duck Stop, Chicheley Street, London, SE1 7PY

Timing: 9:00 am – 8:30 pm (Monday to Sunday)

Admission Fees: INR 1463.61 for adult, INR 1024.52 for children (1 to 12 years), INR 1170.88 for children (13 to 17 years), INR 4244.47 for family (2 adults and 2 children)

Tele: +44- 020- 7928 3132

Website: www.londonducktours.co.uk

18. St Pauls Cathedral

St Paul's Cathedral is flocked by numerous tourists for seeing its huge dome, which is considered as the third largest dome in the world. The original cathedral was destructed in the Great Fire of London in 1666. The present day building was built of its site and was designed by Sir Christopher Wren. Its construction was finished in 1710.

The dome is the most distinguishing part of the London skyline. The interior of the dome is named as the Whispering Gallery due to its unique acoustic features. It provides a view of the frescoes of St Paul's life.

There are facilities to even climb higher from the inside of the dome to two other galleries that are located on the outer side. From these two galleries, visitors get a complete view of London. Guided sightseeing tours to St Pauls Cathedral are also available but advance booking is required for them.

Address: Paternoster Square, EC4, London, United Kingdom

Timing: 8:30 am – 4:00 pm (Monday to Saturday) Sightseeing not available on Sunday and religious holidays

Admission Fees: INR 914.75 for adult, INR 329.31 for children (6-18 years), INR 2158.82 for family

Tele: +44-020-7246 8350

E-mail: admissions@stpaulscathedral.org.uk

Website: www.stpauls.co.uk

19. Natural History Museum

The Natural History Museum is a good example of Victorian style building. It is divided into different zones, which are dedicated to discover the various aspects of the planet. A life size model of a blue whale, the dinosaur displays and the earthquake simulators are among the main attractions of the museum.

The Wildlife Garden outside the museum displays live specimens. The Darwin Centre showcases a huge assortment of specimens, some of which are as old as the 16th century. Some recent new species that were discovered by the scientists are showcased here and visitors are allowed to speak with the scientists to know about their current research.

Address: Cromwell Road, SW7, London, United Kingdom

Timing: 10:00 am -5:50 pm (Daily, except 24 - 26 December)

Admission Fees: Free (except for major exhibitions)

Tele: +44-020- 7942 5000

Website: www.nhm.ac.uk

20. National Maritime Museum

The National Maritime Museum is among the biggest maritime museums in the world. The museum has models, displays, paintings and trophies from all over the world, that are arranged in a series of themed exhibition galleries. The great ocean liners and golden barge of Prince Frederick are showcased here and tourists are acquainted with the traditions of maritime London and trade history across the Atlantic.

The All Hands gallery is popular among children, as they can use the professional ship simulator on the Bridge and understand the outcome of carelessness on the ocean environment. There is a complete programme of family events, lectures along with significant reference library containing books and manuscripts. The Paul patisserie and coffee shop provides recreational facilities and the Regatta licensed restaurant is very economical eating joint. Tourists are also allowed to purchase exclusive items associated with the museum collections from the shops. The National Maritime Museum has even won laurels like Visit London awards for their qualitative customer service and access policies.

Address: Romney Road, Greenwich, London SE10 9NF

Timing: daily 10.00 am – 5:00 pm (Daily)

Admission Fees: Free

Tele: +44- 020- 8312 6565

Email: bookings@nmm.ac.uk

Website: <http://www.nmm.ac.uk>

Activities - Overview

Activities in London cater to both indoor and outdoor requirements of the visitors. Some of the popular indoor activities are indoor ice-skating in Queens Ice bowl that has a 45m x 20m rink and Alexandra Palace Ice Rink, especially for a festive skate. Various places and clubs provide facilities for various activities like Gymnastics, Aerobics, Rollerblading, Salsa Dancing and others.

Tourists attend recitals in city churches and Royal Opera House, visit the House of Commons and see the Swiss Centre glockenspiel clock extravaganza along with watching films at the British Museum and take part in other activities in London that are a part of its culture.

Besides, there are various options for outdoor activities in London like exploring Richmond, Rambling on Hampstead Heath, taking part in an urban run, roller-skating, kite flying, bike riding, playing rugby in Battersea Park and old Deer Park and skateboarding. There are outdoor swimming facilities in places like Serpentine and Hampstead Bathing Ponds.

Activities - Generic, Individual level write-ups

Rollerblading

Although rollerblading is quite a popular outdoor activity in London but you may find only a few places here providing this facility because many places do not allow it. The best places where rollerblading facilities are available include the Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens. One should be careful about the signs and markings because enjoying skating in the restricted areas can invite fines.

For those who are new to rollerblading or skating are also provided starting lessons on skating for INR 360 or even a free beginner's lesson. London's second largest royal park is Bushy Park, which is also a very large area where over 3,00 roller skaters come and enjoy together without outing in much money.

Gymnasium or Aerobics

Visitors may face certain difficulties in joining a gym in London due to insurance problems because the induction sessions sometimes can be a bit out of pocket. However, a one-day free trial is provided in certain places, who offer them by claiming a possible relocation to London. Some of the popular names here are Soho Gyms, Virgin, Fitness First and La fitness.

However, if anyone has a student card, he or she can try his hand at London University Student's Union in Mallet, which is just behind Tottenham Court Road. Jubilee Hall, which is in Covent

Garden's Plaza or the Pineapple Dance Studio in Langley St, Covent Garden, are the most popular options for aerobics.

Karti

Another popular activity among the masses in London is the outdoor sport of 'Karting'. In London, Go-karting has developed throughout the years not only as an outdoor sports but also as a medium of entertainment both professional and casually. One of the most preferred karting tracks in London is the 'London Karting' track, which is a just minute away from the City Centre and Canary Wharf.

There are many kart tracks in London where the minimum age limit varies depending upon the place. Some of the places are Daytona raceway in west London where the minimum age is 8 years. F1 city in east London is another option and Kings X raceway in central London has the age limit of 18 years.

Excursions & Tours - Overview

Excursions and tours in London have been a popular option among millions of tourist from all over the globe, as there are dozens of tours, guided or self-guided, to the surrounding countryside including places like Greenwich Observatory, Stratford-on-Avon and farther on to western England, Scotland and Wales, to choose from.

Some of the most famous London Excursions and tours include the London ghost walk, walking tours, bike tours, black taxi tours, rock music tours, Thames dinner cruises, a hop-on hop-off big, red, double-decker bus tours, most also includes a Thames River cruise in their fare. Tourists visit the Brighton resort town, Canterbury Cathedral, Leeds Castle, town of Windsor Hampton Court Palace and even day trips from London to the mysterious Stonehenge.

A quick round trip to the "Chunnel", the undersea tube that connects England with France is another favourite among tourists.

Excursion and tours - Individual level write-ups

Brighton

Brighton is a seaside resort town in England. It came into limelight in the 18th century after the Prince Regent (later King George IV) selected Brighton site for his holiday palace, which features a unique onion-shaped Brighton Pavilion. Brighton is known for its entertainment venues and bustling nightlife.

A blend of Regency and Victorian architecture makes Brighton a popular and unique attraction of tourists. The winding village lanes are complimented with antique and jewellery shops an,

while East Pier stretches out over the sea. There are numerous funfairs and amusement arcades making this place an exciting option for visitors. A train from London Waterloo is available to Brighton and take about an hour.

Website: www.brighton.co.uk

Windsor

Windsor is a small town located 32 km west of London, on the banks of River Thames. Windsor Castle is the main tourist attraction of the town, and is renowned as the largest and oldest occupied castle of the world. Built by William the Conqueror some thousand years ago, Windsor Castle is inhabited by English monarchs and is the favourite of the Queen. The Royal Family usually spend their weekends in this castle, which features the wonderful State Apartments and the Waterloo Chamber, that was built to honour the British triumph over Napoleon at Waterloo.

Tourists are fascinated by the St George's Chapel, which is among the best examples of Perpendicular Gothic architecture in the world. This Chapel houses tombs of several English sovereigns including King Henry VIII, Jane Seymour, Charles I and King George V. The rooms of the castle are adorned with invaluable artefacts from renowned artists like Rubens, Holbein, Van Dyke, Rembrandt and Lawrence and highlights fine tapestries, porcelain, sculpture and armour.

The backside of Windsor castle accommodates Home Park, sprawling across 500 acre of land, and includes the Frogmore site, where Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were buried. Windsor Great Park is popular among people who love to explore the area on walk. Then there is the world famous Eton College, located over the river from Windsor. Tourists can reach Windsor by hopping on a train from London Waterloo or London Paddington.

Address:

Timing: 9.45 am - 5.15 pm (Daily) with last admission at 4 pm (March to October)

9.45 am - 4:15 pm (Daily) with last admission at 3 pm (November to February)

Admission Fees: Castle: INR 1150 for adults and INR 685 for children. Concessions available

Tele: +44-020-7766 7300 (ticket sales and Information office)

E-mail: bookinginfo@royalcollection.org.uk

Website: www.royalcollection.org.uk

Hampton Court Palace

Hampton Court palace is located 23 km southwest of London, on the banks of the River Thames. Built by Cardinal Wolsey in the early 1500s, this royal palace is a popular day-trip attraction from London. It was the main residence of King Henry VIII and was the major centre for important events concerning royal and political life until 1737.

Tourists visit the Great Hall of King Henry VIII and State Apartments of King William III, which were conceptualized by Wren and were finished in 1700. Tudor Kitchens remains the same since the 16th century and were instrumental in serving raucous banquets. The main attraction at Hampton Court palace is perhaps the maze, which was planted in 1705 and continues to entertain children coming here, from all parts of the globe.

A train from London Waterloo reaches Hampton in 35 minutes. Alternately, many tourists also take a boat ride along the River Thames from Westminster, Richmond or Kingston.

Address: East Molesey, Surrey

Timing: 10 am - 4.30 pm (Monday to Sunday) with last admission at 3.30 pm and last entry to the maze at 3.45 pm

Admission Fees: INR 1024.52 for adults and INR 512.26 for children

Tele: +44-870-752 7777

Website: www.hrp.org.uk

Restaurants - Overview

There a myriad range of restaurants in London from capital curries to great gastropubs, serving multiple cuisines and local delicacies. Tourists and shoppers frequent the Oxford Street in the heart of London's West End to relax in between their shopping spree.

Many tourists relish the afternoon tea or "cuppa" at one of several hotels and restaurants in London, the most popular being Ritz that have a dress code, serving tea with all the grace and tradition of the British Empire. The world-famous Indian curries are available in any of the hundreds of restaurants, including the posh Mayfair and the stylish Brick Lane. Chinese cuisine is available at Chinatown in Soho, whereas African and Caribbean cuisines are served at Brixton.

Home to celebrity chefs like Jamie Oliver and Gordon Ramsay, restaurants in London offers some finest cuisines for the country. www.london-eating.co.uk provides detailed information on London restaurants.

Shopping - Overview

Being a global centre of fashion, music and style, London is the place where trends begin and are exported worldwide, thereby making shopping in London inevitable. Many tourists around the globe attest to the immense popularity of London for shopping, especially the world famous Harrods.

Right from exclusive boutique stores for luxurious shopping to vibrant street markets providing incredible deals, London offers a myriad range of shopping options for the tourists. For the brand conscious people, the exclusive stores at Knightsbridge and Harrods are extremely popular. Tourists looking for great deals and moderate price range prefer shopping on Oxford Street and Regent Street. The markets at Covent Garden are known for unique souvenirs shopping.

Another popular shopping spree for tourists includes the curios of Portobello Market, lively street shopping at Bow Market or Camden Market and other street markets across London. Camden Market offers a wide variety of clothing, food, antiques, bric-a-brac, bars and nightspots for the tourists to enjoy. Shopping in London is incomplete without a visit to Broadway Shopping Centre, that accommodates more than 40 shops along with a Tesco Metro and restaurants, cafes and bars. This shopping centre also has underground parking facility for cars along with disabled access. The Old and New Bond Streets in W1 are home to international designers like Prada and Gucci. The Conduit Street close by offers stuffs from off-the-wall designers like Vivienne Westwood.

British foodstuffs are available at Fortnum and Mason, W1. Going towards the East End, tourists flock the Sunday markets for almost everything from fruits to accessories, including Petticoat Lane and Brick Lane, E1, and the flower market at Columbia Road, E2.

Speaking about taxes and duties in London, most major shops in the West End comes under the Tax-Free Shopping scheme, which is a part of Global Refund - www.globalrefund.com. As per the scheme, travellers from outside the European Union can avail refund of VAT, which is currently 17.5%.

Attractions - Overview

Many of the attractions in London are created keeping in mind the requirements of the youngster and children, as fondness for children of all ages is an inseparable part of English charm. This is evident from the number of Zoos, rides, arcades, museums, theatres, music attractions and other places that appeal to any young visitor. Tourists recall the nursery rhymes at the London Bridge site and experience the glory of the British Empire at the heritage sites along with spending time with the animals at the London Zoo.

Shopping at Harrods is another popular activity among millions of visitors, who flock the city every year. Experiencing the historic reflection of the Tower of London along with visiting the Buckingham Palace and the Parliament building are other favourite attractions for travellers. Foodies can enjoy their evening at any of the restaurants at ethnic neighbourhoods of London. Many tourists also vouch for the entertaining nights at the theatre or the London Symphony.

There are numerous attractions in London that are free, including the famous British pomp and ceremony that is held outside Buckingham Palace. Besides, there are some museums like the British Museum, Sir John Soane's Museum, and the Garden Museum along with renowned art galleries such as the National Gallery, National Portrait Gallery, Tate: British and International Modern and Contemporary Art and Wallace Collection are some other London attractions that are all free.

Sports is another favourite attraction among visitors as London has on offer various sports like cricket, football, horse racing, tennis, and golf, along with some other unusual sports, such as “going to the dogs” or watching dog racing. A ride on the famous "double-decker" buses is a cheap and unique way to discover the city. There are numerous guided or self-guided tours to the nearby countryside to choose from.

TRAVELLING TO

Travelling to - Overview

London has one of the most extensive public transports in the world, covering airport transfers, London Tube, buses, trains, ferries, cycling and more. Tourists travel to London mainly by flights, and some opt for Coaches, Eurotunnel and Eurostar to London.

Having a global city status, it is the most served destination by all major flights. London has five airports, namely London Heathrow, London Gatwick, London Stansted, London Luton and London City Airport.

Coaches are also a cheap mode of travelling to London from almost anywhere in the UK or Europe. Victoria Coach Station is main station for coached in London. Besides, Eurostar train via the Channel Tunnel is another popular way to travel between the UK and Europe. This high-speed rail service is extremely frequent from Paris and Brussels. The terminal of Eurostar in London is at St Pancras. Then there is the Eurotunnel, which offers high-speed car, coach and freight services

via the Channel Tunnel. It serves between Coquelles (Calais) and Folkestone that is close to the motorway network and London.

The best way to reach London from India is to take a flight. There are various direct flights from Delhi to London, including British Airways, Virgin Atlantic, Jet Airways and Air India. Kingfisher, British Airways, Jet Airways and Air India provides direct flights to London from Mumbai airport. British Airways also serves passengers from Bangalore, Chennai and Hyderabad.

Flights

With the biggest and busiest airspace in the world, London is the main centre of international air transport. Flights to London, whether to Gatwick, Heathrow, Stansted, Luton or City airport, arrive very near to the capital city.

Although the city has eight airports, but the major hub of national flag carrier, British Airways, is the London Heathrow Airport, located in Hillingdon, West London. Catering to all international flights from most major airports worldwide, London Heathrow Airport is the busiest airport of the world with regards to international passenger traffic. Located 15 miles west of London, the Heathrow airport have five terminals, but currently only four are operational, as the T2 is under redevelopment and will remain closed until 2014. While planning the itinerary, one need to consider the waiting time required to get through T3, especially if the traveller is not having an UK/EU passport.

London Gatwick Airport, situated in West Sussex 28 miles south of central London, is another major airport with traffic similar to London Heathrow along with some low-cost short-haul flights. Located in north east of London in Essex, Stansted Airport is the main hub for Ryanair in UK. While Luton Airport in Bedfordshire, north of London, usually caters to short-haul flights. Short-haul scheduled flights and business jet traffic is handled at London City Airport situated ten miles east of London's West End, which it the smallest and most central airport in London.

British Airways flights to London from New York, Edinburgh and other cities around the UK and arrive at Heathrow Airport as well as London City Airport and Heathrow Airports. With soaring competition in the domestic flight market, flight prices are often very reasonable while travelling within the city.

Transfers to city (from the airport)

London airport is located in east London and facilitates easy travelling for the passengers to the city through an availability of sufficient public transportation option like trains, buses, taxis, and more. The easiest way to travel from the airport is through the docklands light railway (DLR).

DLR station is an over ground system connected to the airport terminal where the trains depart at every 8 to 15 minutes to Canning Town. Heathrow connect rail is the fastest way to travel in London. Executive car hire as well as chauffeur car hires are also available at the London airport for travelling to London purposes.

Trains

There are several rail routes connecting London and one of them is the service provided by Docklands Light Railways. It has an independent rail service up to the newly formed Isle of Dogs. Now, a new extension of the same railway network operates under the Thames to Greenwich and beyond to Lewisham.

Some areas in London like the northern suburbs receive good train service, much better than the services of tubes. The link of north London extends from Richmond to North Woolwich across the northern part of London. Other useful train service includes the rail service from Hampstead Heath to Kew and often these rails prove to be much cheaper than tube rails by connecting to the tourist destination much closely and quickly.

At present, it is very difficult to calculate the fares and to find out the schedule of travel due to the past mandate by the British government because of which the former British Rail was broken up in order to create smaller divisions that could connect several areas of the countries in a much better manner.

Although the facilities on trains vary, depending on the Train Companies the run them, but most of the trains in London are totally non-smoking and offer Standard seating. Besides, first class seating, seat reservations and catering services are available for the trains. There are WiFi and power points for laptops and mobile phone chargers on certain trains. Most modern trains are equipped with visual information displays and automatic announcement facilities.

Buses

There are many double-decker buses in London that has a seating capacity between 60 to 80 people. Some of the buses that operate here are bus number 473 that operates between destinations like London City Airport, Stratford, Silvertown, North Woolwich and Prince Regent Dlr Station. The other bus that operates here is bus number 474 and he bus routes are available on the internet.

Tourists are provided the London Travel Card, which provides unlimited option to travel by buses or subways throughout all 6 or 2 central zones of London. This facility can help a person in travelling from one destination to other very easily without worrying about change or tickets.

However, there is a condition that the residents of Britain are not eligible to obtain a London travel card.

Weather

London has a temperate type of climatic conditions with high temperatures in the summers with flowing heat waves. Winters receive irregular rainfall in form of drizzles that are here all round the year. Although London receives, snow sometimes but they are not here for much of a time. Climate of London in summers are pleasant with average temperature ranging to 18⁰ Celsius. Snow here in winters is not common. However, the temperatures in winters here is in between 2 to 6⁰ Celsius. It is not often that the temperature here drops below freezing point.

The best time to visit London would be in the summers because the weather is more stable at that time. The days are long and sunny while nights are usually muggy due to the urban heat effect. However, the weather of the city might change frequently from sunny to rain and from hot to cold, no matter which time of the year it is.

Visa

Visa is an important document, which a person requires to enter UK from outside nation and this document is issued to an individual by the UK Border Agency and this permission is better known by the name of 'entry clearance'. Generally, there are four types of documents regarding entry clearance. The first one is a permit required by citizens of countries outside the European Economic Area also known by the name of EEA.

The second one is an entry certificate issued to the non-nationals and the third one include the permit granted to the family members of the EEA nationals who themselves are not an EEA national. The last type of clearance documents includes a minor document stating the exempt for people such as Diplomats from the restrictions of the Immigration Act 1971.

The visa and migration rules to UK especially London keep on changing that is why it is better to stay updated on the latest rules regarding the VISA with the help of relevant UK government site. The processing time in the assessment of individual applications may vary.

There are certain important documents that are necessary for an individual to submit along with the visa application form. The first document is a valid passport with a minimum validity of six months and a complete application form that will direct you to one of the Application support centres for submitting your finger scans.

The other documents include recent passport size photographs, documents stating conformation of employment, recent bank statements including travellers' cheques.

For further information, please contact:

Contact of the Embassy New Delhi

British High Commission,

Shantipath,

Chankyapuri,

New Delhi 110021

Tele: +91 (0) 11 26872161

Fax: (91) (11) 26870065

Email: postmaster.NewDelhi@fco.gov.uk

Website: www.ukinindia.com/

Contact of the Embassy Mumbai

British Deputy High Commission

Maker Chambers IV

Second Floor

222 Jamnalal Bajaj Road

Nariman Point

Mumbai 400021

Tele: +91 (22) 56502222

Fax: (91) (22) 22027940

Email: comenq.bombay@fco.gov.uk

Website: www.ukinindia.com/

Contact of the Embassy Chennai

British Deputy High Commission

20 Anderson Road

Chennai- 600006

Tele: +91 (44) 52192151

Fax: (91) (44) 52192322

Email: bdhcchen@vsnl.com

Consular@madras.mail.fco.gov.uk

Website: www.ukinindia.com/

Contact of the Embassy Kolkata

British Deputy High Commission

1A Ho Chi Minh Sarani

Kolkata -700071

Tele: +91 (33) 22885172/

22885173-76

Fax: (91) (33) 22883435

Email: kolkata@fco.gov.uk

Website: www.ukinindia.com/

Currency

The currency used in London is British Pounds also known as Great Britain Pounds. Under the decimalization system of UK, 100 pence is equal to one pound and one British pound is equivalent to 73.2 Indian rupees. The current bank notes used there are 5, 10, 20 and 50-pound notes. Apart from British pounds, no other currencies are accepted in London, except for some of the shops, which might accept Euros.

Although many ATM's are available in London, but most tourists exchange cash in advance before travelling, as there are chances that travellers have to pay extra for withdrawing cash in London. In Delhi, there are various currency exchangers in Connaught Place providing best exchange rates. The best rates for currency exchanges in Mumbai are provided at Andheri, Colaba, Bandra West and Mahim.

Currencies are exchanged at bureaux de exchange and even in some renowned hotels, offering currency exchange in London. However, the banks are likely to provide much better exchange rates, here. Credit cards such as MasterCard, American Express and Visa card were accepted in London. Apart from these, other credit cards and smart cards might work, depending on the facilities provided by the credit card companies. Apart from these above-mentioned credit cards, most of the areas accept traveller's cheques too.

There are several sources of currency exchanges in London, which includes airports, banks, travel agencies, and even street kiosks. Banks and travel agencies are preferred by most tourists instead of currency exchange kiosks in central London or the railway bureaux, for providing better exchange rates.

Insurance

It is very necessary for a person to have travel insurance before finalizing any trip abroad. Travel insurance is not a part of any particular tour package and it includes medical, travel delay and financial expenses within the home country or other destination country. It is better to gather all the important information that is essential to know before you travel.

It is important for an individual to check with his or her travel insurance company the type of services and security they provide while travelling to London. The different types of travel insurances are trip protection or cancellation insurance, travel medical insurance, emergency evacuation insurance, annual multi-trip insurance and travel accident insurance.

There are different types of offers and options provided by travel insurance depending upon the type of travel like business travel, student travel, leisure travel, adventure travel and international travel. Travel insurance commonly covers medical expenses, overseas funeral expenses, delayed departure, cancellation, loss like theft or damage of possessions and legal assistance.

Emergency contact numbers in London

Police, Fire, Ambulance, Coastguard: 999, 112

Crime: (non-emergency) Tel: 101

NHS Direct: health advice 24/7 Tel: 08 45 46 47

TRAVELING WITHIN

Travelling within - Overview

London offers an efficient and cheap transportation for travelling to its popular destinations, through different modes including trains, taxis, buses, car rentals, riverboats, trams, and many more. The local underground trains are a good choice for covering long distance in minimum time. For travelling cheaper through trains, oyster cards are also available as an option. Amongst the trains, options are underground trains and the Docklands light railways.

London trams runs from Croydon to Beckenham and are an integral part of the London bus network. Buses and trams are a good way to travel cheap within London for which passes both for bus and tram network can also be availed. Taxis are also useful in reaching the desired destination, conveniently. Other options like London riverboat services and cycling in London are also a cost saving way of travelling within London.

Buses

Buses in London are available from the close of the tube to the starting of the daytime. London have an extensive bus network, wherein Trafalgar Square is a hub of night buses in London. The information board at the bus stop provides information about the routes of the buses. The flat fare for bus and tram network is INR 95.

Taxis

The taxis of London vary from iconic London black cabs to local minicabs. These cabs and taxis can be hailed in the streets or availed from the designated ranks at prominent places namely mainline rail, tube, and bus stations. These cabs offer the maximum journey of 12 miles and duration of one hour. Their fares are metered that start from a minimum INR 160.

Trains

The underground local trains of London cover the city in a crisscross manner and extend beyond the tube network. To travel cheap in these trains oyster cards are used, as they are cheaper than the paper tickets and are usable for more than one time. Popular rail operators of London include Silverlink, First Capital Connect, SouthEastern Railway, and London Overground.

Riverboats

London riverboat services are a good way to travel across London avoiding the traffic in the way. These services help travellers to view the most popular destinations of the London along with basic commuter services. The common stops of these riverboats include Tate Modern, London Bridge, Tower Of London, Hilton London Docklands Riverside, The O2, and The Greenwich.

Cycle hire

Apart from car rentals, cycle hire services are also available in London. This cycling scheme is a way of public bike sharing for making shorter journeys more fascinating around the capital. There are over 400 hundred locations providing cycle hire in London. This service is free for first 30 minutes and apart from cash, and payment through credit, debit or membership cards are accepted.

Oysters and travelling cards

Travel cards are also available for tourists, which allows passengers unlimited travel on the Tube, buses, and trains in the London urban area. The concept of oyster and travelling cards is also quite popular in London as a faster, smarter, and cheaper way to pay for various transport systems including trains, ferries, buses, trams, DLR, and tube through a single card. With travel card, tourists can also avail discounts on many of scheduled river services in London.

Car rentals

Hiring a car in London is considered as one of the best and quickest ways to move around by various tourists, and there are car hire offices in more than 50 different locations around London. One can hire a car easily online and these companies offer car service from and to major London airports and that too, on a daily or weekly basis.

Some of the major car hire companies in London are holiday autos, hertz, thrifty, SIXT and e-bookers. These companies offer both small cars as well as three door cars, which includes Fiesta, Corsa on daily as well as special weekly basis. Many car rental companies also facilitate airport transfer along with sightseeing and city tours. Tourists can book various models of cars, with or without chauffeur, in London. The charges vary from INR 7850 to INR 9200, depending on model and other services.

Other Public Transportation

London is a well-connected city when it comes to transportation facilities and the visitors have a wide range of transport options including bike rentals and car hires.

Buses

Buses are available in London throughout the day. For the night run, night bus services are also available, that run from the close time of underground rail network to the starting time of daytime bus services. The flat rates of bus services amount to 95 INR when paying through oyster card otherwise 160 INR when paying in cash. These fares vary according to distance covered. Most of the bus routes in central London require buying tickets before boarding the buses. Ticket machines that sell single fare tickets as well as daily bus passes are available at the main bus stops on these routes.

Train

The DLR trains in London depart from the airport at every 8-15 minutes. The overground trains in London are available at East London Line, West London Line, North London Line, Gospel Oak to Barking Line, and Watford Dc Line. At the north London line, four trains depart per hour from Monday to Saturday and two per hour on Sundays. On the west London line, two trains depart per hour with some additions at the peak time. At the east London, line four trains depart per hour at each of the southern termini. At the gospel oak to barking line, every hour, two trains depart in non-peak hours and four trains depart in peak hours. At the Watford DC line, three trains are available every hour from Monday to Saturday and two trains are available per hour on Sundays. One can use these trains by paying for paper tickets or through oyster cards.

Taxis

The traditional taxicabs of London include royal black cabs and local minicabs. These taxis can be hired or boarded from the streets of London or to book it specifically, they can also be booked from mainline rail, tubes, and bus stations. They are available for a period of maximum one hour

and only for a distance for 12 miles with an exception of Heathrow airport taxi ranks that provide taxis for 20 miles journey too. The fares of these taxis start from the minimum rent of INR 160 and rest depends on the distance covered. There is a charge of INR 175 for taking a cab from the Heathrow Airport and an additional charge of INR 146 for booking one on the telephone.

Trains

The DLR trains in London depart from the airport at every 8-15 minutes. The overground trains in London are available at East London Line, West London Line, North London Line, Gospel Oak to Barking Line, and Watford Dc Line. At the north London line, four trains depart per hour from Monday to Saturday and two per hour on Sundays. On the west London line, two trains depart per hour with some additions at the peak time. At the east London, line four trains depart per hour at each of the southern termini. At the gospel oak to barking line, every hour, two trains depart in non-peak hours and four trains depart in peak hours. At the Watford DC line, three trains are available every hour from Monday to Saturday and two trains are available per hour on Sundays.

Others

Other transportation services in London include the local means of transports such as bike renting and Boat services that one can use to explore the city with little cost. Riverboat services are the best means to avoid traffic and are popular among the locals. One of the service providers is Thames riverboat services.

Other than boat service, hiring a bike is also an option to cut on cost. Many companies here provide mountain bikes in proper condition with deposits varying from INR 7200 to INR 1500. Some of them accept credit cards too. One of such company is the London Bicycle tour company.

